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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CHAPTER VIII.

Introduction to vers. 1–11.—These verses, with vii. 53, form, perhaps, the gravest critical difficulty in the New Testament. I. THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST the passage. 1. That it is not found in some of the oldest and best MSS. 2. That it is wanting in some of the earlier versions. 3. That it is not commented on by Greek Fathers, Origen, Cyril, Chrysostom, and Theophylact, in their exposition of St. John, nor quoted or referred to by Tertullian and Cyprian. 4. That it differs in style from the rest of St. John's Gospel, and contains several words and forms of expression which are nowhere else used in his writings. 5. That the moral tendency of the passage is somewhat doubtful, and that it seems to represent our Lord as palliating a heinous sin. II. THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR of the passage are as follows: 1. That it is found in many old manuscripts, if not in the very oldest and best. 2. That it is found in the Vulgate Latin, and in the Arabic, Coptic, Persian, and Ethiopian versions. 3. That it is commented on by Augustine in his exposition of this Gospel; while in another of his writings he expressly refers to and explains its omission from some manuscripts; that it is quoted and defended by Ambrose, referred to by Jerome, and treated as genuine in the Apostolical constitutions. 4. That there is no proof whatever that there is any immoral tendency in the passage. Our Lord pronounced no opinion on the sin of adultery, but simply declined the office of a judge. I lean decidedly to the side of those who think the passage is genuine, for the following reasons: 1. The argument from manuscripts appears to me inconclusive. We possess comparatively few very ancient ones. Even of them, some favour the genuineness of the passage. The same remark applies to the ancient versions. Testimony of this kind, to be conclusive, should be unanimous. 2. The argument from the Fathers seems to me more in favour of the passage than against it. On the one side the reasons are simply negative. Certain Fathers say nothing about the passage, but at the same time say nothing against it. On the other side the reasons are positive. Men of such high authority as Augustine and Ambrose not only comment on the passage, but defend its genuineness, and assign reasons for its omission by some mistaken transcribers. Let me add to this, that the negative evidence of the Fathers is not so weighty as it appears. Cyril of Alexandria is one. But his commentary on this chapter is lost, and what we have was supplied by a modern hand in 1510. Chrysostom's commentary on John consists of popular public homilies, in which we can easily imagine such a passage as this might possibly be omitted. Theophylact was notoriously a copier and imitator of Chrysostom. Origen, the only remaining commentator, is one whose testimony is not of first-rate value, and he has omitted many things in his exposition of St. John. The silence of Tertullian and Cyprian is, perhaps, accountable on the same principles by which Augustine explains the omission of the passage in some copies of this Gospel in his own time. Some, as Calovius, Maldonatus, Flacius, Aretius, and Piscator, think that Chrysostom distinctly refers to this passage in his Sixtieth Homily on John, though he passes it over in exposition. 3. The argument from alleged discrepancies between the style and language of this passage, and the usual style of St. John's writing, is one which should be received with much caution. We are not dealing with an uninspired, but with an inspired, writer. Surely it is not too much to say that an inspired writer may occasionally use words and con-

structions and modes of expression which he generally does not use, and that it is no proof that he did not write a passage because he wrote it in a peculiar way. The whole discussion may leave in our minds, at any rate, one comfortable thought. If even in the case of this notoriously disputed passage—more controverted and doubted than any in the New Testament—so much can be said in its favour, how immensely strong is the foundation on which the whole volume of Scripture rests! If even against this passage the arguments of opponents are not conclusive, we have no reason to fear for the rest of the Bible. After all, there is much ground for thinking that some critical difficulties have been purposely left by God's providence in the text of the New Testament, in order to prove the faith and patience of Christian people. They serve to test the humility of those to whom intellectual difficulties are a far greater cross than either doctrinal or practical ones. To such minds it is trying, but useful, discipline to find occasional passages involving knots which they cannot quite untie, and problems which they cannot quite solve. Of such passages the verses before us are a striking instance. That the text of them is "a hard thing" it would be wrong to deny. But I believe our duty is not to reject it hastily, but to sit still and wait. In these matters, "he that believeth shall not make haste." (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The internal evidence in favour of the passage:*—It bears the same relation to revelation as a ray of light does to the sun. Its consummate knowledge of the human heart; its masterly harmonizing of the demands of the Mosaic law with the gospel; its triumphant turning of the tables in the presence of insolent foes; its matchless teachings of mercy, mingled with the sternest rebuke to sin; its complete and glorious victory in their terrible defeat and shame, all point out and prove the handwriting of God. God's Word is a great fact in the moral world, as the Alps are in the natural. A fragment of granite taken from the Alps proves God its Creator quite as fully as the mountain range. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The intrinsic truthfulness of the passage:*—Were the critical evidence against its genuineness far more overwhelming than it is, it would yet bear upon its surface the strongest proof of its authenticity. It is hardly too much to say that the mixture which it displays of tragedy and tenderness—the contrast which it involves between low, cruel cunning, and exalted nobility of intellect and emotion—transcends all power of the human imagination to have invented it; while the picture of a divine insight reading the inmost thoughts of the heart, and a yet diviner love which sees those inmost secrets with larger eyes than ours, furnish us with a conception of Christ's power and person at once too lofty and too original to have been founded on anything but fact. No one could have invented, for few could even appreciate, the sovereign purity and ineffable charm—the serene authority of condemnation and pardon—by which the story is so deeply characterized. The repeated instances in which, without a moment's hesitation, He foiled the crafty designs of His enemies, and in foiling them taught for ever some eternal principles of thought and action, are among the most unique and decisive proofs of His more than human wisdom; and yet not one of those gleams of sacred light which were struck from Him by collision with the malice of man was brighter or more beautiful than this. The very fact that the narrative found so little favour in the early centuries; the fact that whole Churches regarded the narrative as dangerous in its tendency; the fact that eminent Fathers either ignore it or speak of it in a semi-apologetic tone—in these facts we see the most decisive proof that its real moral and meaning are too transcendent to admit of its having been originally invented or interpolated without adequate authority into the sacred text. Yet it is strange that any should have failed to see that, in the ray of mercy which thus streamed from heaven upon the wretched sinner, the sin assumed an aspect tenfold more hideous and repulsive to the conscience of mankind. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*)

Ver. 1. **Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.**—*The habits of Jesus:*—At the close of the day Jesus withdrew to the Mount of Olives, and it is interesting to trace in Him once more that dislike of crowded cities, that love for the pure, sweet, fresh air, and for the quiet of the lonely hill, which we see in all parts of His career. There was, indeed, in Him nothing of that supercilious sentimentality and morbid egotism which makes men shrink from all contact with their brother-men; nor can they who would be His true servants belong to those merely fantastic philanthropists "who," as Coleridge says, "sigh for wretchedness, yet shun the wretched, nursing in some delicious solitude their dainty loves and slothful sympathies." On the contrary, day after day, while His daytime of work continued, we find Him

sacrificing all that was dearest and most elevating to His soul, and in spite of heat and pressure and conflict and weariness, calmly pursuing His labours of love amid "the madding crowd's ignoble strife." But in the night-time, when men cannot work, no call of duty required His presence within the walls of Jerusalem; and those who are familiar with the oppressive foulness of ancient cities can best imagine the relief His spirit must have felt when He could escape from the close streets and thronged bazaars, to cross the ravine, and climb the green slope beyond it, and be alone with His heavenly Father under the starry night. But when the day dawned His duties lay once more within the city walls, and in that part of the city where, almost alone, we hear of His presence in the courts of His Father's house. And with the very dawn His enemies contrived a fresh plot against Him, the circumstances of which made their malice more actually painful than it was intentionally perilous. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *Praying must alternate with preaching*:—Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives. His usual oratory. There He prayed by night, and then early in the morning He came unto the Temple to preach. Thus He divided His time betwixt praying and preaching. So must all that will do good of it (see 1 Cor. iii. 6). (*J. Trapp.*) *Preachers must pray much*:—Look at Baxter! he stained his study walls with praying breath, and, after he got anointed with the unction of the Holy Ghost, sent a river of living water over Kidderminster, and converted hundreds. Luther and his coadjutors were men of such mighty pleading with God, that they broke the spell of ages, and laid nations subdued at the foot of the cross. John Knox grasped in his strong arms of faith all Scotland: his prayers terrified tyrants. Whitefield, after much holy, faithful closet-pleading, went to the devil's fair, and took more than a thousand souls out of the paw of the lion in one day. See a praying Wesley turn more than ten thousand souls to the Lord! Look at the praying Finney, whose prayers, faith, sermons, and writings have shaken the half of America, and sent a wave through the British churches. (*C. D. Foss.*)

Ver. 2. **And early in the morning He came again unto the Temple.**—*The Temple*:—We have in our version only one word, "Temple," with which we render both ἱερόν and ναός, but there is a very real distinction between the two, and one the marking of which would often add much to the clearness and precision of the sacred narrative. Ἱερόν (=templum) is the whole compass of the sacred enclosure, the τέμενος, including the outer courts, the porches, porticoes, and other buildings subordinated to the Temple itself. But ναος (=ædes), from ναίω, habito, as the proper habitation of God (Acts vii. 48; xvii. 24; 1 Cor. vi. 19): the οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ (Matt. xii. 4; *cf.* Exod. xxiii. 19) is the Temple itself, that by especial right so called, being the heart and centre of the whole; the Holy, and the Holy of Holies, called often ἁγίασμα. (1 Macc. i. 37; iii. 45). This distinction, one that existed and was acknowledged in profane Greek, and with reference to heathen temples, quite as much as in sacred Greek, and with relation to the Temple of the true God (see Herodotus i. 181–3; Thucydides v. 18; Acts xix. 24–27) is, I believe, always assumed in all passages relating to the Temple at Jerusalem, alike by Josephus, by Philo, by the Septuagint translators, and in the New Testament. . . . The distinction may be brought to bear with advantage on several passages in the New Testament. When Zacharias entered into "the Temple of the Lord" to burn incense, the people who waited His return, and who are described as standing "without" (Luke i. 10) were in one sense in the Temple too—that is, in the ἱερόν, while he alone entered into the ναός, the "Temple" in its more limited and auguster sense. We read continually of Christ teaching "in the Temple" (Matt. xxvi. 55; Luke xxi. 37; John viii. 21), and perhaps are at a loss to understand how this could have been so, or how long conversations could there have been maintained, without interrupting the service of God. But this is ever the ἱερόν, the porches and porticoes of which were eminently adapted to such purposes, as they were intended for them. Into the ναός the Lord never entered during His earthly course: nor, indeed, being made under the law, could He do so, that being reserved for the priests alone. It need hardly be said that the money-changers, the buyers and sellers, with the sheep and oxen, whom the Lord drives out, He repels from the ἱερόν, and not from the ναός. Irreverent as was their intrusion, they yet had not dared to establish themselves in the Temple properly so called. (Matt. xxi. 12; John ii. 14). On the other hand, when we read of another Zacharias slain "between the Temple and the altar," (Matt. xxiii. 35) we have only to remember that "Temple" is ναός here, at once to get rid of a difficulty, which may perhaps have presented

itself to many—this, namely, Was not the altar in the Temple? How, then, could any locality be described as between these two? In the ἱερόν, doubtless was the brazen altar to which allusion is here made, but not in the ναός, "in the court" of the House of the Lord (*cf.* Josephus, "Antiq." viii. 4, 1), where the sacred historian (2 Chron. xxiv. 21) lays the scene of this murder, but not in the House of the Lord, or ναός, itself. Again, how vividly does it set forth to us the despair and defiance of Judas, that he presses even into the ναός itself (Matt. xxvii. 5), into the "adytum" which was set apart for the priests alone, and there casts down before them the accursed price of blood. Those expositors who affirm that here ναός stands for ἱερόν should adduce some other passage in which the one is put for the other. (*Abp. Trench.*) **And He sat down and taught.**—*Christ as a religious Teacher:*—I. HE WAS DEVOUTLY STUDIOUS. It was from the solitudes of Olivet where He had spent the previous night that He goes into the Temple. To preach the gospel three things are essential, and these can come only by solitude. 1. Self-formed conviction of gospel truth. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation; but how is it to be wielded—by Bible circulation, recitation of its contents, or repeating the comments of others? All these are useful, but conviction is indispensable. Heaven has so honoured our nature that the gospel, to win its victories, must pass as living beliefs through the soul of the teacher. The men who teach it without such convictions—conventional preachers—can never enrich the world. They are echoes of old voices, mere channels through which old dogmas flow. But he who speaks what he believes and because he believes, the doctrine comes from him instinct and warm with life. His individuality is impressed upon it. The world never had it in that exact form before. Now, devout solitude is necessary to this. Alone with God you can search the gospel to its foundation, and feel the congruity of its doctrine with your reason, its claims with your conscience, its provisions with your wants. 2. Unconquerable love for gospel truth. There is an immense practical opposition to it. Men's pride, prejudice, pleasures, pursuits, and temporal interests are against it. It follows, therefore, that those who think more of the favour of society than of the claims of truth, will not deal with it honestly, earnestly, and therefore successfully. The man only who loves truth more than even life, can so use it really to benefit mankind. In devout solitude you can cultivate this invincible attachment to truth, and you may be made to feel with Paul, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ." 3. A living expression of gospel truth. Our conduct must confirm and illumine the doctrines which our lips declare. For this there must be seasons of solitude. When Moses talked with God the skin of his face shone. But in devout seclusion our whole nature may become luminous. John the Baptist gained invincible energy in the wilderness; Paul prepared for apostleship in Arabia; and in Gethsemane Jesus was prepared for His work. II. HE WAS SUBLIMELY COURAGEOUS. On the previous day His life had been threatened and His arrest attempted, yet with a noble daring He goes "early in the morning" to the same scene. Distinguish this spirit from what the world calls courage. 1. Brute courage is dead to the sacredness of life. Soldiers hold life cheaply, and their courage is an animal and mercenary thing. But Christ deeply felt and frequently taught the sanctity of life. He came not to destroy men's lives, &c.: "What shall it profit, &c." 2. Brute courage is indifferent to the grand mission of life. The man of brute valour is not inspired with the question, What is the grand object of my life? Am I here to work out the great designs of my Maker or to be a mere fighting machine? On the contrary, Christ's regard for the grand mission of His life made Him courageous. He came to bear witness to the truth; and to fulfil this work He willingly risked His own mortal life. 3. Brute courage is always inspired by mere animal passion. It is when the blood is up the man is daring, the mere blood of the enraged tiger or the infuriated lion. When the blood cools down the man's courage, such as it is, collapses. Not so with the valour of Christ, which was that of deep conviction of duty. "As Luther," Dr. D'Aubigné informs us, "drew near the door which was about to admit him into the presence of his judges (the Diet of Worms), he met a valiant knight, the celebrated George of Freundsberg, who, four years later, at the head of his German lansquenets, bent the knee with his soldiers on the field of Pavia, and then, charging to the left of the French army, drove it into the Ticino, and in a great measure decided the captivity of the King of France. The old general, seeing Luther pass, tapped him on the shoulder, and shaking his head, blanched in many battles, said kindly, 'Poor monk, poor monk! thou art now going to make a nobler stand than I or any other captain have ever made in

the bloodiest of our battles. But if thy cause is just, and thou art sure of it, go forward in God's name and fear nothing. God will not forsake thee.' A noble tribute of respect paid by the courage of the sword to the courage of the mind." Nothing is more necessary for a religious teacher than courage, for his mission is to strike hard against the prejudices, self interests, dishonesties, &c., of the masses. No man without valour can do the work of a religious teacher. The popular preacher must more or less be cowardly conciliatory. Dead fish swim with the stream; it requires living ones with much inner force to cut up against the current. III. HE WAS SUBLIMELY EARNEST. "Early in the morning" He did not indulge Himself sleep—"I must work," &c. Two things should make the preacher earnestly diligent. 1. The transcendent importance of His mission—to enlighten and regenerate imperishable spirits that are in a morally ruinous condition. What is involved in the loss of one soul? 2. The brevity of life. How short the time, even in the longest-lived for this greatest of human understandings. IV. HE WAS BEAUTIFULLY NATURAL. "He sat down," &c. There was nothing stiff or official. All was free, fresh, and elastic as nature. 1. He was natural in attitude. Modern rhetoric has rules to guide a public speaker as to his posture, &c. All such miserable directions are not only unlike Christ, but degrading to the moral nature of the speaker, and detrimental to his oratoric influence. Let a man be charged with great thoughts, and those thoughts will throw his frame into the most beseeming attitudes. 2. He was natural in expression. He attended to no classic rule of composition; the words and similes He employed were such as His thoughts ran into first, and such as His hearers could well understand. To many modern preachers composition is everything. What solemn trifling with gospel truth! 3. He was natural in tones. The tones of His voice, we may rest assured, rose and fell according to the thoughts that occupied His soul. The voice of the modern teacher is often hideously artificial. Just so far as a speaker goes away from his nature, either in language, attitude, or tone, he loses self-respect, inward vigour, and social force. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *We must do good against great opposition:*—That is a poor engine that can only drive water through pipes down hill. Those vast giants of iron at the Ridgway waterworks, which supply this city day and night, easily lifting a ton of water at every gush, so that all the many thirsty faucet mouths throughout our streets cannot exhaust their fulness; those are the engines that I admire. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Vers. 3–11. **And the Scribes and the Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery.**—*The scene and its significance:*—It is probable that the hilarity and abandonment of the feast, which had grown to be a kind of vintage festival, would often degenerate into acts of licence and immorality; and these would find more numerous opportunities in the general disturbance of ordinary life caused by the dwelling of the whole people in their little leafy booths. One such act had been detected during the night, and the guilty woman had been handed over to the Scribes and Pharisees. Even had the morals of the nation at that time been as clean as in the days when Moses ordained the fearful ordeal of the "water of jealousy"—even had those rulers and teachers of the nation been elevated as far above their contemporaries in the real as in the professed sanctity of their lives—the discovery, and the threatened punishment of this miserable adulteress could hardly have failed to move every pure mind to a compassion which would have mingled largely with the horror which her sin inspired. They might then have inflicted the penalty with a sternness as inflexible as that of the Pilgrim Fathers; but the sternness of a severe and pure-hearted judge is a sternness which would not inflict one unnecessary pang and is wholly incompatible with a spirit of malignant levity. But the spirit of these Scribes and Pharisees was not by any means the spirit of a sincere and outraged purity. In the decadence of national life, in the daily familiarity with heathen degradations, in the gradual substitution of a Levitical scrupulosity for a heartfelt religion, the morals of the nation had grown utterly corrupt. The ordeal of the "water of jealousy" had long been abolished, and the death by stoning as a punishment for adultery had long been suffered to fall into desuetude. Not even the Scribes and Pharisees, for all their external religiosity, had any genuine horror of an impurity with which their own lives were often stained. They saw nothing but a chance of annoying and endangering One whom they regarded as their deadliest enemy. It was a curious custom among the Jews to consult distinguished Rabbis in cases of difficulty; but there was no difficulty here. It was long since the law of death had been demanded; and even had

this not been the case the Roman law would have interfered. On the other hand, divorce was open to the injured husband, and the case of this woman differed from that of no other who had similarly transgressed. And even if they had sincerely desired the opinion of Jesus there was not the slightest excuse for haling this woman into His presence, and thus subjecting her to a moral torture, all the more insupportable from the close seclusion of women in the East. And therefore to subject her to the superfluous horror of this odious publicity—to drag her fresh from the agony of detection into the sacred precincts of the Temple—to subject this unveiled, dishevelled, terror-stricken woman to the cold and sensual curiosity of a malignant mob, and this merely to gratify a calculating malice—showed a brutality of heart and conscience which could not but prove revolting to One who was infinitely tender because infinitely pure. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *Virtue taught:*—This remarkable story is a signal instance of the magical passing of virtue out of the virtuous man into the hearts of those with whom he comes in contact, and illustrates the difference between scholastic or scientific and living or instinctive virtue. It occurred to the religious leaders that the case afforded a good opportunity of making an experiment on Christ. They might use it to discover how He regarded the Mosaic law. That He was heterodox on this subject they had reason to believe, and to satisfy themselves and the people on this point they asked Christ whether He agreed with Moses on the subject of adultery. A judgment He gave them, but quite different from what they had expected. In thinking of the "case" they had forgotten the woman and even the deed. What became of the criminal appeared to them wholly unimportant; towards her crime or her character they had no feeling whatever. If they had been asked about her they might probably have answered, with Mephistopheles, "She is not the first"; nor would they have thought their answer fiendish—only practical and business-like. Perhaps they might on reflection have admitted that their frame of mind was not strictly moral, that it would have been better if they could have found leisure for some shame at the scandal and some hatred for the sinner. But they would have argued that such strict propriety is not possible in this world, that we have too much on our hands to think of these niceties, that a man who makes leisure for such refinements will find his work in arrears at the end of the day, and probably also that he is doing injustice to those dependent upon him. Thus they might fluently have urged. But the judgment of Christ was upon them, making all things seem new and shining like the lightning. The shame of the deed itself, and the brazen hardness of the prosecutors, the legality which had no justice and did not pretend to have mercy, the religious malice that could make its advantage out of the fall and ignominious death of a fellow-creature—all this was rudely thrust before His mind at once. The effect upon Him was such as might have been produced upon many since, but perhaps upon scarcely any man that ever lived before. He was seized with an intolerable sense of shame. He could not meet the eye of the crowd. In His burning embarrassment He stooped down so as to hide His face, and began writing on the ground. His tormentors continued their clamour until He raised His head for a moment and said, "He that is without sin," &c., and then instantly returned to His former attitude. They had a glimpse, perhaps, of the glowing blush upon His face, and awoke suddenly with astonishment to a new sense of their condition and conduct. The older men naturally felt it first and slunk away; the younger followed their example. The crowd dissolved and left Christ alone with the woman. Not till then could He bear to stand upright; and then, consistently with His principle, He dismissed the woman, as having no commission to interfere with the office of civil judge. But the mighty power of living purity had done its work. He had refused to judge a woman, but He had judged a whole crowd. He had awakened the slumbering conscience in many hardened hearts, giving them a new delicacy, a new ideal, a new view and reading of the Mosaic law. And yet this crowd was either indifferent or bitterly hostile to Him. Let us imagine the correcting, elevating influence of His presence upon those who were bound to Him by the ties which bind a soldier to his officer, a clansman to his chief, a subject to a king ruling by Divine right, aye, and by ties far closer. The ancient philosophers were accustomed to inquire about virtue, whether it can be taught. Yes! it can, and in this way. But if this way be abandoned, and moral philosophy be set up to do that which in the nature of things it can never do, the effect will appear in a certain slow deterioration of manners which it would be hard to describe had it not been described already in well-known words: "Sophistry and calculation" will take the place of "chivalry." There will be no more "generous loyalty," no more

"proud submission," no more "dignified obedience." A stain will be no more felt like a wound, and our hardened and coarsened manners will lose the "sensibility of principle and the chastity of honour." (*Ecce Homo.*) *The woman taken in adultery*:—Note: I. That the VILEST SINNERS ARE OFTEN THE GREATEST ACCUSERS. Were there a worse lot of men in Judea or on the round earth than these Scribes and Pharisees, and members of the Sanhedrim, who now accused this woman? It is ever so: the more base and corrupt a man is, the more ready to charge crimes on others and the more severe in his censures. II. That the SEVEREST JUDGE OF SINNERS IS THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE. "They which heard Him, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one." Observe two things—1. Christ's method of awakening their conscience. (1) He expresses by a symbolical act His superiority over their malignant purposes. He stoops down as if He were utterly indifferent. (2) He puts the question of the woman's punishment upon their own consciences. "He that is without sin," &c. Observe—2. The force of their awakened consciences. They were convicted, and went out one by one. Ah! there is no judge so severe and crushing in his sentence as that of a guilty conscience. III. That THE GREATEST FRIEND OF SINNERS IS JESUS CHRIST. The accusers are gone, but the accused remains with Jesus alone. Observe—1. He declines pronouncing a judicial condemnation upon her. "Neither do I condemn thee." He does not mean that He did not disapprove of her conduct and condemn her morally, but judicially. He declines to pronounce judgment. 2. He discharges her with a merciful admonition. "Go, and sin no more." An expression, this, implying (1) That she had sinned. Adultery is a terrible moral crime. (2) That He forgave her. "Go." I absolve thee. (3) That her future should be free from sin. "Sin no more." Let bygones be bygones; let oblivion cover thy past; let virtue crown thy future. Thus Jesus deals with sinners. Desolate, branded, forsaken of all, He alone will stand by thee. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The judges judged*:—Parts of this story are not fitted for public discourse. But if we may not preach about the woman, we may and ought about her accusers, and the sin of fault-finding of which they were guilty. I. CENSORIOUSNESS GROWS FROM AN EVIL EAGERNESS. Many forms of eagerness are invaluable—diligence in business, promptitude in doing good, in giving, helping, &c. Here was an occasion in which eagerness of kindness was much needed. "If ox or ass fall into a pit, straightway pull him out"—if man or woman, be quicker still. But this was an evil eagerness, as seen—1. In the needless number of accusers—one or two would have done. 2. In their want of delicacy, disregarding the crowd and the woman's feelings. 3. In their unfairness. The law of Moses awarded the same penalty to man and woman; probably the fear of the knife of the man makes them more content with the capture of the woman, and so they come with no thoughts of her shame and painful future, but clamour for her condemnation. How common is this evil eagerness. Some lose languor with scandal as if it were a tonic. Some faces are never so full of interest as when telling or investigating something which the generous heart would cover and for which the devout heart would pray. Perhaps like these men you would find your fault-finding has its root not in virtuous indignation, but in an evil eagerness. II. CENSORIOUSNESS GENERALLY HAS OTHER GRAVE FAULTS CONNECTED WITH IT. It is quite a mistake to suppose that the more faults a man finds the less he has. On the contrary, the censorious are never faultless. "Being convicted in their own consciences" means convicted of having committed similar crimes. Their bitterness was not the indignation of the innocent against the guilty, but of the "not found out" against the "found out." Purity does not clamour for vengeance, but the worse we are the less patient are we with others as bad. It is hard to conceive of such hypocrisy, but a little thought will show how it would grow. 1. They want credit for character, and denunciation is the cheapest way of getting it: therefore are frequently taken. By condemning evil they are the more likely to be taken for good. 2. They had, like us, two standards of goodness—one for themselves and one for their neighbours. Divers weights are an abomination to God, but a comfort to us. We weigh our duties by one set and our neighbours by another. "If I am angry it is nervous irritability, or a habit of speaking my mind; but if you are, you are ill-mannered." So we all reason. So these men did. Their delinquencies were "gaieties," "hot blood of youth," "occasional excesses unimportant in their character," balanced by superior virtues. But for a woman to so act was intolerable. We like a monopoly of our vices: no one must poach on our preserves. So we dislike men of our own faults with an intensity the innocent never feel. You will learn the faults men have by listening

to their favourite charges. It is the proud who judge most severely the proud; so with the greedy, the dishonourable, the selfish. Are you censorious? Take it as a sign of faultiness, and let severity begin at home. III. CENSORIOUSNESS DISTRESSES THE HEART OF CHRIST. He stooped down as though He heard them not, distressed at sinners accusing a fellow-sinner. He is the Great Judge, and soon all will be gathered at His bar; and yet they come accusing one another to Him. He sees how much each needs mercy, but instead of supplicating it, here are eleven sinners asking condemnation to the twelfth. No wonder he was shocked at the incongruity. Astonished that so few use their neighbours' faults as mirrors, and that for the mercy they could get there are so few applicants, and for the censure He was so slow to give, so many. This unseemliness attaches to all severity! He still, though unseen, overhears the slighting speech, &c., and turns His head from one of the most grievous activities that dishonour human nature. IV. CENSORIOUSNESS SOONER OR LATER IS GRIEVOUSLY PUT TO SHAME. There is more here than the shame of unholy censure—there is failure of a snare laid for Christ, and the awful rebuke of the Saviour's glance and speech. They came secure in being unknown to Him, forgetting that every fault leaves a mark—vice, some coarseness of feature as well as thought; pride, some line of scorn; falseness, some restlessness of eye. The Son of Man had only to look and see. Their souls wither beneath His strange words, "He that is without sin," &c. What a terrible rebuke in the Temple; in the presence of the people whose reverence they had won by hypocrisy; and it wrought no relenting. No one says "I perceive Thou art a prophet," or "Depart from me for I am a sinful man," or "Whence knowest Thou me? Thou art the Son of God, the King of Israel." Only shame and bitterness fill them. Doubtless all made excuses. One had a committee requiring immediate attendance; another willing to be the expositor declines to be the executioner of the law; another vaunted his exemption from any such vice, but had come to get the law sanctioned; another was going to Jericho and wanted to catch the caravan—but all suddenly abandoned the charge and in confusion left the place. V. CENSORIOUSNESS AND ITS METHODS STANDS IN UTTER CONTRAST WITH CHRIST AND HIS METHODS. The Scribes have a zeal for public welfare and so has Christ. In their case coarse sin mixed with cruel anger unite to destroy a poor sinner; in His infinite purity mixed with tenderest love unite to destroy sin and save the sinner. He does not pardon because she has not yet repented; but, declining to condemn her, He bids her "go and sin no more." (*R. Glover.*) *Christ and woman:*—It has been often urged, to the disparagement of Christianity, that modern civilization lacks a certain severity of tone and simplicity of manners very observable in classic antiquity; and the charge is not without a plausible foundation. But to argue that the lack is a loss or a step backward is quite another thing. In ancient times woman occupied a very inferior position; her influence upon society was hardly perceptible; consequently she scarcely entered as a moulding power into education and civilization. There was a certain severe hardness, or hardiness, if you like, characterizing men of classical lands. But Jesus Christ came into the world "made of a woman," reproducing in His person and life the finer features of a woman. By His means female influence became a factor in the history of the world, and entered as a softening, transforming element into education and civilization; and as an inevitable result the severe manly hardness of olden times has been much tempered. The equipoise has not hitherto been definitely fixed, for the world is only in its transition state; but the recognized ideal of Christianity is indisputable—it is the happy union of masculine simplicity and firmness with feminine delicacy and grace. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *Paraded piety unreal:*—In the olden times, even the best rooms were usually of bare brick or stone, damp and mouldy, but over these in great houses, when the family was resident, were hung up arras, or hangings of rich material, between which and the wall persons might conceal themselves, so that literally walls had ears. It is to be feared that many a brave show of godliness is but an arras to conceal rank hypocrisy; and this accounts for some men's religion being but occasional, since it is folded up or exposed to view as need may demand. Is there no room for conscience to pry between thy feigned profession and thy real ungodliness, and bear witness against thee? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *An adulteress and murderess detected:*—When Dr. Donne took possession of his first living, he walked into the churchyard as the sexton was digging a grave; and on his throwing up a skull, the doctor took it into his hands, to indulge in serious contemplation. On looking at it, he found a headless nail sticking in the temple, which he secretly drew out, and wrapped it in the corner of his handkerchief. He then asked the

gravedigger whether he knew whose skull it was. He said he did, adding it had been a man's who kept a brandy-shop—a drunken fellow, who one night, having taken two quarts of ardent spirits, was found dead in his bed the next morning. "Had he a wife?" "Yes." "Is she living?" "Yes." "What character does she bear?" "A very good one; only her neighbours reflect on her because she married the day after her husband was buried." This was enough for the doctor, who, in the course of visiting his parishioners, called on her. He asked her several questions, and, among others, of what sickness her husband died. She giving him the same account, he suddenly opened the handkerchief, and cried, in an authoritative voice, "Woman, do you know this nail?" She was struck with horror at the unexpected question, instantly acknowledged that she had murdered her husband, and was afterwards tried and executed. **Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned.** This is the legitimate conclusion of the two texts, Lev. xx. 10 and Deut. xxii. 22, when compared. There seems no ground for the comment of some writers, that Moses did not command an adulteress to be put to death by stoning. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The dilemma:*—They knew His clemency and expected He would show it. A noble testimony from His enemies to His well-known mercy. He had hinted that publicans and harlots might find forgiveness (Matt. xxi. 31). They hoped that He, professing to be Messiah would contradict Moses. They knew that Messiah, was bound to sustain Moses' law. If He bade them stone her, He would give twofold offence—1. He would condemn a laxity of morals sadly and widely prevalent. 2. He would infringe on Roman authority and offend the rulers, as Jews had no longer the right of capital punishment. They challenged Him to carry out a law which prevailing licence had rendered a dead letter. They expected a very favourable decision from the past (Luke vii. 47; Matt. xi. 28; Luke xv. 11). Thus the trap was cunningly laid. If He say that the law must be executed the Roman authorities would object; if that the law must be waived, then Moses would be sacrificed. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Death by stoning:*—The offender was led to a place without the gates, two cubits high, his hands being bound. From hence one of the witnesses knocked him down by a blow upon the loins. If that killed him not, the witness lifted up a stone, being the weight of two men, which chiefly the other witness cast upon him. If that killed him not, all Israel threw stones upon him. The party thus executed was afterwards, in greater ignominy, hanged on a tree till towards the sunset, at which time both he and the tree were buried. (*Godwin.*) **Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.**—A sense of all their baseness, their hardness, their malice, their cynical parade of every feeling which pity would temper and delicacy repress, rushed over the mind of Jesus. He blushed for His nation, for His race; He blushed not for the miserable accused, but for the deeper guilt of her unblushing accusers. Glowing with uncontrollable disgust that modes of opposition so irredeemable in their meanness should be put in play against Him, and that He should be made the involuntary centre of such a shameful scene—indignant that the sacredness of His personal reserve should thus be shamelessly violated, and that those things which belong to the sphere of a noble reticence should be thus cynically obtruded on His notice—He bent His face forward from His seat, and, as though He did not or would not hear, stooped and wrote on the ground. For any others but such as these it would have been enough. Even if they failed to see in the action a symbol of forgiveness—a symbol that the memory of things thus written in the dust might be obliterated and forgotten—still any but these could hardly have failed to interpret the gesture into a distinct indication that in such a matter Jesus would not mix Himself. But they saw nothing and understood nothing, and stood there unabashed, still pressing their brutal question, still holding, pointing to, jeering at the woman, with no compunction in their cunning glances and no relenting in their steeled hearts. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *The significance of the writing on the ground:*—As St. John gives no explanation, we are left to conjecture. 1. Some think, as Bede, Rupertus, and Lampe, that our Lord wrote on the ground the texts of Scripture which settled the question brought before Him, as the seventh commandment, and Lev. xx. 10, and Deut. xxii. 22. The action would then imply, "Why do ye ask Me? What is written in the law, that law which God wrote with His own finger as I am writing now?" 2. Some think, as Lightfoot and Burgon, that our Lord meant to refer to the law of Moses for the trial of jealousy, in which an accused woman was obliged to drink water into which dust from the floor of the Tabernacle or Temple had been put by the priest (Num. v. 17). The action would then imply, "Has the law for

trying such an one as this been tried? Look at the dust on which I am writing. Has the woman been placed before the priest, and drank of the dust and water?" 3. Some think, as Augustine, Melancthon, Brentius, Toletus, and à Lapide, that our Lord's action was a silent reference to the text, Jer. xvii. 13: "They that depart from Me shall be written in the earth." 4. One rationalist writer suggests that our Lord "stooped down" from feelings of modesty, as if ashamed of the sight before Him, and of the story told to Him. The idea is preposterous, and entirely out of harmony with our Lord's public demeanour. 5. Some think, as Euthymius, Calvin, Rollock, Chemnitius, Diodati, Flavius, Piscator, Grotius, Poole, and Hutcheson, that our Lord did not mean anything at all by this writing on the ground, and that He only signified that He would give no answer, and would neither listen to nor interfere in such matters as the one brought before Him. Calvin remarks: "Christ intended, by doing nothing, to show how unworthy they were of being heard; just as if any one, while another was speaking to him, were to draw lines on the wall, or to turn his back, or to show by any other sign that he was not attending to what was said." I must leave the reader to choose which solution he prefers. To my eyes, I confess, there are difficulties in each view. If I must select one, I prefer the last of the five, as the simplest. Quesnell remarks: "We never read that Jesus Christ wrote but once in His life. Let men learn from hence never to write but when it is necessary or useful, and to do it with humility and modesty, on a principle of charity, and not of malice. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The literary silence of Christ*:—Most religious leaders have given important writings to their followers—Moses the Law, Mohammed the Koran. The reformers, Wiclif, Luther, Calvin, &c., wielded as much power by their pen as by their tongue. But the only writing ascribed to Jesus is that of the text, and now doubt is thrown even upon that. Consider the significance of this. It could not be to discourage literature, because—1. Christ was a great teacher, and dealt with ideas as well as conduct. 2. His disciples wrote under His commission. What, then, may we learn from the literary silence of Christ? I. CHRIST WAS CARELESS OF FAME. It came, but unsought. Among those Galilean hills Jesus spoke words which make the most brilliant sayings of the Greek philosophers and poets look commonplace. Yet He had no thought of attracting the world's admiration. His words are like wild flowers. We set our plants in conspicuous beds in trim gardens where our friends can admire them. God scatters His flowers in pathless woods, on lonely moors, &c. They bloom in the wilderness, but fade in the city. Consider how some of the best of Christ's words were spoken to one individual—to Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, Martha, &c. True they have been reported; but—1. There is no reason to suppose that Jesus thought of any record being made of them. 2. He must have said many other similarly great and beautiful things of which there is no report (chap. xxi. 25). Learn simplicity, humility, and self-forgetfulness from this literary silence. Let it silence the pretentions of literary vanity. II. CHRIST WAS MORE CONCERNED WITH THE SUBSTANCE THAN WITH THE FORM OF HIS TEACHING. He did not only speak for the benefit of His contemporaries; He entrusted His teaching to apostles. No doubt memory was stronger then than now we have injured it by the use of memoranda. Moreover, Christ promised the Spirit to help the memories of His apostles. Nevertheless, they did not report their Master's sayings with that absolute verbal accuracy which would have marked His writing of them. This is proved by differences in the records. Hence learn—1. That Christ condemns worship of the letter. "The letter killeth." 2. That the method of studying Scripture by means of the minute pedantic analysis of texts and the building of ponderous arguments on small phrases—unstable as inverted pyramids—is wrong. We should seek rather for the broad lessons of a passage. 3. That distress and doubt, occasioned by various readings, changes in the Revised Version, alternative marginal renderings, &c., are due to a mistaken idea of Scripture. In the essence of revelation no vital truth is shaken by these variations. III. THE PERSON OF CHRIST IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HIS WORDS. People say the Press is crushing the pulpit. The work of Christ is the greatest proof of the power of a living personal presence. Some men put their best selves in their books; but it is better to be loved by one friend than admired by ten thousand readers. Jesus was loved best by those who knew Him most. His influence is still powerful because personal. 1. We have to note in the Gospels not merely the words of Christ, but His whole life, death, resurrection; and for us the words are chiefly valuable as revealing the soul of the speaker. 2. We have a living Christ, unseen but present. IV. THE WORK OF

CHRIST IS GREATER THAN HIS TEACHING. Christ's claims are essentially different in kind as well as degree from those of Socrates. He is the grandest of Teachers, but He is more; He is the Saviour of the world and the King of the new heavenly kingdom. His chief mission lay not in His preaching, but in His doing the work of the kingdom of God. It does not centre in the Sermon on the Mount, but in the death on Calvary. V. THE TRAINING OF MEN IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE PUBLICATION OF IDEAS. Socrates resembles Christ in writing nothing and being chiefly concerned with the work of training the characters of disciples. 1. All Christian work must have this practical aim. In the mission, the Church, the Sunday-school, the kind of teaching must be the training of souls. The teacher who simply propagates ideas is as sounding brass. 2. Christ's work in us is personal and spiritual. We may study His sayings, but we shall be no Christians till our lives are quickened by His life. (*W. F. Adeney, M.A.*) *Christ's mission non-literary*:—No thoughtful Christian can fail to have been struck by the fact that except these few words Christ wrote nothing. He did not bow down over a table piled with manuscripts, and in hours of meditative thought, during which He outwatched the stars, erect a monument which might be admired by a succession of sages and critics; He did not write out the complete text of an elaborate system of theology. He went out into the throng of men. He spoke by the highways and the lake-side, in words which, if they were high as heaven and deep as the transparent lake, were in form broad and popular. When we consider the analogy of the "tables which were the work of God" and "the writing which was the writing of God" (Exod. xxxii. 16), and the value of books in excluding error and securing permanence, we ask why He did not write. There is one reason derived from His nature. In great books the truest element of greatness is the conviction that we can trace the pathway of a superior mind in pursuit of truth. When he seems to have found it, the writer quivers with delight. With the Word made flesh, truth cannot be an effort and a conquest—the conclusion toilfully drawn from premises laboriously acquired. Rather the truth dwells in Him. He does not say: "After long communion with Divinely-inspired books, after long self-questioning, prompted sometimes by voices that seemed to come from the ancient hills, and the glory of the sunlit heaven, I gradually worked out My system." He does not say: "I have *found* the truth." He does say: "I *am* the Truth." We may answer the question why Christ did not write—His thought is preserved in a Diviner way. "I will put My law in their mind, and write it in their heart." (*Bp. Alexander.*) *Why Christ wrote no book*:—1. It might seem that Christ ought to have written; for—(1) Writing is best for an immortal doctrine (Luke xxi. 33). (2) Analogy of old law (Deut. xxiv. 1; xxxii. 16; xxxi. 18; xxiv. 12). (3) Exclusion of error. 2. Christ wrote nothing because—(1) The more excellent mode suited the most excellent Teacher (Matt. vii. 1). The greatest teachers—Socrates and Pythagorus, *e.g.*—wrote nothing. (2) Most excellent doctrine cannot be cramped into books (John xxi. 25). (3) Due order through disciples to people (Prov. ix. 3). 3. Again—(1) What was done by the members (apostles, evangelists) was done by the Head. (2) Old law might be written, but 2 Cor. iii. 3. (3) Those who believed not apostles would not have believed Christ. (*T. Aquinas.*) *The writing in the dust*:—Perhaps He thus wrote to show that sin, which is written before God, and graven, as it were, with a pen of iron, and with the pane of a diamond, is pardoned and blotted out by Christ as easily as a writing slightly made in the dust. (*J. Trapp.*) **So when they continued asking Him, He lifted Himself up.**—Jesus is writing as one in an office, absorbed in some account, might write, not hearing the question another had put to Him. They think He will answer directly, but He continues writing. They continue asking, and press Him for a reply. Possibly they enlarge on the heinousness of the offence—an easy task and a sort of solace for a bad conscience. These men knew that they had committed sin enough, which should have made them charitable, but it did not. Christ is never in a hurry to condemn; hence His silence. Moreover, He had no wish to be judge. "Who made Me a ruler and a judge over you?" They think Jesus is pondering a reply; He has no need, for one is ready. He keeps it back for some time, knowing that silence up to a certain point is more powerful than speech. They ask Him the more vehemently, for the silence now becomes painful. How they wish He would cease that writing and say something! They could bear an open accusation. That could be rebutted with all the force of aggrieved innocence. But to be treated as though unworthy an answer, as though uncharitable in wishing to have the woman condemned, or as though mean in trying to entrap Christ—this is terrible! a taste of Gehenna. They press Him further;

and now, rising, He glances first on the accused and then on the accusers. Slowly, quietly, witheringly, He utters a vivid sentence: "He that is without sin," &c. He looks away from law to conscience. Again He stoops and writes. Was it imagination that deceived them? His look was a lightning flash, quickly gone. His voice was as the blare of the judgment trumpet, echoing to the innermost recesses of their souls. They realized now the report of their officers—"Never man spake," &c.—and were almost as overpowered as the armed band in Gethsemane. The power of Christ's words lay in His character. He alone could say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" He was therefore the only one who had a right to condemn. We have in this a foreshadowing of Christ's power at the Day of Judgment. How silently, surely, quickly, we shall be judged! Suppose now we had heard these words. Are we without sin? We must not hear for others, but listen for self. It is necessary to isolate each one, as I once saw the prisoners in the chapel of a prison. Each one was in a wooden enclosure, and no one could look at them but the chaplain. His eye could almost see into the heart of each. Thus we have to be isolated by the Word of Christ. As we feel His eye resting upon us, can we say that we are without sin? Enter those long-locked chambers of memory! Can you now blame others? Whatever we do, we should beware of playing the critic. The critic in society or in the house is a disagreeable person, and harms himself most by his criticisms. If manners or persons or utterances do not please, we may hide our dislike. We may take persons as we find them. Those who cannot please soon cease to try. Oh, that fault-finders would remember these words! It is good to look to ourselves. We shall find failings enough to make us charitable. There is an old parable of a rusty shield that prayed, "O sun, illumine me," to which the sun replied, "First, polish yourself." We need to remember this and be pure ourselves. In men's eyes those respectable, well-dressed, pious-looking priests appeared of enviable purity, but a keen Eye saw their sin and sees ours. (*F. Hastings.*) **And again He stooped down.**—*Respectable sin:*—It is with sins as with men, some have pedigree and some have not; for some are, and have always been, held in respect and others in contempt. The sins of place, power, bravery, genius, and those of felony, vice, brutality, are judged differently. These distinctions had little weight with Christ, and He deals with the hypocrisies of religion, the impostures of learning, and the gilded shows gotten by extortion in terms of abhorrence. Hence the jealousy with which He was watched, and the endeavours of the rabbis to draw Him into some kind of treason in His doctrine, because they feared His influence with the people, and lest He might head a revolution which would subvert the present social order. Hence the plot here so signally frustrated. And now look upon these scribes, &c., as they withdraw and follow them as Christ and the whole assembly did. Observe the orderly manner of their shame, "beginning at the eldest," &c. See how carefully they keep the sacred rules of good breeding and deference to age, even in their snivelling defeat, and you will find how base a thing may take on airs of dignity, and how contemptible these airs of dignity may be. I. TO CLEAR THE INFLUENCE OF A FALSE OR DEFECTIVE IMPRESSION GROWING OUT OF THE FACT THAT WE LIVE SO ENTIRELY IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF DECENCY. Our range of life is so walled in by the respectability of our associations, that what is on the other side of the wall is a world unknown. Hence we have no such impression of sin as we ought to have. It is with us in all our associations much as it is with us in church. Sitting here how can you suffer any just impression of that evil which wears a look so plausible? If there came in a fair representation of the vice and drunkenness, &c., of the town, how different it would be for me to speak of sin and for you to hear. And so of the associations of life generally. Sin in its revolting forms seldom gets near enough to meet your eye. II. WE NEED ALSO TO CLEAR ANOTHER WRONG IMPRESSION GROWING OUT OF THE TENDENCY TO IDENTIFY SIN WITH VICE, and therefore to judge that whatever sin is respectable is no sin at all. All vice presupposes sin, but sin may be the reigning principle of the life and never produce one scar of vice or blameable injury. Indeed, virtue, as the term is commonly used, classes under sin—conduct approved irrespectively of any good principle of conduct—a goodness wholly negative and consisting in abstinence from what is base. But sin is the negation of good as respects the principle of good, anything which is not in the positive power of universal love. Virtue, therefore, which consists in barely not doing is sin, because not in any positive principle of love or duty to God—respectable indeed, but having the same root with all sin, viz.: the not being in a state of positive allegiance to God. III. RESPECTABLE SIN IS NOT LESS GUILTY BECAUSE IT HAS A LESS REVOLTING ASPECT. Even those who blame themselves for not being Christians think their blame of a

higher quality than it would be under the excesses which many practise, whereas all sin is of the same principle. There are different kinds of vice, but only one kind of sin, viz.: the state of being without God. Respectable sin shades into the unrespectable as twilight shades into night. The evil spirit may be trained up to politeness and be elegant, cultivated sin, exclusive and fashionable sin, industrious thrifty sin; it may be a great political manager, commercial operator, inventor; it may be learned, eloquent, poetic sin; still it is sin, and has the same radical quality which in its ranker conditions produce all the most hideous crimes. There is, of course, a difference between a courteous and an ill-natured man, a pure and a lewd man, &c., yet both are twin brothers; only you see in one how well he may be made to look, and in the other how both would look if that which is in both were allowed to work unrestrained. IV. RESPECTABLE SIN IS OFTEN MORE BASE IN SPIRIT THAN THAT WHICH IS DESPISED. This is not the judgment of those who are apt to rule the judgments of the world. The lies of high life, *e.g.*, are the liberties asserted by power and respectable audacity; those of commoners are fatal dishonour. The conqueror who desolates a kingdom will be named with respect by history, when probably God will look upon him with much greater abhorrence than if he had robbed a hen roost. How very respectable those learned imposters and sanctimonious extortioners! How base those publicans and sinners. But Christ, who regarded no man's appearance, was of a different opinion. It is not a show of sin that makes it base, but what is in motive, feeling, thought. V. RESPECTABLE SIN IS COMMONLY MORE INEXCUSABLE. The depraved classes have to a great extent been trained up to the very life they lead. They are ignorant by right of their origin, accustomed only to what is lowest. Sometimes the want of bread makes them desperate. They are criminal, but who does not pity them? It is incredible to you that in your own decent life of sin, taken as related to your high advantages, there may even be a degree of criminality, which as God estimates crime is far more inexcusable than that for which many are doomed to suffer the penalties of the law. VI. RESPECTABLE SIN IS MORE INJURIOUS. The baser forms of vicious abandonment create for us greater public burdens in the way of charity and justice, and annoy us more. But have they not a wholesome influence? They tempt no one but warn away. They hang out a flag of distress upon every shoal of temptation. We should never conceive the inherent baseness of sin if it were not shown us in their experiment; revealed in their delirium, rags, bloated faces, &c. Meanwhile, respectable sin—how attractive its pleasures, gay hours, courteous society—even its excesses are only a name for spirit! Nay, church-going sin is the most plausible, and therefore the most dangerous; for if a man never goes to a place of worship, we take his sin as a warning, but if he is regular at church, a sober, correct character, then how many will be ready to imagine that there is one form of sin that is about as good as piety itself. VII. APPLICATIONS. 1. With how little reason are Christians cowed by the mere name and standing of those who are living under the power of sin. Doubtless it is well enough to respect them, but, however high they are, allow them never to overtop your pity. How can a true Christian ennobled by the glorious heirship be intimidated by what is only respectable sin. If he goes to God with boldness, how much more should he stand before them and speak of Christ and His salvation. To falter is a great wrong to our Master's gospel, which puts the humblest far above the most honoured sinner. 2. It is impossible in such a subject as this not to raise the question of morality. (1) Morality, apart from religion, is but another name for decency in sin. There is no more heart of holy principle in it than in the worst of felonies. It is the same thing as respects denial of God or His claims as reprobacy, only well dressed. Will that save you? (2) A far greater danger is that the decent character of your sin will keep you from the discovery of its real nature as a root of character. How difficult is true conviction when its appearances are so fair, when it creeps so insidiously into our amiable qualities. (3) How necessary it is, then, to make a study of this subtle, cunningly veiled, reputable sin long enough to fashion its real import. Ask how, if unrestrained, it would look. (4) Another motive is, no matter how respectable, you can never tell where it will end. You may be confident that virtuous irreligious living will not lead to murder. Perhaps not. Avoiding what is bloody, you may fall into what is false or low, or if you keep your decency here, the proper end will show itself hereafter, and then it will be seen how deep in criminality is every soul becoming, even under the fairest shows, coupled with neglect of God. 3. Advancing a step, observe that it is on just this view of human character under sin that Christianity is based. Christ makes no distinction of respectable and unrespectable as regards the common want

of salvation. Hence the declared impossibility of eternal life even to a Nicodemus or a young ruler save by a radical change of character, but the most fallen, like this woman, Christ wants to raise. 4. And so, when you go to stand before God, it will not be even your virtues, however much commended here, that will give you an entrance among the glorified. Respectable sin will not pass there as here, and as both forms are the same in principle, the world of retribution must be a world of strange companionships. The spirits of guilty men will not be assorted by their tastes, but by their demerits. Those now pleasing themselves in the dignity of their virtues may fall into group with those now avoided with revulsion. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) **Being convicted in their own conscience.**—*Spiritual convictions*:—I. PRELIMINARY DISTINCTIONS AS TO CONSCIENCE ITSELF. It may be considered as—1. Ignorant or enlightened. The former, being vitiated by error or corrupted by prejudice, is an unsafe guide. It may condemn virtue and canonize vice. Hence the Jews persecuted Christians, thinking to do God service, and Christians have persecuted one another. But the latter, freed from corrupt influence and acquainted with the rule of duty, distinguishing between things that differ and approving those that are excellent, is a great blessing (Heb. xiii. 8). 2. Unnecessarily scrupulous or daringly presumptive. The former makes that a sin which God has not declared sinful, and is a weak conscience (1 Cor. viii. 7; x. 12). The latter has no scruples, and bids defiance to the laws and vengeance of heaven (Deut. xxix. 19). 3. Pure or defiled. The one is purged by the blood of Christ from guilt, and is thus pacified; the other is contaminated by sin, and lays no restraint on the appetites, nor reproves the motions of sin (1 Tim. iii. 9; Heb. x. 22; 1 Tim. i. 15). 4. Tender or seared. The one is a faithful monitor, and trembles at the Divine threatenings (Prov. xx. 27); the other is free from all fear, and too stupid to perform its functions (Zech. vii. 12). 5. Peaceable or troublesome. The one conscious of pardoned guilt and mortified corruptions is one of the greatest mercies this side of heaven. It arms us against the most virulent reproaches and supports under the most agonizing afflictions. The other is a worm at the root of all our comfort; there can hardly be a greater calamity (Prov. xviii. 14). 6. Natural and renewed. The first does not entirely neglect its duty, but performs it in an imperfect manner (Rom. ii.); but the other fulfils its functions more perfectly. The conscience here spoken of is the former, awakened for a time, and then falling asleep again. II. WHEREIN CONSISTS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CONVICTIONS WHICH ARISE FROM CONSCIENCE AND THOSE IMPRESSED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. There is a great difference in spiritual convictions. Some are sudden (Acts ii. 37), others more gradual; some visible and violent, others invisible and easy, as in the case of the jailor and Lydia. But the distinction between these and natural lies in such things as these. 1. Natural convictions respect only the guilt of sin, spiritual are attended with a painful sense of inherent pollution. The former are illustrated in the cases of Cain, Lamech, Pharoah, Ahab, and Judas; the latter in the case of the Prodigal, Peter, and Paul. 2. In natural convictions the soul is actuated by slavish fear of temporal and eternal punishments. Persons may dread the consequences of sin, and yet be addicted to it. But spiritual convictions have a respect to the honour and love of God, hence "against Thee, Thee only have I sinned." Godly sorrow proceeds from this. 3. Natural convictions extend only to some sins, and those generally of a more gross and heinous nature, as Achan and Judas. It is true that the Spirit of God in conviction fastens some particular sin, often, on the conscience; but He does not stop there, but leads to the corrupt fountain of sin in the heart, and to those spiritual sins which are beyond natural convictions, pride, avarice, &c. 4. Natural convictions are temporary and vanishing, as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar and Felix. The unclean spirit quits its abode, but not its claim, and returns with seven other spirits, &c. It is otherwise with the truly awakened. He not only lies under conviction, but yields to the force of it, and acts permanently under it. 5. Natural convictions may consist with the love of sin. The legal convict is as much an enemy to real holiness as ever; but spiritual convictions are always attended with an abhorrence of sin. (*B. Beddome.*) *Conviction of conscience*:—I. NOTWITHSTANDING A BOLD AND CONFIDENT APPEARANCE. Innocence has boldness, so has guilt. Hides in imaginary concealment. But let there be a sense of impossibility of prevarication, as under the searching eye of God, and conscience condemns—1. As to any special sin: Achan, David. 2. Sin generally. What a spectacle would the hearts of an assembly possess under the full persuasion of Divine omniscience! II. OFTEN BY THE SIMPLEST THING. No fierce reprobations necessary. Calm, quiet words, enough, *e.g.*—1. "Son, remember." The

burial places of memory give up their dead. 2. "Even thou wast one of them." Christ rejected. 3. "What dost thou more than others?" Slothful professor. When the rocks out of the "hell gate" in New York harbour were to be cleared away, the explosion of dynamite required no army to effect it, only the touch of a child on the battery. III. LEADS TO WITHDRAWAL FROM OTHERS. 1. Sometimes for sullenness and anger, as probably here. 2. Sometimes for disastrous results, suicide, *e.g.*, Judas. 3. If wise, for penitence and prayer. Learn—1. The helplessness of the law admits no excuse or escape. 2. The method of the gospel begins with forgiveness. 3. The blessedness of the mission of Christ. He came not to hear accusations, but to save. (*G. McMichael, B.A.*) *The penitent's gospel*:—I. THE SINNER'S WAY OF TREATING SIN. It is a terrible thing for a sinner to fall into the hands of his fellow sinners. There is little hope for the sinner at hands like these. They may send him to the judge and the officer; to the gaol or the reformatory. They may make the case one for light gossip and casuistical distinctions, studying it as an anatomical deformity. II. THE LAW'S WAY OF TREATING SIN.—"Moses said that such an one should be stoned." It is with the moral, as with natural law—the least violation of its provisions is immediately and terribly avenged. III. THE SAVIOUR'S WAY OF TREATING SIN. In that bowed head and hidden face we get a slight indication of how much it costs Him. Sin cannot change His royal heart, or staunch His pity, or freeze the fountains of His compassion. Nay, it makes Him more careful to show His tender, pitying, pleading love. He sometimes seems to wait ere He utters the words of peace. But this is from no tardiness in His love. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *The awakening of conscience*:—King Richard I. of England, on his way to the Holy Land, was taken captive, and thrown into an unknown dungeon. He had a favourite minstrel named Blondel, who knew only that his master was imprisoned somewhere in a castle dungeon among the mountain forests. From one to another of these he travelled, playing some well-known airs before the dungeon bars, till at last his music without was answered by the voice of his king within. This discovery led to Richard's return from exile, and restoration to his throne. "Thus the spirit of man sits like a captive king in a dungeon, until the voice of divine music wakes echoes hitherto unknown along his prison-house, and stirs him with new knowledge, new consciousness." *Conscience*:—More than one hundred years ago there graduated at Harvard University a man by the name of Grindoll Rawson, who subsequently settled in the ministry at Yarmouth, on Cape Cod. He used to preach very pointed sermons. Having heard that some of his parishioners were in the habit of making him the object of their mirth at a tavern, he one Sabbath preached a discourse from the text, "And I was the song of the drunkard." His remarks were of a very moving character—so much so that many of his hearers rose and left the house in the midst of the sermon. A short time afterwards the preacher delivered a discourse still more pointed than the first, from the text, "And they, being convicted out of their own conscience, went out one by one." On this occasion no one ventured to retire from the assembly, but the guilty ones resigned themselves, with as good a grace as possible, to the lash of their pastor. (*W. Baxendale.*) *Conscience*:—It is related of Mr. Richard Garratt that he used to walk to Petworth every Monday. In one of these walks a country fellow that had been his hearer the day before, and had been cut to the heart by somewhat he had delivered, came up to him with his scythe upon his shoulders, and in a mighty rage told him he would be the death of him, for he was sure he was a witch, he having told him the day before what no man in the world knew of him but God and the devil, and therefore he most certainly dealt with the devil. (*Ibid.*) *Condemning conscience*:—Where is there a power to be found comparable to that of an accusing conscience, which, with its condemning voice, fills even heroes with dismay, who otherwise would not have trembled before thousands; and, stronger than death, deprives mighty men, who are accustomed to fear nothing and no one, and even to look death in the face, of the brazen armour of their courage, and their confidence in a moment; which is able to make us feel the validity of its sentence, even though the whole world should deny it, and applaud and eulogize our names in opposition to it; and which transmutes into gall that which is the most valuable to us in the world, if we are obliged to enjoy it under the thunder of its reproaches? (*Krummacher.*) *The danger of silencing conscience*:—You may dim the surface of the glass, so that it shall no longer be painfully bright, like a little sun lying on the ground; but your puny operation does not extinguish the great light that glows in heaven. Thus to trample conscience in the mire, so that it shall no longer reflect

God's holiness, does not discharge holiness from the character of God. He will come to judge the world, although the world madly silence the witness who tells of His coming. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *The two convictions*:—The Pharisees, convicted by their conscience, go *away* from Jesus; the woman, convicted by her conscience, *remains* with Jesus; the Pharisees conceal and withdraw from the Saviour their sin, which yet they cannot deny; the woman surrenders her sin to Jesus, for the burden of it she cannot bear. In short, the woman is penitent—the Pharisees are not. Thus it came to pass that the proceeding which the Pharisees were led to adopt through malignity only served to drive a lost sheep into the arms of the good Shepherd. (*R. Besser.*) *Conscience a provision of mercy*:—A man may be saved from death by seeing the reflection of danger in a mirror, when the danger itself could not be directly seen. The executioner with his weapon is stealthily approaching through a corridor of the castle to the spot where the devoted invalid reclines. In his musings the captive has turned his vacant eye towards a mirror on the wall, and the faithful witness reveals the impending stroke in time to secure the escape of the victim. It is thus that the mirror in a man's breast has become in a sense the man's saviour, by revealing the wrath to come before its coming. Happy they who take the warning—happy they who turn and live! (*Dr. Arnot.*) *Conscience stricken*:—Father André, preaching one day at Paris against the vices of gallantry and intrigue, threatened to name a lady present as being one of the guilty. He, however, corrected himself, saying, in Christian charity he would only throw his skull-cap in the direction where the lady sat. As soon as he took his cap in his hand every woman present bobbed down her head, for fear it should come to her. (*W. Baxendale.*) **And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.**—*Mercy and misery met together*:—A sinner and the Saviour in the temple of God, face to face and alone. How solemn the interview! How suggestive the incident! Note—I. THAT SINNERS NEED NOT DREAD A PERSONAL INTERVIEW WITH JESUS NOW. Her accusers had placed the woman "in the midst," and now they had departed, and she might have gone, there she still stood. Solitary woman, guilty sinner, ashamed and awed by her situation, she is strangely bound to the spot. Not an effort made to escape His judgment. Condemned already by the law of Moses, what has she to fear from Him? If the worst should happen, she could but die; but perhaps her misery may find mercy. How instructive to sinners this conduct! 1. From the hour of the first transgression sinners have feared a personal interview with God. Jacob thought Bethel a dreadful place; Moses did exceedingly fear and quake; Monoah thought he would die because he had seen God. And now sinners try to do what Adam and Eve failed to do—"hide themselves from the presence of the Lord." 2. But to exorcise this demon of guilty dread God was manifest in the flesh. The Son of Man came to seek and to save, and to be the Friend of sinners. None has cause to shun Jesus. He does not repel, He invites. Known to Him is my sinful history; and whither shall I flee from His presence? There is no need, for He is a just God and a Saviour. II. THAT "JESUS ALONE" IS THE SINNER'S COURT OF APPEAL FROM ALL ACCUSERS. These men never dreamed of the gospel truth they were signally illustrating. The woman was under legal penalty of death. The representatives of the law arraigned her, quoting the Mosaic statute, and by asking Jesus to adjudicate, perhaps in irony of His Messianic claims, they appealed from Moses to Christ. And when the accusers, themselves condemned, had left, she allowed her case to remain where they had lodged it, in the supreme court of appeal, and from His lips only would she receive her doom. Our case is parallel. 1. Our sinfulness is indisputable. The penal sentence in the law has been promulgated: "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Moses indicts us, and demands judgment. 2. But our appeal is lodged in the gospel court. We are "come to Jesus and the blood of sprinkling." He satisfies the demands of the law and silences the accusers of all whom He shields with His mercy. III. THAT WHEN A SINNER TRUSTFULLY LEAVES HIS CASE WITH JESUS ALONE THE ISSUE CANNOT BE DOUBTFUL. By tarrying she signified a wish that Christ should adjudicate, and thus gave evidence of her trust in His mercy. The verdict was not delayed: "Neither do I condemn thee," &c. Primarily the words refer to the civil penalty of death, which Jesus had been asked to confirm, and which, not being a magistrate, He declined to do. But this carried with it religious reprobation, and therefore Christ could not pronounce the words of judicial doom, "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn," &c. If there be no man to cast the stone, the merciful Redeemer will not do so; He will save. There is no questionable leniency here. A more decisive censure could not have been uttered. Yet while there was in the admoni-

tion "sin no more" an emphatic reproof of her former sin, the words "Neither do I condemn thee: go," must have brought Divine absolution. "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." Let sinners be encouraged to come to Jesus. This woman, who was brought to Him as a Judge, found Him a Saviour; the bar of judgment became the throne of grace. We are invited to come. The coming is a confession of need, an indication of penitence, a confession of trust. (*A. A. Ramsay.*) *Sin and its treatment:*—"How do you make your living?" "I hang about the drinking saloons," she replied. Not quite taking in the meaning of her answer, I asked her again, "What are your means of life?" But she laughed and gave no other answer. Hereupon the master of the lodging came in, and, casting a stern look at her, said, "She is a prostitute, sir!" After saying that to me, he turned to the woman as though she was a dog. "You hang about the drinking saloons. Well! give the answer you ought to give—prostitute. She does not know her own name." His tone pained me. "We have no right to insult her," I said. "If we men lived as God would have us live, there would be no prostitutes. We ought rather to pity them than to blame them." I had no sooner said this than I heard the boards of the beds creaking in the next room. Above the partition (which did not reach to the ceiling) there appeared a curly head, with little swollen eyes, and a dark red face; then another head popped up; and still another. These women had doubtless got on their beds to look over, and all stared at me earnestly. There was an awkward silence. The master of the lodging cast his eyes down in confusion. The women drew in their breath and waited. I felt more confused than any. I had never thought that a word dropped thus casually could have produced such an effect. It was almost like the movement of the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision. I had uttered without thought a word of love and pity, and that word had thrilled them all. They all looked at me as if they expected me to speak the words and do the deeds whereby these bones might come together, cover themselves with flesh, and live again. (*Count Tolstoi.*) **When Jesus had lifted Himself up, and saw none but the woman.** — *Shameful life:*—I. THE FACT OF SHAMEFUL LIFE ITSELF. 1. In the midst of the great city, with all its grandeur and luxury, there hangs the dark shadow of one prevailing sin, the presence of which every one knows and feels, but of which no one dare speak. We deprecate the contamination of the statement, while we suffer the curse of the fact. It is an ancient shame, coeval with the earliest corruption of the human heart; stalking in its painted abominations amongst the most splendid refinements; mingling its polluted stream with the foremost tides of civilization; moving with colonies; as sure to be found in every city as crime or death. 2. As in this passage, so everywhere, it is woman who stands in the foreground, and upon her the malediction falls. Consider this army of six thousand women, so many of them mere children, some of them from homes of sanctity where grey hairs have gone down, through them, in sorrow to the grave. Some indeed were born so low that they could not fall; but to many it has been a fall as awful as that of a star from its sphere. It may be easy to forget a lower state in rising to a higher, but never in the profoundest degradation the condition from which we have lapsed. Remorse can never abandon the human soul. This remorse accompanies the lost girl in her descending career. In the early stages there is an incongruity between that "soul's tragedy" and the gay welcome into the world of the lost; but as with rapid descent the steps go downward God's violated law of purity makes known its awful vindications. On that pallet of straw, in that damp, dark cellar reeking with the miasma of debauchery and death, the woman dies. 3. If the sufferings of the victim furnishes no reason for calling this fact before us, the peril of the young and innocent should. Silence and apathy are not justified by any motives of delicacy. The curse is in having a social cancer, not in talking about one. The only possibility of curing a wrong is to become clearly conscious of it. To prevent talk there is on the one hand a morbid sensitiveness, and on the other frivolity, which only finds the subject an occasion for jest or an insinuation that the reformer knows more about it than he ought. At least there is an unconsciousness of danger which cries, "Don't disturb this matter; let it rest as something that cannot be helped, or with which we have nothing to do." Is it so that innocent lives are in no danger? Is there a moral swamp whose foul vapours ever spread? We must have quarantine for pestilence. We break laws and burn buildings if it come too near. But a moral evil that oozes its damnation through brick walls, and saps the city with corruption, that breaks the hearts of good

women—this we must not speak about, but let alone. So, then, it is a safe danger, is it? Who is safe? Are you in your respectability, O father! while this temptation waits for your sons? Are you in your honour, O mother! while mothers are broken-hearted for their daughters' shame? Are you, O citizen! with this many-headed fountain of poverty and crime? Preach to the heathen, but this devil-worship—as to that walk about in silence. This is neither delicacy nor sense. No! bring into open view the shame, even as this woman was; let it be marked, that the full light of Christ's truth and purity may stream upon it. II. THE RELATION OF IT TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN IT. 1. The accusers felt by the Saviour's reply that in some way they were related to the woman's guilt. Not by that, it may be, but by some sin. But how many are conscious of this special crime? People think the text a lesson of charity, but it is a lesson of justice also. But what justice is there in our modern custom that scarcely frowns on the guilty man—sometimes laughs at and even patronizes him—and pours all its vials of wrath upon the woman, the victim of his falsehood and meanness? What justice, honour, and delicacy, O refined woman! who, recoiling with virtuous scorn from that fallen sister, will welcome him by whom she fell? I suppose the mantle of Christian charity should cover everybody; but if there is anybody that it won't cover, and that ought to have the privilege of lying outside the hem of it in the cold blast and biting frost, it is that man who trades in a woman's affections, and leaves her to suffer in the guilt, and goes on to new conquests, and boasts of his victories—smooth, flattered, welcomed in refined society, when his only use in the world seems to be to make men feel that any particular devil is unnecessary. No! I insist that the shame should be divided, and that the sinning man should be branded as distinctly as the sinning woman. 2. The accusers went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, being convicted by their conscience. Yes, conscience, if nothing else, convicts—(1) The aged of participation in the shameful life. It is most awful to contemplate—a profligate old man without even a sinful excuse for his corruption. (2) And youth. Vain attempt to paint a picture which needs not to be painted, so terribly is every lineament of it drawn in thousands of faces, in hundreds of homes, in ruined character, in diseased manhood, in beautiful life recklessly thrown away into untimely graves. 3. What are the causes? Well, one is want. Thousands have struggled to the last thread of subsistence before yielding to temptation, and have, poor wretches! resorted to the streets to eke out a living. If you ask what you have to do with this matter, you have to cease to glory in buying cheap, which involves starvation wages. III. CHRIST'S TREATMENT OF IT. 1. The first idea of all Christian treatment is to get rid of sin—not to palliate it. How? The very least we can do is to recognize our obligation of personal purity. 2. The other point of treatment is mercy, giving a chance of repentance and reformation to the sinner. This was what Christ did, and if He did, who shall refuse? But Society makes a Dante's hell of the state of shameful life; closes its doors and writes over them, "No hope." Consider the words of a poor girl: "Now I have once done wrong, I can't get any one to give me work, and I must either stay here or starve." Have we any right to establish such an inexorable barrier? Conclusion: We hardly comprehend the full meaning of "Ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites—the publicans and harlots enter the kingdom of heaven before you." The Christian idea is to seek and to save the lost. Some one may suggest that those we may save are only like a drop in the ocean. But every drop is a soul. Mercy is justice in this case. Christ has proposed the true test: "Let him that is without sin," &c. No one can do that. But He interposes with His more excellent way—of hope and new life; and He says, and requires us to say, "Go and sin no more." (*E. H. Chapin, D.D.*) **Neither do I condemn thee.**—*Sin not palliated though pardoned:*—What? does our Lord favour sin? No; observe what follows: "Go and sin no more." Therefore He condemned sin and pardoned the sinner. Let them who love Christ's mercy also fear His truth, for "gracious and righteous is the Lord" (Psa. xxv. 7). Observe also that this acquittal was pronounced by Christ under special circumstance, viz., when the teachers of the law were breakers of the law, as was shown by our Lord's test: "He that is without sin," &c.; and consequently great indulgence was due to those who were subject to their teaching and looked to their example. Hence our Lord's merciful reply. But let it not be abused by misapplication to the times of the gospel, when the sin of adultery has been made more heinous by the Incarnation, and by clearer teaching on the sanctity of marriage (Eph. v. 32), and by still more awful denunciation on the sins of uncleanness (1 Cor. vi. 9; Eph. v. 3, 5; 1 Thess.

iv. 5–7; Heb. xiii. 4; Rev. xxi. 8). Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah as well as the Lamb of God. Let us not presume on the meekness of the Lamb, lest we feel the wrath of the Lion. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*) *Tenderness to the erring*:—Perhaps the most eminently practical grace which could be given to a man or a woman is the gift of tenderness in dealing with the erring. Where pitiless severity would harden, where cold contempt would embitter, a few words of tender human sympathy will often open the heart of one not yet wholly depraved to the teaching, and to the grace of Christ. Nothing thaws the frozen ground more quickly than the warm rains of spring; nothing will thaw a frozen heart like the warm rains of a Christian sympathy that can weep for the sins, as well as the woes, of others. Nearly ten years ago a minister was invited to address the inmates of a home for those who had been saved out of an infamy worse than death. As he rose to his feet, and saw, upturned to his, a hundred faces marred by the blight of lost innocence, a great wave of emotion surged over his soul, and he found himself unable to utter a word. For a moment he faced his audience; then he bowed his head on the reading-desk with a great sob. During that moment's hush all held their breath, wondering at his silence. When he bowed his head to hide his tears, the strong wave of emotion surged from his heart to theirs, and in a few seconds, while yet no word had been uttered, nothing could be heard but the sobs of those bewailing their lost innocence. That wordless sermon was, in its results, the most effective sermon that had ever been preached in that institution. The sympathetic tenderness of that minister had done more than his logic could have done. Perhaps some of us would have more of his success in reaching the lost if we had more of that loving and sorrowing regard for the sinner which enabled him to realize so profoundly the pathos and the tragedy of those wrecked lives before him. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *If Christ condemn us not, we need not fear men*:—A prisoner standing at the bar in the time of his trial seemed to smile when heavy things were laid against him. One that stood by asked him why he smiled. "Oh!" said he, "it is no matter what the evidence say, so long as the judge says nothing." *Care for the fallen*:—A writer relates that during a conversation with George Eliot, not long before her death, a vase toppled over on the mantelpiece. The great authoress quickly and unconsciously put out her hand to stop its fall. "I hope," said she, replacing it, "that the time will come when we shall instinctively hold up the man or woman who begins to fall as naturally and unconsciously as we arrest a falling piece of furniture." (*W. Baxendale.*)

Vers. 12–20. **Then spake Jesus again unto them.** *The connection of Christ's discourse with the previous incident and the feast*:—The feast of tabernacles was over. The water of Siloah was no more poured out by the altar; the golden lights no longer burned in the fore-court of the Temple. But like as Jesus Christ, the True Well of salvation, offered from His inexhaustible spring living water to all who were athirst, so also as the True Light, He shone with a never-dying lustre, in order that He might lead sinners out of the darkness of death into the light of life. What power the perishable, earthly light of the Temple had, how impotent it was to enlighten the hearts of those who participated in the festival, had been exhibited to all in the narrative of this morning. In the midst of the bright shining of the tabernacle lights, that woman was wandering in the darkness of adulterous lust, and her accusers in the darkness of arrogant self-conceit. Not until the light of Jesus broke in upon the woman's heart did she become a penitent sinner, or forsake the love of darkness; whilst on the other hand, the Pharisees, when shone upon by the light of the Searcher of hearts, became convicted sinners, and went out because they loved darkness rather than light. And the requirement that the Lord made of the woman upon whom the light of His grace had shone, "Go and sin no more," is now included in the word of promise: "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Once upon a time, the people had followed the light of the pillar of fire in the wilderness; and of this they were reminded by the light of the feast of tabernacles. But now many in the wilderness followed that light and yet wandered in darkness, because the light of life was not theirs!—they had it not! How many, too, were there now who rejoiced in the lustre of the tabernacle light, yet were wandering in darkness, because they too had not the light of life! Yes, how many heard the law read aloud in the assembly of the feast of tabernacles, and yet learnt it not (Deut. xxxi. 10, &c.), because they would not learn the End of the law, which was Jesus Christ! Thus they were shone upon by the light of Divine revelation, and boasted of being a people of light, and

yet remained in darkness. Different is the case with the true followers of the light. Their following consists in faith, and faith makes Christ to dwell in their hearts (chap. xii. 36, 46; Eph. iii. 17); and because they then have the light of life, they no longer walk in darkness, neither in the love, nor in the terror of it; they no longer walk in sins, nor in death, no more according to the pleasure, no more in the power of the devil. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) **I am the Light of the world.** *The incident:*—When these words were spoken it was early morning. They had parted last night, after a day of commotion and danger; but at daybreak Jesus was back again in the midst of the people. "And early in the morning He came again into the Temple, and all the people came unto Him; and He sat down and taught them." We can picture to ourselves the unfolding splendours of the new morning. The eyes of the people gazed as, without wave or sound, as with increasing vigour and unsullied purity, the light streamed in from the east. It disclosed the green fields and well kept vineyards and pleasant groves of the valleys; it lit up the city and its splendid palaces and gorgeous Temple; and it revealed all around them the majestic forms of the mountains. How it gilded everything, and beautified the pinnacles of the Temple, and touched the hills with gold! How it aroused the wicked, who then as now turned night into day, and worked deeds of violence and wrong under cover of black night! How it cleansed the earth, and lifted the thick veil of mist, and drove away the pestilential vapours! Even the beasts, savage and dangerous, who through the night had been seeking and securing their prey, owned its power, and retired from the light into the caves and dens of the earth. All this was present to the thoughts of the people, and standing there in the midst of them Jesus said, "This is the emblem of My mission: I am the Light of the world." (*C. Vince.*) *The force of the allusion:*—He was seated at that moment in the Treasury—either some special building in the Temple so called, or that part of the court of the women which contained the thirteen chests with trumpet-shaped openings, called *shopherôth*, into which the people, and especially the Pharisees, used to cast their gifts. In this court, and therefore close beside Him, were two gigantic candelabra, fifty cubits high and sumptuously gilded, on the summit of which nightly during the feast of tabernacles, lamps were lit which shed their soft light over all the city. Round these lamps the people, in their joyful enthusiasm, and even the stateliest priests and Pharisees, joined in festal dances; while, to the sound of flutes and other music, the Levites, drawn up in array on the fifteen steps which led up to the court, chanted the beautiful psalms which early received the title of "Songs of Degrees." In allusion to these great lamps, on which some circumstance of the moment may have concentrated the attention of the hearers, Christ exclaimed to them, "I am the Light of the world." (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *The Light of the world:*—Note—I. THE GREAT ASSUMED TRUTH WHICH LIES UNDERNEATH THE WHOLE VERSE is the fall of man. The world is in a state of moral and spiritual darkness. Naturally men know nothing rightly of themselves, God, holiness, or heaven. They need light. II. THE FULL AND BOLD MANNER OF OUR LORD'S DECLARATION. He proclaims Himself to be "the Light of the world." None could truly say this but one, who knew that He was very God. No prophet or apostle ever said it. III. HOW OUR LORD SAYS THAT HE IS "THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD." He is not for a few only, but for all mankind. Like the sun He shines for the benefit of all, though all may not value or use His light. IV. THE MAN TO WHOM THE PROMISE IS MADE. It is to him "that followeth Me." To follow a leader, if we are blind, or ignorant, or in the dark, or out of the way, requires trust and confidence. This is just what the Lord Jesus requires of sinners who want to be saved. Let them commit themselves to Christ, and He will lead them safe to heaven. If a man can do nothing for himself, he cannot do better than trust another and follow him. V. THE THING PROMISED TO HIM WHO FOLLOWS JESUS—deliverance from darkness and possession of light. This is precisely what Christianity brings to a believer. He feels and sees, and has a sense of possessing something he had not before. God "shines into his heart and gives light." He is "called out of darkness into marvellous light" (2 Cor. iv. 4–6; 1 Pet. ii. 9). (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The Light of the world:*—Christ as Light is—I. WONDROUSLY REVEALING. Light is a revealing element. When the sun goes down and darkness reigns, the whole of the beautiful world is concealed, all on ocean and land is hidden. The sun arises, and all stands forth to view. What does Christ reveal? God, a spiritual universe, a moral government, a future state of retribution, a remedial system by which fallen humanity can be restored to the knowledge, the image, the friendship, and the enjoyment of the eternal Father. Men have appeared here in different ages and regions who have been called lights.

Prophets; John the Baptist; the apostles; some of the heathen sages; and many of the modern philosophers and scientists. But Christ is *the* Light. Other lights are borrowed; He is the original Fountain. Other lights only reveal dimly a few things in some narrow space; He reveals all things fully through all regions of moral being. Other light shone a little, and, like meteors, went out; He burns on for ever—the "Light of the world." II. HUMANITY GUIDING. "He that followeth Me," &c. The sun may shine in its noontide radiance, and yet men may walk in darkness; they may shut their eyes or keep in cells or caverns. It is so with Christ. Though He is the moral Sun of the world, the millions "walk in darkness." Christ is to be followed—1. Doctrinally. 2. Ethically. 3. Spiritually. Men who follow Him thus will always be in the "light." III. SPIRITUALLY QUICKENING. The natural sun is the fountain of life to the world; his beams quicken all. Christ is the Life of the world. "In Him was life." He quickens the intellect, the conscience, the soul. There is no spiritual life apart from Him. Conclusion:—How great the obligation of the world to Christ! What would this earth be without the sun? Its condition would be wretched beyond conception; and yet it would be better off than humanity without Christ. Were all that Christ has been to humanity, and still is, to be withdrawn, into what a Stygian condition it would sink. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!" (*Homilist.*) *The Light of the world*:—Light and life are intimately associated. "Let there be light" was the first creative act—essential for the life that was to follow. How true of the soul! A chaos of death and darkness—then the shining of the life-giving Sun of Righteousness. I. IN WHAT SENSE IS CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. 1. The light He communicates is not derived. Christ is not a reflector, but the Spring and Source. None ever taught Him wisdom; eternity did not increase His knowledge, "God is Light" and Christ is God. 2. He is the Medium through which it is revealed to men. When the world through sin had become exposed to the withdrawal of all heavenly light, then by Christ's interposition was a gentle ray preserved. This grew till in His own Person He brought the full and living manifestation of glory. II. THE CHARACTER OF THE LIGHT. 1. Christ brought into the world knowledge. No small advance had been made in knowledge before Christ came—art, science, and philosophy had flourished. But the knowledge of God and futurity had almost died out. And the advances of the human intellect would seem to have been permitted to prove that men by searching could not find out God. 2. Christ brought into the world holiness. Light and purity, darkness and unholiness are synonymous terms. "Ye were once darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." The wisdom of the world may exist with the grossest passions, but the "Light of the world" cleanses as well as instructs. III. THE RELATION OF THE LIGHT TO THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Following the course of the sun, we cannot but have the "light of life." As the flowers, drawn by the attracting power of the sun's rays, turn round and follow the great light of day in his course in the heavens, drinking in with avidity every beam, developing new beauties, giving forth fresh odours with every ray of light received, so the Christian, drawn by the magnetic influence of Divine love, living in constant intercourse with the source of all inspiration, following closely the light of truth which radiates from the eternal sun, develops fresh beauties of character, gives forth the sweet perfume of true nobleness of life, adorning the doctrines of Christ the Saviour. (*T. Mirams.*) *The Light of the world*:—All that the sun is to the natural world Christ is to the moral and the spiritual. It is not He that is like the sun, but rather the sun that is like Him. Thus understood, the words of the text recall the prophecy "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings." What a marvellous assertion it is! In the mouth even of an extraordinary man it would be ridiculous, and no intellectual eminence could redeem it from the charge of vanity. We can save it from the accusation only by regarding it as the utterance of Incarnate Deity. And it is only in the same way that we can harmonize it with those qualities of truthfulness and humility by which at all times the Man Christ Jesus was distinguished. The text suggests—I. THE PURITY OF THE LORD'S PERSONAL CHARACTER. A ray of light is the cleanest thing we know, and though it may pass through the most polluted medium, it comes out of it as immaculate as when it entered it. Christ was from the very first "a holy thing." There are spots on the sun, but nothing ever appeared to mar the beauty of His holiness, by the constant emanation of His own purity, he kept the evil from approaching Him. Now this purity consisted not so much in the absence of all sin as in the presence of all excellence. Just as the white light of the sun is

composed of the seven primary colours, each in its own proportion, and having its own properties, so the holiness of Christ, when analyzed, reveals the presence in its normal degree of each of the virtues. His love contributed warmth, His truth imparts its sharp actinic influence, whereby the correct outlines of all subjects on which He shone were clearly defined! His humility gave its violet beauty to mellow the lustre of His character; His courage lent its yellow tinge to complete the harmony; while His meekness contributed its soft green hue, and His justice brought the fiery red, which burned in His withering denunciation of all hypocrisy and wrong. Peerless as the sun in the firmament shines the character of Jesus Christ. No keen-eyed sceptic has ever been able to detect in it a flaw. II. THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE REVELATION WHICH HE MADE. His advent chased away darkness, and brought new truths into view. We have been so long accustomed to the lustre of His beams, that it is difficult to estimate how much we owe to Him in this respect, for the things which we now teach to children were far beyond the reach of the educated minds of antiquity. 1. Look at the views which He has given us of God. By that one utterance "God is a spirit" &c. He threw a flood of light on questions which had puzzled the wisest heathens. That we are not idolators we owe entirely to the light which Christ has shed for us, on the spirituality, omnipresence, supremacy, and fatherhood of God. 2. Look at the matter of atonement, and see what radiance He has cast on that dark subject. When He came into the world, victims were smoking daily upon altars, and everywhere they were at once the expression of a want and confession of a failure. They gave inarticulate witness to the longing of men's souls for acceptance with God, on the ground of expiation, while their continued repetition acknowledged that they who offered them could not rest long in their offering. But Christ offered Himself, and it was at once seen by all who believed on Him, that His sacrifice met the case, for His resurrection demonstrated that it was accepted by God, and so they could rest perfectly content. This accounts for the fact, that wherever Jesus was received sacrifices disappeared. 3. Look how the revelation brought by Christ has illuminated the future life. He has "brought life and immortality to light by the gospel." The immortality of the soul was a wish rather than an object of faith among the most of the ancients, and they knew nothing whatever about resurrection. But when Christ rose from the tomb He left its portal open; and when He ascended He took possession of heaven in His people's name. Absence from the body is now presence with the Lord. III. THE BENEFICENT INFLUENCES THAT RADIATE FROM CHRIST. There are few natural agents more valuable than the light. 1. It ministers largely to health. Even the plants cannot thrive without the sunshine, and a shrub taken to the bottom of a mine speedily withers; while the very weed that grows in the cave turns ever with a wonderful instinct towards the light. So it is a common aphorism that the sunny side of the street or house is healthier. Christ gives health to the soul by bestowing upon it regeneration, while the influence of His instructions strengthens the intellect, gives sensitiveness to the conscience, stiffens the will, settles and centres the affections, and broadens and deepens the character. 2. It contributes materially to happiness. Everybody knows a difference between a clear and a dull day. The one, as it were, electrifies the system, and we go forth into it with joyous exhilaration; the other is heavy and depressing. We are ill at ease with ourselves and cross with everybody else. So again, we know a difference between day and night. The light has that in it which somehow keeps us up, but darkness has become a common metaphor for heaviness of heart. Now Jesus is the Author of joy. He takes away from us sin which is the source of all sadness. He adds the gladness of fellowship with Himself to all our other delights; and when the joys of earth grow dim, He remains to be to us as full of satisfaction as He was before. 3. It contributes to our safety. Unless we see where we are going we may stumble or fall, to the serious injury of our bodies; and so, especially when the way is rough and dangerous, it is always better to travel in the daytime. In moral things, it is just as essential that we see what we are doing. We must mark the tendencies of things, lest we should take a wrong direction. We must look well to our little steps of daily conduct, lest we should be tripped up, and bring dishonour on our Lord and on ourselves. And for this reason it is of the greatest importance that we keep near to Jesus. Safety lies in walking in His light. It is not earthly philosophy; it is not worldly prudence; it is not caution or canniness that will keep a man secure. All these are in the main but modes of selfishness, and selfishness is always like a mole burrowing in the dark and trapped at last by the higher art of the hunter. But Christ's light is love, the love of God and our

neighbour. IV. THE MANNER IN WHICH WE BECOME PARTAKERS OF THE BLESSINGS WHICH CHRIST BRINGS. We are enlightened by opening our eyes to the light. In the morning we raise our blinds, and let in the blessed sunbeams, whereby our hearts are gladdened and our homes are brightened. And in the same way we are to become illuminated by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. We must open our eyes and behold His glory; we must open our intellects to receive His instructions; we must open our hearts to let Him into our affections; we must open our lives to let Him rule over our actions. Here our great duty, as also our great difficulty, is to be simply receptive. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The Light of the world*:—Christ was His own great theme. What He said about Himself was very unlike language becoming a wise and humble teacher. This is only reconcileable with our conception of His nature that He is God manifest in the flesh. Are such words as these fit to be spoken by any man conscious of his own imperfections. They assert that Christ is the only source of illumination for the whole world, that following Him is the sure deliverance from error and sin and gives the follower a light which is life. And the world, instead of turning away from such monstrous assumptions, has largely believed them and has not felt them to mar the beauty of meekness, which, by a strange anomaly, this Man says He has. I. THE SYMBOLISM. What was the meaning of those great lights that went flashing through the warm autumn nights of the feast of tabernacles. All the parts of that feast were intended to recall some feature of the wilderness wanderings; and the lights by the altar were memorials of the pillar of cloud and fire. Jesus, then, declares Himself to be in reality, for all, and for ever what that pillar was in outward seeming to one generation. 1. It was the visible vehicle of the Divine presence. It manifested and hid God, and was thus no unworthy symbol of Him who remains after all revelation unrevealed. The fire is ever folded in the cloud, and the thick darkness in which He dwells is but the "glorious privacy" of perfect light. That pillar, a cloud to shelter from the scorching heat, a fire to cheer in the blackness of night, spread itself above the sanctuary, and "the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle," and when that was replaced by the Temple "the cloud filled the house of the Lord," and there, dwelling between the cherubim, types of all creatural life; and above the mercy seat that spoke of pardon, and the ark that held the law; and behind the veil where no feet trod save those of the priest bearing the blood of atonement once a year—shone the light of the visible majesty of present Deity. 2. But centuries had passed since that Light had departed. Shall we not, then, see a deep reference to that awful blank, when Jesus, standing before that shrine which was in a most sad sense empty, pointed to the quenched lamps which commemorated a departed Shekinah, and said, "I am the Light of the world." He is that because in Him is the glory of God. The cloud of the humanity "the veil, that is to say, His flesh," enfolds and tempers; and through its transparent folds reveals while it swathes the Godhead. Like some fleecy vapour flitting across the sun and irradiated by its light, it enables our weak eyes to see light and not darkness in the else intolerable blaze. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt," &c. II. THE PRIVILEGE AND DUTY. 1. Christ, like that pillar, guides us in our pilgrimage. Numb. ix. dwells upon the absolute control of all the marches and halts by the cloud. As long as it lay spread above the tabernacle, there they stayed. Impatient eyes might look and impatient spirits chafe—no matter. And whenever it lifted itself no matter how short had been the halt, footsore the people, or pleasant the resting-place—up with the tent-pegs immediately, and away. There was the commander of their march—not Moses nor Jethro. 2. We have in Christ a better Guide through worse perplexities than theirs. By His Spirit, example, Word, providence, Jesus is our Guide—gentle, loving, wise, sure. He does not say "Go," but "Come." "I will guide thee with Mine eye"—not a blow, but a look of directing love which heartens to and tells duty. We must be near Him to catch it and in sympathy with Him to understand it, and be swift to obey. Our eyes must be ever toward the Lord, or we shall be marching on unwitting that the pillar has spread itself for rest, or dawdling when it has gathered itself up for the march. Do not let impatience lead you to hasty interpretations of His plans before they are fairly evolved. Take care of "running before you are sent." But do not let the warmth of the camp fires or the pleasantness of the shady place keep you when the cloud lifts. 3. All true following begins with or rather is faith (chap xii. 46). Faith the condition and following the operation and test of faith. None but they who trust follow Him. To follow means the submission of the will, the effort to reproduce His example, the adoption of His command as my law, His fellowship as my joy; and the root

of this is coming to Him conscious of darkness and trustful in His light. III. THE PROMISE. In the measure in which we fulfil the duty the wonderful saying will be verified and understood by us. 1. "Shall not walk in darkness" refers (1) to practical life and its perplexities. Nobody who has not tried it would believe how many difficulties are cleared away by the simple act of trying to follow Christ. It is a reluctant will and intrusive likings and dislikings that obscure the way oftener than real obscurity in the way itself. It is seldom impossible to discern the Divine will when we only wish to do it. And if ever it is impossible, that is the cloud resting on the Tabernacle. Be still, wait and watch. (2) But "darkness" is the name for the whole condition of the soul averted from God. There is the darkness of ignorance, impurity, sorrow, thickening to a darkness of death. To follow Christ is the true deliverance, and the feeblest beginnings of trust in Him, and the first tottering steps that try to tread in His bring us unto the light. 2. "Shall have the light of life," a grander gift—not the light which illuminates the life, but like similar phrases, "bread of life," "water of life,"—light which is life. "In Him was life," &c. "With Thee is the foundation of life, &c." The pillar remained apart, this Guide dwells in our souls. Conclusion: Christ, like His symbol of old, has a double aspect—darkness for Egypt, light to Israel. Trusted, followed, He is light; neglected, turned from, He is darkness. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The Light of the world* (In conjunction with Matt. v. 14):—A startling combination! The two ends of a chain of teaching, of which the middle links are supplied by the apostle who speaks of "Christ in you," and of the saints as "light in the Lord." I. WHEREIN DOES CHRIST'S LIGHT DIFFER FROM OURS? 1. As ordinary white light—the light of the sun—is an exquisite blending of all hues of light, so Christ combines all the varied features of goodness in Himself. He is *the Unity* of all enlightening, cheering, quickening qualities. 2. But as the light is broken up and reflected, so the scattered rays of goodness are reflected from each disciple in his own character and ministry amongst his fellows. II. WHEREIN IS OUR REFLECTED LIGHT AS CHRIST'S? 1. It may reveal, as He did, the Father. 2. It may guide and cheer, as He did, the sons of men. 3. As His exposed the evil in men, so may ours expose and shame those who come into contact with us. 4. As He, like light, coaxes the plant to thrive, causes men's natures to bloom and bear fruit, so may we develop men's latent capacities for goodness by contact with us. 5. As His light was diffused, so may ours go forth upon unknown ministries. (*W. Hawkins.*) *Light for us*:—I. CHRIST IS THE LIGHT FOR LIFE WHICH GUIDES. 1. Christ is such guiding light because He *is* the Light. Moral guidance shines from Him, because He is the one perfect specimen of moral living. 2. Christ is such a guiding Light because He is a light so placed that all may see it. II. CHRIST IS THE LIGHT WHICH NOURISHES AND MAKES STRONG THE TRUE LIFE IN EVERY MAN. Christ promises, if He be followed, a man shall have the light *of life*. Here is a pale leaf. Why is it so pale? It has been denied the sunlight. Put it in the sunlight, and it will grow green and strong. Here is a leaf of noble resolution. But it is very pale and sickly. What will give it strength and colour? Bring it into the shining of Him who is the Light. III. HOW WE MAY ENTER INTO THIS GUIDANCE AND INVIGORATION. "He that followeth Me," &c. Some one has said: "Nobody who has not tried it would believe how many difficulties are cleared out of a man's road by the simple act of trying to follow Christ." No doubt there will still remain obscurities enough as to what we ought to do, to call for the best exercise of patient wisdom; but an enormous proportion of them vanish like mist, when the sun looks through, when once we honestly set ourselves to find out where the Light is guiding. It is a reluctant will and intrusive likings and dislikings that obscure the way for us, much oftener then real obscurity in the way itself. It is seldom impossible to discern the Divine will, when we only wish to know it that we may do it. (*W. Hoyt, D.D.*) *Christ the Light of the world*:—Do you see what I mean? When the sun rose this morning it found the world here. It did not make the world. It did not fling forth on its earliest ray this solid globe, which was not and would not have been but for the sun's rising. What did it do? It found the world in darkness, torpid and heavy and asleep; with powers all wrapped up in sluggishness; with life that was hardly better or more alive than death. The sun found this great sleeping world and woke it. It bade it be itself. It quickened every slow and sluggish faculty. It called to the dull streams, and said, "Be quick"; to the dull birds and bade them sing; to the dull fields and made them grow; to the dull men and bade them talk and think and work. It flashed electric invitation to the whole mass of sleeping power which really was the world, and summoned it to action. It

did not make the world. It did not sweep a dead world off and set a live world in its place. It did not start another set of processes unlike those which had been sluggishly moving in the darkness. It poured strength into the essential processes which belonged to the very nature of the earth which it illuminated. It glorified, intensified, fulfilled the earth; so that with the sun's work incomplete, with part of the earth illuminated and the rest lying in the darkness still, we can most easily conceive of the dark region looking in its half-life drowsily over to the region which was flooded with light, and saying, "There, there is the true earth! That is the real planet. In light and not in darkness the earth truly is itself." That is the parable of the light. And now it seems to me to be of all importance to remember and assert all that to be distinctly a true parable of Christ. He says it is: "I am the Light of the world." A thousand things that means. A thousand subtle, mystic miracles of deep and intricate relationship between Christ and humanity must be enfolded in those words; but over and behind and within all other meanings, it means this—the essential richness and possibility of humanity and its essential belonging to Divinity. Christ is unspeakably great and glorious in Himself. The glory which He had with His Father "before the world was," of that we can only meditate and wonder; but the glory which He has had since the world was, the glory which He has had in relation to the world, is all bound up with the world's possibilities, has all consisted in the utterance and revelation and fulfilment of capacities which were in the very nature of the world on which His Light has shone. Do you see what I mean? Christ rises on a soul. Christ rises on the world. I speak in crude and superficial language. For the moment I make no account of the deep and sacred truth—the truth which alone is finally and absolutely true—that Christ has always been with every soul and all the world. I talk in crude and superficial words, and say Christ comes to any soul or to the world. What is it that happens? If the figure of the light is true, Christ when He comes finds the soul or the world really existent, really having within itself its holiest capabilities really moving, though dimly and darkly, in spite of all its hindrances, in its true directions; and what He does for it is to quicken it through and through, to sound the bugle of its true life in its ears, to make it feel the nobleness of movements which have seemed to it ignoble, the hopefulness of impulses which have seemed hopeless, to bid it be itself. The little lives which do in little ways that which the life of Jesus does completely, the noble characters of which we think we have the right to say that they are the lights of human history, this is true also of them. They reveal and they inspire. The worthless becomes full of worth, the insignificant becomes full of meaning at their touch. They faintly catch the feeble reflection of His life who is the true Light of the world, the real illumination and inspiration of humanity. Let us then leave the figure, and try to grasp the truth in its complete simplicity and see what some of its applications are. The truth is that every higher life to which man comes, and especially the highest life in Christ, is in the true line of man's humanity; there is no transportation to a foreign region. There is the quickening and fulfilling of what man by the very essence of his nature is. The more man becomes irradiated with Divinity, the more, not the less, truly he is man. The fullest Christian experience is simply the fullest life. To enter into it therefore is no wise strange. The wonder and the unnaturalness is that any child of God should live outside of it, and so in all his life should never be himself. And yet how clear the Bible is about it all! How clear Christ is! It is redemption and fulfilment which He comes to bring to man. Those are His words. There is a true humanity which is to be restored, and all whose unattained possibilities are to be filled out. Let us see how all this is true in various applications. Apply it first to the standards of character. We talk of Christian character as if it were some separate and special thing unattempted, unsuggested by the human soul until it became aware of Christ. The Christian graces are nothing but the natural virtues held up into the light of Christ. They are made of the same stuff; they are lifted along the same lines; but they have found their pinnacle. They have caught the illumination which their souls desire. Manliness has not been changed into Godliness; it has fulfilled itself in Godliness. As soon as we understand all this, then what a great clear thing salvation becomes. Does this make smaller or less important that great power of God whereby the human life passes from the old condition to the new—the power of conversion? Certainly not! What task could be more worthy of the Father's power and love than this assertion and fulfilment of His child? Great is the power of a life which knows that its highest experiences are its truest experiences, that

is most itself when it is at its best. For it each high achievement, each splendid vision, is a sign and token of the whole nature's possibility. What a piece of the man was for that shining instant, it is the duty of the whole man to be always. When the hand has once touched the rock the heart cannot be satisfied until the whole frame has been drawn up out of the waves and stands firm on its two feet on the solid stone. (*Phillips Brooks, D.D.*) *The Light of the world* :— Christ is this because—I. HE BRINGS GOD NEAR AND MAKES HIM REAL TO MAN. Every scientific discoverer half acknowledges that He interprets the arrangements of a single intelligence. And yet it is easy to leave out of view the higher relations of scientific thinking; to stop with force and law, and not go on to the Agent who is assumed in both. But this Atheism, now so fashionable, brings darkness into the mind. It may not interfere with a limited department of research, but it is always held at the expense of liberal thinking. It may now and then perfect man as an observing machine, but it has never yet brought a ray of light to the intellect or glow to the heart. Christ teaches no science, no philosophy, and yet He is a Light to both, not by what He teaches but by what He is. He simply manifests God as living and personal, and fills the universe to the believing mind and loving soul with a sense of His presence. He not only tells us of a Father in heaven, but says: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." And thus Christ holds the attention of men in every science to truths concerning God which science assumes and confirms. II. HE CONFIRMS MAN'S CONFIDENCE IN MAN'S POWER TO KNOW THE TRUTH. Christ teaches caution, docility, and a certain quality of self-distrust; but He couples with it the quality of clear and tenacious conviction. He knows nothing of that fashionable scepticism which suggests that knowledge is but uncertain guess-work, that thinking is a changing product of a material organization, that the truths of one generation are the dreams of the next. The capacity of man to know the truth, his obligation to defend it, and if need be to die for it is positively enforced by Christ. It is said that Christians are committed to a creed and therefore incapable of new ideas. To one conviction they are committed, viz., that truth is possible and that man is bound to attain it. III. HE ASSERTS FOR MAN HIS TRUE DIGNITY AND HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE. In nothing has Christ wrought so signal a revolution as in this, and that not by teaching a new philosophy, but by living a new life and consecrating that life by His death. He came to save man because man was lost, yet could be exalted to wisdom and holiness, and therein declared the intrinsic worth of the lowliest in the judgment of God. He consorted with publicans and sinners, not because He sympathized with what they were, but because He knew what they might become. Before Christ man's insignificance was contrasted with Nature's greatness; or when set in other relations the old thinkers argued "the state, the race remains; the individual perishes—let Him go. What is one among so many when God will forget every one of us?" Christ has reversed all these estimates. He emphasized each man's personality by recognizing his responsibility. As responsible he is capable of personal rights as the condition of the exercise of his moral freedom, and the development of his character. As such he is king over nature, being made in God's image. His education is the supreme end for which nature exists and society goes on; and this education is the story of redemption. What we call Christian civilization is either flower or fruit of faiths in respect to man's place in nature and the plan of God. It is proposed to change all this. Man is the product and slave of nature, and at length its victim. Personality and character are poetic abstractions; right and wrong are the outcome of social forces; conscience the reflex of average judgments of our community; the right of the individual non-existent as against society; our protests against injustice irrational. That this new philosophy must be inhuman in its tendency need not be argued. May God spare us when insane enthusiasts or maddened criminals act it out. After the scenes of horror shall be over and society begin to reorganize itself, Christ will be the light of its schools of thought. IV. HE IS THE LIGHT OF HUMAN CULTURE IN THAT HE BOTH STIMULATES AND REFINES IT. So far as art and literature are concerned, we may concede that Greece gave to the world the perfection of form; but Christ breathed into those forms a living soul. In manners Christ has done still more. The graces of modern life are the products of the unselfish, sympathizing, forgiving, patient, Son of Man. No sooner is Christ received into any community than the unbought graces of life are a natural consequence. But culture has its dangers. It degenerates as soon as it becomes an end and not a means. It is substituted for duty or made an excuse for sin often with terrific results. Some

of its devotees are too dainty in their tastes to do the work of life, and not a few sink into unmanly fastidiousness. Christ reforms these abuses; in His school no man liveth or dieth to Himself, and man is refined by the presence and approval of his Maker. V. HE MAKES CLEAR AND POSSIBLE TO MAN ANOTHER AND A BETTER LIFE. He has not demonstrated it to reason, but has verified it as a fact "Because I live," &c. In former times men were esteemed profound, aspiring, brave and strong according as they reflected about another life. In these, man is counted shallow if he accepts it; sordid if he derives motives from it; cowardly if he cannot brave death without it; and weak if he cannot substitute for it the immortality of his thoughts as repeated in other minds. This seems unnatural and inhuman. It is the cant of a clique to attempt to silence the outcry of every longing of man with the sneer of sentimentalism. All this is a striking proof that the risen and personal Christ is as much needed as ever as the Light of the world. And when science becomes more simple and earnest, and culture more sincere and humane, both will turn to Him. VI. HE GIVES WORTH AND SIGNIFICANCE TO THE LIFE-WORK OF EVERY MAN. There is a strong tendency to depreciate the present life; and if there is no God but nature, and he locked in the bands of fate; if knowledge is guess-work, and man the sport of agencies that feel not, life is at best a dull farce or a weary tragedy, and the sooner the play is over the better. But Christ teaches differently. Under the light which He cast no event is insignificant, no joy empty, no sorrow to be spared. The hopes and regrets, the successes and defeats are all steps of discipline for immortality. To every individual a place in life is assigned, if he will occupy it, and success assured if he will rightly estimate success. Every life which Christ guides by His light, and cheers with His smile, and crowns with His reward is thoroughly worth living for its experience and its rewards. (*Noah Porter, LL.D.*) *The Light of the world*:—Compare the impression the text must have produced when first uttered and that which it produces now. In a despised country, among a conquered people, speaking a degenerated language, a humble man from an obscure village, says "I am the light," &c., not one more light, but light in the absolute sense. What would a contemporary thinker of Athens or Rome have said? Just what the Pharisees in their language said. Now let 1,800 years pass by. Look at the world, not as Christians, but as impartial witnesses, and you are obliged to acknowledge that the saying which seemed senseless is an historical fact. Jesus is so much the light of the world that outside the regions over which His brightness is shed there is no more progress. To-day millions salute Jesus as the Sun of souls, and those who are at one in nothing else are at one in this. In what sense is Jesus what He said, and what is the domain in which He sheds His light? I. BY LIGHT WE GENERALLY MEAN SCIENTIFIC TRUTH when the word is used in other than a material sense. But one of the most original features of Christ's teaching is that He never learnt science nor professed to solve its problems. 1. Christians have been often mistaken here, and the irritation of scientists, when Christians interfere with their demonstrations, is legitimate. They demand independence, and the demand should be conceded. But they must also grant independence in the domain of the moral and religious order which has its own laws and evidences. Christianity is never called upon to anathematize science—rather let it increase under the Divine benediction. 2. But we cannot be mistaken—the whole progress of science has not shed one ray of light on the problem of problems. We are told that we should be indifferent here, and Positivism enjoins humanity to enclose itself between the cradle and the tomb, and know nothing beyond. But it cannot succeed. In our time, when all that can distract, absorb, enchant is multiplied, man doggedly raises the problems of the invisible world. All become acquainted with anguish and need consolation, and ask, therefore, for light. 3. An answer is necessary, and that answer the intellect reduced to its own forces is incapable of finding. With what courage and perseverance it has striven all history attests. Has science ever consoled any one? When your conscience is troubled will you ask for a philosophical consultation? When you are near a death-bed will you call in a *savant*? This century has made an idol of science with the inevitable result (Psa. cxv. 5, 6). II. HERE CHRIST APPEARS. His light has not been poured on scientific problems—that domain God has left to the intellect—but He has illumined the spiritual world. How? By His teaching? What then does He teach? Himself. He is not so much the Prophet as the Truth; the light-bearer as the Light. 1. He has revealed what God is. Not that He delivered discourses about God, or gave metaphysical definitions of God; but He has shown Him to us—"He that hath seen Me hath seen

the Father" (Heb. i. 3; Col. i. 15). Moses had revealed the only, the holy, the all-mighty, the just God; Jesus reveals the God who is Love. What could be added to the idea? 2. A new ideal of humanity has appeared in Jesus. He never taught a systematic and scientific morality; but simply replaced the moral world on its right axis—the love of God and the love of man. For the first time was seen in Him a life absolutely fulfilling the moral law—a life in which there is not a word, thought, movement, which is not inspired and filled by the love of God and man. In Him was seen for the first time the admirable assemblage of all the virtues which seem opposed and which ordinarily exclude one another; authority and simplicity, majesty and humility, strength and gentleness, horror of evil, and tender mercy, purity without asceticism, and familiarity without vulgarity, so that, as the diverse colours which the prism decomposes—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet—form the splendid white, to all these diverse traits, which make up the figure of Christ, are blended into so vivid a harmony that it is imprinted on the conscience of humanity for ever. In Him is seen man as he ought to be. 3. He has thrown light on the abyss which separates man from God. The more luminous His holiness, the more obvious our imperfection. He makes us discern the evil we have done, and the good we have neglected. Never before Him was our nature so surely judged (Luke ii. 35). 4. But the light would leave us without hope, did it not reveal a love in God greater than our revolt, a pardon greater than our iniquity; but the text nowhere is truer than as it falls from the Cross, at whose foot the sinner divines and receives a grace worthy of God, because it secures His justice while revealing His mercy; he there sees sin both judged and remitted. All other religions and philosophies must compound with evil and attenuate it; the religion of the Cross alone dares to see it, because it alone can crush it. (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) *The Light of the world*:—In a physical sense this is the sun, and with it Jesus may be compared. The sun is—I. ONE, and throughout the extent of our planetary system, it is the one source of light. Towards it each planet, with its satellites, turns every portion of its surface to receive light. There is but one Saviour—without whom every soul is wrapt in darkness, but from whom all believers obtain all blessings. II. THE BRIGHTEST LUMINARY. In His splendour the moon and stars pale. Jesus in all things has the pre-eminence, and is "the chiefest among ten thousand." The man of the world walks by taper light; the Christian by sunlight. What are 10,000,000 tapers to the sun? III. OF PRODIGIOUS MAGNITUDE. Our earth is 25,000 miles round and has a surface of 200,000,000 square miles. But what is it to the sun? about one to a million! The highest mountain bears the proportion to the whole earth of a grain of sand to an 18in. globe; man less, animals still less. What then the tiny flower and the insects that float in the sunbeam. Yet the light that streams 97,000,000 miles gladdens and enlightens all. But greater still is its Creator—Jesus—who is rich in mercy to all who call upon Him. IV. EMINENTLY BEAUTIFUL AND BEAUTIFYING. Pure light is proved to consist of seven opposite colours—so in Jesus there is a combination of all excellences. He is "all fair." The beauties of the landscape are derived from the sun; the variety of hues that meet the eye are painted by Him. So saints are beautiful through the comeliness that Jesus puts upon them, varying as it does in character, differing as it does in position. V. MOST BENEFICIAL. Light, heat, and fertility flow from his beams. Blot out the sun and our earth would be destroyed. Without him what would be the blessing of sight? So without Jesus we should have no spiritual knowledge, no happy love to God or man, no fruitfulness. Conclusion—1. We may gather some thoughts of Jesus from the laws of light, or the modes of its operation. Is the sun an unexhaustible fountain of light? In Jesus there is an infinite fulness of grace. Does the light travel with amazing rapidity? How swiftly do the thoughts of Jesus flow out towards His servants—"Before they call I will answer." Does light travel only in straight lines? Jesus is a holy Saviour; His eyes look straight before Him in the prosecution of His Father's purposes. Is the angle of reflection always equal to the angle of incidence? The Christian knows that the light he receives from heaven, he will find it his honour and happiness to reflect on earth. Is light a radiant force, and does a small approximation to its centre bring an increase of influence? So in proportion to our nearness to Christ will be our realization of His grace. 2 Reflect on what is popularly called the rising of the sun. See how he climbs higher and higher. Even so was it with Jesus. Mark the first streak of light

in the first promise—broader streaks in those succeeding to Abraham, Jacob—then the types and ceremonies; then the great prophecies, until Christ could proclaim the text. So with the preaching of Christ to nations, and His reception by individuals. (*J. M. Randall.*) *The Light of the world:*—Light is—I. REVEALING. 1. Every morning it removes the dark veil from the face of nature, and enables us to go wherever our duty calls us. 2. What blanks there would have been in science, philosophy, and poetry, if there had been no Newton, Bacon, Milton; but what a famine of knowledge there would have been regarding God and man, &c., without the Bible. Other books speak to us on these subjects, but, like the light of every star, their light is borrowed. The Bible has been the means of suggesting more thoughts, and expanding more minds, than all other books combined. The artist, historian, poet, novelist, scientist, traveller, are all indebted to it. Every syllable has been carefully examined, and out of this examination vast libraries have been formed. If all the rays of mental light which have streamed from it could be brought back to it, and if it were to be totally eclipsed, as the sun has been, what would be the condition of the world of mind? 3. To whom are we indebted for the Bible? To Christ! If He had not lived and died the New Testament could not have been written, nor the Old, since the latter is to the former what the germ is to the fruit. He is the Alpha and Omega of its subject matter, and the cause of its existence. II. MYSTERIOUS. 1. In the morning it appears to come from the east, it travels at the rate of 90,000,000 miles in eight minutes; and in the evening seems to retire in the west. Where does it come from and go to? How shall we account for its inconceivable speed? For thousands of years it has punctually visited our planet; why does it continue as fresh as on the day of its creation? What is it? Newton says that luminous particles actually proceed from the sun; and Huyghens, that the sun only occasions a disturbance of the ether which extends in the same manner as a wave spreads itself on the surface of a lake; but no one can give a thoroughly satisfactory answer. It is a mystery. 2. Christ was human—but He was also Divine; and as we think of Him existing from eternity, as incarnate, as swaying the sceptre of the universe, and upholding all things, the mystery is deep indeed. We are advised to renounce His Divinity as a means of clearing the mystery; but that would only deepen it. A mere boy astonishing learned rabbis, a mere man stepping into the first rank of the world's teachers, working miracles, penetrating the future, giving away His soul for sinners as willingly as He gave them advice, bursting the barriers of the tomb!—to reject His Divinity is to plunge into Egyptian darkness!—3. What then shall we do? Because of the mystery turn infidels, or stand in suspense—perplexed and miserable? The mystery of light does not disturb our equanimity; we place it among matters which our reason cannot just now grasp. Inasmuch, however, we cannot live without it, we welcome it. In the same way let us do with the mystery of Christ—a human leader, saviour, will not do for us; He must be Divine or we are lost. Let us trust Him and leave the mystery till removed by the perfect light of heaven. III. FELICITOUS. 1. Who loves the darkness? Not the little child, who fears it. Not the virtuous youth, who, although he may have nothing to do, when evening comes wishes for a light; not the righteous old man. Those only love the darkness whose hearts are set on evil deeds. "Truly the light is sweet," &c. In its presence flowers open themselves, landscapes smile, and birds sing. 2. It is thus an emblem of that felicity the blessed God wishes every man to have; but it will never come to us as pleasure comes to the beasts of the field. We must go in quest of it. Whither? To wealth, honour, fame, &c.? These will only disappoint; but if we go to Christ He will give us every element of happiness in abundance—pardon, comfort, strength, heaven. IV. UNDEFILED. 1. The water as it proceeds from its distant home is clear as crystal, but becomes impure; the snow in a little time becomes mixed with the muddy soil; the winds, pure in their origin, become unwholesome passing through pestiferous regions; but the light—stainless it comes to us, chases away the darkness from St. Giles's as freely as from Windsor Palace, enters abodes of sickness as cheerfully as abodes of health, and having brightened and beautified every object pursues its way as pure as when it came. 2. What a true image of Jesus! For twenty-eight years He resided in Nazareth, a place proverbial for wickedness. He was tempted of the devil, and mingled with the most sinful, yet what was the result? The nearer we approach a work of art the less we admire it, and the closer we come to some men the more imperfect they appear; but the more we inspect

the character of Jesus the brighter does it shine. He came into the world pure, continued in it pure, and returned pure. This was the testimony of His enemies, His friends, Himself. 3. To resemble Jesus in this is the principal duty of His followers—"Ye are the light of the world," "Let your light so shine," &c. Were this duty discharged the moral darkness of the world would be swiftly chased away. (*A. McAuslane, D.D.*) *The relation of the Light of the world to the Incarnation*:—Light within, by His Godhead enlightening the mind; light without, by His manhood guiding, by miracles, by word, by example. (*I. Williams, B.D.*) *Moderated light*:—By this Light the sun's light was made; and the Light which made the sun, under which also He made us, was made under the sun for our sake. Do not despise the cloud of the flesh; with that cloud it is covered, not to be obscured, but to be moderated. (*Augustine.*) *Revelations of light*:—As dust in a chamber cannot be seen until light is let in, so no man can know himself until this Light reveals him to himself. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Light the emblem of gladness*:—A little child dislikes the darkness instinctively, and at night, as soon as the candle is put out, it hides its head under the bed-clothes, shuts its eyes resolutely, and tries to forget all about the darkness. But when the morning comes the light streams in through the window, the little child awakens, rejoicing that the night has gone. It shakes its little spirit free from fear, and comes out of its sepulchre of clothes; for its heart is full of gladness which the light has brought. Jesus is the Light of the world in this sense also. He came not to condemn but to forgive, and to save those who were lost. And so He brought gladness and peace and great joy into the world. (*C. Vince.*) *The saving and health-giving influence of light*:—The inscription on Eddystone lighthouse is, "To give light and to save life." This is a motto that also may be used to show the purpose of our Saviour Jesus Christ. He came to give light and to impart life. We erect a lighthouse on rocks that have been proved to be dangerous to life—we put it on the rocks—and, likewise, when souls were wrecked by the corruption of human nature, the Light of the world shone from the human nature of Christ Jesus. His sacred light warns us from the sin and corruption that have been proved to be so fatal to the peace and life of human souls; and, like a lighthouse, it also shows the safe path to the harbour of heaven. God is Light; and the body of Jesus is the lighthouse from which the fulness of the Almighty shone forth on a dying world. The sun is spoken of as an angel with healing in its wings. You may not be aware that persons who live in a room which opens only to the north, are more in danger of sickness than if they lived in a room which faced the opposite point of the compass. Statistics tell us that the unsunned rooms of a barracks or hospital are much less healthful than those parts on which the sun shines through the day. It is said that the absence of the direct rays of the sun increases the mortality twenty per cent., as compared with the places on which it shines continually. The sun is our best doctor and sunshine is our cheapest and most efficient physic. Narrow streets, blind-alleys, and back-slums in which the rays of the sun never shine are a disgrace to our humanity. In such places you see, like as you see in that part of your garden on which the sun does not shine, stunted and diseased human plants. If you give the people wide streets and good houses, and provide three times the number of gaslights at night, you will have a more healthful and a more holy city than we have just now. The sun shines away disease, and a powerful light scares away sin. (*W. Birch.*) *Light brings power*:—The day closed with heavy showers. The plants in my garden were beaten down before the pelting storm, and I saw one flower that I had admired for its beauty and loved for its fragrance exposed to the pitiless storm. The flower fell, shut up its petals, drooped its head, and I saw that all its glory was gone. "I must wait till next year," I said, "before I see that beautiful thing again." And the night passed, and morning came, the sun shone again, and the morning brought strength to the flower. The light looked at it, and the flower looked at the light. There was contact and communion, and power passed into the flower. It held up its head, opened its petals, regained its glory, and seemed fairer than before. I wonder how it took place—this feeble thing coming into contact with the strong thing, and gaining strength! By devout communion and contact a soul gains strength from Christ. I cannot tell how it is that I should be able to receive into my being a power to do and to bear by this communion, but I know that it is a fact. Is there a peril from riches or from trial which you are afraid will endanger your Christian consistency? Seek this communion, and you will receive strength and be able to conquer the peril. (*C. Vince.*) *The effects of sunlight*:—In autumnal mornings mists settle over the Connecticut Valley, and lie cold and

damp upon the meadows and the hill sides, and it is not till the sun rises and shines down warm upon them that they begin to move; and then there are swayings, and wreathings, and openings, till at length the spirit which has tormented the valley can stay no longer, but rises and disappears in the air. So is it when the Sun of Righteousness shines upon the troubles which brood over our souls. Shining but a little, they only fluctuate; but if the Sun will shine long, they lift themselves and vanish in the unclouded heaven. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The light of life*:—He declares that to all the pilgrim hosts of men, He is what the cloud with its heart of fire was to that race of desert wanderers (Exod. xiii. 21 and Numb. ix. 15-23). I. As to its nature. That fire in the heart of the cloud was prophetic of our Lord's Deity, enfolded and enshrined in His humanity. II. As to its functions. The work of the fire-cloud was threefold. 1. It led.—The wilderness was a trackless waste to the hosts of Israel, and they were absolutely dependent on the cloud to show their path, and to find out a resting-place each night. 2. It shielded. 3. It gave light. III. As to the conditions. "He that followeth Me. . . ." We must put Christ first. He must hold the position of Leader and Guide. Which way is He taking? We may generally ascertain this as we endeavour to answer one of the following questions: 1. What is the law of Christ? 2. What is the will of Christ? 3. What would Christ do under the circumstances? If we are not sure, we must wait till we are; but knowing, we must follow at all costs. We cannot follow Jesus except we leave all—our own judgment and wisdom, our schemes and preferences, our predilections and fancies. 1. Shall not walk in darkness. 2. But shall have the light of life. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *We must not refuse the light*:—I once happened to be on a visit to a great castle situate on the top of a hill. There was a steep cliff, at the bottom of which was a rapid river. Late one night, there was a person anxious to get home from that castle, in the midst of a thunderstorm. The night was blackness itself. The woman was asked to stop till the storm was over; but she declined: next they begged her to take a lantern, that she might be able to keep upon the road from the castle to her home. She said she did not require a lantern, but could do very well without one. She went. Perhaps she was frightened by the storm (I know not the cause); but in the midst of the darkness she wandered from the path, and fell over the cliff: the next day that swollen river washed to the shore the poor lifeless body of this foolish woman. (*Bp. Villiers.*) *Rays from the Sun of Righteousness*:—All the light that comes to us from the sun is made up of the beams, which he is continually pouring forth. When this light is decomposed, it is found to be made up of seven different coloured rays. There are blue, and red, and orange, and yellow, and so on. These rays differ from each other in other things. The red has more heat in it; the yellow is the coldest; and the violet is the quickest in its motion. And if we wish to understand the light, we must find out all we can about the different rays. And so, if we would have a right knowledge of Jesus, we must study the different rays that shine from Him as the Sun of Righteousness. We are dependent on the sun for—I. Life. The light of the sun has no power to make dead things alive by shining upon them. Suppose we take a dead body, or plant, and lay it down where the light of the sun can shine on it; the light has no power to give life when it does not exist; but it can help to preserve it. The light of the sun is needed in order to keep everything alive. If the light were taken away, everything would die. And for this reason, Jesus might well say of Himself, "I am the Light of the world." He is more necessary for the life of our souls than the light of the sun is for the life of our bodies. The light which shines from Jesus is made up of the truths taught us in the Bible about His character and work. The light which shines from Jesus has the power of giving life to souls that are dead, as well as of keeping them alive when it is given. When ministers preach the gospel, or when Christian people read it, or preach it to others, they are scattering light from Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness. And the light thus scattered has the power of giving life to souls that were dead in sins. II. Growth. If the light were taken away from plants, and they were kept in the dark, they would not grow. Suppose you have a lot of potatoes in your cellar. If there is no window the potatoes will rot. But if there is a window those potatoes will begin to grow over towards the window. As you see them straggling across the cellar floor, it looks as if the potatoes were stretching out their arms towards the light, and begging it to come and help them to grow. And it is the same with the flowers and the trees, and with every other kind of vegetable. Each, in its place, is dependent on the light. None of them can grow without it. Here is an acorn. What a tiny little thing it is! Yet,

there is a big oak-tree stowed away in this little cup. But, then, that tree can never get out of the acorn and grow up to its proper size without the help of the sunlight. It needs the light to make it begin to grow. Then it springs up a tender little sprouting thing, which an infant's foot could crush. But every year it grows higher, and broader, and stronger. And, as it goes on increasing in size and strength, the trunk depends on the branches, and the branches depend on the leaves, and the leaves depend on the sunlight for all they need to make the tree grow. And just in the same way our souls depend for their growth on the light that Jesus gives. A young Christian, just converted, is like an acorn just beginning to grow. A mature Christian, who has reached what the Apostle Paul calls "the stature of a perfect man in Christ," is like the tree that has grown up to its full size out of the little acorn. The tree can only grow by the help of the light which the sun gives, and the soul can only grow by the help of the light which Jesus gives. III. BEAUTY. Light is one of the most beautiful things that God has made, and it makes other things beautiful. All the beauty that we see in the world around us we owe to the light. Suppose you go into a garden full of flowers on a dark night. How many colours will you see among the flowers? Only one. Black. Suppose you go and look at a gallery of beautiful paintings in the dark. How many colours will you see? Only black. Suppose you look at a great mass of clouds in the western sky at the close of the afternoon. They are all of one colour; and this is a dark grey, almost black. There is very little beauty in those clouds. But presently the sun gets behind them. He pours a flood of light over them and through them; and what a change takes place in a moment. What different colours are there! How beautiful they are! And what has made this change? The light has done it. All those beautiful colours are made by the light. And Jesus may well be called "the Light of the world" on this account. Like the light, He is beautiful in Himself, and He makes others beautiful. Jesus is a glorious sun, and the light that He gives comes to us like sunbeams, that spread brightness and beauty everywhere. IV. SAFETY. There is danger in darkness. We cannot see the evils that threaten us then, nor how to escape them. It is under the cover of darkness that thieves go forth to rob, and murderers to kill, and all sorts of wicked people to do bad things (chap. iii. 20). Our merchants and shop-keepers have found out there is safety in light; and they are putting this knowledge to a good use. When I was a boy, I remember that at night the jeweller's stores, and others that had valuable things in them, used to have heavy wooden or iron shutters to the windows; and these would be fastened with locks, or great iron bolts or bars. And all this was done for safety. But now many of those stores have no shutters at all to them; and others only have a thin wire grating over them. But, if you stop and look through one of those windows at night, you will find that the gas is lighted in the store, and kept burning. If a thief should get in there and begin to steal, he would be seen by the watchman, or the people going by. And so the thieves stay away. They are afraid to go into a shop where the gas is burning. This shows us that there is safety in light. And Jesus may well be called "the Light of the world," because He brings salvation wherever He comes. And salvation means safety. When we learn to know Him, and trust in Him, we are safe (Prov. xviii. 10; Psa. xci. 4; Matt. xxiii. 37). But He does this for all who love Him. When we learn to know Him and trust Him, it is just as if a beam of light had shined down on our path to show us the way to a safe hiding-place. (*Richard Newton, D.D.*) *Light intercepted:*— What a poor and contemptible light-bearer does the sun seem when barely discerned through a fog. Is it any wonder, therefore, that those who behold the Sun of Righteousness only through the mist of prejudice and misrepresentation can discern nothing wonderful either in Himself or in the light wherewith He lightens the world? But we who have seen the Sun on a bright day know that He is, indeed, the Light of the world, and we are not troubled because those deny it who have only seen Him through the mist; nor yet are we disheartened when our own view of Him is partially obscured through a temporary phase of our local atmosphere. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) **He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.** Strong and full of hope as these words are in the English rendering, the Greek is more emphatic still. The negative is in its strongest form, "shall by no means," "shall in no wise;" possibility is excluded from the thought. "God is light," &c. If a man makes a false step in life, it is because he seeks other guides in his own thoughts or in subjection to the thoughts of other men. He that seeks to follow the true Light—to follow, not precede it; to follow always, not only when it coincides with his own will; to follow patiently and trustfully, step by step,

wherever it may lead—cannot walk in darkness, for he is never without the presence of the Light. Here, as so often, stress is laid on the certainty and universality of the Divine love on the one side, and the action of the human will on the other. 1. There can be no doubt, "shall by no means walk," &c. 2. There can be no limit, "he that followeth." 3. There can be no halting, "he that followeth." The light ever points the way; it is he who day by day follows it who cannot miss the way. Perception of truth attends its practice. The true journey of this life is here presented as a constant activity; in chap. vii. 37 the source of this action is found in a constant receptivity. (*Archdeacon Watkins.*) *Following Christ:*—Here is a summary of the Christian life; its rules and its promises; its duties and its joys; its sacrifices and its recompenses. The two great objects of Christ's life were salvation and example. Let us consider the latter. Christ the model Man. The way to follow is to have the eye constantly on the pattern, not so much on the copy. Most persons do exactly the reverse. Note that our Lord's life was a life of—I. CONCENTRATION. He came for one great end—the glory of God and the good of man—and from that He never turned His eye. It was a life with one grand master idea; and that is what every life requires. Few lives are dedicated to one object which satisfies our aspirations. Give your life a goal, a worthy one, the one Christ had. Without this your life will be weak, desultory, wasted. II. HUMILITY. From first to last it was a descent—from heaven to the grave—yet all the while it was a constant ascent. The secret of men's want of peace, influence, and power, is that they do not go low enough. Follow Christ in His continual self-abasement. III. SYMPATHY. This was intense. He threw Himself into every heart, every circumstance. That sympathy was the key of His influence and the basis of His power. Follow that. Live less in your own narrow and selfish circle; go out into the larger sphere of other people's hearts. IV. LABOUR. Christ never played with life. From early morning to late evening, in private and public, physically and mentally, Christ worked, not as a duty merely, but as a privilege. None can be said to live indeed who do not work, like Him, for God and man. V. LOVE. Life and love with Christ were one and the same—from him who lay upon His bosom to His very murderers—all were the objects of His love. What we have to do is to put more love into life, not dreamy love, the love that is only felt, but is silent and inactive, but love that shows and sacrifices itself, in the home, church, business, all life. Conclusion: Wherever two ways meet, and you cannot tell which to take, ask yourself honestly, "Which would the Master take?" (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Following Christ:*—1. Every promise has its condition. Here light is the promise; following is the condition. 2. The promise exactly meets our need. In every point life wants brightness—more light—the mind clearness, the will definiteness, the path guidance, the heart joy, the hope vividness. 3. All nature teaches the essential union between "light" and "life." Take away light and all creation pines. Therefore "light" was the first creation because necessary to all else. And as at the beginning so at the end. "No night there." 4. Following Christ gives the light of life. The measure of the light we receive will depend on the nearness of the following. All who follow Christ will catch some rays; but only those who keep very close may claim the promise in its fulness. The secret of this is that Christ Himself, not His doctrines, is the fountain of life and light; and note that the rays which are in Christ attract as much as they emit—draw the follower while they cheer and vivify him—just, in fact, as the sun acts on the tangible system, and is at once its magnet and its light. 5. Remember that there are latent beauties in everything. What they need is some ray to bring out to view the hidden grace and delicate colours. But how does following Christ bring this light to life? I. THE IMITATION OF CHRIST BRINGS LIGHT TO THE PRACTICAL LIFE. We have but to copy the great Pattern and this alone would make the path so clear that we should never be left in the dark as to what we ought to do. II. FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST BRINGS LIGHT TO THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE. Persons who become more religious become more intelligent. Minds naturally weak and dull are made tolerably clear by the simple power of their piety. It may be through the habit of concentration of thought on the beauty of Christ, through the tendency of the Christian life to disencumber the intellect from the carnal hindrances and obscurity of sin; from the power of Christ's Spirit; but in some way the process is sure. III. LOVING CHRIST BRINGS LIFE TO THE EMOTIONAL LIFE. There is a talent in love, and love to Christ clears it of imperfection and strengthens it. He who follows Christ follows a path which is all love, and this love exercises and refines all the other affections, and directs them towards their true objects. IV. FAITH IN CHRIST BRINGS LIGHT TO THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.

How many real Christians are in darkness because of the imperfection of their faith? This only can bring the consciousness of pardon and acceptance, make hope bright, and kindle joy, and this consciousness, &c., will be in proportion to the quantity and quality of faith. V. COMPANIONSHIP WITH CHRIST WILL BRING LIGHT TO THE LIFE OF HEAVEN. "The Lamb is the light thereof." "In Thy light shall we see light." (*Ibid.*) *Walking in the light*:—Thomas à Kempis, shut in the monastery of St. Agnes, in the fifteenth century, began his immortal treatise "On the imitation of Christ" with the sentence, "He that keepeth My words shall not walk in darkness, saith the Lord." And according to his faith was it unto him. In the superstitious darkness of that day, leading an obscure life, celebrated for his skill and diligence in copying pious books, Kempis did not walk in darkness. His devout book shows that he walked in light; and the Father, who sees in secret, set the candle upon a candlestick, so that the light of the German monk's meditations has enlightened the hearts of men in every nation of Christendom unto this day. It was in Bedford gaol, with no hope of release, that John Bunyan drew that noble portrait of the brave Christian, who kept heart in the Shadow of Death, and overthrew Apollyon; and there he had that vision of the Delectable Mountains. No circumstances can darken the soul of him who walks in the light, (*Clerical Library.*) *Following Christ the path of life*:—If we will only have patience with God's leading, He will always show us the way as fast as we are really ready to go on. The trouble with most of us is that we want to see the path through to the end, before we take the first step. We want to know, before we start, how we are to come out. But this is not God's way for us. A man who is travelling in a dark night on a country road, does not have the whole way lighted at once by the lantern he carries. It shows him only one step; but as he takes that, the lantern is borne forward, and another step is lighted, and then another and another, until in the end the whole has been illumined, and he is safe at his destination. God's Word, as a guiding light, is a lamp unto our feet, not a sun flooding a hemisphere. In the darkest night it will always show us the next step; then, when we have taken that, it will show us another; and thus on, till it brings us out into the full, clear sunlight of the coming day. We need to learn well the lesson of patience, if we would have God guide us. Many of us cannot wait for Him, but insist in running on faster than He leads, and then we wonder why there is no light on the path, and we complain, and are discouraged because we stumble so often. If we stay back with the lantern, it will be all right with us in our journeying. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *Perpetual daylight for the Christian*:—If a man could continually follow the sun, he would be always in broad daylight in every part of the globe. So with Christ and believers. Always following Him they will always have light. (*Brentius.*) *Christ an unsetting light*:—It seems to thee, suppose, that thou must follow the sun, and thou also travellest thyself towards the west, whither it also travels; let us see after it has set, if thou wilt not walk in darkness. See, how, although thou art not willing to desert it, yet it will desert thee. But the Lord Jesus is a sun which never sets: if thou wilt not fall off from Him He will not fall off from thee. (*Augustine.*) *The believer's life is a walk*:—Walking implies activity; but it must be of a continuous kind. Neither this step, nor that, nor the next, can make a walk. We must be moving onward and onward, and remain in that exercise, or we cease from walking. Holy walking includes perseverance in obedience, and continuance in service. Not he that begins, but he that continues is the true Christian; final perseverance enters into the very essence of the believer's life: the true pilgrims of Zion go from strength to strength. This suggests that walking implies progress. He that takes one step, and another step, and still stands where he was, has not walked. There is such a thing as the goose-step, and I am afraid many Christians are wonderfully familiar with it: they are where they used to be, and are half inclined to congratulate themselves upon that fact, since they might have backslidden. They have not advanced in the heavenly pilgrimage, and how can they be said to walk? My hearer, is your life a walk with God and towards God? If so, our subject has to deal with you. May the Spirit of all grace lead us into the heart of it! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *We must walk in the light*:—Not only must the light be around us, but in us, before we can be said to live in it and walk in it. A blind man is surrounded by the sunlight as any one else is, but he does not live in it; he does not walk in it; he cannot enjoy it. Why not? Simply because it is not in him. We must have eyes; and these eyes must be opened to receive the light into the body, so that we may live in it, walk in it, and enjoy it. And in the same way must the eye of faith be opened to

receive the heavenly light into the soul before we can even be aware of its presence; and it must be kept open in order that we may "walk in the light as He is in the light." Christ must be in us by His Holy Spirit in order that we may live in Him. *We must follow Christ:*—If a man, whose body was radiant and bright as the sun, were walking through a land of Egyptian darkness, all who followed him would actually walk in the light, and the closer they kept to him the clearer their light would be and the safer their road. He who follows Christ follows one from whom light streams upon the road we are to go—an illuminated man—laying bare its hidden pitfalls—discovering its stumbling-stones—showing all its turnings and windings, and enabling us to walk safely, surely, and cheerfully on our way (chap. viii. 12). *The safety of light:*—Our steamer was crossing the Gulf of Mexico and approaching the mouth of the Mississippi river. As the sun went down a cold and furious blast from the north came down suddenly upon us. The darkness became intense. Here and there were shoals and other dangers. Great anxiety prevailed among all on board. Suddenly came a shout from the sailor on the forward, "There's the light." The joyful sound rang through the ship, to the great relief of every passenger. The true position of the steamer was now known. Anxiety was over, and quietness in a sense of safety was restored. We were soon in the quiet waters of the river. (*H. B. Hooker.*)

VERS. 14–17. **Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true.**—*The self-evidencing power of the Sun of Righteousness:*—The sun pours forth his beams so that it becomes bright day, and we question not his being the sun, because he bears witness of himself; and shall we say to the eternal Sun, who is shedding His light upon us, "Thou bearest record of Thyself, Thy record is not true?" Be that far from us! A light not only reveals other things, but itself also. Therefore the light bears witness of itself; the eye, if healthy, it brightens up and is its own witness that we may know it as being the light. (*Augustine.*) *Christ's witness to Himself:*—Consider what this witness is. If any of us know a holy man, we know a humble man. The holiest are the most conscious of their sinfulness. It is not a fashion of speech. It is not cant or hypocrisy. The writer who is perfectly satisfied with his lines is not a poet. The painters or sculptors who have no noble dissatisfaction with their work may be ingenious and dexterous, but they are not artists. They have none of that straining forward to an unattained ideal of beauty which is the heritage of genius. So, too, the man who is perfectly content with his own spiritual condition may have a mechanical regularity of habit. He may be a respectable Pharisee; but he is utterly without saintliness, which is, as it were, the genius of goodness. Now Jesus had the loftiest idea of duty. He was also the meekest and humblest of men. Yet in His life there is one fundamental difference from the lives of the saints. They are full of burning words of penitence; they are burdened with cries of confession. But we have long discourses of Jesus. We have one soliloquy with His Father in chap. xvii. Yet there is no confession of sin. He can bare His noble breast to His enemies, and say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" He can go further: He can declare, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." Farther yet—in those solemn moments when death is near; when moral natures, seemingly made of the strongest granite, crack and crumble before the fire of eternity—He can lift His calm and trustful eyes to heaven and say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." And with this we know that His spiritual insight was so keen and piercing, that not one mote could have floated on the tide of his purity without being detected by that eagle eye; that one speck or stain could not have rested on the very skirts of the garment of His humanity without soiling in His sight the raiment that was white as snow. This holy Man, with the highest idea of duty; this humble Man, who prays falling upon His face; this keen-sighted Man, who sees further into sin than any other, declares that His life and the perfect rule of goodness are in unbroken harmony. What witness is comparable to this witness of Jesus to Himself? (*Bp. Alexander.*) **Ye judge after the flesh: I judge no man.**—Is this not in conflict with chap. v. 22, and with the whole tenor of the New Testament, viz., that Christ is the present and final Judge of all men? No. Christ was indeed Judge; but there were some manner of judgments which He never exercised, and had no commission to execute; for He did all His Father's will. 1. Christ usurps no man's jurisdiction; that were against justice. 2. Christ imputes no false things to any man; that were against charity.

3. Christ induces no man to desperation; that were against faith: and against justice, charity, and faith, Christ judges not. Christ, then, judgeth not—I. IN SECULAR JUDGMENTS. 1. In civil matters (Luke xii. 13). 2. In criminal matters (ver. 11). When Christ says this, may we not ask of His pretended vicar, "Who made you judge of kings that you should depose them? or proprietory of kingdoms that you should dispose of them?" If he says, Christ; did He it in His doctrine? If so, where? Did He do it by His example? Yes, when He whipped the traders out of the Temple and destroyed the herd of swine. But these were miracles; and though it might seem half a miracle that a bishop should exercise so much authority, yet when we see his means, massacres, assassinations, &c., we reply that miracles are without means. II. BY CALUMNY, as did the Pharisees when they judged Him. 1. Calumny is—(1) Direct. (*a*) To lay a false imputation. (*b*) To aggravate a just imputation with unnecessary circumstances. (*c*) To reveal a secret fault when not bound by duty. (2) Indirect. (*a*) To deny expressly some good in another. (*b*) To smother it in silence when our testimony is due. (*c*) To diminish his good parts. 2. These Pharisees calumniated Jesus with the bitterest of all calumny—scorn and derision. 3. Since Christ, then, judges no man as they did, judge not you. (1) "Judge not, that ye be not judged"—*i.e.*, when you see God's judgments fall upon a man, do not judge that he sinned more than others, or that his father sinned and not yours. (2) Especially speak not evil of the deaf that hear not (Lev. xix. 14)—*i.e.*, calumniate not him who is absent and cannot defend himself. It is the devil's office to be the accuser of the brethren. (3) Always remember David's case, who judged more severely than the law admitted, which we do when in a passion. But Christ judges no man; for Christ is love, and love thinks no evil. III. SO AS TO GIVE A FINAL CONDEMNATION HERE. There is a verdict against every man in the law, the consequence of which men might well despair; but before judgment, God would have every man saved by the application of the promises of the gospel (chap. iii. 17). Do not, therefore, give malicious evidence against thyself; do not weaken the merit or lessen the value of the Saviour's blood, as though thy sin were greater than it. Can God desire thy blood now, when He hath abundantly satisfied His justice with the blood of His Son for thee? (*J. Donne, D.D.*) *Judging "after the flesh" is often altogether misleading:*—Were men to be guided by the appearance of things only in forming their judgment, how erroneous and deceptive it would be! The sun would be no more than a few miles distant and a few inches in diameter; the moon would be a span wide and half a mile away; the stars would be little sparks glistening in the atmosphere; the earth would be a plain, bounded by the horizon a few miles from us: the sun would travel and the earth stand still; nature would be dead in winter and only alive in summer: men would sometimes be women, and women men; truth would often be error, and error truth: honest men would be rogues, and rogues honest men; wealth would be poverty, and poverty wealth; piety would be wickedness, and wickedness piety. In fine, there is scarcely any rule so deceptive as the rule of appearance; and there are multitudes who, in many things, have no other rule by which they form their judgment. Hence the errors of their speech and life; ridicule and blunders into which they plunge themselves before the world. (*John Bate.*) *False judgments:*—If you go into a churchyard some snowy day, when the snow has been falling thick enough to cover every monument and tombstone, how beautiful and white does everything appear! But remove the snow, dig down beneath, and you find rottenness and putrefaction, "dead men's bones, and all uncleanness." How like that churchyard on such a day is the mere professor—fair outside; sinful, unholy within! The grass grows green upon the sides of a mountain that holds a volcano in its bowels. (*Dr. Guthrie.*) *Judging by appearances fallacious:*—We are shallow judges of the happiness or misery of others, if we estimate it by any marks that distinguish them from ourselves; if, for instance, we say that because they have more money they are happier, or because they live more meagrely they are more wretched. For men are allied by much more than they differ. The rich man, rolling by in his chariot, and the beggar, shivering in his rags, are allied by much more than they differ. It is safer, therefore, to estimate our neighbour's real condition by what we find in our own lot, than by what we do not find there. . . . . Surely, you will not calculate any essential difference from mere appearances; for the light laughter that bubbles on the lip often mantles over brackish depths of sadness, and the serious look may be the sober veil that covers a Divine peace. You know that the bosom can ache beneath diamond brooches; and how many blithe hearts dance under

coarse wool! (*E. H. Chapin, D.D.*) **And if I judge, My judgment is true.**—*The concurrent judgment of the Father and the Son:*—The Mosaic law required at least two or three witnesses to make a testimony valid (Deut. xvii. 6; xix. 15). Jesus declared that He satisfied this rule because the Father united His testimony to that which He bore of Himself. Where the fleshly eye saw but one witness, there were in reality two. It is usual to refer this testimony to miracles, in accordance with chap. v. 36. But ver. 16 sets us on the road to a far more profound explanation. Jesus was here describing an inward fact, applicable both to the judgments He pronounced on others and the statements by which He testified to Himself. He was aware that the knowledge He possessed of His origin and mission was not based wholly on the fact of consciousness. He felt that it was in the light of God that He knew Himself. He knew, moreover, that the testimony by which He manifested His inward feeling bore, in the eyes of all who had a sense for the perception of Deity, the seal of this Divine attestation. An anecdote may perhaps better explain this. About 1660, Hedinger, chaplain to the Duke of Wurtemburg, took the liberty of censuring his sovereign—at first in private, but afterwards in public—for a serious fault. The latter, much enraged, sent for him and resolved to punish him. Hedinger, after seeking strength by prayer, repaired to the prince, the expression of his countenance betokening the peace of God and the feeling of His presence in his heart. The prince, after beholding him for a time, said, "Hedinger, why did you not come alone, as I commanded you?" "Pardon me, your highness, I am alone." The duke, persisting, with increasing agitation, Hedinger said, "Certainly, your highness, I came alone; but I cannot tell whether it has pleased God to send an angel with me." The duke dismissed him unharmed. The vital communion of this servant of God with his God was a sensible fact, even to one whom anger had exasperated. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) **I am one that bear witness of Myself.** *The witness of Christ as seen in some contradictory phenomena of His life and character:*—The conflict of Christianity is ever being narrowed to the question of the person of Christ. Unitarians have either abandoned their old positions and Christianity with them, or returned to views not easily distinguished from orthodox. Both friends and foes write lives of Jesus, and seek in that for proof of Lordship or evidence of delusion. Men have largely forsaken metaphysical arguments. "What think ye of Christ?" is the question of apologist and infidel. The issue here is vital. Victorious at this point all the rest is easy; defeated here the Christian Church expires. In this line of argument it is natural to ask what testimony Christ gives of Himself, and we propose to point out certain paradoxes and find their explanation. I. THE PHENOMENA. A candid observer will notice in Jesus—1. His sublime self-consciousness of Divinity, together with His ceaseless subjection to God. (1) Compare Him with all religious teachers, and we find Him dreaming no dreams, seeing no visions. We never hear Him saying, "Thus saith the Lord," but "I say unto you." He consoles His disciples. "Let not your hearts be troubled." Why? "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." "Show us the Father," says one: the response is, "He that hath seen Me," &c. In discussion with Jews He says, "Abraham rejoiced to see My day"—wild words to scribe and Pharisee. "Thou art not yet fifty years old"; the rejoinder is, "Before Abraham was I am." There is an endeavour to explain away the simple meaning of all this. Much greater force will therefore be found in the indirect words of Christ. Take one, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come," &c. What must He claim who says He will send God's Spirit? and who must He believe Himself to be? (2) On the other hand, a young man asks, "Good Master, what good thing," &c. Jesus replies, "Why callest thou Me good," &c.? Although He said, "I and My Father are one," He also says, "The Father is greater than I." "I came not to do My own will." Nowhere does the contrast appear more distinctly than in that scene in the Temple, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business;" and then He meekly places His hand in His mother's and becomes "subject unto Joseph and Mary." 2. His pronounced self-assertion and His humility and self-abnegation. (1) He appeals to no authority but His own as the ground on which men should accept Him. When He propounded His law on the Mount, He contrasts His teaching with that of the ancient law, although Divinely given, with the words, "I say unto you." What a significant scene is that in which He upbraids the cities for their unbelief, and then hearken to the words which follow, "Come unto Me all ye that labour," &c. From His disciples He learns how men misunderstand Him; and how calm, resolute, inspiring, the words in which He replies to these misapprehensions, and rewards the confes-

sion of Peter. "On this rock I will build My Church," &c. Is this arrogance, egotism? It is the sublimest ever witnessed. If true, the noblest; if unfounded, the wildest and most vain. (2) But what a contrast. The child of a carpenter's wife; He is fitly born in the outhouse of an inn, and moved for thirty years amidst the humblest surroundings. When He came into public life His career opened to Him no affluence or dignity. "The foxes have holes," &c. His moral characteristics were in keeping with His circumstances. "I am Meek and lowly of heart." "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter," and prays for His murderers. 3. Infinite power combined with noteworthy weakness. (1) Mark the works of Jesus—how easily performed. "Let there be light," says God, "and there was light." He opens the windows of heaven and a race is overwhelmed. And thus Christ works. It is in a storm; the Master sleeps. The disciples cry, "We perish!" He rises, speaks, and there is a great calm. In His dealings with disease, a touch upon the eyelid pours daylight on the darkened orb. "Be clean," He says to the leper, and the loathsome disease is gone. Another word, and the man who had become a wild beast is sitting at His feet in his right mind. Here is no paraphanalia of the magician, or the exercise of delegated power. (2) In contrast with this is Christ's meekness. Take the supernatural out of His life, and what feebleness! He who can multiply the bread is familiar with hunger. "Give me to drink," He says to one to whom He gives living water. With His hand upon a universe He is as helpless as a child. 4. The complete absence of any sense of sinfulness or moral defect. The religious life of the leaders of human thought has been marked by a profound sense of personal unworthiness, but there is no trace of this in Jesus. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" asks Jesus of the ages. "I find no fault in Him," re-echo well nigh two milleniums. 5. In these series of contrasts we have noted two contradictory qualities—infinity and limitation. The last scenes of His life exhibit these. Our Lord comforts His disciples. Calm and helpful, He promises them Divine strength. But see Him a few moments after in His agony. Where in all literature is an artistic contrast so striking? And this only the simple story of the unlettered, who tell the story as they knew it best. But what is this. An armed band approaches, and at a word from Him they fall to the ground—yet He submits to be led away. II. SOME OF THE EXPLANATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN GIVEN. 1. That Christ is a natural product, the outgrowth of the ages; that all preceding generations gathered in Him, and produced the ideal man. But where in Judæa, Greece, or Rome, can be found the elements from which the nature of Christ could be compounded? And if one Christ could be produced why not others? 2. That Christ is a literary product, the ideal of an individual mind—the grandest triumph of human imagination, but altogether fictitious. But who was the romancer who must have been greater than His romance? 3. That Christ is a mythical product; that a remarkable individual did exist who founded a school, and after death was slowly changed by the loving regard of His followers into the heroic, and at last into the Divine. Granted that such a myth may have grown up in a century, how is it that we have the unique Divine nature of Jesus made the ground of a finished argument in the Epistle to the Romans, published within a generation from the time of Christ, by one whose life overlapped His? 4. The theory that Christ was a deceiver or deceived hardly merits notice. A knave ought to recognize that Christ was truthful, and a fool, would he open his eyes, might see that He was perfectly self-possessed. III. THE THEORY WHICH ALONE SATISFIES ALL THE CONDITIONS OF THE CASE. In these phenomena—1. We find evidence of a personality altogether unique. There are contrasts, but there is a unity about the Person, and a consistency in the life which make us feel confident of the truthfulness of the Bible record. All things fall into their place when we are taught that Christ is at once the Son of God and the Son of Man. He is Divine, and all the Divinity of His being is thus accounted for. He is human, and all the humanity of His lot is wholly explained. 2. The origin of this unique personality must be traced to God. The human race could produce no such being. Even were the ideal conception possible, which is doubtful, a person who had formed the idea could never have realized it. But with God all things are possible. 3. The purpose for which such a unique being was sent by God must have been to accomplish some special work. (1) A mere teacher or reformer might have been only man. (2) God would not have become man for His own sake. He can require nothing which He cannot supply. (3) Christ is evidently not the first of a new species, for He has no successor. (4) His mission therefore must have been for man, to establish some new, or modify some old relation between God and man. Such an object is declared by

Scripture to have been sought by God and accomplished by Christ, and for this such a Personality as has been described was suited and designed. (*Ll. D. Bevan, D.D.*) **Then said they unto Him, Where is Thy Father?**—The question indicates assumed ignorance of Christ's meaning, or a scornful fling at His ever imagining that God was His Father. How different to the child-like simplicity of Philip (chap. xiv. 8)! Their earthborn idea was, "If you are visible, can't we see something of your Father?" They ask about the Father, He replies as to Himself; and when asked about Himself He (vers. 25–27) replies concerning the Father. The primitive Christians were called atheists because they could not show their God. In every age the sneering challenge is repeated. At Orleans the Papists asked the Huguenots in the flames, "Where is now your God?" Mary Queen of Scots, having by French mercenaries forced Protestants into the bleak hills, cried, "Where is John Knox's God?" In Fotheringay Castle she had time to answer her own question. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*)

Ver. 20. **These words spake Jesus in the Treasury.**—*The Treasury*:—From Mark xii. 41 and Luke xxi. 1 it is clear that this word was applied to the brazen trumpet-shaped chests placed in the Court of the Women for the reception of alms. There were thirteen of them, and each bore an inscription showing to what purpose the alms placed in it would be devoted. Here the word is apparently used of the place itself, in which the chests were deposited. This notice is interesting in many ways. The Court of the Women was one of the most public places in the Temple area. Christ taught there openly and fearlessly. The chamber in which the Sanhedrim held their session was between the Court of the Women and that of the Men. They had on that or the previous day been assembled to take counsel against Him (chap. vii. 45–52). This gives point to the words which here follow. (*Archdeacon Watkins.*) **No man laid hands on Him; for His hour was not yet come.**—*Divine Providence*—I. EXERTS A RESTRAINING POWER ON WICKED MEN. "No man," &c. Why? Jewish rage was almost at its height; the Sanhedrims lacked neither disposition, muscular power, nor public co-operation. It was because "His hour was not yet come." There was a mysterious power holding them back, an invisible hand restraining them. In relation to this restraining power of God's moral government of the world, note—1. It is not always a matter of consciousness. Sometimes, it may be, men feel that they are reined in, some mysterious power preventing them from doing what they desire. History presents us with monsters that have felt themselves like caged lions. But as a rule the restraining force is so subtle, so delicate, that men are unconscious of it. 2. It interferes not with human freedom. A man is not free from the guilt of a wrong act because he has not the power or the opportunity to embody it. The guilt is in the desire, the volition. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." At first sight it seems morally absurd that God should restrain a man from committing a crime, and yet hold him guilty for it. The solution is here: the crime is in the wish. 3. It is an incalculable advantage to the race. What was in the Alexanders, the Caligulas, the Napoleons, the Lauds, and the Bonners, is for the most part in every unregenerate soul. Were there no restraining hand upon depraved hearts, all social decency, order, peace, and enjoyment would be at an end. The world would be a Pandemonium. We rejoice that He who reigns in the ocean and keeps it within bounds, holds in the passions and impulses of the depraved soul. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord," &c. II. HAS SETTLED PERIODS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVENTS. "For His hour was not yet come." Christ recognized that there was a particular hour or crisis for everything He had to do. There was an hour for the commencement of His miracles, for His baptism, for His death. His death was the hour of hours. "Father, *the* hour has come." God has appointed scenes in space and in duration for all things that occur in His vast dominion. Nothing He allows to be done in one scene that is intended to occur in another, nothing in one season that is fixed for another. "To everything there is a season." Every orb that rolls through immensity has a point it is bound to reach, and an "hour"; it is never behind its time. So it is not only in the epochs and eras of human history, but in all the events of individual life. Man's decrees and purposes often fail from the fickleness of his own mind, from his want of foresight, and from his want of power. It is altogether otherwise with the designs of the Almighty. When His set time for working comes, not all the power in the universe can stay His hand. When we first look abroad, indeed, upon the busy field of human affairs, and observe the numerous actors, all moving, planning, arranging, we may be tempted for the

moment to imagine that destiny itself is in their hands. But when we have looked a little longer and have seen all their schemes deranged, and a result emerging the very opposite, it may be, we begin to discover that there is a power out of sight mightier than all—"One whose purposes are from everlasting to everlasting, whose counsel shall stand, and who will do all His pleasure." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Ver. 21–24. **I go My way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins.**—Sin here means the departure of the heart from God, general alienation from Him, and in ver. 24 the particular manifestations of such a disposition. In chap. xiii. 33 Jesus speaks to the apostles of the impossibility of following Him in the same terms as at the end of this verse; but for them this impossibility would be but temporary, for He will return to fetch them (chap. xiv. 6). For the Jews, on the contrary, there will be no longer a bridge between earth and heaven; their separation will be consummated by their rejection of Him without whom no man cometh unto the Father. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Christ and men*:—I. THE WITHDRAWMENT OF CHRIST FROM MEN. 1. Christ had a way—undoubtedly that through the Cross to His native heavens. What a way! It will be the study of eternity. 2. Christ pursued His way voluntarily. "I go." You cannot force Me. (1) This is no extenuation of the guilt of His murderers. "The Son of Man goeth . . . but woe unto the man by whom He is betrayed." (2) This is the glory of His history. Why has Christ's death the power not only to save humanity but to charm the universe? Because it was free. "I have power to lay down my life," &c. (3) A more terrible calamity cannot happen than this—far greater than the withdrawment of the sun. There is a sense in which Christ withdraws from impenitent men now. II. THE FRUITLESS SEEKING OF CHRIST BY MEN. This is a repetition of chap. vii. 34. When I am gone, and the judgments of heaven will descend on your country, you will be seeking Me, but you will not find Me; you will have filled up the measure of your iniquity, the things that belong to your peace will be hid from your eyes. 1. The fruitless seeking is possible. The day of grace closes with some men even while they are in the world. In the judgment He will be earnestly sought, but shall not be found. "Many shall say unto Me on that day," &c., &c. 2. This fruitless seeking is lamentable. "Ye shall die in your sins." Sin is like quicksand, the man who walks on it must ultimately sink and be lost. "It sometimes happens on the coast of Britain or Scotland that a person walking on the sand will suddenly find a difficulty in walking. The shore is like pitch, to which the soles of his feet cling. The coast appears perfectly dry, but the footprints that he leaves are immediately filled with water. Nothing distinguishes the sand which is solid and that which is not. He passes on unaware of his danger. Suddenly he sinks. He wishes to turn back, but it is already too late. The slow burial of hours continues; the sand reaches to his waist, to his chest, to his neck; now only his face is visible. He cries; the sand fills his mouth, and all is silent." What a striking emblem of the danger of sin! III. THE ETERNAL SEPARATION OF CHRIST FROM MEN. "Whither I go ye cannot come." The separation will be complete and irreversible. "Ye cannot come." Christ had said this before (chap. vii. 34), and He refers to it again (chap. xiii. 33). So that to Him the words had a terrible meaning. More terrible words than these could not be sounded in human ears, "Ye cannot come." It means incorrigible depravity, hopeless misery. Separation from Christ is hell. The commission of every sin contributes to the construction of the impassable gulf. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Final impenitence*:—From the time that our Lord left the world down to this day, the expression has been peculiarly true of the Jewish nation. They have been perpetually, in a sense, "seeking" and hungering after a Messiah, and yet unable to find Him, because they have not sought aright. In saying this we must carefully remember that our Lord did not mean to say that any of His hearers were too sinful and bad to be forgiven. On the contrary, not a few of them that crucified Him found mercy on the day of Pentecost, when Peter preached (Acts ii. 22–41). But our Lord did mean to say, prophetically, that the Jewish nation, as a nation, would be specially hardened and unbelieving, and that many of them, though an elect remnant might be saved, would "die in their sins." In proof of this peculiar blindness and unbelief of the Jewish nation we should study Acts xxviii. 25–27, Romans xi. 7, and 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. The Greek expression for "sins" in this verse confirms the view. It is not, literally rendered, "sins," but "sin": your special sin of unbelief. Let us note that—I. IT IS POSSIBLE TO SEEK CHRIST TOO LATE, OR FROM A WRONG MOTIVE, and so to seek Him in vain. This is a very important principle of Scripture. True

repentance, doubtless, is never too late, but late repentance is seldom true. There is mercy to the uttermost in Christ; but if men wilfully reject Him, turn away from Him, and put off seeking Him in earnest, there is such a thing as "seeking Christ" in vain. Such passages as Prov. i. 24–32; Matt. xxv. 11, 12; Luke xiii. 24–27; Heb. vi. 4–8 and x. 26–31, ought to be carefully studied. II. THAT IT IS POSSIBLE FOR MEN TO "DIE IN THEIR SINS," and never come to the heaven where He has gone. This is flatly contrary to the doctrine taught by some in the present day, that there is no future punishment, and that all will finally be forgiven. It is worthy of remark that our Lord's words, "Ye shall seek Me," and "Whither I go ye cannot come," are used three times in this Gospel—twice to the unbelieving Jews, here and at chap. vii. 34, and once to the disciples, chap. xiii. 33. But the careful reader will observe that in the two first instances the expression is coupled with, "Ye shall not find Me," and "Ye shall die in your sins." In the last, it evidently means the temporary separation between Christ and His disciples which would be caused by His ascension. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Unbelief fatal:*—Observe the infinite difference between dying in our sins, and dying not in our sins. Lazarus, and Dives the rich man, both died—one in his palace, but in his sins; the other famished at the gate, but not in his sins. Stephen was stoned to death, but not in his sins, for he could say "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," "I see the Son of man," &c.; but Judas, in his sins, went and hanged himself. Ananias and Sapphira died in their sins, but the thief upon the cross cast his last look upon the Saviour, and his sins, though many, were instantly forgiven. I. Let us contemplate THIS FEARFUL PREDICTION OF THE CERTAIN END OF ALL UNBELIEVERS. 1. They die under the sentence of Divine condemnation for their sins. 2. They die under the dominion or power of them. 3. Under the guilt and misery of sin. 4. They die to experience the immediate and everlasting punishment denounced upon them. II. THE EXCLUSIVE CONDITION UPON WHICH THIS FEARFUL AND IMPENDING DOOM CAN BE AVERTED. It is involved in the converse of the text—if ye believe not, ye shall die—but if ye believe, ye shall not die. 1. The object of their believing. 2. The nature of their belief. Must be cordial, entire, practical, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." 3. The spiritual importance and efficacy of such faith. Saving in its effects by divine appointment. III. APPLICATION. 1. Let those who have faith exercise it on the glorious object. Appreciate the glory and grace of that Saviour by faith in whom they have life everlasting. 2. Let those who believe not in Jesus remember—"They are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (*The Evangelist.*) *To die in sin is the most terrible death:*—This is a heavy doom, and the very door of damnation. It is a sad thing to die in prison, to die in a ditch, but far worse to die in your sins. Death to the wicked is as a trap-door to let them into hell; so that it is a just wonder that, foreseeing their danger, they do not go roaring and raving out of the world. (*J. Trapp.*) *Dying in sin:*—Charles IX. (who gave order for the massacre on St. Bartholomew's day, 1575) expired bathed in his own blood from his veins, whilst he said, "What blood—what murders—I know not where I am—how will all this end? What shall I do? I am lost for ever. I know it." Francis Spira, an Italian apostate, exclaimed, just before death, "My sin is greater than the mercy of God. I have denied Christ voluntarily; I feel that He hardens me, and allows me no hope." Hobbes—"I am taking a fearful leap into the dark." *Sinners warned of death:*—On a very dark, stormy night, out West, the wind blew down a part of a railroad bridge. A freight train came along, and it crashed into the ruin, and the engineer and conductor perished. There was a girl living in her father's cabin near the disaster, and she heard the crash of the freight train, and she knew that in a few moments an express train was due. She lighted a lantern, and climbed up on the one beam of the wrecked bridge, and then on the main part of the bridge, which was trestle-work, and started to cross amid the thunder and the lightning of the tempest and the raging of the torrent beneath. One misstep and it would have been death. Amid all that horror the lantern went out. Crawling sometimes and sometimes walking over the slippery rails and over the trestle-work, she came to the other side of the river. She wanted to get to the telegraph station where the express train did not stop, so that the danger might be telegraphed to the station where the train did stop. The train was due in five minutes. She was one mile off from the telegraph station, but fortunately the train was late. With cut and bruised feet she flew like the wind. Coming up to the telegraph station panting, with almost deathly exhaustion, she had only

strength to shout, "The bridge is down!" when she became unconscious, and could hardly be resuscitated. The message was sent from the station to the next station, and the train halted, and that night the brave girl saved the lives of hundreds of passengers, and saved many homes from desolation. But every street is a track, and every style of business is a track, and every day is a track, and every night is a track, and multitudes under the power of temptation come sweeping on and sweeping down toward perils raging and terrific. God help us to go out and stop the train. Let us throw some signal. Let us give some warning. By the throne of God let us flash some influence to stop the downward progress. Beware! Beware! The bridge is down, the chasm is deep, and the lightnings of God set all the night of sin on fire with this warning, "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (*De Witt Talmage.*) **Then said the Jews, Will He kill Himself?**—Afterwards at the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, many of the desperate Jews did the very thing they here said of our Lord—they killed themselves in madness of despair. (*Rupertus.*) Self-murder was, by the Jews, esteemed the most aggravated of crimes—a crime which sent every one after death to Gehenna, the place of damnation. Josephus, in the weighty speech wherein he warns his companions in war, who had been hemmed in by the enemy, to refrain from self-murder, says of suicides, "a darker hell receives the souls of such." The Jews, no doubt, perceived very well what Christ meant to say. But, instead of permitting themselves to be humbled, their only purpose was to retort upon Christ the cutting expression, "Ye shall die in your sins," and, therefore, they contemptuously utter the taunt, "Well, if He is determined to take His own life and go to Gehenna, He is indeed correct when He says that no one will follow Him thither." (*Tholuck.*) **Ye are from beneath: I am from above.**—An abyss separates heaven, life in God, the home of Jesus, and earth the life of this world, the natural and moral home of the Jews; and faith in Jesus could alone have bridged over this abyss. Hence their perdition is, if they refuse to embrace Him, certain, since He alone could have raised them to heaven. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) Jesus lived and moved in a different world. His motives were pure, honest, kind, self-sacrificing. His joys were holy, spiritual, expanding, enduring, Divine. He had heaven in His soul, and they had hell begun in theirs. A gulf impassable between them, except by repentance. One must think with Christ, will with Him, toil with Him, endure with Him, and die with Him, so as to dwell with Him for ever. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Christ's moral elevation:*—The expression is susceptible of two interpretations. 1. Physical or local, in which sense Christ must have meant that He came from the heavenly world, and they had their origin on the earth. But the latter is only true of their bodies; all souls, as did the Divine personality of Christ, come from God. 2. Moral. The language must apply to character, its elevation and degradation. Christ's moral character was from above—lofty, divine: their's from beneath—mean, selfish, low as hell. In this sense Christ was as distant from His age and all unregenerate mankind as heaven from hell. Concerning this distance, note—I. IT WAS MANIFESTED IN HIS EARTHLY LIFE. 1. It was seen in the conduct of the Jews and others in relation to Him. The Gospels abound with instances illustrative of the felt disparity between Christ and the people with whom He lived (Luke iv. 14–27; Matt. viii. 5–13: xxi. 12; John viii. 1–11). It was thus with the soldiers in Gethsemane, Pilate, the spectators of the Crucifixion. Whence arose this felt distance? It cannot be accounted for on the grounds of—(1) Social superiority: He was a humble Peasant. (2) Non-sociality: He mingled with the people. It was—(3) Simply distance of character. His incorruptible truthfulness, immaculate purity, calm reverence, warm and overflowing benevolence struck them with awe. 2. It was seen in the conduct of Christ in relation to the people. He felt and manifested a moral loneliness. The crowd had nothing in common with Him. What they honoured, He despised; what He loved, they hated. Hence, He only felt akin to those who had kindred sympathy. "My mother and brethren are those who do My will." Hence, too, His frequent withdrawal from the people to pour out His sorrows to the Father. And in His lonely hours He bewails the moral character of His age: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee." He was morally above them. They were mere flickering lamps, dim and sooty; He rolled as a bright star above them. II. IT WAS DEMONSTRATIVE OF HIS REAL DIVINITY. Whence came such a character as this? 1. Intellectually there was nothing, either in Jewish or Gentile mind, to give rise to such a doctrinal system as that propounded by Jesus of Nazareth. His revelation of God's love transcended all human conception. 2. And morally there

was nothing in His age to produce such a character. How could immaculate purity come out of an age of corruption—incorruptible truth come out of a world of falsehood—self-sacrificing love out of a world of selfishness? Men's characters are formed on the principle of imitation; but Christ's character could not be thus formed. He had no perfect form to imitate. Even the best of the patriarchs and the holiest of the prophets were imperfect. How can you account for the existence of such a character as His? Tell me not it came of the earth. Do grapes grow on thorns? Did the flaming pillar in the wilderness grow out of the sand? (1) His perfect moral excellence was universally felt, not because there was no effort employed to discover imperfections in Him; the keen eye of His age was always on the watch, to descry some moral defect. And Pilate, who had every facility for knowing Him, and every motive for condemning Him, said, "I find no fault in Him." (2) This moral excellence was retained to the last, not because He was not assailed by temptation. Never came the great tempter to any man in a more powerful form than to Christ. How then shall we account for such a character as this? Only on the principle that He was indeed the "Son of God." III. IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO HIS REDEEMERSHIP. Had He not been thus morally above mankind, He had lacked the qualification to redeem souls. Holiness has the power to convict, to renovate, to sanctify, and to save. A man who is one with sinners, morally standing on the same platform, can never save them. Because Christ is "above" them, He rolls His moral thunders down to alarm the careless: pours His sunbeams to quicken the dead; rains His fertilizing showers to make moral deserts blossom as the rose. As the well-being of the earth depends upon the heavens, so the spiritual progress of humanity depends upon that Character that is stretched over us like the sunny skies. Conclusion: The subject predicates—1. The way to true elevation. Men are endowed with aspirations. But what altitudes should they scale to reach true dignity? Commerce, literature, scholarship, war? No; from all these heights man must fall—fall like Lucifer, the sun of the morning. The altitude of imitating Christ is that which conducts to glory. Seek the things "above." Press on to assimilation to that character that is above you. It will always be above you, and so far it meets the unbounded moral aspirations of your heart. "Be ye holy, even as God is holy." Christ's character is everlastingly saying to you, "Come up hither." 2. Reveals the only way by which we can regenerate the world. Keep at a moral distance from mankind. Let the people amongst whom we live feel that we are morally above them. In this age, what is called the Church is morally so identified with the spirit that moves the world, that it is on the same moral plane as the market, the theatre. 3. Presents motives for the highest gratitude. The grandest fact in the history of our planet is, that a perfect moral character has been here, wearing our nature. Though His physical personality is gone, His character is here still. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Methods of living*:—There are three methods of living—from beneath, from within, from above. We none of us live after one single method. There has been but one self-consistent man, Jesus, who followed one method throughout. But no other man is either wholly good or consistently bad. Three distant principles, however, of the formation of character are clearly manifest. I. LIFE FROM BENEATH we can easily recognize. The world has received Christian education enough to lead it publicly, at least to repudiate the method of the devil, even though they may follow it privately. II. LIFE FROM WITHIN is good so far as it goes. It is the effort to live as a human being may best live in the powers of his own reason, and out of the motives of his own heart without seeking help from above. And it is fair to say that some who follow it reach admirable results. Christian faith need not make us blind to natural virtues. III. BUT SCRIPTURE FAILS TO RECOGNIZE THIS INTERMEDIATE METHOD OF LIVING. Yet Jesus must have looked out upon life with as quick an appreciation of anything fair in it as any of us can ever feel, and was always ready to see good where we cannot. Nevertheless, He admits of only two sharply defined principles and tendencies—one of this world and tending towards that which is beneath; and the other like His own higher life rising towards that which is above. This is admittedly a difficulty. We observe a good deal of loveableness and goodness in the world growing out of men's hearts without any religious vitality in it; Christ recognized nothing of the kind. Which is right? 1. Remember that Jesus went beyond all that is temporary in human conduct, and that His judgments have reference to radical principles and final issues. When, therefore, He distinguishes two opposite methods of life only, while human experience shows us a third, the question arises whether life can go on much farther in the half-way fashion? Is not this intermediate way a path that must break off

somewhere, and he who follows it be compelled to scale the height or plunge into the abyss? Is it anything more than a provisional method, and so cannot be justified as a necessary and reasonable expedient for a life? 2. It is a great presumption against it that it *is* an expedient, and cannot possibly be the full, final method of an immortal soul. It is a serious disadvantage that the plan must be held subject to death, and will have to be dropped in the grave. As thinking, acting beings, we want to plan our lives for ages, not for years; and who of us expect to live one single day after death without finding ourselves obliged to take God and the whole kingdom of righteousness into our account of life? I cannot live fifty, one hundred, one thousand years hence, still drifting on in unconcern about the greatest and final realities of the universe. 3. Some will admit this disadvantage, but, however they may wish to believe as their mothers have, say, "I must build my life upon known facts and truths which experience can substantiate." So be it, give me facts to build into the substantial arch of a life, but let me not neglect the Keystone, because life can be carried so high without it, and the temporary scaffolding hold all in place for the present. And if the gospel brings the facts which are necessary to make life entire we ought at once to use them. Is faith in Christ, this Keystone, which completes and secures all, and that with no temporary scaffolding of our own construction, but with the righteousness of God? 4. Let me ask you who are trying to live honourably without religion to search the scriptures of your heart, and of providence, and see if the present fact of a living God is not everywhere pressed upon you? But beside this there is a whole range of Divine facts in the world called Christianity, as positive facts of history as the rocky mountains are facts of geography; and one might as reasonably attempt to engineer a railroad across America without taking the mountains into account as to seek to stretch a purpose across this life without taking Christianity into his plan. From these facts let us specify—(1) The person of Christ. Pilate did not know what to do with it and would wash his hands; but the world cannot evade its responsibility. Christ stands before the judgment throne of every soul, and the final question of our lives, whether we will or no, becomes, "What shall I do with Jesus?" &c. (2) The power of the Holy Ghost in the lives of men. This is a fact which runs through the whole range of Christian history, and is not unknown outside it, or whence those instinctive prayers, great ideas, visions of better things? 5. We must allow that a provisional way of living is justifiable only on the supposition that it is necessary. One may live as well as he can in a tent, provided there is no material of which he can build a house. One may camp out under a mere moral theory of life, provided a religious home is an impossibility. But there are materials sound and ample for a Christian home in life in the Christian Church. Do not then camp out, but come in. Conclusion: Note some considerations which show the completeness of the Christian method of living and the incompleteness of the best method which is not clearly Christian. 1. The Christian method is life from above. Christ finds the lost child and sets him in the midst of the Divine Fatherhood, and thus brings life into union with God. 2. It harmonizes everything in and around us, and the growing harmony of life is the sure proof that the method cannot be wrong. 3. Without these reconciliations the best life must be imperfect, and its method therefore to be eschewed. (*Newman Smyth, D.D.*) **If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.**—Our Lord spoke as One having authority, as a king from the throne, a judge from the tribunal. I. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN OUR BELIEVING IN CHRIST. 1. A deep sense of our need of Him as the only and all-sufficient Saviour. "They that are whole need not a physician" (Isa. xxvii. 13; Matt. ix. 12). 2. A giving full credit to the gospel revelation concerning Him in His Person, offices, and work. 3. A full conviction of conscience arising—(1) From a discernment of the excellency of what is revealed. (2) From the manner in which it is revealed. 4. A removal of all enmity and aversion to Christ. 5. A powerful attraction of the whole soul to Christ, a closing in with the gospel way of salvation, and a cleaving to Him with full purpose of heart. II. THE AWFUL CONSEQUENCES OF UNBELIEF (Ezek. iii. 18). Unbelievers—1. Die in a state of guilt and under condemnation. Their conscience condemns them because they have defiled it; the law, because they have broken it; the gospel, because they have rejected it. This condemnation is now (chap iii. 18). 2. Die under the power and dominion of sin (Rev. xxii. 11). 3. Dying in their sins, they sink under everlasting punishment. Those who sin against the remedy perish without it. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *The greatest calamity*:—I. TO DIE IN ONE'S SINS IS THE GREATEST CALAMITY. To die is a terribly solemn thing, for it involves separation from home, business, ac-

quaintance, world, the very body itself, and introduction into a mysterious, untried, spiritual state of retribution. But to die in sin adds immeasurably to its solemnity. Sin is the sting of death. To die in one's sins means—1. To die having misused this life with all its blessings. Life's grand purpose is the cultivation of a holy character. For this—(1) All physical blessings are given: health, time, nature. (2) All social pleasures and happy interchanges of thought, feeling, and soul. (3) All mental blessings, literature, science, poetry, schools, &c. (4) All redemptive blessings—the gospel with its soul-saving appliances. He who dies in his sins has abused all. 2. To die with all the conditions of misery—conflicting passions, tormenting conscience, a dreaded God, foreboding anguish. If this is not hell, what is it? Better a thousand times to die in a pauper's hovel or in a martyr's tortures than to die in sin. II. UNBELIEF IN CHRIST RENDERS THIS GREATEST OF CALAMITIES INEVITABLE. Belief in Christ, as the Revealer of God, is essential to the deliverance of man from the guilt, power, and consequence of sins. 1. This deliverance requires the awaking in the soul of a supreme affection for God. Love to God only can destroy the old man. 2. A supreme affection for God requires a certain revelation of Him. In what aspects must the Eternal appear to man before this love can be awakened? He must appear personally, forgivingly, and sublimely perfect. 3. This certain revelation is nowhere but in Christ. Belief in Him therefore is essential to a deliverance of the soul from sin. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Unbelief* is a sin—1. Heavy with the burden of ingratitude (Luke xvii. 17). 2. Heavy with the burden of a broken law (Gal. iii. 10). 3. Heavy with impending wrath of God (John iii. 36). 4. Crimsoned with blood (Isa. i. 18; Heb. x. 26; Hos. i. 2). (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Unbelief*:—I. IS THE THING THAT SPECIALLY RUINS MEN. All manner of sin may be forgiven. But unbelief bars the door against mercy (Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 36). II. WAS THE SECRET OF THE JEWS BEING SO THOROUGHLY "OF THE WORLD." If they would only have believed in Christ, they would have been "delivered from this present evil world." The victory that overcomes the world is faith. Once believing on a heavenly Saviour a man has a portion and a heart in heaven (Gal. i. 4; 1 John v. 4, 5). III. THERE IS NOTHING HARD OR UNCHARITABLE IN WARNING MEN PLAINLY OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNBELIEF. Never to speak of hell is not acting as Christ did. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Unbelief will destroy the soul*:—If but one sin be unrepented of, the man continues still a bond-slave of hell. By one little hole, a ship will sink into the bottom of the sea. The stab of a penknife to the heart will as well destroy a man as all the daggers that killed Cæsar in the senate-house. The soul will be strangled with one cord of vanity as well as with all the cart-ropes of iniquity: only the more sins, the more plagues and fiercer flames in hell; but he that lives and dies impenitent in one, it will be his destruction. One dram of poison will despatch a man, and one reigning sin will bring him to endless misery. (*R. Bolton.*) *Dying in sin*:—A dying woman, after a life of frivolity, said to me, "Do you think that I can be pardoned?" I said, "Oh, yes," Then, gathering herself up in the concentrated dismay of a departing spirit, she looked at me and said, "Sir, I know I shall not!" Then she looked up as though she heard the click of the hoofs of the pale horse, and her long locks tossed on the pillow as she whispered, "The summer is ended." (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *We must believe or perish*:—Unbelief stops the current of God's mercy from running; it shuts up God's bowels, closeth the orifice of Christ's wounds, that no healing virtue will come out. "He could not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief" (Matt. xiii. 58). (*T. Watson.*) *Judgment overtakes sin suddenly*:—The Rev. F. W. Holland in 1867 was encamped in Wady Feiram, near the base of Mount Serbal. He says: "A tremendous thunderstorm burst upon us. After little more than an hour's rain the water rose so rapidly in the previously dry wady (valley), that I had to run for my life, and with great difficulty succeeded in saving my tent and goods, my boots, which I had not time to pick up, being washed away. In less than two hours a dry desert wady, upwards of 300 yards broad, was turned into a foaming torrent from eight to ten feet deep, roaring and tearing down, and bearing everything before it—tangled masses of tamarisks, hundreds of beautiful palm trees, scores of sheep and goats, camels, donkeys, and even men, women, and children, for a whole encampment of Arabs was washed away a few miles above me. The storm commenced at five o'clock in the evening, and at half-past nine the waters were rapidly subsiding, and it was evident that the flood had spent its force. In the morning a gently flowing stream, but a few yards broad and a few inches deep, was all that remained of it. But the whole

bed of the valley was changed. Here great heaps of boulders were piled up, where hollows had been the day before; there holes had taken the place of banks covered with trees. Two miles of tamarisk wood, which was situated above the palm grove, had been completely washed away, and upwards of a thousand palm trees swept down to the sea. The change was so great that I could not have believed it possible in so short a time had I not witnessed it with my own eyes." So sudden, and greater far will be the final ruin of those who build their hopes of eternal life on the sand of human doing, and not upon the "Rock"—Christ Jesus.

Vers. 25–27. **Then said they unto Him, Who art Thou? . . . Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.**—By thus expressing Himself, Jesus evidently declared Himself to be the expected One. He avoided, however, the term "Messiah," as subject to too much misunderstanding among the Jews. It was, however, just this term which His hearers desired to extort from Him, and it was with this object that they asked the question: "Who art Thou?" In other words: "Have at least the courage to speak out plainly." In fact, an express declaration on this point might have furnished them matter for a capital accusation. The answer of Jesus is: Absolutely what I also declared unto you—neither more nor less than My words imply. He appeals to His own testimony as the adequate expression of His nature. They have only to fathom the series of statements He has made concerning Himself, and they will find therein a complete analysis of His mission and essence. The application of this reply of Jesus was that, to discover His true nature and the position He filled towards Israel and the world, it was sufficient to weigh the testimony which He had for some time borne to Himself. Neither more nor less was to be expected from Him than He Himself stated. In this manner He would be successively recognized as the true Temple (chap. ii.); the Living Water (chap. iv.); the true Son of God (chap. v.); the Bread of heaven (chap. vi.); &c. And thus His name of Christ would be spelt out in some sort, letter by letter, in the heart of the believer, would there take the form of a spontaneous discovery, which would be infinitely more advantageous than if learnt by rote under external teaching. In fact, the confession "Thou art the Christ," to be a saving one, must be as with St. Peter (chap. vi. 66–69), the fruit of the experience of faith (Matt. xvi. 17). Jesus never sought or accepted an adherence arising from any other principle. This reply is one of the most characteristic traits of our Lord's wisdom, and perfectly explains why He so frequently forbade the twelve to say that He was the Christ. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Christ's teaching* is—I. CONSISTENT (ver. 25). Probably it was desired that He should make a proclamation of Himself inconsistent with His former utterances; if so it was disappointed. All His utterances meet in Him as rays meet in the sun. This is remarkable if we consider—1. The various and trying circumstances under which He spoke. It was often under intense suffering and great provocation, and often in answer to men who did their utmost to make Him contradict Himself. 2. The diversity in the minds and circumstances of those who reported His speeches. How different in faculties, taste, culture, habits, and angles of observation were His four biographers; and yet their reports agree. II. PROGRESSIVE (ver. 26). Christ suited His teaching to the capacities and characters of His hearers. In His mind there was an infinite treasury of truth; but His administration of it was gradual. Indeed no finite intelligence could take in all that was in the mind of Christ; it would take Eternity to unfold all His wonderful thoughts. This progressiveness—1. Supplies a motive to stimulate human inquiry. Christ will teach you according to your capacity. The more you learn of Him, the more He will teach you. 2. Shows His suitability as a Teacher for mankind. Men have naturally a craving for knowledge; and the more they know, the more intense their craving becomes. They therefore want a teacher of boundless resources. III. DIVINE. "He that sent Me," &c. (ver. 26). He taught not human things, but the things of God—absolute realities—concerning the Divine nature, government, claims, &c. IV. NOT ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD (ver. 27). In this they represent an enormous class in every age, who understand not Christ, but misinterpret Him. Conclusion—Have we put to Christ in earnest the question, "Who art Thou?" and have we received in docility, faith, and love back into our own hearts an answer from Him? (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Ver. 28, 29. **When ye have lifted up the Son of Man.**—As instruments they would lift Him to the cross; as a result He would ascend to His throne. (*W. H.*

Van Doren, D.D.) *Christ forecasting His death and destiny* :—Christ's language here—I. REVEALS HIS SUBLIME HEROISM IN THE PROSPECT OF A TERRIBLE DEATH. "When ye have lifted up," an expression more than once used to signify His crucifixion. This was—1. The culmination of human wickedness. This could reach no higher point than the putting to death of the Son of God. 2. The culmination of human suffering. Crucifixion involved ignominy, insult, torture. Yet how calmly Christ speaks about it—"He endured the Cross and despised the shame." There was no faltering note, no complaint, no perturbation, dismay. II. EXPRESSES HIS UNSHAKEN FAITH IN THE TRIUMPH OF HIS CAUSE. "Then shall ye know," &c. 1. He was not discouraged by apparent failure. To the world His life ending in crucifixion would appear a stupendous failure: to Him it was a success. His death was as a seed falling into the earth. 2. He did not despair of man's improvability. He believed that there would come a reaction in men's minds concerning Him. When He was gone they would begin to think, recognize, and give Him credit for excellency, which they did not when He was amongst them. 3. He was not doubtful of ultimate success. He saw the day of Pentecost, the result of apostolic labours, the triumph of His truth through all successive ages, and at last His character moulding the race to His own ideal. III. IMPLIES A PRINCIPLE OF CONDUCT COMMON IN ALL HISTORY: viz., that good men undervalued in life are appreciated when gone. We see this principle—1. In the family. Members may live together for years, and through infirmity of temper, clashing of tastes, collision of opinion, &c., excellencies may be entirely overlooked. One dies—father, mother, brother, sister—and then attributes of goodness come up in the memory that never appeared before. 2. In the State. Public men, devoted to the common good, and loyal to conscience, clash with popular opinions and prejudices and are bitterly denounced. They die, and their virtues emerge, and fill the social atmosphere with fragrance. Burke, Hume, and Cobden are examples of this. 3. In the Church. A minister labours for years among a people—too thoughtful to be appreciated by the thoughtless, too honest to bow to current prejudices—so that his work passes unacknowledged and unrequited. He dies, and has a moral epiphany. It was so with Arnold and Robertson. IV. INDICATES A CONSCIOUSNESS OF HIS PECULIAR RELATION TO THE ETERNAL FATHER. "As my Father hath taught me," &c. (ver. 29). 1. He was the Pupil of the Father. 2. He was the Companion of the Father. 3. He was the servant of the Father. "I do always those things that please Him," though I displease you. Conclusion: 1. This subject reveals the sublime uniqueness of Christ. Who, amongst all the millions of men that have appeared, could use such language as this? Who could forecast such a terrible future with such accuracy and composure? Who could proclaim such a Divine relationship? As our system has but one sun, our universe has but one Christ. 2. This subject suggests the Christ verifying force of human history. What Christ here predicts history has established. Through His crucifixion ever increasing multitudes have been convinced that He is the true Messiah. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **He that hath sent Me is with Me.**—1. Unity of essence. 2. Communion of spirit. 3. Consciousness of favour. 4. Present help. 5. One in eternal plans. Jehovah was ever at His right hand in might, majesty, and love. To be with God is to have light without darkness, truth without falsehood, power without weakness, love without limit. The sunbeams spread their golden wings over us, and yet abide with the sun, from whence they flow. He who sent His Son into the world was so with Him, that He shared, so to speak, all the opprobrium and enmity with which His mission was met. In the same manner is Christ with His people. (Matt. xxv. 40). (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The exemplary life* :—I. LIFE COMMISSIONED BY GOD. "Sent me." Christ was appointed by God to His Work (1 John iv. 14). Every life is a plan of God. Cunning workmen in building the Temple were inspired by Him. He sends to all kinds of lawful work. Lowly workers realize this, it will exalt and encourage you. II. LIFE APPROVED OF GOD. Our Lord's life and work were ever well pleasing to God. So may our life and work be if, by His help, we are diligent, faithful, unselfish, and do all as unto Him. III. LIFE ACCOMPANIED BY GOD. Please God in your life and you will realize His gracious presence. His presence is an assurance of support in trial, victory in conflict, guidance, progress, &c. (*W. Jones.*) **The Father hath not left Me alone.** Let us not think holiness in the hearts of men here in the world is a forlorn, forsaken, and outcast thing from God, that He hath no regard of. Holiness, wherever it is, though never so small, if it be but hearty and sincere, it can no more be cut off and discontinued from God, than a sunbeam here upon earth can be broken off from its

intercourse with the sun, and be left alone amidst the mire and dust of this world. The sun may as well discard its own rays, and banish them from itself, into some region of darkness, far remote from it, where they shall have no dependance at all upon it, as God can forsake and abandon holiness in the world, and leave it a poor orphan thing, that shall have no influence at all from Him to preserve and keep it. Holiness is something of God, wherever it is; it is an efflux from Him, that always hangs upon Him, and lives in Him: as the sunbeams, though they gild this lower world, and spread their golden wings over us, yet they are not so much here, where they shine, as in the sun, from whence they flow. God cannot draw a curtain betwixt Himself and holiness, which is nothing but the splendour and shining of Himself. He cannot hide His face from it; He cannot desert it, in the world (Matt. xxviii. 20; Acts ix. 4, 5; 2 Tim. iv. 17). (*R. Cudworth.*) **I do always those things which please Him.**—Eternally, past, present, and future at all times, everywhere, in all ways, He requires from all, and teaches all those things which please God. Of whom but the eternal Son and Spirit can this be said? (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The Christian's motto:*—Observe Christ as—I. THE MEDIATOR. Our text is true of our Lord every way. 1. Of His incarnation we read, "Lo, I come . . . I delight to do Thy will." He did the thing which pleased the Father during His obscure life as the carpenter's Son. He was "The holy child Jesus." At the end of His retirement the Father set His seal upon His beloved Son in whom He was well pleased at His baptism, when He fulfilled all righteousness, a type of the perfect obedience He intended to render. His temptation and victory were well pleasing to God, the token whereof was the ministration of angels. Throughout His life He fulfilled Isa. xlii. 21. He magnified the ceremonial law by coming under it and observing it until the time when it passed away; and the moral law by such obedience as enabled Him to say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin." Hence the same attestation at the Transfiguration as at the Baptism, and the answer to His prayer, "Father, glorify Thy name." The miracles were tokens of the Father's pleasure (Acts ii. 22). In His death "it pleased the Father to bruise Him." It pleased God that He should ascend, for "He received gifts for men." God is pleased with His intercession, for it is all prevalent. It will please that He should come again; for all judgment is committed to His hands. 2. The saving works of Jesus are lovely in the Father's eyes. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper," &c. "I have no pleasure in the death," &c. 3. The benefits which Christ confers on the saints please the Father; "for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell," and it pleases Him when of His fulness we receive grace for grace. II. THE MODEL. In taking Christ as our example—1. It implied that we ourselves are rendered pleasing to God. As long as a man is obnoxious to God, all he does is obnoxious. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." 2. Included in this is the avoiding all things that displease Him. (1) Pride, whether of talent, self-righteousness, wealth, dress, rank. "The Lord resisted the proud." (2) Sloth—which God couples with wickedness. (3) Unwatchfulness, carelessness, indifference, neglect. (4) Anger, oppression, craftiness, covetousness, worldliness. (5) Unbelief—doubts of His power and faithfulness. (6) Murmuring. 3. It should be our intent and earnest design to please God. We shall not do this by accident; we must give our whole souls to it. 4. The text is positive and practical. "Do." (1) Christ was prayerful, and it cannot please the Father for His child not to speak to Him. (2) Christ loved God and man. (3) Christ pleased not Himself, and to please God we must deny ourselves. (4) Christ was separate from sinners, and we must not be conformed to the world. (5) To please God note Psa. lxix. 30, and Heb. xiii. 16, and learn to cultivate a thankful spirit; note—1. John iii. 22, and Heb. xi. 5, 6. and believe; note Col. i. 10, and learn that resignation is pleasing to God. 5. These things must be actually done. "I do." It will not suffice to talk or pray about them or to be charmed with them. 6. "Always." At home as husband or wife, &c.; at business as master or servant. There must not be at any moment anything that we should not like God to see, nor be where we should not like Christ to find us. 7. By doing the things that please God. (1) We shall enjoy and retain the presence of the Father, not otherwise. (2) We shall be girded with strength; otherwise we shall be impotent. (3) The Lord will be with us in our work. Conclusion: 1. Is this too high a model? Would you prefer an example that would let you be contented with a measure of sin? Do you think it an impossible ideal? But what about the promised help of the Spirit? 2. Have you failed? Then grieve over it, and try again. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *We must please God always:*—It will not suffice to say I do the things which please God when I go out to worship.

The Christian must aim to say "I do *always*." I have known some persons take a holiday from Christ's service sometimes. They say "Once a year surely one may indulge." If holiness is slavery then surely you are the slave of sin. (*Ibid.*) *Conduct inspired by love*:—A child had a beautiful canary, which sang to him from early morning. The mother of the child was ill—so ill that the song of the little bird, which to the boy was delicious music, disturbed and distressed her so that she could scarcely bear to hear it. He put it in a room far away, but the bird's notes reached the sick bed, and caused pain to her in her long, feverish days. One morning, as the child stood holding his mother's hand, he saw that when his pet sang, an expression of pain passed over her dear face. She had never yet told him that she could not bear the noise, but she did so now. "It is no music to me," she said, as he asked her if the notes were not pretty. He looked at her in wonder. "And do you really dislike the sound?" "Indeed I do," she said. The child, full of love to his mother, left the room. The golden feathers of the pretty canary were glistening in the sunshine, and he was trilling forth his loveliest notes; but they had ceased to please the boy. They were no longer pretty or soothing to him, and taking the cage in his hand he left the house. When he returned he told his mother that the bird would disturb her rest no more, for he had given it to his little cousin. "But you loved it so," she said; "how could you part with the canary?" "I loved the canary, mother," he replied; "but I love you more. I could not really love anything that gave you pain. It would not be true love if I did." (*Quiver.*) **As He spake these words many believed on Him.**—*The force of truth*:—A woman in Scotland, who was determined, as far as possible, not to have anything to do with religion, threw her Bible and all the tracts she could find in her house into the fire. One of the tracts fell down out of the flames, so she picked it up and thrust it in again. A second time it slipped down, and once more she put it back. Again her evil intention was frustrated, but the next time she was more successful, though, even then only half of it was consumed. Taking up the portion that fell out of the fire, she exclaimed, "Surely the devil is in that tract, for it won't burn." Her curiosity was excited; she began to read it, and it was the means of her conversion. It was one of my sermons. Verily that sermon, and the woman too, "were saved, yet so as by fire." What wondrous ways the Lord has of bringing home the truth! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A word in season*:—Lady Huntingdon once spoke to a workman who was repairing a garden wall, and pressed him to thoughtfulness on the state of his soul. Some years afterwards, she was speaking to another man on the same subject, and said, "Thomas, I fear you never pray, nor look to Jesus Christ for salvation." "Your ladyship is mistaken," answered the man; "I heard what passed between you and James at such a time, and the word you designed for him took effect on me." "How did you hear it?" "I heard it on the other side of the garden, through a hole in the wall, and shall never forget the impression I received."

Vers. 31–59. **Then said Jesus unto those Jews which believed on Him.**—*A glorious liberator*:—I. FREEDOM PROFFERED. 1. Sin makes bondage (ver. 34; Matt. vi. 24; Luke xvi. 13; Rom. vi. 16, 17; Gal. iv. 25; 2 Pet. ii. 19). 2. Truth brings freedom (ver. 32; Rom. vi. 14, 18, vii. 6; Gal. v. 18; Jas. i. 25; 1 Pet. ii. 16). 3. Christ gives freedom (ver. 36; Psa. xl. 2, cxviii. 5; Rom. vi. 23, viii. 2; 1 Cor. vii. 22; Gal. v. 1). II. BONDAGE DEMONSTRATED. 1. By doing evil deeds (ver. 44; Gen. iii. 13, vi. 5; Matt. xiii. 38; Mark vii. 23; Acts xiii. 10; 1 John iii. 8). 2. By disbelieving the Lord (ver. 45; Isa. liii. 1; Luke xxii. 67; John iv. 48, v. 58, vi. 36, xvii. 24). 3. By not hearing truth (ver. 47; Isa. vi. 9; Matt. xiii. 15, Mark iv. 9; John iii. 12, v. 47, 1 John iv. 6). III. DEATH VANQUISHED. 1. A dying race (ver. 53; Gen. iii. 19; Psa. lxxxix. 48; Eccl. xii. 5; Zech. i. 5; Rom. v. 12; Heb. ix. 27). 2. A life-giving obedience (ver. 51; Deut. xi. 27; Jer. vii. 23; Acts v. 29; Rom. vi. 16; Heb. v 9; 1 Pet. i. 22). 3. An ever-living Saviour (ver. 58; Psa. xc. 1; John i. 1, xvii. 5; Col. i. 17; Heb. i. 10; Rev. i. 18). (*Sunday School Times.*) *Bondage and freedom*:—I. PHYSICAL BONDAGE. 1. An ancient institution (Gen. ix. 25, 26). 2. Called bondmen (Gen. xliii. 18, xliv. 9). 3. Some born in bondage (Gen. xiv. 14; Psa. cxvi. 16). 4. Some captured in war (Deut. xx. 14; 2 Kings v. 2). 5. Subject to sale (Gen. xvii. 27, xxxvii. 28–36). 6. Debtors sold into bondage (2 Kings iv. 1; Matt. xviii. 25). 7. Thieves sold into bondage (Exod. xxii. 3). 8. Bondage of Israelites not perpetual (Exod. xxi. 2; Lev. xxv. 10). II. SPIRITUAL BONDAGE. 1. Is to the devil (1 Tim. iii. 7; 2 Tim. ii. 26). 2. Is to fear of death (Heb. ii. 14, 15). 3. Is to sin (John viii. 34; Rom. vi. 16). 4. Is to

corruption (2 Pet. ii. 19; Rom. viii. 21). 5. Is to iniquity (Acts. viii. 23). 6. Is to the world (Gal. iv. 3). 7. Is to spiritual death (Rom. vii. 24). 8. Is unknown by its subjects (John viii. 33). III. SPIRITUAL FREEDOM. 1. Promised (Isa. xlii. 6, 7, lxi. 1). 2. Typified (Exod, i. 13, 14 with Deut. iv. 20). 3. Through Christ (John viii. 36; Rom. vii. 24, 25). 4. Proffered by the gospel (Luke iv. 17–21). 5. Through the truth (John viii. 32). 6. Testified by the Spirit (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 5, 6). 7. Enjoyed by saints (Rom. vi. 18–22). 8. Saints should abide in it (Gal. v. 1). (*Ibid.*) *The Kingdom of the Truth*:—I. THOSE WHO ARE NOT ITS SUBJECTS THOUGH THEY SAY THEY ARE. 1. Accepting a mere dead orthodoxy does not constitute one a genuine subject of the Kingdom of Truth (vers. 31–33). This declaration is levelled against the traditional faiths and old maxims which those Jews were holding as their birthright blessing. 2. Nor being born of respectable and even believing lineage. Our Lord was confronted with the dry statement that they descended from Abraham, and that they were never slaves even in morality. "Professing themselves wise, they became fools." Christ answered with directness that the plain reason why they did not believe in Him, was that they were not born of God. All there was of good in their boasted ancestor was due to his having by faith seen Christ's day. And when this maddened them, He raised His word to an imperial utterance, such as only the King of the Kingdom of Truth could make (ver. 58). There are two things in this: (1) He that is not in Christ's kingdom is in Satan's. (2) He who is not a Christian cannot be a true man in life, thought, temper, &c. 3. Nor following mere blind formulas of performance. Education has value; but the truest men in an age like ours must sometimes turn back upon their training with a free judgment. Antiquity is no proof of soundness in the right. The devil has all the force of the argument in that direction, and Jesus told these Jews that Satan was their first father. 4. Nor insisting on mere sincere convictions. One may have honest preferences for an absolutely false standard. It is possible that the affections have grown perverted. The later history of Turner can be explained only on the supposition of a disease in his eyes; this threw all his work out of drawing. He was as honest and industrious as ever; his sense of colour was as fine as in his early days, but his eyes had become mechanically untrustworthy. The men, arguing here with our Lord, did not believe in Him, not because what He told them was not true, but because they, in their innermost hearts, were not true; there was a distorted image upon their souls. II. THOSE WHO ARE ITS SUBJECTS. 1. A true man will accept true doctrines. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." The two grand divisions of our race have always been ranged around Christ and Anti-Christ (1 John iv. 2–6). 2. A true man will cherish true principles. Joseph said he must refuse sin because he could not offend against God. Hazael had no more to offer in objection than that he was afraid he might be thought only a dog. Expediency is not enough, genuineness of principle is needed. 3. A true man will cultivate true tastes. He may not always get in love with some forms and phases of religion. He may find that he has to get himself into a more amiable and trustful frame of mind before he is anything but the artificial being that training for a bad life-time has made him. If he does not love gentleness, or humility, or charity, or temperance, or godliness, when he sees it, it is a task for him to set about to grow to love it as soon as he can. For a critic who does not like a true painting is not himself true. If one prefers Turkish jargon to a harmonious tune, he is not true. And when one turns away from a true child of God, it is because he is not true. 4. A true man will manifest true consistency. Christ gave us the Word of God as the standard of reference. The New Testament is the book of manners in the social circle of the Kingdom of Truth. 5. A true man will live a true life. There will be a fine, high unconsciousness that anything else could be expected of him. He never will seek to pose; he means to *be*. Pure and noble, he wishes only for a career "without fear and without reproach." Can any one tell why the old college-song still thrills us when we are quite on in life? There is a wonderful power in the famous "Integer Vitæ" of our early days. We would like to be reckoned as integers—whole numbers—when the world adds up the columns of its remembered worthies (Psa. xv. 1–4). (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Jesus and Abraham*:—I. THE RELIGION OF THESE JEWS. 1. It was a matter of blood and ancestory. There were, it is true, certain ceremonies to be observed, but it was enough to be "Abraham's seed" to secure the favour of Jehovah. Without that the most diligent piety could not avail. Good parentage no one will despise. If we have got our vigour from virtuous ancestors, we may well be thankful. Even if prodigal of such an inheritance, we shall still have an advantage in the battle

of life. Aaron Burr was a stouter sinner because his mother was Jonathan Edward's daughter. Robert Burns exhausted himself at thirty-eight, but what did he not owe to an honest and frugal parentage? The first generation of sinners lasts longer than the second; much longer than the third. But it will not do to trust blood as a substitute for religion. "Who is your father?" may be the first question, but "Who are you?" comes next. Many a boy disclosing his father's name has excited surprise in the police-court, but the father's good name does not keep him out of prison. Absalom was David's son, and Judas Abraham's. 2. Christ told the Jews that this dead faith in our ancestor was really a bondage to the devil (vers. 34–44). Their ancestors had been slaves in Egypt and Babylon, and now the Roman Eagle had them in its talons. Yet by some legerdemain of logic they reasoned that to be a Hebrew was to be a free man. At once Jesus set them on a deeper search (ver. 44). What a hard master the devil is! For Paradise Eve gets an apple. See this illustrated in the case of Cain, Esau, Samson, Saul, Judas, Agrippa. The prodigal is sure to be set on the lowest tasks, and left to crave even husks. Nor has the devil grown kinder since. 3. Of course the bondsmen of Satan "cannot bear" the truth (vers. 43, 45, 47), neither receive nor recognize it. Paul thought he was doing God service when killing Christians, and perhaps these Jews were sincere, but with the maladroitness of those who give themselves to the service of evil they reserve their criticisms for that which was most fair, and direct their assaults when the line was most secure. Our Lord's treatment of the woman was apparently the cause of their hostility. The truth and goodness which angered them angers sinners now. II. CHRIST'S DISCIPLES. 1. They are those who abide in Christ's Word. The dead religion was a mere name, an accident of birth; the new religion laid hold of the soul and was light and life (vers. 31, 32, 47). What the mind must have is truth. A man who believes a lie warms a serpent in his bosom. Christ's heel has crushed the head of the serpent of falsehood, and for His disciples its charm is broken. Having come to the light the real children of Abraham continue in it. Bartimæus has no wish to return to his blindness. The Christian's love of the truth is one that lasts. And Christians obey the truth (ver. 31; *cf.* Pet. i. 22; Gal. iii. 1, 5, 7). The truth not only touches their intellect, judgment, conscience, but quickens, guides and establishes their will (ver. 30). 2. Yet they enjoy a real freedom—a further contrast (vers. 32, 36; *cf.* Rom. vi. 14–22). Subjection to Christ's word is not slavery. Freedom does not destroy law nor overturn authority. The best liberty finds its satisfaction within the limits of a law which is loved. Note the Divine order; first a change of heart, then morality and piety. To require these bloodthirsty children of Abraham to do his works would be to put an intolerable yoke upon them. The Bible is a weary book to a bad man. Prayer to the worldly is a burden. For the dissolute no shackles so heavy as the rules of virtue. But change a man's mind, and his world is changed. Obedience becomes a song. Besides this, there is the liberty from the penalty of sin by Christ's Cross. 3. As a result of all comes an assurance of endless life (ver. 51, &c.). (*H. A. Edson, D.D.*) *The grace of continuance*:—I. A PREPARATORY STAGE OF DISCIPLESHIP. The mind, heart, will, moved, but the soul not yet made new in Christ. The vestibule of salvation. All depends on holding on. The seed is in the soil, but needs to get root and grow. Satan then tries to check it. II. THE RESULTS OF CONTINUANCE. 1. Confirmation of discipleship. 2. Revelation of truth. 3. Emancipation from sin. III. OUR LORD GIVES HIS FOLLOWERS SOMETHING—1. To do. 2. To prove. 3. To know. 4. To become. (*A. T. Pierson, D.D.*) *Disciples indeed*:—I. THE CHARACTER OF A DISCIPLE INDEED. Let us look at Christ's first disciples. 1. They forsook all they had. See the case of Paul (Phil. iii. 7, 8). Every sin, idol, circumstance inconsistent with Christ's claim must be renounced. 2. They were docile. Christ taught them as they were able to hear. They had much ignorance and many prejudices, but they willingly sat at Christ's feet. This is requisite in all true disciples (Matt. xviii. 2, 3). 3. They had a spiritual knowledge of Christ (chap. xvii. 6–8), although the world knew Him not. So it is still (2 Cor. iv. 6). 4. They enjoyed the friendship of Christ (chap. xv. 15). The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him (1 John i. 3). 5. They were engaged in Christ's service (chap. xv. 16). "None of us liveth to himself." II. THE PRIVILEGE PROMISED TO CHRIST'S DISCIPLES. "Ye shall know the truth." 1. The truth referred to. Christ is the truth (chap. xiv. 6). We read (Eph. iv. 21) of the truth as in Jesus—the truth full of Christ's personal glory, love, power to save. There is truth in His holy character, in His sublime life, in His vicarious death. He speaks here of the redemptive truth of which He Himself was the sum and substance! 2.

The knowledge spoken, of "Ye shall know," not as mere theory, but living power, spiritually, experimentally. The inner eye is opened, the inner ear is unstopped, the heart is melted, the soul is subdued. Truth must be engrafted in the soul (James i. 21). 3. The result predicated. The truth in Jesus emancipates the soul from the—(1) Condemnation (Rom. viii. 1); (2) the power and depravity of sin (Rom. vi. 23; viii. 30); (3) harassing fear of the wrath to come (1 Thess. i. 9, 10); (4) the depressing anxieties of life; (5) from the dark and gloomy forebodings of death (Heb. ii. 14, 15). III. THE CROWNING EVIDENCE THAT ONE IS A DISCIPLE INDEED. "If ye continue in My word." Many of Christ's professing disciples do not continue in His word. See the parable of the sower. But all Christ's true disciples do. 1. His word is engrafted in their souls. The gospel is a living shoot that produces fruit of its own. That soul thus Divinely operated on continues in Christ's word, and Christ's word continues in it. 2. They are joined to the Lord in an everlasting covenant. Every true disciple has entered into a perpetual covenant to be Christ's, having found that he is interested in God's everlasting covenant, ratified and established for ever by the blood of the Surety! His motto is, "I am not My own!" 3. They are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. Without the indwelling, ever-abiding Spirit, there is no spiritual life, power, worship or service; without Him there is no safety. He comes as our life, and He seals us as God's for ever and ever. 4. They are kept by the power of God through faith unto final salvation (Pet. i. 15; John xiii. 1, 2). His Almighty arms of unchanging love are placed underneath, and round about (Deut. xxxiii. 27; Isa. xxvii. 3). God's true people are kept not in mere safety, but in a life of holy love and devotedness; not in sloth and indolence, but in holy activity and spiritual diligence. (*T. G. Horton.*) *Continuous piety is piety indeed:*—It is the evening that crowns the day, and the last act that commends the whole scene. Temporary flashings are but like conducts running with wine at the coronation, that will not hold, or like a land-flood, that seems to be a great sea, but comes to nothing. (*J. Trapp.*) *Constancy a severe test of piety:*—Many who have gone into the field, and liked the work of a soldier for a battle or two, soon have had enough, and come running home again; whereas few can bear it as a constant trade: war is a thing that they could willingly woo for their pleasure, but are loath to wed upon what terms soever. Thus many are easily persuaded to take up a profession of religion, and as easily persuaded to lay it down. Oh! this constancy and persevering is a hard word; this taking up the cross daily; this praying always; this watching night and day, and never laying aside our clothes and armour, indulging ourselves to remit and unbend in our holy waiting upon God, and walking with God, this sends many sorrowful from Christ; yet this is the saint's duty, to make religion his every day's work, without any vacation from one end of the year to the other. (*J. Spencer.*) *The best service is constant:*—After a great snowstorm a little fellow began to shovel a path through a large snow bank before his grandmother's door. He had nothing but a small shovel to work with. "How do you expect to get through that drift?" asked a man passing along. "By keeping at it," said the boy, cheerfully. "That's how." That is the secret of mastering almost every difficulty under the sun. If a hard task is set before you, stick to it. Do not keep thinking how large or how hard it is, but go at it, and little by little it will grow smaller, until it is done. If a hard lesson is to be learned, do not spend a moment in fretting; do not lose breath in saying, "I can't," or "I don't see how;" but go at it, and keep at it—steady. That is the only way to conquer it. If you have entered your Master's service and are trying to be good, you will sometimes find hills of difficulty in the way. Things will often look discouraging, and you will not seem to make any progress at all; but keep at it. Never forget "that's how." *Evidence of discipleship:*—A soldier's confidence in his commander is evidenced by the soldier obeying his commander's orders. A patient's trust in his physician is shown by the patient following the physician's directions. A disciple's sincerity in his professions of discipleship is proved by the disciple walking according to the Master's teaching. It is not that there is any merit in the obedience itself; but it is that there is no sincerity in a profession of faith where there is no obedience. (*H. C. Trumbull.*) *Truth and liberty:*—Faith cometh by hearing (ver. 30). It is in connection with the word of truth that the Holy Spirit works in us. I. THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST'S WORD BEGINS DISCIPLESHIP. There may be alarm, disquietude, inquiry, before this, but these are not discipleship. They are but inquiries after a school and a teacher which will meet the wants, capacities, and longings. All men are saying, "Who will show us any good?" Discipleship begins, not with doing some great thing, but with

receiving Christ's word as the scholar receives the master's teaching. What does He teach? 1. The Father. 2. Himself. From the moment that we accept this we become disciples—taught not of man, but of God. II. CONTINUANCE IN THAT WORD IS THE TEST OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP. This is not continuance in general adherence to His cause; but continuance in the word by which we become disciples. As it is by holding the *beginning* of our confidence that we are made partakers of Christ, so by continuing in the word we make good the genuineness of our discipleship. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"—in that word is everything we need. 1. It is an expansive word: ever widening its dimensions; growing upon us; never old, ever new; in which we make continual discoveries; the same tree, but ever putting forth new branches and leaves; the same river, but ever swelling and widening—loosing none of its old water, yet ever receiving accessions. 2. It is a quickening word: maintaining old life, yet producing new—"Thy word Lord hath quickened me." 3. It is a strengthening word: nerving and invigorating us; lifting us when bowed down; imparting health, courage, resolution, persistency. 4. It is a sanctifying word: it detects the evil and purges it away, pouring holiness into the soul. Let us continue in this word; not weary of it, not losing relish for it. III. KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH IS THE RESULT OF DISCIPLESHIP. All that enter Christ's school are taught of God. Consequently they know the truth; not *a* truth or part of it, but *the* truth—not error—Him who is the Truth. They shall *know* it; not guess at it, speculate on it, get a glimpse of it; but make choice of it, realize it, appreciate it. Blessed promise in a day of doubt and error! IV. THIS TRUTH IS LIBERTY. All truth is, so far, liberty, and all error bondage; some truth is greater liberty, some error greater bondage. Bondage, with many, is simply associated with tyranny, bad government, evil or ecclesiastical despotism. Christ's words go deeper, to the root of the evil. The real chains, prison, bondage are within—so true liberty. It springs from what a man knows of God and of his Christ. Seldom do men realize this. Error, bondage! How can that be if the error be the man's own voluntary doing—the result of his intellectual effort? But the Master is very explicit. The truth shall make you free. There is no other freedom worthy of the name. "He is a free man whom the truth makes free; and all are slaves besides." (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) **Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.**—*True freedom:*—1. Three mighty thoughts—knowledge, truth, freedom. 2. Men claim to be free born or to attain freedom at a great price; yet he who sins is a slave of sin. (1) Political freedom is but the bark, intellectual freedom but the fibre, of the tree spiritual: freedom is the sap. Men contend for bark and fibre, Christ gives the sap. Sometimes we have political freedom, but formal, sapless, as dead as telegraph poles strung with the wires of politicians. 3. Circumstances cannot fetter freedom or confer it. Joseph was as free in the dungeon as on the throne. "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage." The Israelites in the desert were a nation of slaves despite their liberty. It matters not where I place my watch, so I wind it, it is really free; if I interfere with the works, wherever it may be, it is in bondage. So of man—bind, chain, imprison; if the soul be in sympathy with God, sustained by truth, you have a free man; if the reverse, you have a slave. John, though in prison, was free; Herod, though on the throne, was a slave—Christ and Pilate. Freedom, like the kingdom of heaven, is within. The text teaches a threefold lesson—man may know; truth is: the knowledge of the truth brings freedom. I. The word KNOW carries us back to the dawn of history. 1. Two possibilities are placed before man—life or knowledge. Full of life, he chooses knowledge at the risk of life. 2. The race is true to its head—exploration, geographical, scientific, philosophical. 3. Yet men were then setting up altars to the unknown God: men now to God unknowable. The great Teacher says: "Ye shall know." 4. The promise implies that man can trust himself and the results of his research and experiences. II. THE SUBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE IS TRUTH. Truth stands in contrast—1. With a lie. Christ accuses His hearers of being children of the devil. To-day as then men lie; wilfully misrepresent in business, political, and social life. 2. With veracity. Truth is consistency between what we think and say and what is. Veracity is consistency between what we say and think; but we may think wrongly. 3. Truth is reality as opposed to a lie and to appearance. Christ, as Son of God and Son of Man, sets forth certain realities regarding both, and the relation between the two. That God is, what God is, and what man is: alienation and possible reconciliation; regeneration by the Spirit; the results of separation from and reconciliation with God. These facts, relations,

results, are truth, and may be known. III. THE RESULTS OF SUCH KNOWLEDGE IS FREEDOM. 1. Freedom from the past, "Son, remember;" but the knowledge of God's reconciliation blots out the sin-stained past as a cloud. 2. Freedom from fears for the future based upon the past. IV. THE ONE CONDITION OF ALL THIS IS BELIEF IN CHRIST. Faith as a grain of mustard seed grows into knowledge, &c. (*O. P. Gifford.*) *Freedom by the truth.*:—Observe—1. The greatness of Christ's aim—to make all men free. He saw around Him man in slavery to man, race to race; men trembling before priestcraft, and those who were politically and ecclesiastically free, in worse bondage to their own passions. Conscious of His Deity and His Father's intentions, He, without the excitement of an earthly liberator, calmly said: "Ye shall be free." 2. The wisdom of the means. The craving for liberty was not new, nor the promise of satisfying it; but the promise had been vain. Men had tried—(1) Force: and force in the cause of freedom is to be honoured, and those who have used it have been esteemed as the world's benefactors—Judas Maccabæus, &c. Had Christ willed so to come, success was certain. Men were ripe for revolt, and at a word, thrice three hundred thousand swords would have started from their scabbards; but in that case one nation only would have gained independence, and that merely from foreign oppression. (2) Legislative enactments. By this England could and did emancipate her slaves; but she could not fit them for freedom, nor make it lasting. The stroke of a monarch's pen will do the one—the discipline of ages is needed for the other. Give a constitution to-morrow to some feeble Eastern nation, and in half a century they will be subjected again. Therefore Christ did not come to free the world in this way. (3) Civilization. Every step of civilization is a victory over some lower instinct; but it contains elements of fresh servitude. Man conquers the powers of nature, and becomes in turn their slave. The workman is in bondage to his machinery, which determines hours, wages, habits. The rich man acquires luxuries, and then cannot do without them. Members of a highly civilized community are slaves to dress, hours, etiquette. Therefore Christ did not talk of the progress of the species; he freed the inner man that so the outer might become free. Note—I. THE TRUTH THAT LIBERATES.—The truth Christ taught was chiefly about: 1. God. Blot out that thought and existence becomes unmeaning, resolve is left without a stay, aspiration and duty without a support. Christ exhibited God as—(1) Love; and so that fearful bondage to fate was broken. (2) A Spirit, requiring spiritual worship; and thus the chain of superstition was rent asunder. 2. Man. We are a mystery to ourselves. So where nations exhibit their wealth and inventions, before the victories of mind you stand in reverence. Then look at those who have attained that civilization, their low aims and mean lives, and you are humbled. And so of individuals. How noble a given man's thoughts at one moment, how base at another! Christ solved this riddle. He regarded man as fallen, but magnificent in his ruin. Beneath the vilest He saw a soul capable of endless growth; hence He treated with respect all who approached Him, because they were men. Here was a germ for freedom. It is not the shackle that constitutes the slave, but the loss of self-respect—to be treated as degraded till he feels degraded. Liberty is to suspect and yet reverence self. 3. Immortality. If there be an idea that cramps and enslaves the soul it is that this life is all. If there be one which expands and elevates it it is that of immortality. This was the martyrs' strength. In the hope and knowledge of that truth they were free from the fear of pain of death. II. THE LIBERTY WHICH TRUTH GIVES. 1. Political freedom. Christianity does not directly interfere with political questions, but mediately it must influence them. Christ did not promise this freedom, but He gave it more surely than conqueror, reformer, or patriot. And this not by theories or constitutions, but by truths. God a Spirit, man His redeemed child; before that spiritual equality all distinctions vanish. 2. Mental independence. Slavery is that which cramps powers, and the worst is that which cramps the noblest powers. Worse therefore than he who manacles the body is he who puts fetters on the mind, and demands that men shall think and believe as others have done. In Judæa life was a set of forms and religion—a congeries of traditions. One living word from Christ, and the mind of the world was free. Later a mountain mass of superstition had gathered round the Church. Men said that the soul was to be saved only by doing what the priesthood taught. Then the heroes of the Reformation said the soul is saved by the grace of God; and once more the mind of the world was set free by truth. There is a tendency to think, not what is true, but what is respectable, authorized. It comes

partly from cowardice, partly from habit. Now truth frees us from this by warning of individual responsibility which cannot be delegated to another, and thrown off on a church. Do not confound mental independence with mental pride. It ought to co-exist with the deepest humility. For that mind alone is free which, conscious of its liability to err, and, turning thankfully to any light, refuses to surrender the Divinely given right and responsibility of judging for itself and having an opinion of its own. 3. Superiority to temptation. It is not enough to say that Christ promises freedom from sin. Childhood, paralysis, impotence of old age, may remove the desire of transgressions. Therefore we must add that one whom Christ liberates is free by his own will. It is not that he would and cannot; but that he can and will not. Christian liberty is right well sustained by love, and made firm by faith in Christ. This may be seen by considering moral bondage. Go to the intemperate man in the morning, when his head aches and his whole frame unstrung: he is ashamed, hates his sin, and would not do it. Go to him at night when the power of habit is upon him, and he obeys the mastery of his craving. Every more refined instance of slavery is just as real. Wherever a man would and cannot, there is servitude. 4. Superiority to fear. Fear enslaves, courage liberates. The apprehension of pain, fear of death, dread of the world's laugh at poverty, or loss of reputation, enslave alike. From all such Christ frees. He who lives in the habitual contemplation of immortality, cannot be in bondage to time; he who feels his soul's dignity cannot cringe. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Spiritual and scientific truth*:—There is a well-known picture by Retzsch, in which Satan is represented as playing at chess with a man for his soul. The pieces on the board seem to represent the virtues and the deadly sins. The man is evidently losing the game, while in the background stands an angel sad and helpless, and statue-like. We need not stay to criticize the false theology inplied in that picture, because our immediate concern is with a meaning which has been read into that picture by a great scientific teacher of our day. We have been told by Professor Huxley, that if we "substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture a calm, strong angel who is playing, as we say, for love, and would rather lose than win," we shall have a true picture of the relation of man to nature. "The chessboard is the world; the pieces are the phenomena of the universe; the rules of the game are what we call the laws of nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, and just, and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance." Such is the modern reading of the picture. And here there is a great truth, or at least one side of a great truth, expressed. It puts before us in a very real and concrete form the fact that, in our mere physical life, we are engaged in a great struggle. We must learn to adapt ourselves truly to the physical conditions of our life, or we must perish in a fruitless opposition to natural laws. But that physical life which we live is not our whole life, nor are what we call the laws of external nature the only laws which we need to know. We are surrounded by spiritual forces in which our moral life is lived. In that more real life we have relations with spiritual beings, some like ourselves and some above us, and One whom we love to call our Father, which is in heaven. Are there no laws in that spiritual world? No truths there, the knowledge of which will make us free? If the violation of physical law is death, is there no death in the moral and spiritual sphere? Is the life of the soul less real, its death less terrible than that of the body? And if not, what do we know of the great spiritual realities which environ life? 1. All truth gives freedom. To know nature is to gain freedom in regard to her; to know her fully is to conform ourselves to her. And to know God is to cease to be afraid of Him, to know Him fully is to love Him perfectly, and to conform ourselves to His likeness. 2. Why, then, is there such fear and jealousy of dogma amongst men who gladly welcome every new truth about their physical life? If all truth is from God, and every truth sets us free, why is it that men hesitate to allow these characteristics to that which, above all, claims to be from God, and to give us perfect freedom? It is here that we touch the characteristic difference which exists between the laws of the spiritual and the laws of the material world. The laws of nature are discoveries; the laws of the spiritual world are revelations. The former are found out; the latter are given. The former are confessedly imperfect, added to continually as years go by; the latter are complete, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. The former lay claim to no finality; they may be challenged, put upon their trial, called upon to justify themselves. The latter, if they are from God, claim our reverence, our obedience,

our willing submission. (*Aubrey L. Moore, M.A.*) *Freedom only to be found in God*:—Last summer the good ship *Wieland* brought over a large number of caged birds. When we were about mid-ocean one restless bird escaped from his cage. In ecstasy he swept through the air, away and away from his prison. How he bounded with outspread wings! Freedom! How sweet he thought it! Across the pathless waste he entirely disappeared. But after hours had passed, to our amazement, he appeared again, struggling towards the ship with heavy wing. Panting and breathless, he settled upon the deck. Far, far over the boundless deep, how eagerly, how painfully had he sought the ship again, now no longer a prison, but his dear home. As I watched him nestle down on the deck, I thought of the restless human heart that breaks away from the restraints of religion. With buoyant wing he bounds away from Church the *prison*, and God the *prison*. But if he is not lost on the remorseless deep, he comes back again with panting, eager heart, to Church the *home*, and God the *home*. The Church is not a prison to any man. It gives the most perfect freedom in all that is *good* and all that is *safe*. It gives him liberty to do what is *right*, and to do what is *wrong*, there is no rightful place to any man in all the boundless universe. (*R. S. Barrett.*) *Freedom by the truth*:—The truth shall set us free from—I. PHYSICAL SUFFERING. The laws of nature are the laws of God, and to know and obey them will liberate us from every sickness except that of death. There is—1. The law of heredity. This is a Bible law; for it states that the sins of the fathers shall be carried down to the third and fourth generation. Know that, and care for the health of your bodies, and your posterity will be free from the taint of hereditary disease. 2. The law of sanitation. Know that, and obey it, and you free your cities from fevers and infectious diseases. Much suffering is entailed by ignorance, apathy, or wilful negligence about this truth. 3. The law of temperance; that obeyed will make you free from the suffering of bodily anguish and the sense of degradation. II. SOCIAL DISARRANGEMENT. This is one of our most rampant evils. Contrast the suburbs with their villas and the slums with their hovels. These extremes should not exist in a Christian country. What is the cure? The truth that humanity is one. 1. The strong should help the weak. The rich, who enjoy their libraries, drawing-rooms, gardens, should not be satisfied that the poor should have to tramp long distances to see a tree or read a book. Parks, museums, baths, libraries, should be within reach; and by recognising the truth on this matter, the wealthy should lend a helping hand. 2. The weak should help themselves. Too much help would pauperize. The poor must be taught and encouraged to raise themselves. Much can be effected by co-operation. If the money spent in beer were utilized for this purpose, the millenium would be hastened. III. CHRISTIAN ANTAGONISM. What a pity it is to see the strife of sects over nice doctrinal or ceremonial points. Christ wants His Church to be one, and so do good men. But the truth only will unify; and there is enough truth held in common by all churches, which, if recognized, would soon bring Christian unity. All are agreed that Christ's life should be lived by His followers. Surely this is a good working truth; and as all hold it, all should act upon it, and be one. IV. ALIENATION FROM GOD. What a slave was the prodigal, and all his degradation arose from his distance from God. But when the vision of his father arose before his mind, he arose and went back. What sinful men want to know is, the truth about God as revealed by Christ; how He loves the sinner, and would save him from his sins. (*W. Birch.*) *Freedom by the truth*:—It is no strange thing for truth to set people free. What delivers men from terror—*e.g.*, over prodigies, &c.—but the truth about them? In the darkness, which invests harmless objects with weird appearances, the imaginative man is as timid as a child. But let the day dawn, and the truth of things be revealed, and fear vanishes. The truth sets us free from—I. THE DREADS OF LIFE. 1. Those which belong to our physical life—dreads of want, disease, poisoned air, accidents. Christ frees us from these by revealing the providence of God (Matt. vi. 26–28). 2. Social fears—fears of what men can do unto us. Christ says, "Fear not them which kill the body," &c. Their wrath is restrained by our Father; and at their worst they can only drive man closer to God, and bring him nearer home. 3. Spiritual fears—about God. Christ frees from this by His truth—"Our Father." II. THE SINS OF LIFE. These make the real bondage. Our fears weaken us, but our sins corrupt, and lead to death. They bind in two ways. 1. By spreading their shame through our soul (Ezra ix. 6). Christ frees us by His declaration (chap. iii. 17), and His own treatment of a sinner in shame (vers. 3–11). 2. By weakening our will, so that when we would do good

we cannot. Christ brings not only pardon to banish shame, but power to put away sin (1 Tim. i. 13). III. DWARFED CONDITIONS OF LIFE. 1. In church life—from the tyranny of forms and places (chap. iv. 21–23). 2. In individual life. The truth of Jesus liberates the highest faculties—faith, hope, love, conscience. (*J. Todd.*) *Freedom by the truth* :—Christ, by His truth, delivers man—I. From the bondage of IGNORANCE. That truth enlightens, invigorates, instructs. II. From the bondage of ERROR. 1. Intellectual—scepticism or superstition. 2. Practical; for with it He gives His example and His guiding spirit. III. From the bondage of FEAR. 1. The fear of death and judgment. 2. Of God's conscience-searching word. 3. Of the supernatural. IV. From the bondage of SIN. 1. As a fetter. 2. As a service. V. From the bondage of the LAW. 1. The ritual, which is abolished. 2. The moral, which by grace becomes perfect freedom. (*P. N. Zabriskie, D.D.*) *Truth and liberty* :—God's grace reveals itself in endless diverse forms. The thousand changing colours which play upon sea, land, and sky, in the high day of summer, are but variations of the one clear and transparent light which comes down from above; and the same water of the sea is the same water of the sea, whether it is called ocean, gulf, or strait. A recognition of this truth is essential to the understanding of what Christian liberty is. It is the liberty of the light which, always opposed to darkness, yet reveals itself in constantly new tints and shades of colour; it is the liberty of the water, ever cleansing and ever essential to life, which yet takes its shape from the vessel into which it is poured. It is the liberty of the tree to be green, of the sea to be blue, of the sunset to be crimson, of the sand to be yellow—each obtaining its own tint from God's clear light, and no one quarrelling with the beauty of the other. So God's grace reveals itself in the lives of God's true children. In each it is the same grace, yet in each it takes a special form and colour—that of the individuality in which it reveals itself. And the liberty for which Christ has made us free, is the liberty for each of us to grow into that special manifestation of grace for which his nature is most fitted. It is freedom for us to grow in our own way, without conforming at all points to the growth of another; and (what we are more likely to forget) it is liberty for others to grow in their way without conforming at all points to our way of growth. If we compare the Church to "a garden shut up," we ought to remember that the wise cultivator does not expect the tender vine to grow in the same way as the sturdy oak, nor does he expect the apple or the pear-tree to bring forth grapes or figs. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *Spiritual liberty* :—Liberty is a matter which interests every one. But it is sadly limited. By it men mean political, intellectual, physical, and some, alas! sinful freedom. Christ proclaims real liberty—that of the soul. Secure this, and all that is worth the name of liberty will follow. Christ effects this emancipation by the truth. We must accept the truth, not as theory in our minds, or sentiment in our hearts, but by experience and practice; then we shall be free. The truth thus received liberates from—I. THE FETTERS OF IGNORANCE, SUPERSTITION, AND PREJUDICE—three links in a mighty chain. 1. We have but to pass the line of Christendom to behold a world ignorant of God and Divine truth. What follows? The most debasing superstition, idolatry, witchcraft, &c. Hence the almost invincible prejudice there is at first against the reception of the gospel. 2. But within Christendom and in its most cultivated circles, how many men learned in this world's wisdom are utterly ignorant of the things of God? And what can result here but superstition, the worship of the idols of the mind, and putting light for darkness, bitter for sweet? The consequence is sceptical prejudice. 3. The same holds good in regard to Popery. The Bible-prohibited people are in gross darkness; believe what they are told to believe, however irrational; bow to images, and worship the creature above the Creator; and therefore bitterly oppose, and, where they can, persecute the gospel. 4. From all this Christ's truth sets us free. (1) By throwing light on the darkness of ignorance, and bringing knowledge to mind and heart. (2) This knowledge removes the grounds of superstition and prejudice. II. THE THRALDOM OF SATAN. However manifold the links bound round the soul led captive by the devil, the last link is in his hand. Men are either slaves of Satan or free men of Christ. Christ comes as a strong man armed to break the links of the chain, which are mainly three. 1. Guilt, and the consequent curse of God. For this Christ provides pardon, and secures God's blessing. 2. Corruption, and consequent moral impotence. For this Christ provides the grace of the Holy Spirit. 3. The world and the fear of man, that bringeth a snare. But "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." III. THE BONDAGE OF THE FEAR OF DEATH. Spite of his boasting, no man is so hardy but he shrinks from

death. Why? Because "after death the judgment." This is seen in the mad recklessness of the profligate, and the unspiritual service of the moralist, the religious inventions of the devotee. Momentary oblivion of the dread spectre is all that these can produce. But he who receives the truth of Christ triumphs over death. Conclusion: This liberty includes a service, but it is perfect freedom. (*Canon Stowell.*) *Spiritual emancipation:*—These words suggest —I. THAT A KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH MAY BE SECURED. II. THAT THIS KNOWLEDGE IS MENTAL AND EXPERIMENTAL. III. THAT EXPERIMENTAL KNOWLEDGE IS ALONE SAVING. IV. WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL TRUTH, THE EXPERIMENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF WHICH MAKES FREE. 1. We may know the truth as we know language, science, &c.; as a mass of doctrines; Christ a historical character like Pilate. All this knowledge may have no effect on the heart or life. 2. The new man obtains his knowledge by a different process. He experiments, verifies, proves. Truth becomes the prevailing principle of action, and enthrones itself. To be sure a man must become possessed of Christian facts and doctrines. These are the bones for the body of holiness. 3. An experimental knowledge of the truth frees man morally, and from the bondage of merely human views, and introduces man into the broad province of ideas world wide in their grasp and extending back to the Creation. 4. The condition of the freedom promised by Christ is belief in His Divine sonship, "as many as received Him," &c. The emancipating power of this truth is made to us—(1) Wisdom, by enlightening us and thus freeing the mind; (2) Righteousness, by justifying us and thus freeing us from the law; (3) Sanctification, by purifying us and thus freeing our hearts: (4) Redemption by the union of them all, thus purchasing us into blessed immortality. (*J. M. King, D.D.*) *The hour of emancipation:*—August 1, 1834, was the day on which 700,000 of our colonial slaves were made free. Throughout the colonies the churches and chapels were thrown open, and the slaves crowded into them on the evening of the 31st. July. As the hour of midnight approached they fell upon their knees and awaited the solemn moment, all hushed in silent prayer. When 12 o'clock sounded, they sprang upon their feet, and through every island rang the glad sound of thanksgiving to the Father of all, for the chains were broken and the slaves were free. (*Heroes of Britain.*) *The freedom which Christ gives:*—It is a freedom from the servitude of sin, from the seduction of a misguided judgment, and the allurement of any ensnaring forbidden object: consisting in an unbounded amplitude and enlargedness of soul towards God, and indetermination to any inferior good; resulting from an entire subjection to the Divine will, a submission to the order of God, and steady adherence to Him. (*John Howe.*) *Spiritual freedom:*—They make a great fuss when they give a man the freedom of the City of London. There is a fine gold casket to put it in. You have got the liberty of the New Jerusalem, and your faith, like a golden box, holds the deeds of your freemanship. Take care of them and rejoice in them to-night. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man.**—*Moral bondage:*—Note that its subjects—I. ARE UNCONSCIOUS OF IT (ver. 33). This was an interruption of Christ's discourse on freedom. As much as to say "Why talk of freedom to us? We are free men." But in the eye of Christ they were in the most miserable captivity. It is common here in England to hear men—1. Boast of religious liberty who have no religion. Some of its most strenuous advocates are destitute of reverence to God, and charity to men. These will repeat the boast while they are in bondage to their own prejudices, exclusiveness, love of fame or gain. 2. Boast of civil freedom who are moral slaves. Men who are under the tyranny of their own lusts and greed, who are even governed, as Carlyle says, "by a pot of heavy wet" and a clay pipe, peal out in thunderous chorus "Britons never shall be slaves." The worst part of this bondage is that men are unconscious of it. Hence they are mere creatures of circumstances. It is the more sad because it precludes any aspiration for self-manumission; and it is only self-effort that can liberate. Other men may deliver the prisoner from his dungeon, or the slave from his tyrant, or the serf from his despot; but no one can deliver him from bondage but himself, "He who would be free, himself must strike the blow." II. ARE THE AUTHORS OF IT (ver. 34). It is not the sin of another man that makes me a slave, but my own. Solomon says, "His own iniquities shall take the wicked." Paul says, "To whom ye yield yourselves to obey his servants ye are," &c. Shakespeare says, "Vice is imprisonment." Every sin a man commits forges a new link in the chain that manacles his soul. The longer a man pursues a certain course of conduct the more wedded he becomes to it, and the less power he has to abandon it. Habit is a cord strengthened with every action, at first it is as fine as silk, and

can be easily broken. As it proceeds it becomes a cable. Habit is a momentum, increasing with motion. At first a childs hand can obstruct the progress, by and by an army of giants cannot arrest it. Habit is a river, at its spring you can divert its course with ease, as it approaches the ocean it defies opposition. III. CAN BE DELIVERED FROM IT (ver. 36). How does Christ make the soul free? By generating in the heart supreme love to the supremely good. It is a law of mind to have some permanent object of affection, and that object limits its field of operation. The man who loves money most will have all his faculties confined to that region. The same with him who loves fame, or pleasure, &c. But all these objects are limited; hence the soul is hemmed in as in a cage. In order to have freedom the heart should be centred on an infinite object, and this Christ does. And with God as the centre of the heart all the faculties have unbounded scope. Conclusion: All souls not made free by Christ are in slavery. Even the heathen considered the virtues essential to true freedom. Cicero said "The wise man alone is free." Plato represents the lusts as the hardest tyrants. Seneca speaks of the passions as the worst thraldom. Epictetus said "Liberty is the name of virtue." And this virtue is obtained only through Christ. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The vain boast of the Jews:*—The whole past history of their nation was the record of one bondage following hard on another, they for their sins having come at one time or another under the yoke of almost every people round about them. They have been, by turns, in bondage to the Canaanites, in bondage to the Philistines, in bondage to the Syrians, in bondage to the Chaldæans; then again to the Græco-Syrian kings; and now, even at the very moment when this indignant disclaimer is uttered, the signs of a foreign rule, of the domination of the stranger, everywhere met their eye. They bought and sold with Roman money; they paid tribute to a Roman emperor; a Roman governor sat in their judgement hall; a Roman garrison occupied the fortress of their city. And yet, with all this plain before their eyes, brought home to their daily, hourly experience, they angrily put back the promise of Christ, "The truth shall make you free," as though it conveyed an insult: "How sayest thou, ye shall be made free? We were never in bondage to any man." (*Abp. Trench.*) **Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.**—*Sin is spiritual slavery:*—Sin is the suicidal action of the human will. It destroys the power to do right, which is man's true freedom. The effect of vicious habit in diminishing a man's ability to resist temptation is proverbial. But what is habit but a constant repetition of wrong decisions. The will cannot be forced or ruined from outside. But if we watch the influence upon the will of its own yielding to temptation, we shall discover that the voluntary faculty may be ruined from within. Whatever springs from will we are responsible for. The drunkard's powerlessness issues from his own inclination and therefore is no excuse. "If weakness may excuse, what murderer, what traitor, parricide, incestuous, sacrilegeous, may not plead it? All wickedness is weakness." Sin is spiritual slavery, if viewed in reference—I. TO MAN'S SENSE OF OBLIGATION TO BE PERFECTLY HOLY. 1. The obligation to be holy as God is rests upon every rational being, and he is a debtor to this obligation until he has fully met it. Hence even the holiest are conscious of sin, because they are not completely up to this high calling. This sense is as "exceeding broad" as the commandment, and will not let us off with the performance of a part of our duty. It is also exceeding deep, for it outlives all others. In the hour of death it grows more vivid and painful as all else grows dimmer. A man forgets then whether he has been prosperous or unsuccessful and remembers only that he has been a sinner. It might seem that this sense would be sufficient to overcome sin, and bring man up to the discharge of duty; but experience shows that in proportion as a man hears the voice of conscience, in this particular does he become aware of the bondage of his will. 2. In our careless unawakened state we sin on, just as we live on without being distinctly aware of it. A healthy man does not go about holding his fingers on his wrist, neither does a sinner as he goes about his business think of his transgressions. Yet the pulse beats, and the will transgresses none the less. Though the chains are actually about us they do not gall us. "We are alive without the law." But as the Spirit of God awakens the conscience, that sense of the obligation to be perfectly holy starts up and man begins to form an estimate of what has been done in reference to it. Now the commandment comes, shows us what we ought to be and what we are, and we die (Rom. vii. 9–11). The muscle has been cut by the sword of truth, and the limb drops helpless, and we learn in a most affecting manner that "whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin." But suppose after this discovery we

endeavour to comply with the obligation: this only renders us more painfully sensible of the truth of the text. II. To THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE SOUL. All those serious impressions and painful anxieties concerning salvation, which require to be followed up by a mighty power from God to prevent their being suppressed again by the love of sin and the world. For though man has fallen into a state of death in sins, yet through the common influences of the Spirit of Grace, and the workings of rational nature, he is at times the subject of aspirations which indicate the heights from which he fell The minds of the greatest of the ancient pagans were the subjects of these aspirations, and they confess their utter inability to realize them. The journals of the missionary disclose the same in modern heathenism. All these phenomena show the rigid bondage of sin. The drunkard in his sober moments longs to be free and resolves never to drink again. But the sin is strong and the appetite that feeds it is in his blood. Temptation comes before the enslaved will. He aspires to resist but will not; and never is he more conscious of being a slave to himself than when he thus ineffectually aspires to be delivered from himself. This applies to all sin. There is no independent and self-realizing power in mere aspiration, and when, under the influence of God's common grace, a man endeavours to extirpate the inveterate depravity of his heart, he feels his bondage more thoroughly than ever. III. To THE FEARS OF THE SOUL. 1. The sinful spirit fears the death of the body, and therefore we are all our lifetime subject to bondage. We know that bodily dissolution can have no effect on the imperishable essence, yet we shrink back from it. 2. The spirit fears that "fearful something after death"—eternal judgment. We tremble having to give an account of our own actions, and to reap the harvest, the seed of which we have sown. 3. The spirit has an awful dread of eternity. Though this invisible realm is the proper home of the soul, never is the soul stirred to so great depths as when it feels the power of an endless life. Men will labour convulsively day and night for money, power, fame, pleasure; but what is the paroxysm of this activity compared with those throes, when the startled sinner sees the eternal world looming into view. 4. If, now, we view sin in relation to these three great fears we see that it is spiritual slavery. Our terror is no more able to deliver us than our aspirations. The dread that goes down to hell can no more save us than the aspiration that goes up to heaven. Conclusion: 1. This bondage is self-inflicted, and therefore the way of release is not to throw the burden of it upon God. 2. The way out of it is to accept the method of deliverance afforded by Christ. (*Prof. Shedd.*) *The progress of the lost soul to destruction*:—I. Note OF WHOM OUR LORD SPEAKS. "He that committeth sin"—*i.e.*, he who has become a doer of sin; the habitual, conscious, wilful sinner. He is the bondslave, the absolute thrall, the hopeless subject of an overmastering tyranny. It will help us to obtain a completer view of what this implies if we trace the steps by which the end is reached. 1. We must begin by having a clear idea of what temptation is. It is the suggestion to our mind of the pleasure or good to be got by doing or allowing something which is against the will of God, and so against the perfectness of our own true nature. Such suggestions are innumerable and take their peculiar colour from the temperament of our own mental and bodily constitution. For as there is a special excellence to which we may attain, so there must be, in the perversion of that excellence, a special character of evil to which we are most prone. In the mere entrance of this suggestion there is nothing sinful. Such were cast into the mind of our Lord. Sin begins when the mind rests with pleasure upon the evil suggestion, but if this is resisted there is no sin. But when the sweet morsel is rolled under the tongue, the acting of sin has begun, and the next step is near the consent of the will to the suggestion. 2. How the bond is wound around the soul, the contemplation of the progress of sin suggests to us. One impure thought cherished, still more one impure act allowed, is the certain cause of after suggestions of impurity: and so it is of every other sin. The harbouring of anger opens the mind to new suggestions of wrath; the allowance of one wandering thought in prayer, invites the disturbing presence of a crowd of others: the nursing one doubt multiplies after its kind. 3. He who has allowed his spirit to rest on the conscious sweetness of sin has made that indulgence a necessity to him: and then, as this, like all other sweetness, soon palls upon the taste, he has made it needful in order to obtain the same gratification, to yield himself more completely to it, and to seek it in its larger measures and fiercer qualities. And so his taste becomes degraded and his gratifications coarser; until the power of relishing purer pleasures is rapidly becoming extinguished; they seem used up and insipid; and thus he is led to the one step further of consenting to the evil which has miser-

ably become his good. Then indeed the chain is bound about him. For though every indulgence lessens the pleasure of indulging, yet the growing power of habit more than supplies the place of the energy of enjoyment, nay, the pleasure of sin may not only be lessened, but be gone; the chain may even gall him, but he cannot break it. 4. Other bonds besides those of habit are winding themselves around him. (1) There is from the conscience, commixing continually with pollution, a daily lowering of the standard of the soul, which makes it with less consciousness of its degradation bow itself to greater evils, until the infirmity is such that it can in no wise lift itself up. (2) With this growing disorder of the conscience the other faculties sympathize. The will which was once calm, ready, resolute, grows vehement and irresolute, passionate and yet tardy, an uncrowned king, the helpless sport of insolent menials. 5. Even this is not all. For higher powers and greater endowments have been passing from his soul in the sad process of its enchaining; it has been denying its fellowship with Christ, resisting and grieving the Holy Spirit; and as that free Spirit withdraws itself, all true liberty for the soul is lost, and the evil spirit comes in and dwells there, making the slavery complete. 6. All this is true of spiritual sins. The suggestion of doubt—*e.g.*, involves no sin; for into the mind of Jesus was thrown the question, "If Thou be the Son of God?" But if the suggestion, instead of being cast out, is gloated on; if the pleasant thought is indulged of being a great thinker, and being able to manifest a certain shallow ability by the utterance of petulant flippancy, then assuredly sin enters, and the assent of the soul to that which at first startled or offended it soon follows. Then comes boldness and rudeness of spirit in dealing with heavenly mysteries. The mind becomes darkened, and the eyes blind, and then comes the end of the dungeon and the chain. The lamentations which sometimes break forth from the prison are the saddest to be heard on earth; the voice of the despairing soul crying aloud for its early power of believing, sad echo of this note of warning, "He that committeth sin is the servant of sin." II. THE CHIEF PRACTICAL GUARDS AGAINST THE ENEMY. 1. Guard especially against the beginnings of temptation. Galling as is the end of the sinner's captivity, the separate bonds by which it is secured are seldom heavy. The soul is the giant who is being manacled unawares, by the winding round him of a multitude of threads; those painted gossamers which float so brightly in the dewy morning will grow into fetters, and you will lose the power of resisting before you know that it is threatened. Moreover, temptations in their early stages are mostly to little sins, which severally do not alarm the conscience, and thus men grow to sin securely. The snowflakes, with their featherly lightness, choke the highway with an immovable barrier, whilst the giant tree which falls across it, is but the obstruction of an hour. A waterspout bursts, makes a moment's inundation, and disappears; whilst the small but numberless drops of rain furnish the deep floods which fill the banks of mighty rivers. 2. Realize your own place in the kingdom of grace. Despair is destruction; and self-trust only despair in its early unsuspected actings. Only in the strength of God's grace can we resist sin. 3. Seek a living union with Christ. If thou art one with Him, thou canst not be enslaved. But for this, more is needed than profession, or baptism; there must be personal surrender to Christ. He must be the centre round which thy life moves. (*Bp. Samuel Wilberforce.*) **The servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever.**—1. Our Lord is speaking of servant and son generically. A son is a natural inalienable part of the family; a slave is not. He may be acquired, sold, given away, set free. There was in Jewish servitude provision against the slaves continuing "in the houses for ever," at the Jubilee, unless he gave himself to his master, in which case bondage was exchanged for consecration: he was free. But a son is bound to his father's household by a tie which no distance breaks, and no time wears away. 2. The application of this is not that the servants are the Jews, who were such because of their constrained obedience, and would, therefore, forfeit their national privileges, and be cast out of the house; for in ver. 34 the master of the slave is distinctly specified "Sin," and therefore cannot be "God" in this verse. 3. The force of the thought, "Slave's sin does not abide in sin's house," is that, however hard the bondage of sin, the slave is not in his true home, nor incorporated hopelessly into his taskmaster's family. 4. Into the midst of this tyrant's household there has come one who is a Son, and abides for ever in the household of God, even Christ. Sin's house, in so far as that expression denotes this fair world, belongs to God, and the tyranny is usurpation. Into the midst of human society He comes who is a Son for ever, and the emancipation He effects is adoption. I. THE POSSIBLE ENDING OF THE TYRANNY OF SIN. "A slave abides not in the

house for ever." All the world has dimly hoped that it was so; but no man has been sure of it, apart from revelation. Christ has shown that sin is not natural to man, as God meant him to be, howsoever it may have twined around his life. 1. We see that from our own constitution. Look at these minds of ours, originating thoughts, born for immortality; these hearts with their rich treasures of transcendent affections; these wills so weak, yet so strong, craving for authority, and yet striving to be a law unto themselves; these consciences so sensitive and yet so dull, waking up only when the evil is done, voices which have no means of getting their behests obeyed, and yet are the echo of the supreme Law-giver's voice; the manifest disproportion between what we are, and might, and ought to be; and then say whether the universal condition of sinfulness is not unnatural, a fungus, not a true growth. 2. Then there is no such relation between a sinner and his sin as that deliverance should be impossible. It must be possible to part them, and to leave the man stronger for the loss of what made him weak. We may be brought to our true home in our Father's house. Howsoever the fetters may have galled and mortified the limbs they may be struck off. 3. Men have always cherished these convictions, and in spite of history and experience. They have tried to set themselves free, and their attempts have come to nothing—and yet after all failures this hope has sprung immortal. True, we cannot effect the deliverance. It is like some cancer—a blood disease. We may pare and cut away the rotting flesh—the single manifestations of evil we can do something to reduce; but a deeper surgery is needed. Sin is not our personality, and so we may have it removed and live, but sin has become so entangled with ourselves that we cannot undo it. The demoniac, who, in his confused consciousness, did not know which was devil and which man—"*my* name is legion, for *we* are many"—could not shake off the demon. But the voice that said "Come out of him" has power still. II. THE ACTUAL DELIVERER. "The Son abideth ever," while a general statement, has a specific reference to our Lord, and if so the two houses must be the same, or at least the Son, who is ever in His Father's house, must yet be in the midst of the bondsmen in the dark fortress of the tyrant. That is but a figurative way of putting the necessity that our freedom must come from outside humanity, and yet be diffused from a source within. Unless it come from above it will not be able to lift us, but unless it be on our level we shall not be able to grasp it. The Deliverer must Himself be free, therefore must be removed from the fatal continuity of evil; but he must be a sharer in their condition whom He would set free. These contradictory requirements meet in Him who has been anointed to proclaim liberty to the captives (chap. iii. 13). Two things are required, that the Deliverer should be the Son of God, and that He should be the Son for ever (Gal. iv. 4, 5). We have to trust to a living Saviour who is as near the latest generations as to the first. "This man because he continueth ever is able to save to the uttermost." III. THE ABIDING SONSHIP WHICH CONSTITUTES THE SLAVE'S EMANCIPATION. The process of deliverance is the transfer from the one household to the other. We are set free from our bondage when through Christ we receive the adoption, and cry, "Abba! Father!" This filial spirit, the spirit of life which was in Christ Jesus, "makes us free from the law of sin and death." Conclusion: There are but two conditions in which we can stand—slaves of sin or sons of God. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The son and the slave contrasted*:—This contrast between the position of the slave, who is a chattel that may be bought or bartered or sold, and has no affinity with the members of the house, and no permanent right in it; and the son, in whose veins is the master's blood, and who is heir of all things, is obvious and general; but here, again, the present meaning is special. They claim to be the seed of Abraham. Did they remember the history of Isaac and Ishmael? The son of the freewoman abideth in the house; the son of the bondmaid is cast out. (*Archdeacon Watkins.*) **If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.**—In Rome, and in other ancient communities, it was no unusual occurrence for a son, on coming into his inheritance, to set free the slaves who had been born in the house. The form of setting a slave free was very picturesque. The master, the slave, and some third person, appeared before one of the higher magistrates. This third person touched the slave's head, saying, as he did so, "I claim that this man is free." The master then took hold of the slave, turned him around, and said: "I concede that this man is free." The slave was then pronounced free by the magistrate, and thenceforth he was free indeed. Man being a slave, and not having any permanent authority —not abiding in the house forever—cannot endow others with freedom that endures to eternity; but that freedom the Son can give, who abideth in the house forever

with the Father. (*S. S. Times.*) *The English slave; or, the man who was afraid of his neighbours:*—A common objection of workingmen to going to church is that they will be brought into subjection to the priesthood. They stay away therefore to protect their freedom. Now let us look at—I. THE ENGLISH SLAVE WHO GOES TO CHURCH. He is a man who dares not think for himself, or dares not say what he thinks. 1. No one can deny that some forms of religion frighten people from the use of their faculties on religious subjects; hence they give themselves over to a priesthood who tell them how they must and how they must not think. And so wherever we find religious teachers organized into a priesthood, we find a mighty instrument for the enslavement of the mind. It was so of old. Whenever there was an organized national priesthood, the nation lost its senses, and became slaves to caste, as in Eygpt and India; but wherever the priests of the different temples had no organic connection, or the monarch was priest, as in Greece, and Rome, there the people retained some of their freedom. The same holds good in England to-day. In proportion as priests congregate in councils, unchecked by the laity, to issue decrees, candid thought is extinguished. But to what a miserable condition is the man reduced whose soul is a sort of parrot, kept by a priest to repeat the phrases authority has taught him. 2. But there are slaves who are not under the thumb of the priesthood, but dare not think or speak for themselves for fear of their congregation or party. Thus it is that so many persons never grow wiser. In order to grow wiser you must drop some old opinion or form some new one; and to do either of these you must defy the world and use your faculties without asking anyone's leave. And this is what many are not prepared to do, because it might involve loss of repute, friends or position. 3. Now, whatever they may profess, neither the priest or party ridden are true worshippers of God. True worship is based on personal conviction—"In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. II. THE ENGLISH SLAVE WHO DOES NOT GO TO CHURCH. The influence of men upon each other is at its maximum where there is the closest association and the freest speech. This is the case among the working classes. Here, therefore, it requires most courage for a man to stand on his own feet and be true to his own conscience. And there is a large proportion of skilled artizans who are not strong minded enough to resist the dictation of their leaders or equals. Suppose a man who works in a large factory finds himself in the midst of a system of drinking and conversation which disgusts his better nature, and where his conscience commands him not to go with this multitude to do evil, but to assert his manhood; does every skilled workman obey that inward voice? Is it not notorious that thousands dare not? And is it not as bad to be in slavery to bad people as to good? Or if an intelligent workman finds himself surrounded by men who have resolved that the clumsy and idle shall be paid at the same rate as the industrious and skilful, and who in his heart abhors this part of the system, has he the courage to say so and to act accordingly? There is in some parts a reign of terrorism, so that few would dare to say that the present exaggerated system of combination and intimidation in strikes is crushing the spirit of personal liberty, and the chivalrous, independent character of the old English artificer. Now such, notwithstanding all their other excellencies, are the last who ought to point to the enslavement of men's minds in the churches. The secret of national greatness and dignity is the setting free of thought, labour, trade, capital. Combine voluntarily for trade purpose as much as you please, but intimidate no man. III. THE TRUE METHOD OF BECOMING FREE. 1. Slavery requires two parties—the tyrant who domineers, and the slave who submits. The true remedy therefore is to teach men not to submit to unlawful authority; and this is what Christ came to do. All external slavery proceeds from internal. When men dare to think and speak honestly, and act out their convictions, the tyrant's occupation is gone. To set free the thinking power, therefore, is the secret of all other liberties. But this is enslaved. What is freedom? To have the proper use of one's powers and faculties. The condition of the free action of the understanding is that the animal appetites be restrained within certain limits. If a man give way to his thirst for drink, then his intellect ceases to act freely, and thus he is a slave. And so with the other passions. 2. Christ offers to set us free. (1) By setting before us the only Being who has a right to control our thoughts, and by demanding that we should fear Him and no one else. Out of this springs all true freedom. This is what gave boldness to the early Christians. "We ought to obey God rather than man." (2) By supplying the only adequate motive—love to God and man.

(*E. White.*) *The spiritual slavery of man:*—I. THE AFFECTING REPRESENTATION WHICH GOD'S WORD GIVES OF MEN AS SINNERS. The text goes upon the supposition that freedom is required. The idea of bondage represents—1. Our relation to God as sinners. We have violated the law, which consequently has its hand upon us. We are therefore convicted criminals, shut up until the judgment shall be executed. 2. Our moral condition, which is under the control of diabolical powers who reign in the children of disobedience. This spiritual slavery may differ much. There are some who have practised upon them, and who practise on others, a splendid imposition. Their chains are gilded. Their tyrants put on the appearance of virtue. But others are slaves to the lowest and most degrading appetites. II. SCRIPTURE GIVES US A CONTRAST—LIBERTY. 1. With respect to our relation to God. The law takes off its hand, the man is loosened, and he comes forth to the liberty of the child of God, forgiven, justified. 2. With respect to the bondage of the devil. As the man once gave up his members, servants of unrighteousness, he now yields himself to God as a servant of holiness. III. HOW THIS EMANCIPATION IS EFFECTED. It is evidently of such a nature that it could not effect itself. Observe that bondage may be a matter of justice or of usurpation. Then freedom in the former case must be a matter of righteous arrangement, in the latter of force. 1. With respect to bondage as a matter of justice, the case of the sinner in relation to God, the law has a righteous demand on the sinner, for it is holy and good and cannot be violated. Hence we find there is a righteous arrangement—a consideration, a ransom—the atoning death of Christ. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law," &c. 2. With respect to the usurpation. Sin and Satan are usurpers. Man was made for God, not for sin; for truth, not for error. Hence there is a positive operation of mind. God comes down upon a man's heart by the power of His Spirit and renews him. 3. All this is accomplished in consistency with our rational nature. There is something to be observed in the mind of man. The ransom being paid, the mind of man must be brought to harmonize with the mind of God. There are three stages in the process of delivery from the bondage which is matter of justice. (1) The offended Moral Governor admitting an arrangement at all; it is matter of grace entirely. (2) This arrangement being effected is acknowledged and accepted by God, and then published to the individuals concerned, that they may know that their loss will henceforth be their own. (3) Repentance, and faith in the means, thus harmonizing with the arrangement of God. But this faith which justifies also sanctifies. Faith leads to the acceptance of the proffered Deliverer, who frees us from the bondage of corruption. IV. THE PERFECTION AND REALITY OF THE GOSPEL—"free indeed." 1. Freedom from bondage by ransom is complete in every sense. 2. Freedom by power brings the highest liberty of a rational and moral nature. 3. When God gives the one He always gives the other. You may emancipate the slave, but you cannot give him the virtues of a freeman, but when God sets you free He operates on the character, and thus we are free indeed. V. PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS. 1. We rejoice in the liberty of the slave, and we do well, but how dreadful to think that many who do this are slaves themselves. The slave often fixed his hope on death, which would terminate his agony, but if you die in slavery it will continue for ever. 2. Let your minds be affected by the splendour of that ransom which has been paid for your freedom. We talk about the twenty millions that we gave for the liberty of the slave, but "*Ye* were not redeemed with corruptible things," &c. 3. If you profess to be the subjects of God's delivering mercy, walk worthy of your profession. "Ye are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh." 4. Rejoice in that which is to come. (1) The liberating kingdom of Christ. (2) The deliverance of the whole creation from bondage. (*T. Binney.*) *The Great Liberator:*—Blessed is that word "free," and blessed He who lives to make men so. Political slavery is an intolerable evil, and blessed the man who hurls down the despot and gives men their true rights. But men may have political liberty and yet be slaves, for there is religious bondage, and he who cringes before the priest is a slave. Blessed are our eyes that see the light of gospel liberty, and are no longer immured in Popish darkness. Yet a man may be delivered from the bond of superstition only to become a slave to his own lusts. He only is a free man who is master of himself by the grace of God. I. FREEDOM IS POSSIBLE. The Son of God can make the prisoner free. 1. Negatively. (1) From past guilt which weighs so heavily upon many—for His blood "cleanseth from all sin." (2) From the punishment of sin, the fear of which is grievous bondage, for He has borne it in our place. (3) From the power of sin, the same blood which purifies enables a man to overcome. They in heaven washed their robes and overcame through the blood

of the Lamb. (4) From the fear of death, which keeps many "all their lifetime subject to bondage." When sin is pardoned the law is satisfied, and the strength of sin therefore broken and the sting taken out of death. If we believe in Christ we shall fall asleep, but never die. 2. Positively. We are not only free from, but free to. When persons receive the freedom of a city certain privileges are bestowed. To be made free by Christ is to be free to call oneself God's child, to claim His protection and blessing, to sit at His table, to enter His Church, and at last to be free of the New Jerusalem. II. BEWARE OF FALSE LIBERTY. Every good thing is imitated by Satan. There is—1. Antimonian liberty. "I am not under the law, therefore I may do as I like." A blessed truth followed by an atrocious inference. To be under the law is to give God the service of a slave who fears the lash, but to be under grace is to serve God out of pure love. 2. National professional freedom, based upon baptism, and regular attendance at religious ordinances, and performance of outward religious duties. But a good many people dream that they are what they are not. Christ must have come and shown you your slavery, and you must have found through Him the way of escape or you are enslaved. 3. The liberty of natural self-righteousness and the power of the flesh. III. TRUE FREEDOM COMES TO US THROUGH HIM WHO IS IN THE HIGHEST SENSE "THE SON." No man gets free but as he comes to Christ; otherwise he will only rivet on his fetters. This liberty—1. Is righteously bestowed. Christ has the right to make men free. 2. Was dearly purchased. Christ speaks it by His power, but He bought it by His blood. He makes free, but by His own bonds. 3. Is freely given. Jesus asks nothing of us for it. He saves sinners just as they are. 4. Is instantaneously received. The captive has often to pass through many doors—but the moment we believe we are free, although we may have been fettered at ten thousand points. 5. Is done for ever. When Christ sets free no chains can bind again. IV. ARE WE FREE? If so, then—1. We have changed our lodging-place, for the slave and the Son sleep not in the same room. The things which satisfied the servant will not satisy the Son. 2. We live not as we used to do. We go not to slaves' work, to toil and sweat to earn the wages of sin; but now as a Son serveth His Father we do Son's work. 3. We strive to set others free; if we have no zeal for the emancipation of others we are slaves still. 4. We hate all sorts of chains, all kinds of sin, and will never willingly put on the fetters any more. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Liberty:*—Free indeed! Really free! Then there must be an unreal, imaginary freedom. 1. A whole family or nation in bondage is a sad sight, but it is sadder if their eyes are out, so that they fondly dream themselves free. 2. The most melancholy thing in a madhouse is the poor patient who weaves a crown of rags and gives orders as a king, casting all the while stolen and startled glances on the iron bars, and trembling under the keeper's glance. 3. You have lain down wearily to sleep, and dreamt that you soared in the upper air; but when you awoke your limbs were stiffer and heavier. Flying was a dream; the cold reality was only a painful dragging of benumbed limbs. 4. In literary and political circles liberty is plentiful as a profession, but scanty as a power. Independence is frequently a term of sarcasm when men desire to make sport of bondage. 5. But the cases are most numerous of men loudly boasting of their liberty, while vice, like a possessing spirit rules in the heart, and lashes to a degrading task. Apart from Christ's redemption and the Spirit's renewal, the struggles of a sinful race to shake off their bonds are like those of Samson when his locks were shorn and his eyes put out, with the Philistines making sport. 6. The Jews took it ill that Jesus should propose to make *them* free. "We were never in bondage," and yet the Romans held them in their grip. 7. Our inherited and actual bondage has two sides, corresponding to the two sides in Christ's liberty. Spiritual slavery is guilt on the conscience and rebellion in the will. Like the relation between perpendicular pressure and horizontal motion is the relation between these two. Sin and the wrath it deserves constitute the dead weight which presses the spirit down, and thus it cannot go forward in duty. When God's anger is removed we yield ourselves willing instruments of His righteousness. When the Son, by redeeming us from the guilt and power of sin, has made us free, we are free indeed. I. THE MAIN ELEMENT OF THE BONDAGE IS GUILT AND APPREHENSION OF JUDGMENT. 1. The book in which our debt is registered lies far above, out of our sight; but the charge against a man is led by an electric wire from God's secret book right into the man's own bosom, disturbing his rest and blighting all his joys. Conscience is a mysterious, susceptible instrument, bringing the man in close and mysterious con-

nection with the great white throne and the living God. The pain is in practice deadened more or less by a hardening of the instrument, so that it loses a measure of its susceptibility; but mysterious beatings sometimes thrill through all its searings and compel the sinner to realize the presence of the living God. 2. It is natural that the slave, wearied of such inspection, should cast about for means of becoming free. To quench this burning of the unclean conscience all the bloody sacrifices of the heathen were offered, all the efforts of self-righteousness are directed. They are so many blows to sever the connecting-rod, so that the Judge's anger may not be felt; but "there is no peace to the wicked." 3. But a real liberty is possible. The Son can open the seven-sealed book and blot out the reckoning: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." The Mediator has placed Himself in the line of communication between the Judge and the culprit. The frown of justice due to sin is changed into love as it passes through the Mediator, no longer a consuming fire, but the light of life. On the other side, my sins are absorbed in the suffering Saviour as they pass, and His righteousness ascends as mine and for me. II. THERE IS A FALSE FREEDOM WITH WHICH MEN DELUDE THEMSELVES, AND A REAL FREEDOM WHICH CHRIST BESTOWS UPON HIS OWN. 1. The essence of slavery lies in the terror of the master, that sits like a stone upon the heart. After the slave has accomplished his task, something occurs that he ought to have done, and he asks tremblingly, "What lack I yet?" There may be a good deal of work without reconciliation, but there is no liberty in it and no love. It is the heavy weight of unforgiven sin that prevents a man bounding fleetly on the errands of his Lord. When condemnation is taken away obedience begins (Psa. cxvi. 16). 2. Those who are strangers to the liberty of dear children misunderstand this obedience. Here is a man who lives for pleasure. He is good-natured, and if he would not suffer much to promote the happiness of others he would not injure them. He knows another who denies himself, and prosecutes some difficult line of benevolence, and cannot understand him. If the Christian were morose and gloomy he could explain his conduct, but he is precisely the reverse. He counts that liberty which the Christian counts bondage, and that bondage which the Christian counts liberty. But the disciple of Christ has changed, and therefore cannot be understood: he has been made willing in the day of God's power, which the worldling has never felt. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *True liberty*:—It is impossible to mistake the charm and power which attach to the word "liberty." There is something in our nature which at once responds to it. It appeals to sympathies which are universal and profound. Liberty is itself, in one particular sense, the excellence of man as man, *i.e.*, of man as endowed with a free will. As man compares himself with the inanimate creation and the lower animals he knows that he is what they are not. The sense of this prerogative is the ground of human self-respect. To attempt to crush the exercise of this endowment is regarded as a crime against human nature, while the undertaking to strengthen its vigour and enlarge its scope appeals to man's profound desire to make the best of that which is his central self. But when in this connection we use the word two different things are often intended. The liberty to choose between good and evil, with an existing inclination in the direction of evil is one thing; the true moral liberty of man is another. Man's true liberty may be described as the unimpeded movement of his will towards God; but the only liberty with which many speakers and writers trouble themselves is a liberty to choose between good and evil, as though we could not conceive of a liberty which did not include the choice of evil—as though the power of choosing evil was an integral element of real human liberty. Let us rid ourselves of this miserable misconception. True liberty is secured when the will moves freely within its true element, which is moral good. Moral good is to the human will what the air is to the bird, what water is to the fish. Bird and fish have freedom enough in their respective elements. Water is death to the bird as air is death to the fish. A bird can sometimes drown itself; a fish can leap out of the water and die upon the bank; but the liberty of fish and bird is sufficiently complete without this added capacity for self-destruction. And so it is with man. Moral good, the moral law of God, is the element within which the human will may safely find room for its utmost capacities of healthful exercise and invigoration; and when a man takes it into his head that his freedom is incomplete if it does not include a license to do wrong, he is in a fair way to precipitate himself out of his true vital element, to the enslavement and ruin of his will. Every Christian will understand this. He knows that he would gain nothing in the way of moral freedom by a murder or a lie. He knows that our Lord, who did no sin, was not, therefore, other than morally free, since it

was His freedom in giving Himself to death, which is the essence of His self-sacrifice for the sins of the world. Nay, a Christian knows, too, that God could not choose evil without doing violence to His essential nature. But is God, therefore, without moral freedom? And does it not follow that the more closely man approaches the holiness of God, the more closely does he approach to the true idea of liberty. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The liberty of believers*:—I. WHAT BELIEVERS ARE NOT FREED FROM IN THIS WORLD. 1. From obedience to the moral law. It is true that we are not under it as a covenant for justification, but we are still under it as a rule for direction. Its matter is as unchangeable as the nature of good and evil is (Matt. v. 17–18). Its precepts are still urged under the gospel to enforce duties (Eph. vi. 12). It is therefore a vain distinction of the Libertines that it binds us as creatures, not as Christians; the unregenerate part, but not the regenerate. But this is a sure truth that they who are freed from its penalties are still under its precepts, and though no more under its curse, Christians are still under its conduct. The law sends us to Christ to be justified, Christ sends us to the law to be regulated (Psa. cxix. 4, 5). 2. From the temptations and assaults of Satan. Even those who are freed from his dominion are not free from his molestation (Rom. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xii. 7). Though he cannot kill them, he can and does afflict them (Eph. vi. 16). 3. From the motions of indwelling sin (Rom. vii. 21–24). Corruptions, like Canaanites, are still left to be thorns in the side. 4. From inward troubles and exercises on account of sin (Job vii. 19; Psa. lxxxviii. 14, 16; xxxviii. 1–11). 5. From the rods of affliction. God in giving us liberty does not abridge His own (Psa. lxxxix. 32). All God's children are made free, yet what son is there that his father chasteneth not (Heb. xii. 8). Exemption from affliction is rather the mark of a slave. 6. From the stroke of death, though they are freed from its sting (Rom. viii. 10). II. WHAT THAT BONDAGE IS FROM WHICH EVERY BELIEVER IS FREED BY CHRIST. 1. From the rigour and curse of the law, which is replaced by the gentle and easy yoke of Christ (Matt. xi. 28). The law required perfect working under the pain of a curse (Gal. iii. 10), accepted of no short endeavours and no repentance, gave no strength. But now strength is given (Phil. iv. 13), sincerity is reckoned perfection (Job. i. 1), duty becomes delight, and failings hinder not acceptance. 2. From the guilt of sin. It may trouble, but it cannot condemn them (Rom. viii. 33), the handwriting against them is cancelled (Col. ii. 14). 3. From the dominion of sin (Rom. vi. 14; viii. 2). 4. From the power of Satan (Luke xi. 21, 22). (1) By price. The blood of Christ purchases believers out of the hand of justice by satisfying the law for them, which being done, Satan's authority falls of course, as the power of a jailer over the prisoner when he has a legal discharge (Heb. ii. 14). (2) By power (Acts xxvi. 18; 2 Cor. x. 5; Col. ii. 15). 5. From the poisonous sting and hurt of death (1 Cor. xv. 55, 56). Where there is no hurt there should be no horror. III. WHAT KIND OF FREEDOM THAT IS WHICH COMMENCES UPON BELIEVING. There are two kinds of liberty. 1. Civil, which belongs not to the present business. Believers are not freed from the duties they owe to their superiors, whether servants (Eph. vi. 5) or citizens (Rom. xiii. 4). 2. Spiritual. That which believers have now is but a beginning—they are free only in part—but it is growing every day and will be complete at last. IV. THE EXCELLENCY OF THIS STATE OF SPIRITUAL FREEDOM. 1. It is a wonderful liberty never enough to be admired. (1) We owed God more than we could pay. (2) We were in the possession of the strong man, armed. (3) We were bound with many chains—the understanding with ignorance, the will with obstinacy, the heart with hardness, the affections with bewitching vanities. For such to be set at liberty is a wonder of wonders. 2. It is a peculiar freedom—one which few obtain, the great multitude abiding still in bondage (2 Cor. iv. 4). 3. A liberty dearly purchased. What the captain said (Acts xxii. 28) may be much more said of ours (1 Pet. i. 18). 4. A growing and increasing liberty (Rom. xiii. 11). 5. A comfortable freedom (1 Cor. vii. 22). It ranks the slave above the noble. 6. Perpetual and final (Acts xxvi. 18). Improvement. 1. How rational is the joy of Christians above the joy of all others in the world (Psa. cxxvi. 1, 2; Luke xv. 24). 2. How unreasonable and inexcusable the sin of apostasy. Will a delivered captive return to his shackles (Matt. xii. 44, 45). 3. How well-becoming is a free spirit in believers to their state of liberty. 4. Let no man wonder at the opposition of Satan to the preaching of the gospel (Acts xxvi. 18). 5. How careful should Christians be to maintain their spiritual liberty (Gal. v. 1; 2 Cor. i. 24). 6. Let Satan's captives be encouraged to come to Christ. (*J. Flavel.*) Only in the Son does human nature come to liberty, to the free use of all its powers. to the realization of all its privileges, to the full satisfaction of all its desires

Christ gives us freedom from sin. I. As SIN REVEALS ITSELF IN UNBELIEF. 1. Peter says of some, "they cannot see afar off." They are short-sighted, they can only see what is close to them: food on the table, a five-pound note, title-deeds, the earth and the stars, but they cannot see the highest universe, its grandeurs, its treasures, its delights. Thousands of men apparently free are really the poorest of slaves—the slaves of the senses. Some of these look round and think it a big cage, but the physical is only a cage, ample as it may seem. Many contrive to make themselves comfortable in their captivity; they trim their feathers, peck their sugar, sing their song, yet is the earthly life at its best but a captivity. It is only when man emerges into the spiritual element that he gets into the sky, stretches his wings, and tastes the pleasures for which he was born. 2. The truth as it is in Jesus makes us free from the tyranny of the senses; it opens our eyes and causes us to see the world behind the world, the sun behind the sun; it strengthens us that those heavenly places become accessible to us. Oh! how the walls of the prison-house of sense would close in upon us quite if it were not for Jesus Christ. How the Lord's Prayer brings us into the full presence of the spiritual universe—the Divine Father, the Divine kingdom, the Divine will, the Divine grace, the Divine and everlasting goal! With that prayer realized in our heart, we feel there is something more than physiology, mechanism, and victuals; we have dropped the fetters of sense, we have got our feet out of the clogging bird-lime of earthliness, we are free, gloriously free, like Tennyson's eagle "ringed round with the azure sky!" 3. We hear much in these days about "free-thought," but free-thought in the truest, noblest sense is realized only in Jesus Christ. The bondage of thought is the tyranny of materialism. Christ frees us from the most terrible illusions of all, the illusions of time and sense, and causes us to see that real universe, that glorious city of God of which this earth is but the shadow. II. As SIN REVEALS ITSELF IN DISOBEDIENCE. 1. "Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin." Sin makes slaves of us in a variety of practical irregularities. Some of these are coarser, some more refined, but how impossible thousands find it to shake off the tyranny of those evil habits which have established themselves through years! One man is the victim of vanity, another of covetousness, another of ambition, another of appetite. A man's will can do much, but it sadly fails here. You will see sometimes a performer at a fair with an electric machine. At length a bumpkin comes up, and at the invitation of the professor smilingly seizes the handles. In a moment the poor fellow is convulsed, dances in pain, and cries for deliverance. Why does he not drop the thing? He cannot. Does not the crowd help? No; the crowd grins—the crowd always grins. The poor simpleton is at the mercy of the operator, and he goes on grinding. So it is to-day with thousands of men in sin; they are ashamed of themselves, horrified at themselves, filled full of torment and remorse; but they are powerless under the mysterious spell, and do again and again the thing they execrate. 2. But here again Christ can make you free indeed. Some of you think you will have to be buried in your fetters. Let me assure you Christ, by His mighty truth, and love, and grace, can strengthen you to burst these miserable bonds as Samson burst the green withes wherewith he was bound. Where is the proof? I will give you the best logical proof in the world—thousands of living men and women who have attained full mastery by the spirit of Christ. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? . . . And such were some of you," &c. III. As SIN REVEALS ITSELF IN LUST. 1. Christ does not repeal the moral law. He does not accommodate it to our weakness; on the contrary, He brings out more fully its deep, wide meaning, making it more imperative than ever. One of our sceptical writers tells us that when she got rid of Christianity she felt she emerged on "the broad breezy common of nature." Well, we are bound to accept her testimony. But, is there anything so very desirable about "breezy commons?" I never understood that the best things grew there; ferns and furze bushes are there, brambles, and crab-apples; but the ripe orchards, the golden corn, the purple clusters, the richest blooms and blossoms, these are not found on breezy commons. I never understood that breezy commons were very desirable places to live on. And I never understood that the picturesque parties who usually pitch their tents and live on breezy commons constitute the cream of the world's population. There was far more truth in that lady's words than she suspected. To get rid of Christianity, its laws, its hopes, its fears, its inspirations, its reverence and love, is to emerge on a breezy common, all the best things lost for ever. If our countrymen are to repudiate Christ, our country will emerge on that breezy common, and we shall dwell there as our Druidical fathers did before

us. It has taken us more than a millennium to get off that breezy common, and find the goodly heritage of our present civilization, and every step of our progress has been through self-denial, self-limitation, renunciation, subordination, obedience. We have nothing to gain by license. 2. Christ does not give us liberty by modifying the law to suit our weakness. He destroys in us the element of lust or irregular desire. We find in ourselves what the theologian calls our fallen self, what the evolutionist calls our animal self, and this contradicts our best reason, and brings us into bondage. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit," &c. A man is a real slave when he is a slave at heart, when he cannot follow out delightfully the noble impulses and aspirations of his nature, and such slaves are we all by birth. Christ makes us "free indeed" by putting God's laws into our heart and writing them in our mind; by filling us with high, pure, bright, strong, expansive feeling; by making us to say with Himself, in His strength, "I delight to do Thy will, O God." This is the true liberty, to will the good, to delight in it, to follow it passionately, to find our only heaven in it. And this is the freedom wherewith Christ maketh free. IV. AS SIN REVEALS ITSELF IN FEAR. 1. The slave serves in fear. Now Christ, the Son, makes us sons, and, filling our heart with love to our heavenly Father, makes all life's duty light. In the power of a sublime love we accomplish the loftiest law, and taste the utmost freedom. Science tells us that the atmosphere presses upon us to the extent of something like fifteen pounds to the square inch, and an average sized man carries about with him something like fifteen tons weight. But we feel the atmosphere no burden—it is a pleasure to breathe, to feel it around us; "light as air" is a proverb. Why is this? The inward pressure of gases in our body is equal to the external weight, so we suffer no inconvenience—the air is no burden, it is life, joy, to all healthy organizations. So, as John shows, when we love God "His commandments are not grievous." The inward pressure, joy, power, hope, are equal to every exaction of the outward law, and so far from the commandment being a burden to us, it is a delight and glory. 2. And then, as to the future, sin fills us with fear. As Christ shows us in this place, sin disinherits us. "The slave has no permanent place in the household." And so we look forward with dismal apprehension. We are all our lifetime subject to the fear of death. Here Christ, by making us sons, changes fear to hope, and so gives us precious liberty. "The sting of death is sin," &c. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *Ye shall be free indeed*, or in reality:—The word is not the same as in ver. 31. The Jews claimed political freedom, but they were in reality the subjects of Rome. They claimed religious freedom, but they were in reality slaves to the letter. They claimed moral freedom, but they were in reality the bondmen of sin. The freedom which the Son proclaimed was in reality freedom, for it was the freedom of their true life, delivered from the thraldom of sin and brought into union with God. For the spirit of man, that in knowledge of the truth revealed through the Son can contemplate the Father and the eternal home, there is a real freedom that no power can restrain. All through this context the thoughts pass unbidden to the teaching of St. Paul, the great apostle of freedom. There could be no fuller illustration of the words than is furnished by his life. He, like St. Peter and St. John (Rom. i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 1; Rev. i. 1), had learned to regard himself as a "bondservant," but it was of Christ, "whose service is perfect freedom." We feel, as we think of him in bonds before Agrippa, or as a prisoner at Rome, that he is more truly free than he himself was when armed with authority to bind men and women because they were Christians. The chains that bind the body cannot bind the spirit whose chains have been loosed. (*Archdeacon Watkins.*) *The method of Christian freedom:*—A ship outward bound has struck on a sunken rock ere she has well cleared out of the harbour. There she lies in the water, a mile from land, with the ocean all clear before her from that spot to her journey's end; but she moves not. What will make her move? The mechanical resources of our time could bring an enormous accumulation of force to bear upon her, but under all its pressure she will remain stationary. If you increase the dragging power beyond a certain point, you will wrench her asunder limb from limb, but you will not win her forward on her voyage. No; not this way—not by any such method can the ship be set free to prosecute her voyage. How, then? Let the tide rise, and the ship with it: now you may heave off your hawsers and send home your steamers. Hoist the sail, and the ship will herself move away like a bird on the wing. It is thus that a soul may be set free to bound forward on the path of obedience. Dragging will not do it. A soul cleaving to the dust is like a ship aground—it cannot go forward until it be lifted up; but when it is lifted up, it will go forward without any violent drawing. Further: the

soul cleaving to the dust is lifted, as the ship was, by a secret but mighty attraction in the far-off heaven. Elevated by a winning from above, it courses over life with freedom. "I will run in the way of Thy commandments, when Thou hast enlarged my heart." (*W. Arnot.*) *Freedom aided by God*:—Three hundred years ago, in Holland, about one million of people stood for Protestantism and freedom in opposition to the mightiest empire of that age, whose banners the Pope had blessed. William, the Prince of Orange, a man who feared God, was the champion of the righteous cause. In the heat of the struggle, when the young republic seemed about to be overwhelmed, William received a missive from one of his generals, then in command of an important post, inquiring, among other things, if he had succeeded in effecting a treaty with any foreign power, as France or England, such as would secure aid. His reply was, "You ask me if I have made a treaty for aid with any great foreign power; and I answer, that, before I undertook the cause of the oppressed Christians in these provinces, I made a close alliance with the King of kings; and I doubt not that He will give us the victory." And so it proved. *Freedom and responsibility*:—Every man because he is free has the responsibility laid upon him by the hand of God of using His freedom in finding out the truth of duty, the obligations of conduct, the conditions of character. It is not enough to reject the authority of the Church; it is not enough to reject the authority of the minister; it is not enough to rail at the past; it is not enough to separate yourself from sects. You are to exercise this prerogative of liberty, not for the sake of forming systematic views, but for the sake of so shaping your life as to prepare yourselves for your eternal destiny. I lay that responsibility upon your liberty. Use, then, your liberty of judgment and conscience, but in God's name I enjoin you to use it for your salvation. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Bondage and deliverance*:—Take your stand on the margin of the ocean, on the western coast of this island, where the shore is a bold rugged rock, and when a long blue ground-swell is rolling towards the land. I know not any aspect of merely inanimate nature that tends so strongly to make one's heart sad. I have stood and gazed upon it until I was beguiled into a painfully tender sympathy with a mute struggling captive. Slowly, meekly, but withal mightily, the sea-wave comes on in long, regular array, and striking with its extended front at all points simultaneously against the pitiless rock, is broken into white fragments and thrown on its back all thrilling and hissing with expiring agony. Sullen and sore the broken remnants of the first rank steal away to the rear, and hide themselves in the capacious bosom of the mother sea. Anon, you perceive another long blue wave gathering its strength at a distance; with gloomy, unhopeful brow, as if warned by the fate of its predecessor, and hurried onward to its own, it rushes forward and delivers another assault against the rocky shore. It shares the fortune of the last. Again, and yet again, the water wearily gathers up its huge bulk, and again strongly but despairingly launches itself upon its prison walls, to be again broken and thrown back in utter discomfiture. You weep for the great helpless prisoner, who cannot weep for himself Year after year, century after century, era after era, that prisoner toils and strikes upon the walls of his prison, but never once succeeds in clearing the barrier and flowing across the continent free. That mighty creature, with its sublime strength, and dumb, patient, unceasing labour, never succeeds in breaking its bonds—never leaps into liberty. Here you find a picture, such as no artist could ever make, of a sinner, or a worldful of sinners in the aggregate, as they lie in their prison, ceaselessly striving for enlargement, but never attaining it. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest." And can this water never get freedom? Is it doomed to lie weltering for ever in its prison? Cannot the prisoner by any means be ever set free? The captive may be set at liberty; the captive is set at liberty day by day. Above the firmament are waters, as well as in the hollow which constitutes the ocean's bed. They are higher up—nearer heaven—as you see, these aerial waters; but being high in heaven, they are therefore free to move across the earth. Nothing conveys a more lively idea of quick, soft, unimpeded motion, than a flying cloud. Here is none of the effort visible even in the flight of birds. Absolutely free they are; and sweetly swiftly do the free run on the errands of their Lord. In this respect there is a sublime contrast between these waters that have been made free and those that are still enslaved—held down by their own dead weight within their prison walls. It is thus that human spirits advance in fleet, gladsome obedience, when the weight is lifted off, and they are permitted to rise. It is when you are raised up into favour that you can go onward to serve. "O Lord, truly I am Thy servant." That is a great attainment, David; how did you reach it? Hear him give the reason: "Thou

hast loosed my bonds" (Psa. cxvi. 16). (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Spiritual liberty* :—What a thrifty, robust plant is the potato when out in the field it grows beneath the sun! Its leaf so coarse and green, its stem so stout and succulent, it is a pleasure to look upon a thing which seems so to take hold of all the elements of life. But when it has sprouted in the cellar, which has but one north window, half-closed, it is a poor, cadaverous, etiolated, melancholy vine, growing up to that little flicker of light; sickly, blanched, and brittle. Like the cellar-growing vine is the Christian who lives in the darkness and bondage of fear. But let him go forth, with the liberty of God, into the light of love, and he will be like the plant in the field, healthy, robust, and joyful. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Glorious liberty* :—What a difference must a Christian and a minister feel, between the trammels of some systems of divinity and the advantage of Scripture freedom, the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The one is the horse standing in the street in harness, feeding indeed, but on the contents of a bag tossed up and down; the other, the same animal in a large, fine meadow, where he lies down in green pastures, and feeds beside the still waters. (*W. Jay.*) *Freeing the slave* :—In early British times the ceremony of freeing slaves was very striking. They were usually set free before the altar or in the church-porch, and the gospel-book bore written on its margins the record of their emancipation. Sometimes his lord placed him at the spot where four roads met, and bade him go whither he would. In the more solemn form of the law his master took him by the hand in full shire-meeting, showed him open road and door, and gave him the lance and sword of the freeman. *Spiritual freedom a gift* :—A poor slave who has never seen any diamonds but those that are worn upon the breasts of his master, his mistress, and their family and friends, is sent to the mines. Working away there, he picks up a large stone, which looks as if it might be a diamond, if it was only bright; but the negro don't know what to think of it. He says it can't be a diamond; but a companion thinks that it is one. The slave takes it to his master, who seizes it with exclamations, and declares to the slave, "You are a free man. There never before was such a diamond found in these mines!" "What, massa!" says the trembling slave, in great trepidation and bewilderment of joy—for bad as freedom is for negroes, it always excites in them powerful emotions of pleasure—"what, massa! dat dull stone a diamond? It don't look like what massa wear in his shirt bosom." "But, don't you know, Sambo, that diamonds have always to be taken to the lapidary, and ground and polished, sometimes for two or three years, before they are ready to wear? This is a most valuable diamond; and you are, from this very moment, a free man." It is not so that spiritual freedom is obtained. It is in no sense earned or merited; it is Christ's free gift. *Christ sets free the sinful* :—I have heard that a great English prince on one occasion went to visit a famous king of Spain. The prince was taken down to the galleys, to see the men who were chained to the oars, and doomed to be slaves for life. The King of Spain promised, in honour of the prince's visit, that he would set free any one of these men that the prince might choose. So the prince went to one prisoner and said, "My poor fellow, I am sorry to see you in this plight; how came you here?" "Ah! sire," he answered, "false witnesses gave evidence against me; I am suffering wrongfully." "Indeed!" said the prince, and passed on to the next man. "My poor fellow, I am sorry to see you here; how did it happen?" "Sire, I certainly did wrong, but not to any great extent. I ought not to be here." "Indeed!" said the prince, and he went on to others, who told him similar tales. At last he came to one prisoner, who said, "Sire, I am often thankful that I am here; for I am sorry to own that if I had received my due I should have been executed. I am certainly guilty of all that was laid to my charge, and my severest punishment is just." The prince replied wittily to him, "It is a pity that such a guilty wretch as you are should be chained among these innocent men, and therefore I will set you free." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **My Word hath no place in you.**—Where the Word of Jesus ought at once to be received, it is often rejected. These Jews were Abraham's seed, but they had not Abraham's faith. Jesus knows where His Word is received, and where it has no place. He declares that all else is unavailing: it was in vain that they were of the favoured race if they did not admit the Saviour's Word into their hearts. The practical result appeared in their lives: they sought to kill Jesus. Let us honestly consider—I. WHAT PLACE THE WORD SHOULD HAVE IN MEN'S HEARTS. The Word comes from Jesus, the appointed Messenger of God; it is true, weighty, saving; and therefore it must have a place among those who hear it. It ought to obtain and retain—1. An inside place: in the thoughts, the memory, the conscience, the affections. "Thy Word

have I hid in mine heart" (Psa. cxix. 11. See also Jer. xv. 16; Col. iii. 16). 2. A place of honour: it should receive attention, reverence, faith, obedience (chap. viii. 47; Luke vi. 46; Matt. vii. 24, 25). 3. A place of trust. We ought in all things to rely upon the sure Word of promise, since God will neither lie, nor err, nor change (Isa. vii. 9; 1 Sam. xv. 29; Titus i. 2). 4. A place of rule. The Word of Jesus is the law of a Christian. 5. A place of love. It should be prized above our daily food, and defended with our lives (Job xxiii. 12; Jude 3). 6. A permanent place. It must so transform us as to abide in us. II. WHY IT HAS NO PLACE IN MANY MEN. If any man be unconverted, let us help him to a reason applicable to his case. 1. You are too busy, and so you cannot admit it. There is no room for Jesus in the inn of your life. Think of it—"You are too much occupied to be saved!" 2. It does not come as a novelty, and therefore you refuse it. You are weary of the old, old story. Are you wearied of bread? of air? of water? of life? 3. Another occupies the place the Word of Jesus should have. You prefer the word of man, of superstition, of scepticism. Is this a wise preference? 4. You think Christ's Word too holy, too spiritual. This fact should startle you, for it condemns you. 5. It is cold comfort to you, and so you give it no place. This shows that your nature is depraved; for the saints rejoice in it. 6. You are too wise, too cultured, too genteel, to yield yourself to the government of Jesus (chap. v. 44; Rom. i. 22). 7. Is the reason of your rejection of the Word one of these—That you are not in earnest? that you are fond of sin? that you are greedy of evil gain? that you need a change of heart? III. WHAT WILL COME OF THE WORD OF CHRIST HAVING NO PLACE IN YOU. 1. Every past rejection of that Word has involved you in sin. 2. The Word may cease to ask for a place in you. 3. You may yourself become hardened so as to decline even to outwardly hear that Word. 4. You may become the violent opponent of that Word, like these Jews. 5. That Word will condemn you at the last day (chap. xii. 48). Conclusion: Let us reason with you. 1. Why do you not give place to it? 2. All that is asked of you is to give it a place. It will bring with it all that you need. 3. Open wide the door and bid it enter. (*Ibid.*) *No place for the Word*:—Only a short time ago a friend of mine was preaching in one of our cathedral churches. As he was going to select for his text a prominent passage in one of the portions for the day, he thought it expedient to inquire of the clerk, "What did the Canon preach from this morning?" The clerk became very pensive, seemed quite disposed to cudgel his brains for the proper answer; but, somehow or other, he really could not think of it just then. All the men of the choir were robing in the adjacent vestry, so he said that he would go and ask them. Accordingly, the question was passed round the choir, and produced the same perplexity. At length the sagacious clerk returned, with the highly explicit answer, "It was upon the Christian religion, sir!" I think those good people must have needed a reminder as to how we should hear; don't you? (*W. M. H. Aitken, M.A.*) The only reason why so many are against the Bible is because they know the Bible is against them. (*G. S. Bowes.*) *The effects of the rejection and the reception of the Word*:—The Bible has been expelled for centuries, by atheistic or sacerdotal hate, from the dwellings of many of the European nations. As a matter of course, the domestic virtues have declined; the conjugal relation is disparaged; deception and intrigue have supplanted mutual confidence; and Society has become diseased to its very core. The very best thing we can do—the only thing which will be efficient—to arrest these evils, is to restore to those nations the Word of God; to replace in their houses that Bible of which they have been robbed. Only do for France and Italy, Belgium and Spain, Portugal and Austria, what has been attempted, and to a great extent accomplished, for our country; put a Bible in every family, and a mightier change will pass over Europe than can be effected by all the diplomacy of her statesmen, or all the revolutions projected by her patriots. (*The Leisure Hour.*)

Vers. 38-47. **I speak that which I have seen with My Father; and ye do that which ye have seen with your Father.**—*The marks of Divine and diabolic relationship*:—Christ had admitted (ver. 37) that the Jews were the seed of Abraham: He now proceeds to show that they had another Father. Those who degenerate from a virtuous stock forfeit the honours of their race. "These are your forefathers if you show yourselves worthy of them." I. THE MARKS OF THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL. 1. Hatred of the truth (vers. 40, 44-47). This was the real ground of their unbelief. They disliked Christ's doctrines. Had He spoken so as to gratify their pride, they might have been disposed to accept Him. The same principle

operates in all opponents of the gospel. The tendency of Christ's truth is still to humble, and so it is still hated. The Jews said, "We are Abraham's seed; we are no idolaters." And so many think it sufficient to belong to a pure Church, to be outwardly moral; hence where the necessity of Christ and His salvation? 2. Enmity against God and His people. The Jews were not content with rejecting Christ; they went about to kill Him. In every age he who is born after the flesh persecutes him who is born after the Spirit. Stephen asked the Jews which of the prophets their fathers had not persecuted. They themselves murdered the Just One; and as they treated the Master so they treated His servants. The heathen followed their example, and these, again, were succeeded by the persecutors of Popery. And in spite of the Reformation, the offence of the Cross has not ceased. Godly persons in the nineteenth century find foes in their own households, and that their religion stands in the way of worldly advancement. II. THE MARKS OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD. 1. Hearing the Word of God. This the Jews could not do, because they were prejudiced against it. But those who are born of God do not dictate to Him what He should say; but, conscious of their own ignorance, they gladly listen to and learn from Divine teaching. 2. Doing the works of Abraham. His distinguishing work was faith. He believed God, and it was counted to Him for righteousness. And what a practical faith it was! Obedient, he left his father's house and offered his only son. Faith expressed in obedience is the special characteristic of the child of God. 3. Loving Christ—(1) Because the Father loves Him. Can the children of God do otherwise than love whom their Father loves. (2) For what He is in Himself—the altogether lovely. (*J. Fawcett, M.A.*) **Abraham is our father. . . . If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.**—*The works of Abraham and the works of the Jews*:—Abraham believed God; they disbelieved God's testimony on behalf of Christ. Abraham was just and merciful; they strove to compass the death of One whose only offence was that He told them the truth. Abraham honoured Melchisedec; they insulted, rejected, and killed Him of whom Melchisedec was a type. Abraham interceded for Sodom; they shut the kingdom of God against men. *Hereditary and spiritual interest in the covenant*:—The Jew was to have a double being in the covenant, an hereditary, a possessary; the hereditary was nothing but the birthright, which gave him *jus ad rem;* he, that lineally descended from Abraham, might claim to be admitted into the covenant which God made with him. The possessary consisted in his personal grace, which gave him *jus in re*, when he did not only descend from Abraham, according to the flesh, but communicated also with him in the graces of the Spirit. These two beings in the covenant were to concur in every Jew; and they could not be severed without danger, danger not to the covenant, but to the Jew (Rom. ii. 25–29; Gal. iii. 9, 29). (*Bp. Lake.*) *The true children of God*:—We have our spiritual affinities, and these determine our true relations and standing. The Jews were not the children of Abraham's good qualities; they were not the children of faith and love; they were the children of the spirit of untruth and murder. These were qualities of the devil and not of Abraham. The devil is the father of untruth. He lied to Eve in the garden of Eden and to Christ on the mountain of temptation. The devil is the father of the spirit of murder. He tried to murder the whole human race spiritually. The disposition which the Jews manifested toward Christ was altogether un-Abrahamic; it was Satanic, and Christ told them so. He traced their pedigree back to Satan and then He offered them freedom from the Satanic. True family likeness consists in character and in actions, not in bearing the same name. Sometimes descendants are a spiritual burlesque upon ancestors. The life which they live makes the name which they bear a laughable farce. Think of a puny sickly dwarf bearing the name of Goliath! Think of a man bearing the name of Jonathan Edwards writing an exultant treatise upon the decline of Calvanism, and sending it broadcast through New England! Think of a man bearing the honoured name of Stephen or Paul or James, men who died for the Church, and yet living outside of the Church and despising it! We often burlesque the names we wear; by our lives and principles and characters we often slander the men whom we delight to call our fathers. We are often un-Abrahamic, while we boast that we are the children of Abraham. Let me ask a practical question at this point. Just what is the liberty which Christ gives men through the truth? Paul may be chosen as an answer to the question. As we become acquainted with Paul's life through his words, we find it full to overflowing with the spirit of freedom. He had freedom from false theologies, and from the condemnation of the law, and from the fear of death, and

from anxieties with regard to the things of this life, and from caste prejudices, and from the tyranny of the world, and from the power of evil habits, and from low and carnal views of the Christian's privileges and of the Christian's Christ. Now this is not picture painting, this is not declamation, this is simply the assertion of fact taken from the life of Paul. Here is the life of Paul, full and broad and manly, built up after magnificent ideals, replete with the peace of God, beautiful with the reproduction of Christly characteristics, and magnificent with noble sacrifices for the elevation of the human race. The Jews thought that they were already free, they were not. This is the mistake which many in the Christian Church make. Are you free? Your Christian profession says, Yes. But what does your life say? How do you perform the duties of the Christian life? To the free Christian, everything is a privilege; church-going, Bible-reading, prayer, religious contributing. There is a great difference between doing things under compulsion and doing the same things because they are privileges. Privileges are duties transfigured. (*D. Gregg.*) *The children of God and of Satan*:—I. THE CHILDREN OF GOD (vers. 31–36). What do these verses teach us concerning the children of God? God has His children in this world, and some of their traits are here presented to our notice. 1. They believe in Christ (ver. 3). To believe in Christ is more than simply to conclude in a general way that He is worthy of credence. It means belief, confidence, submission, obedience, all in one. This believing is the condition of all blessings under the gospel. 2. They abide in Christ's word (ver. 31). They manifest their faith by their fidelity. There is no "six weeks' religion" during a warm revival, dropping into coldness and deadness when the meetings cease. It is a continued service proceeding from a constant faith. 3. They know the truth (ver. 32). The word in the original for "know" is the verb meaning "to have full knowledge." He who learns the truth by fellowship with Christ receives it at fountain-head, and understands it thoroughly. 4. They have freedom (vers. 32–36). Every sinner is a slave, for a power outside of himself directs his action. The drunkard says, "I can't help myself; an appetite drives me to drink." The passionate man says, "I am not my own master when I get angry." Are they not slaves to a power above their own will? The free man is the disciple of Christ. II. THE CHILDREN OF SATAN. Then there is a devil who would make men believe that he is not, and that consequently they need not fear him. The Scriptures are as clear concerning the existence of Satan as they are concerning the existence of God. The traits of Satan's children, as here set forth, are—1. They are slaves (vers. 33–36). 2. They are enemies of Christ (ver. 37). These slaves of Satan were ready to kill Christ. 3. They show a likeness to their father (vers. 39–44). These Jews claimed to be the children of Abraham. "Not so," said Jesus. "If you were the children of Abraham, you would be like Abraham. But you show the traits of your true father, the devil." 4. They have no affinity with God (vers. 45–47). They do not like God's truth (ver. 45); they will not hear God's words (ver. 47). Just as oil and water will not mix, so the children of Satan have an aloofness of nature with respect to God. (*J. L. Hurlbut, D.D.*) *Pious relatives or friends cannot save us*:—It was poor comfort to Dives, in flames, that Abraham called him "son"; to Judas that Christ called him "friend"; or to the rebellious Jews that God called them His people. (*J. Trapp.*) **Now ye seek to kill Me.**—Notice here the gradation. 1. To kill *a man*. 2. A man who is an organ of *the truth*. 3. Of the truth which comes *from God*. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *The fate of the truth-teller*:—When the Egyptians first conquered Nubia, a regiment perished thus: The desert was long, water failed, and men were half-mad with thirst. Then arose the mirage, looking like a beautiful lake. The troops were delighted, and started to reach the lake to slake their thirst in its delicious water; but the guide told them that it was all a delusion. Vainly he appealed to them and warned them. At last he threw himself in the way, and pointing with his finger in another direction, said, "*That* is the way to the water"; but they answered him with blows, and leaving him dead on the sand, rushed after the phantom lake. Eagerly they pressed on for several days, when their goal disappeared and mocked them. One by one they died—far from the path on which their faithful guide lay murdered. *Unregenerate souls do not love the truth*:—The nature of the soil must be changed before the heavenly plant will thrive. Plants grow not upon stones, nor this heavenly plant in a stony heart. A stone receives the rain upon it, not into it. It falls off or dries up, but a new heart, a heart of flesh, sucks in the dew of the Word, and grows thereby. (*S. Charnock.*) *Men hate the truth*:—As the friar wittily told the people that the

truth he then preached unto them seemed to be like holy water, which every one called for apace, yet when it came to be cast upon them, they turned aside their faces as though they did not like it. Men love truth when it only pleads itself: they would have it shine out into all the world in its glory, but by no means so much as peep out to reprove their own errors. (*Senhouse.*) The thief hates the break of day; not but that he naturally loves the light as well as other men, but his condition makes him dread and abhor that which, of all things, he knows to be the likeliest means of his discovery. (*R. Smith.*) *Noble minds welcome the truth*:—If Archimedes, upon the discovery of a mathematical truth, was so ravished that he cried out, "I have found it, I have found it!" what pleasure must the discovery of a Divine truth give to a sanctified soul! "Thy words were found of me," says Jeremiah, "and I did eat them; and Thy word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Truth lies deep, as the rich veins of gold do: if we will get the treasure, we must not only beg, but dig also. (*J. Fletcher.*) **We be not born of fornication.**—The Jews, having nothing effectual to object, take advantage of the moral sense in which Jesus had spoken of parentage, and try to cite it in their own favour: If Thou wilt have it so, we will leave off speaking of Abraham; for after all in that spiritual sphere, of which it seems Thou art thinking, God is our Father. To understand these words, which have been so variously interpreted, it must be remembered that marriage with a heathen woman was, after the return from Babylon (see Nahum and Malachi), regarded as impure, and the children of such marriage as illegitimate, as belonging through one parent to the family of Satan, the god of the heathen. The Jews, then, meant to say: "We were born under perfectly legal conditions; we have no idolatrous blood in our veins; we are Hebrews, born of Hebrews (Phil. iii. 5), and are hence by our very birth protected from all pagan and diabolic affiliation. As truly as they are pure descendants of Abraham, so certainly do they believe themselves to be descended, in a moral point of view, from God alone; and even when rising with our Lord to the moral point of view, they are incapable of freeing themselves from their own idea of natural parentage. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) These words have been explained as signifying that the Jews were not descended, like Ishmael, from any secondary marriage like that of the patriarch with Hagar—which, however, could scarcely be called "fornication"—or from Sarah through another man than her lawful husband; but are probably to be understood as asserting that their pure Abrahamic descent had been corrupted by no admixture of heathen blood, or better, that their relation of sonship to Jehovah had not been rendered impure by the worship of false gods, in which case they had been "children of whoredom" (Hos. ii. 4), but that, as they were physically Abraham's seed, so were they spiritually God's children. This interpretation seems to be demanded by the next words: "We have one Father even God." By this they signified, not that "God alone" in opposition to heathen divinities was their Father, but that spiritually as well as corporeally, they traced their descent back to one parentage, as in the latter case to Abraham, so in the former case to God (Mal. ii. 10). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **If God were your Father ye would love Me.**—*Love to Jesus the great test.*—The order of salvation is first to believe in Christ. By this we become sons of God, and the proof of our sonship is loving what God loves—Christ. I. LOVE TO CHRIST IS IN ITSELF ESSENTIAL. The absence of this love is—1. The loss of the greatest of spiritual pleasures. What a loss is that of the sense of taste and smell? The fairest rose cannot salute the nostrils with its perfume, nor the most dainty flavour delight the palate. But it is infinitely more terrible not to perceive the fragrance of the name of Jesus, and to taste the richness of the bread and wine of heaven. 2. A sign of very grievous degradation. It is the mark of an animal that it cannot enter into intellectual pursuits, and when man loses the power to love his God he sinks to a level with the brutes. We greatly pity those poor creatures who cannot reason, but what shall we think of those who cannot love? Yet not to love Jesus reveals a moral imbecility far worse than mental incapacity, because it is wilful and involves a crime of the heart. 3. A clear proof that the whole manhood is out of order. (1) The understanding, were it well balanced, would judge that Christ is before all, and give Him the pre-eminence. (2) If the heart were what it should be it would love the good, the true, the beautiful, and nothing is more so than Jesus. 4. A sure token that we have no part in His salvation. (1) The very first effect of salvation is love to Jesus. (2) This love is the mainspring of the Spiritual life. It "constraineth us," and is the grand power which keeps us back from evil and impels us towards holiness. (3) Without this love we incur the heaviest condemnation—"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ," &c. II.

LOVE TO CHRIST IS THE TEST OF SONSHIP. Our Lord plainly declares that God is not the Father of those who do not love Him. The Jews were by nature and descent, if any were, the children of God. They were the seed of Abraham, God's chosen, had observed God's ceremonies, bore the mark of His covenant, were the only people who worshipped one God, and incurred the greatest obloquy in consequence —yet as they did not love Christ they were no sons of God. 1. The child of God loves Christ because he loves what his Father loves: his nature, descended from God, runs in the same channel, and since God loves Christ supremely so does he. 2. He sees God in Jesus—the express image of His Person. 3. He is like Christ. Every man loves what is like himself. If you are born of God you are holy and true and loving, and as He is all that you must love Him. 4. He is essentially divine. "I proceeded and came forth," &c. 5. Of His mission—(1) We must love that which comes from God if we love God. It matters not how small the trifle, you prize it if it comes from someone you revere. How much more should we love Him who came from God; and came not as a relic or memorial, but as His living, loving voice. (2) Remember the message Christ brought—a message of pardon, restoration, acceptance, eternal life and glory. 6. He came not of Himself. When a man lives only to serve himself our love dries up. But Jesus' aims were entirely for the Father and for us—so our heart must go out towards Him. III. THIS TEST IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO APPLY NOW. Do you love Him or no? If you do then, you will—1. Trust Him and lean on Him with all your weight. Have you any other hope besides that which springs from His Cross? 2. Keep His Word. How about your neglected Bible? How about those parts of Scripture you have never understood, because afraid they were different from the creed of your church and family? 3. Keep His commandments. Do you obey Christ? If His commands are of little importance, then your heart is not with Him. 4. Imitate Him. It is the nature of love to be imitative. Are you trying to be Christ-like? 5. Love His people—not because they are sweet in their tempers or belong to your denomination, but because they are His. 6. Sympathize with His objects. Whenever we love another we begin to love the things which he loves. He delights to save men, do you? 7. Serve His cause. Love that never leads to action is no love at all. Are you speaking for Him, giving to Him? 8. Desire to be with Him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *If we love God we shall receive Christ:*—If a child were far away in India, and he had not heard from home for some time, and he at last received a letter, how sweet it would be! It comes from father. How pleased he is to get it! But suppose a messenger should come and say, "I come from your father," why, he would at once feel the deepest interest in him. Would you shut your door against your father's messenger? No: but you would say, "Come in, though it be in the middle of the night, I shall always have an ear for you." Shall we not thus welcome Jesus? (*Ibid.*) *Men ought to love Christ as coming from God:*—I know when I left the village where I was first pastor, and where I had loved the people much and they had loved me, I used to say that if I saw even a dog which came from that parish, I should be glad to see him for I felt a love to everybody and everything coming from that spot. How much more should we love Christ because He came from God! (*Ibid.*) **I proceeded forth and came from God.**—*The inner life of Christ:*—Notwithstanding the multitude of books written on the life of Christ we want one more. We have outward lives more than enough that tell us about places and date and occurrences. We want an inner "life" of thoughts, purposes, feelings. Until we study this inner life, all the outward life will be a plague to our intellect and a mortification to our heart. The inward always explains the outward. 1. Suppose we saw one of the miracles of Christ, the raising of the dead. Here is the dead man, there the living Christ, yonder the mourning friends; presently the dead man rises. But how? Is it trick or miracle—an illusion or a fact? I cannot determine, because my eyes have been so often deceived. I saw a man get up—but the conjuror comes along and says, "I will show you something equally deceiving." I see his avowed trick; it does baffle me; and if then he says, "It was just the same with what you thought the raising of the dead," he leaves me in a state of intellectual torment. Then what am I to do? Leave the outward. Watch the miracle Worker—listen to Him. If His mental triumphs are equal to His physical miracles, then admire, trust, and love Him. Take the conjuror: when on the stage he seems to be working miracles, but when he comes off and talks on general subjects I feel my equality with him rising and asserting itself. So when I go to Christ as a mere stranger and see His miracles, I say, "This Man may be but the cleverest of the host." But

when He begins to speak His words are equal to His works. He is the same off the platform as on. I am bound to account for this consistency. All other men have been manifestations of self-inequality. We know clever men who are fools, strong men who are weak, &c., and this want of self-consistency is a proof of their being merely men. But if I find a Man in whom this inequality does not exist, who says that if I could follow Him still higher I should find Him greater in thinking than is possible for any mere man to be in acting, then I have to account for this consistency, which I have found nowhere else, and listen to His explanation of it. "I proceeded forth and came from God." That explanation alone will cover all the ground He permanently occupies. 2. It will be interesting to make ourselves as familiar with His thoughts as we are with His works. We shall then come to value His miracles as He did. Did He value them for their own sake? Sound a trumpet and convoke a mighty host to see them? Never. He regarded them as elementary and introductory—examples and symbols. Why? Because He was greater within than without. Had He performed them with His fingers only, He might have been proud of them, but when they fell out of the infinity of His thinking they were mere drops trembling on the bucket. We might as well follow some poor breathing of ours, and say, "How wonderful that sighing in the wind!" It is nothing because of the greater life. It is very remarkable that this Man once said, "Greater works than these shall ye do," but never "Greater thoughts than these shall ye think." Let us look at this inner life of Christ from two or three points. I. I watch this man, struck with wonder at His power, and the question arises, WHAT IS THE IMPELLING SENSE OF HIS DUTY? He answers, "I must be about My Father's business." Never did prophet give that explanation before. In working from His Father's point of view, He gives us His key. Put it where you like, the lock answers to it; and is no credit to be given to a speaker, who at twelve years of age, put the key into the hands of inquirers, and told them to go round the whole circle of His life with that key. Can he keep up that strain? Listen, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Can He sustain that high key when He is in trouble? "Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit." II. Arguing from that point, if this Man is about His Father's business, WHAT IS HIS SUPREME FEELING? Concern for the dignity of the law? Jealousy for the righteousness of God! No; from beginning to end of His life He is "moved with compassion," and when people come to Him they seemed to know this sympathetically, for they cried, "Have mercy on us." He speaks like a *Son* and is thus faithful to His *Father's* message. What explanation does He give of His own miracles, "Virtue hath gone out of Me." He did not say "I have performed this with My fingers"—no trickster, but a mighty sympathizer. Whatever He did took something out of Him. Behold the difference between the artificial and the real. The healing of one poor sufferer took "Virtue out of Him." What did the redemption of the world take out of Him when He said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The last pulse is gone and He is self-consistent still. III. TO WHAT ARE ALL HIS TRIUMPHS EVENTUALLY REFERRED? Not to intellectual ability, skill of finger or physicial endurance, but to His soul—"He shall see of the travail of His soul," &c. You know the meaning of the word in some degree. One man paints with paint, another with His soul. One man speaks with his tongue, another with his soul; they are the same words, but not the same, as the bush was not the same before the fire came into it. Thus Christ shall see the travail of His soul, &c. He was often wearied with journeying, when was He wearied with miracles? His bones were tired, when was His mind enfeebled—when did the word ever come with less than the old emphasis—the fiat that made the sun? (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Christ's claim*:—I. WHAT DID HE CLAIM FOR HIMSELF? 1. God announced Himself to Moses as "I AM"—a marvellous name, which seemed as if it were going to be a revelation; but suddenly it returned upon itself and finished with "THAT I AM," as if the sun were just about to come from behind a great cloud, and suddenly, after one dazzling gleam, hide itself before one denser still—God's "hour" was not yet. He had said "I am," but *what* He did not say. 2. Does Jesus connect Himself with this mysterious name? We cannot read His life without constantly coming across it, but He adds to the name simple earthly words, everything that human fancy ever conceived concerning strength, beauty, sympathy, tenderness, and redemption—"I am the vine." What a stoop! Could any but God have taken up that figure? Forget your familiarity with it and then consider that One has said without qualification, "I am the Vine," "I am the Light." We know what that is: it is here, there, everywhere—takes up no room, yet fills all space; warms the plants, yet does not crush a twig. The "I am" fell

upon us like a mighty thundering, "I am the Light" came to us like a child's lesson in our mother's nursery. "I am the Door." That is not a mean figure, if we interpret it aright, a door is more than a deal arrangement swinging on hinges. It is welcome, hospitality, home, honour, sonship. "I am the Bread, the Water, the Good Shepherd, the Way, the Truth, the Life." How any man could be a mere man, and yet take up these figures, it is impossible to believe. It is easier to say "My Lord and My God." II. WHAT DOES HE CLAIM FROM MEN? Everything. In mean moods I have wondered at His Divine voracity. Once a woman came to Him who had only one box of spikenard and He took it all. Would your *humanity* have allowed you to do it? Surely you would have said, "Part of it; I must not have it all." And another woman—she might have touched His heart, for she wore widows' weeds. I expected Him to say, "Poor soul, I can take nothing from you." But He took her two mites—all that she had. He is doing the same to day. How many things has that only boy been in his father's dreams! One day the mother feels that something is going to happen, and what does happen is a proposal that the boy should become a missionary! He must go. Humanity would have spared him—but Christ takes him. III. HOW DID THE BETTER CLASS OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES REGARD HIM. Here is a typical man—a man of letters and of local renown—who says, "Rabbi, Thou art a teacher come from God." Evidence of that kind must not go for nothing. Send men of another type—shrewd, keen men of the world: what say they? "Never man spake like this Man." Here are women coming back from having seen the Lord: what will they say? Never yet did women speak one word against the Son of God! Mothers, women of pure souls! sensitive as keenest life: what saw ye? "The holiness of God." Pass Him on to a judge—cold, observant, not easily hoodwinked. What sayest thou? "I find no fault in Him." What is that coming? A message from the judge's wife, "Have thou nothing to do with this just person. Let Him go." Crucify Him; will anybody speak about Him now? The centurion, accustomed to this sight of blood, said, "Truly this was the Son of God." Put these testimonies of observers, accumulate them into a complete appeal, and then say whether it be not easier for the imagination and judgment and heart to say, "My Lord and my God," than to use meaner terms. IV. FROM SUCH A MAN WHAT TEACHING MAY BE EXPECTED? 1. Extemporaneousness. He cannot want time to make His sermons, or He is not what He claims to be. Does He retire and compose elaborate sentences and come forth a literary artist, leaving the impression that He has wasted the midnight oil? No; His is simple graphic talk. 2. Instantaneousness of reply. God cannot want time to think what He will say? Does Christ? He answers immediately and finally. He had just thrown off the apron; rabbinical culture He had none, and yet there was an instantaneousness about Him to which there is no parallel but in the "Let there be light, and there was light." Give every man credit for ability, and give this Man credit for having extorted from His enemies, "Never man spake like this Man." 3. What do I find in Christ's teaching? Incarnations of the Spiritual. He Himself was an incarnation. He had to embody the kingdom of God, and hence He said, "It is like unto"—To embody the bodiless was the all-culminating miracle of the Peasant of Galilee. 4. Christ's is seminal teaching—that which survives all the changes of time. Where are the grand and stately sermons of the great Doctors? Gone into the stately past. V. DID THIS MAN LIVE UP TO HIS OWN PRINCIPLES? Some people say that the teaching of Jesus conveyed high theories, but too romantic to be embodied in actual behaviour. What said He? "Bless them that persecute you." Did He do it? "When He was reviled He reviled not again." What said He? "Pray for them that dispitefully use you." Did He do it? "Father forgive them," &c. (*Ibid.*) **Ye are of your father the devil**.—*The children of the devil*:—I. WHO IS THE DEVIL? With regard to that remarkable being termed elsewhere "Satan," "the tempter," "the old serpent," "the destroyer," our information, though limited, is distinct. He is a being of the angelic order, formed, like all intelligent beings, in a state of moral integrity, who, at a period anterior to the fall, in consequence of violating the Divine law, in a manner of which we are not particularly informed, was (along with a number of other spirits who, in consequence of being seduced by him, were partakers in his guilt) cast out of heaven, placed in a state of degradation and punishment, and reserved to deeper shame and fiercer pains, at the Judgment. Through his malignity and falsehood man, who was innocent, holy, and happy and immortal, became guilty, depraved, miserable and liable to death. Over the minds of the unregenerate he exercises a powerful, though not irresistible, influence, and hence is termed "the prince," "the god of this world," &c., who

leads men captive at his will. He exerts himself, by his numerous agents, in counter-working the Divine plan for the salvation of men, throwing obstacles of various kinds in the way of their conversion, and spreading his snares for, and aiming his fiery darts at, those who have thrown off his yoke. Error, sin, and misery, in all their forms, are ultimately his works; and his leading object is to uphold and extend the empire of evil in the universe of God. II. WHAT IS MEANT BY HIS BEING THE JEWS' FATHER. The term is figurative. That being is, in a moral point of view, my father, under whose influence my character has been formed, and whose sentiments and feelings and conduct are the model after which mine are fashioned. These Jews instead of having a spiritual character formed under divine influence, had one formed under a diabolical influence; and instead of being formed in God's likeness, or in the likeness of Abraham his friend, they resembled the grand enemy of God and man. III. WHAT IS IT TO BE OF THE DEVIL? "Of" expresses a relation of property. To be "of the world," is to be the world's own. "The world loves its own"—those who are "of it." To be "of God," or "God's," is to belong to God, to be God's property and possession. To be "of Christ," or "Christ's," is to belong to Him. To be "of the devil," or "the devil's," is to belong to him, to be, as it were, his property. All created beings are, and must be, in the most important sense, God's property. The devil himself is God's, subject to His control, and will be made to serve His purpose. But in another sense, the Jews, and all who possess the same character, are the property of the wicked one; they practically renounce their dependence on God; they deny His proprietorship, and they practically surrender themselves to the wicked one, yielding themselves his slaves. It is as if our Lord had said, "Ye say that ye are God's peculiar people, but ye are really the devil's self-sold slaves." IV. WHAT ARE THE LUSTS OF THE DEVIL? "Lust" signifies not merely desire, properly so called, but the object of desire. "The lust of the eye" is a general name for those things which, contemplated by the eye, excite desire—what is splendid or beautiful. "The lusts of the devil" are to be understood in this way, not of his individual desires or longings—for how could the Jews do these?—but of the things which are the object of his desires—such as the establishment and permanence of error, vice, and misery among men—whatever is calculated to gratify his impious malignant mind, a mind of which, as Milton powerfully expresses it, "evil is the good." To do the things which the devil desires is to oppose truth and to increase sin and misery. These things the Jews did—habitually did. V. WHAT IS IT TO WILL THOSE LUSTS? The term "will" is not here the mere sign of futurition—it denotes disposition, determination, choice. "Ye will do the evil things which your infernal father wishes for." It is a phrase of the same kind as: "If any man will be My disciple" (chap. vii. 17). The Jews were not merely occasionally by strong temptation induced to do what is in accordance with the devil's desires, but their desires were so habitually consentaneous with his, that in seeking to gratify themselves they produced the result which he desired. They were cheerful servants—voluntary slaves. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *Children of the devil*:—It is said of Mr. Haynes, the coloured preacher, that, some time after the publication of his sermon on the text, "Ye shall not surely die," two reckless young men having agreed together to try his wit, one of them said, "Father Haynes, have you heard the good news?" "No," said Mr. Haynes, "what is it?" "It is great news indeed," said the other; "and, if true, your business is gone." "What is it?" again inquired Mr. Haynes. "Why," said the first, "the devil is dead." In a moment the old gentleman replied, lifting up both hands, and placing them on the heads of the young men, and in a tone of solemn concern, "Oh, poor fatherless children! what will become of you?" (*W. Baxendale.*) *The devil a liar and a murderer*:—King Canute promised to make him the highest man in England who should kill King Edmund, his rival; which, when he had performed, and expected his reward, he commanded him to be hung on the highest tower in London. So Satan promises great things to people in pursuit of their lusts, but he puts them off with great mischief. The promised crown turns to a halter, the promised comfort to a torment, the promised honour into shame, the promised consolation into desolation, and the promised heaven turns into a hell. **The lusts of your father ye will do.**—It is a frightful "will," and as frightful a "must," which governs the soul of an ungodly man. Such a soul either is a slave of the "must," or a free agent of the "will"; and the most fearful feature of all is that it is guilty as being a free agent, and the more guilty it is so much the more enslaved, and therefore the more it is free to will by so much the more enslaved. (*Augustine.*) Satan hath no impulsive power; he may

strike fire till he be weary (if his malice can weary); except man's corruption brings the tinder, the match cannot be lighted (Acts v. 4; James i. 13–16). (*Thos. Fuller.*) **He was a murderer from the beginning** (comp. Wisd. ii. 23, 24; Rom. v. 12).—The Fall was the murder of the human race; and it is in reference to this, of which the fratricide in the first family was a signal result, that the tempter is called a murderer from the beginning (comp. 1 John iii. 8–12, where the thought is expanded). The reference to the murderer is suggested here by the fact that the Jews had been seeking to kill our Lord (ver. 40). They are true to the nature which their father had from the beginning. (*Archdeacon Watkins.*) **He abode** (Revised Version, "stood") **not in the truth because there is no truth in him.**—*Standing in the truth*:—1. This chapter shows Jesus' power of bringing men out of their fictions of life, and of discovering the essential thing in life. Here He discloses the condition under which it is possible for a created being to stand in the truth. It is no little thing to stand in the truth. You may have stood on some rare evening upon a mountain top. The mists had been lifted from the valleys, the villages, &c., were etched on the map before you; on the far horizon sea and sky met, the few lingering clouds showed their upper edges turned to gold, while the whole air seemed to have become some clear crystal to let the sun shine through. So it is to stand in the truth, and to do so were worth the effort of a lifetime. So without long climbing Jesus stood. 2. Thus more is meant than is suggested to us by "stand fast in the truth." Men may only mean by that—Be obstinate on our side, standing steadfastly in some limited conception of truth; or merely to stand where we are without inquiring how the mind is to find its place, sure, serene, and sunny in the truth; or when men are debating it may be some battle call to fight for some truth at the expense of abiding in all truth. 3. Jesus shows the real thing to be desired in our anxiety to stand in the truth—the truth must be *in* us. Having no truthfulness within the Evil One lost his standing in the truth of God's universe without. This extremest case illustrates the whole process of descent of some from truth. I. THIS UNIVERSE IS A MORAL UNIVERSE, AND A MAN TO STAND IN IT MUST BE MORALLY SOUND. An immoral man can have no permanent standing in a moral universe. 1. There is no untruthfulness, dishonesty, or vice in the constitution of things. Nature invariably gives the same answer. The creation made in truth continues in truth. The ocean tides keep true time and measure; the sun is steadfast; Nature throughout is one piece of honest work, and its veracity lies at the foundation of our industries. Every railroad is built upon it, and every man works in faith that earth and sky will keep their primal covenant. 2. Now when a man born to stand here takes up some lie into his soul, what happens? That fate which befell the father of lies. He cannot stand. Suppose a man conceives a fraudulent thought and says I will succeed in my business with that fraud in my mind, what is the end? Defaulters behind prison bars might answer. Defalcations always begin in a man himself, sometimes years, before they begin at the office. The fall began when he let some falsehood come into his life; when he sought to keep up an appearance that was not true. At last men were shocked to discover that he stood not in the truth because the truth was not in him. 3. Perhaps the end has not come yet, and men who are not truthful within seem to stand as though the universe were in their favour. Nevertheless, sooner or later, the end of inward untruthfulness is as certain as the law of gravitation. The moral universe can be relied upon to throw out eventually every immoral man. "Without is every one that loveth and maketh a lie." And we do not have to wait till the last day. (1) A man cannot stand long in the world's credit if the truth of personal integrity is not in him. (2) A rich or popular man cannot stand always in good society if his heart is becoming rotten—in the end it must cast him out. (3) Even in politics many a leader has not stood in the truth of the people's final judgment because the truth was not in him. (4) The same condition pertains to the realm of science. Nature wants character in her pupil even when teaching her laws of numbers. Clerk Maxwell's character was part of his fitness for high scientific work. (5) And certainly this same law has been confirmed over and over again in the history of literature. What a poet for the coming years Byron might have been, had there been in him higher and holier truth! II. THE UNIVERSE IS A DIVINE UNIVERSE, AND NO MAN CAN STAND IN ITS TRUTH WHO WISHES TO SAY IN HIS HEART, "THERE IS NO GOD." There is some Divine reality behind all these shifting appearances of things. There is an expression of Divine intelligence playing over the face of Nature. And what is

seen and touched is not half of the glory of the kingdom of God. Faith is standing in this Diviner glory. We would all like to stand in this truth, but John says, "If a man says, 'I love God,' and hateth his brother, he is a liar." When a man is thinking a hateful thought, he does not then believe in God, though he be making an argument to prove one, and saying, "Lord, Lord!" And it is no avail for any of us to try and believe in God or the unseen universe simply by thinking about them or discussing their natural probabilities, unless we are first eager to have some truth of God in ourselves, and so by the truth within us find that we stand in the Divine truth of the world. Live like a brute, and believe like a son of God? Never. Does any man want to prove the existence of God? Let him search the book of his life, and if he finds that he did some truth of God, then find God and worship Him. III. THIS UNIVERSE IS A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSE, AND IF A MAN HAS NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, HE CANNOT STAND IN ITS FULL, FINAL CHRISTIANITY. All things were made by Christ, and in Him all things consist. The universe is Christian because created for Christ, and reaching its consummation in Him; because God has shown Himself to be Christian in His eternal thought and purpose towards the world, and because its last great day shall be the Christian judgment. Hence if we would stand in this full and final truth, we must have some Christian truth in us which shall answer to the Christian character of the universe. If we should fail of this, how could we hope to stand when whatever is not Christian must eventually be cast out, for Christ must reign until all enemies be put under His feet. Sin must go, and death, and all uncharitableness, and all deceit, to make room for a new heaven and a new earth. (*Newman Smyth, D.D.*) **He is a liar, and the father thereof.**—Lying is well-nigh universal in the East. It is not only practised, but its wisdom is defended by Orientals generally. "Lying is the salt of a man," say the Arabs. The Hindoos say that Brahma lied when there was no gain in lying; and so far they are ready to follow Brahma's example. Yet Orientals recognize the truth that lying is essentially sinful, however necessary it may seem. The Arabs to-day will trust a Christian's word when they would not believe each other. They also admit that a liar cannot long prosper. And the Hindoos have a saying that the telling of a lie is a greater sin than the killing of a Brahman. It was an appeal to the innermost consciences of His Oriental hearers when Jesus charged them with showing in their practice that they were children of the father of lies. (*S. S. Times.*) **Because I tell you the truth, ye believe Me not.**—Generally, the reason why a man is believed is that he speaks the truth. But the experience of Jesus was, in the case of the Jews, the opposite. They were so ruled by the lies with which their father had blinded their hearts, that it was just because He spoke the truth that He obtained no credence from them, (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *The rationale of unbelief:*—I. REPUGNANCE TO THE TRUTH (ver. 45). Had He given them popular dogmas or speculative disquisitions, they might have believed Him; but He gave them truth that addressed itself with imperial force to their central being. They were living in falsehood, appearances, and shams, far away from the awful region of spiritual realities. The truth came in direct collision with their prepossessions, pride, interests, habits; and they would not have it. This repugnance —1. Reveals man's abnormal condition. His soul is as truly organized for truth as his eyes for light. Truth is its natural atmosphere, scenery, food. 2. Suggests his awful future. The soul and truth will not always be kept apart. The time must come when the intervening falsehoods shall melt away and the interspacing gulfs bridged over, and when the soul shall feel itself in conscious contact with moral realities. II. THE PURITY OF CHRIST (ver. 46). Christ is the Truth, and His invincible intolerance of all sin repels the depraved heart. "Men love darkness," &c. The first beams of the morning are not half so repulsive to a burglar as the rays of Christ's truth are to a depraved heart. Purity makes the hell of depravity. III. ESTRANGEMENT FROM GOD (ver. 47). Divine filial sympathies are essential to true faith. The more a child loves his parent, the more he believes in his word. Unregenerate men have not this sympathy, hence their unbelief. They do not like to retain God in their thoughts. "He that loveth not knoweth not God." IV. PRIDE OF INTELLECT (ver. 48). They had said this before, and here they pride themselves on their sagacity. "Say we not well?" Are we not clever? What an insight we have into character! Infidels have ever been too scientific to believe in miracles, too philosophic to require a revelation, too independent to require Christ, too moral to need inward reformation. "Say we not well?" is their spirit. It comes out in their books, lectures, converse, daily life. "We are

the wise men, and wisdom will die with us." This pride is essentially inimical to true faith. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child," &c. V. UNCHARITABLENESS OF DISPOSITION (ver. 48). Suppose He was a Samaritan, are they all bad? Yes, said they, and because thou art a Samaritan thou hast a devil. This uncharitable reasoning has ever characterized infidelity. All Christians are hypocrites, all preachers crafty mercenaries, all churches nurseries of superstition; hence we will have nothing to do with it. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **Which of you convinceth Me of sin?**—*The Christ of history the revelation of the perfect man:*—This sinlessness of Jesus stands alone in history in that—I. JESUS CLAIMED IT FOR HIMSELF. Even those who have rejected His Divinity admit that He was pre-eminently holy; yet no other man has ever claimed or had claimed for him this sinlessness. On the contrary, in proportion to a man's saintliness he realizes the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It is the guiltiest who do not feel guilt. The cry of the sin-wounded heart is wrung from a David, not from a Herod; from a Fénélon, not from a Richelieu. We hear its groaning in the poems of a Cowper, not of a Byron; in the writings of a Milton, not of a Voltaire. That Jesus should have claimed to be sinless, and to have acted all through on that assumption, can never be explained except upon the ground of His Godhead. If He were not sinless and Divine, He would be lower than His saints, for then He would have made false claims, and been guilty of presumptuous and dishonouring self-exaltation. II. THIS CLAIM HAS NOT AND CANNOT BE IMPUGNED. 1. The Jews could not meet His challenge. It was not from want of desire. There is a vein of natural baseness in fallen natures which delights in dragging down the loftiest. Whom has not envy striven to wound? And has it not ever been at the very highest that the mud is thrown? Even Francis of Assissi, Vincent de Paul, Whitefield, did not escape the pestilent breath of slander. Yet, though Jesus lived in familiar intercourse with publicans and sinners, not even His deadliest enemies breathed the least suspicion of His spotless innocence. They said, in their coarse rage, "Thou art a Samaritan," &c., but none said, "Thou art a sinner." "Have nothing to do with that just Man," exclaimed the Roman lady. "I find no fault in Him," declared the blood-stained Pilate. "There is no harm in Him," was the practical verdict of Herod. "This Man has done nothing amiss," moaned the dying malefactor. "I have shed innocent blood," shrieked the miserable Judas. His most eager accusers stammered into self-refuting lies; and the crowds around the cross, smiting on their breasts, assented to the cry of the heathen centurion, "Truly this was the Son of God." 2. Subsequent ages have conceded this sinlessness. The fierce light of unbelief and anger has been turned upon His life, and the microscope of historical criticism and the spectrum analysis of psychological inquiry, without finding one speck on the white light of His holiness. The Talmud alludes to Him with intensest indignation, yet dares not invent the shadow of a crime. Outspoken modern rationalists seem as they gaze at Him in dubious wonder to fall unbidden at His feet. Spinosa sees in Him the best symbol of heavenly wisdom, Kant of ideal perfection, Hegel of union between the human and the Divine. Rosseau said that, if the death of Socrates was that of a sage, the death of Jesus was that of a God. His transcendent holiness moved the flippant soul of Voltaire. Strauss wrote whole volumes to disprove His Divinity, yet he calls Him "the highest object we can imagine with respect to religion; the Being without whose presence in the mind religion is impossible." Comte tried to find a new religion, yet made a daily study of the "Imitation of Christ." Renan has undermined the faith of thousands, yet admits "His beauty is eternal, and His reign will never end." How can all this admiration be justified if He, of all God's children, claimed a sinlessness which, if He were not Divine, was a sin to claim? III. MIGHT NOT HIS VOICE ASK US ACROSS THE CENTURIES, "TO WHOM WILL YE LIKEN ME AND SHALL I BE EQUAL?" I do not ask what religion you would prefer to Christianity. Christianity is the true religion, or there is none. No man would dream of matching the best thoughts of the world's greatest thinkers, or the highest truths of the best religion, with Christianity. Not, certainly, the senile proprieties of Confucianism, the dreary, negatious, and perverted bodily service of Buddhism, or the mere retrogade Judaism of the Moslem; and if not these, certainly no other. 1. But compare the founders of these religions with our Lord. The personality of Sakya Mouni is lost in a mass of monstrous traditions; but his ideal, as far as we can disentangle it, was impossible and unnatural. The life of Confucius is tainted with insincerity; and he not only repudiated perfection, but placed himself below other sages. Mohammed stands self-condemned of adultery and treachery. Socrates and Marcus Aurelius were the

noblest characters of secular history, but those who know them best confess that the golden image stands on feet of clay. 2. If you turn to sacred history, which will you choose to compare with Him whom, in dim Messianic hope, they saw afar off? Adam? but he lost us Paradise. Moses? but he was not suffered to enter the promised land. David? but does not the ghost of Uriah rise again? 3. But are there not in the long Christian centuries some as sinless as He, since they have had His example to follow and His grace to help? Look up to the galaxy of Christian examples, and it is but full of stars, of which each one disclaims all glory save such as it derives from the sun. Many have caught some one bright colour, but in Him only you see the sevenfold perfection of undivided light. And none have been able to appreciate the many sided glory. All see in Him the one excellence they most admire. The knights saw in Him the model of all chivalry, the monks the model of all asceticism, the philosophers the source of all enlightenment. To Fénélon He was the most rapt of mystics, to Vincent de Paul the most practical of philanthropists, to an English poet "The first true gentleman that ever breathed." His life was the copy over which was faintly traced the biography of all the greatest saints, but each of them presented but a pale image of His Divine humanity. The wisdom of apostles, the faith of martyrs, the self-conquest of hermits, were but parts of Him. In the tenderness of Francis, the thunderings of Savonarola, the strength of Luther, the sincerity of Wesley, the zeal of Whitefield, the self-devotion of Howard, we but catch the single gleams of His radiance. His life was not the type of any one excellence, but the consummation of all. No mind has been large enough to comprehend its glorious contradictions—its clinging friendship and its sublime independence; its tender patriotism and humanitarian breadth; its passionate emotion and unruffled peace; its unapproachable majesty and childlike sweetness. IV. WE HAVE NOT FOUND HIS EQUAL—CAN WE IMAGINE OR INVENT IT? Has this ever been done? The greatest poets and thinkers have striven to picture characters faultlessly ideal. Have they—Homer, Sophocles, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton—done so? No. Why? Because the ideal of every man must be stained more or less with his own individuality, and therefore imperfection. Had the evangelists invented the character of Jesus, it must have been so in their case, too. Christ transcends the utmost capacity of the combined apostles. In the apocryphal gospels invention and forgery were at work—and with what result? The "Imitatio Christi" is a precious and profound work, yet even that realizes but one phase of the Redeemer's holiness. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *The perfect character of Jesus Christ:*—The persons thus challenged would have been glad enough to accept the challenge had the least hope existed of their being able to convict of sin, or even of fault, one whom they so thoroughly hated. Surely in no respect were the aged Simeon's words more true respecting our Lord than this: Christ's moral and religious character is "a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of God's people Israel." 1. In the first place, we may notice its gradual even growths. Like the gentle unfolding of the bud or blossom of a tree, even in spite of obstacles, Jesus went on from day to day, and year to year, showing more and more of that inward perfection of heart and mind which won for Him the approbation first of His earthly guardians, then of His Heavenly Father, and, in the end, of those who condemned and executed Him. What, we ask, was the one quality which marks every period of His life, and which secured this marvellous agreement in His praise and favour? It was innocence—simple, guileless, childlike innocence. He is everywhere, and at all times the same, "in malice a child," "the Lamb of God," gentle, pure, and innocent. But with this innocence, this simplicity, what strength, what manliness, what courage are combined! In word and deed, in teaching and in conduct, the tenderest soul that ever drew the breath of heaven, the man whom children loved, and the common people delighted to listen to, and the sick welcomed, and publicans and sinners were attracted by, was also forward and energetic in action, unceasing in labour, inured to hardship, bold in declaring truth, uncompromising in speech, fearless in opposing wrong. How are we to account for this remarkable union of qualities which general experience has shown to be so rare that men had come to think it incredible? Next to this comes another and a deeper aspect of this part of His character on the side of religion. For 2. whereas in all ordinary cases repentance forms a great part of religion, Jesus owns to no sin, breathes no word of repentance, and on no occasion expresses, however faintly, the least consciousness of imperfection in His relations and behaviour towards God His Father. Advancing a step, we shall be able to observe how there is exhibited in the person and character, the works and teaching of Jesus Christ, a

kind of universality, which connects Him with mankind generally. By race He is a Jew, reared up in the traditions and hopes of Israel, bred up from infancy to Jewish customs, steeped in the spirit of Hebrew literature; nevertheless, He does not reflect the peculiar dispositions of the Jew. But in Him there blend all the common traits of humanity. The Gentile finds his true ideal in Jesus Christ equally with the Jew. And, what is more, the men of every race and clime, and of every degree of culture and civilization not only may, but have regarded and do regard Him as their own, recognize Him as their brother, and follow Him as their guide. Nor ought we to forget the words which Christ Himself has spoken respecting His proper relation to mankind in general; words which, while they give emphasis to that aspect of His moral character and teaching which I have dwelt upon, do in effect state claims of the widest extent (see John vi. 51; viii. 12; xii. 32; xiv. 6; xvi. 28; xvii. 3; Matt. x. 37; xi. 28). Now these sayings, with many others of like nature, have a two-fold bearing. In the first place, they assert claims so exalted, so imperial, so exacting, that nothing short of the most literal and entire correspondence, in fact, can be admitted in justification of their being laid down. Either they are simply, literally, exactly, and absolutely true, or they must be regarded as the ravings of a maniac or the blasphemies of an impostor. They can only be true on condition that the utterer is truly a Divine person. On the other hand, such sayings, being at the time of their utterance entirely novel in themselves and admitted to be hard to accept, must certainly have excited in the minds of all who heard them a keen curiosity respecting the private life and character of Jesus, both amongst His disciples and His opponents. And both these classes enjoyed abundant opportunities for scrutiny. What, then, is the result? All the watching of His adversaries can detect no flaw in His life or conversation. The banquet-hall and the synagogue, the mountain-top and the seashore, the market and the Temple, are searched in vain for a just record against Him. On the contrary, the better He is known by His friends, the more highly is He appreciated. That familiarity which scorches and shrivels so many reputations in the estimate of those who are admitted to close intimacy left His untouched with damage. No little weaknesses took off the edge of His grand public discourses. No infirmities of temper lowered His just claims to men's admiring homage. He shared human pain but not human impatience. A calm evenness of soul accompanied Him everywhere, the offspring not so much of self-restraint as of a perpetual sunshine beaming with love and devotion. Hardship fails to ruffle Him. The most factious opposition provokes Him indeed to a holy severity, but a severity entirely free from personal resentment or bitterness. The terrible knowledge that one of His own chosen companions is ready to betray Him haunts and oppresses His spirit, but He has no threatenings. Even the tortures of the cross extracted no complaints from those sacred lips, but only prayers for His murderers, and the cry of His extreme desolation is blended with a holy confidence and subsides into hopeful resignation. Looking back upon this poor outline of the character of Jesus Christ, we are entitled to ask of all who admit the facts, How do you account for such a phenomena? under what classification will you bring it? Is it of the earth, earthy? or is it superhuman, supernatural, heavenly? The Catholic Church, with her doctrine of incarnation, points to her Lord's character, as delineated in the Gospels, with triumphant certainty. All who share that belief experience no difficulty in discerning a Divine personality through the veil of His human perfection. Jesus is Divine. (*D. Trinder, M.A.*) *Does Christ here assert His own sinlessness*:—The doctrine of Christ's sinlessness rests on foundations far too strong to be shaken by the removal of one stone which has been generally supposed to form part of them. When we read concerning Jesus (2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. iv. 15; vii. 26; 1 John iii. 5), what need have we to demand further documentary demonstration of a truth so explicitly stated, and so implicitly believed by every genuine Christian? It has been held, however, with considerable unanimity that in this passage Christ Himself bears witness to, and calls upon His adversaries, the Jews, to impugn, if they can, that sinlessness of His. Yet I would submit that this is not the meaning of our Lord's question. The whole argument is concerned, not with action, but with *speech*. In ver. 43 Jesus says: "Why do ye not apprehend My language? Because ye cannot hear My word." Then, describing the devil, He declares: "There is no truth in him; when he speaks falsehood, he draws out of his own store, for he is a liar and the father of it (falsehood). But as for Me, because I say the truth, ye do not believe Me." Then comes the question under consideration, with the words immediately following (vers. 46, 47): "If I *say* truth, why do ye not believe

Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; therefore ye hear not, because ye are not of God." And so the discourse for the moment closes. And we see that it is the language of Jesus which is on the rack; that truth which, as God's Prophet, He declares to unwilling ears, and tries to drive home to sin-hardened hearts. They will not listen to Him that they may have life. They cannot confute, yet they cavil. Though He tells them the truth, and they cannot deny it, they wilfully refuse to believe Him, for to do so was to condemn themselves. (*W. S. Wood, M.A.*) *Christ's language about sin*:—"Which of you proves Me mistaken in My language about sin?" What had He said of sin? It is the prophet's place to rouse the conscience of the sinner, to show him his guilt in its true light. And this Jesus had done. He had striven, alas! for the most part in vain, to clear away the film from the eyes and hearts of these self-righteous, self-deceived Jews, who would have all men to be sinners save themselves. He had charged them, using the pitiless logic of facts, with being neither true descendants of upright Abraham, nor genuine children of God, but in reality the devil's brood, and the natural heirs of his false and murderous disposition and designs. For sin is of the devil; and "the works of your father ye do" (ver. 41). Moreover, He had spoken to them of sin's necessary issues. Like an echo of the old prophet's sentence (Ezek. xviii. 4, 20), had rung out His awful warning, "By (means of) your sin ye shall die"; and "Ye shall die by your sins; for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die by your sins" (vers. 21, 24). But not only had He warned them. He had also made known to them the one possible means of escape from the threatened fate (vers. 34–36). Sin brings death in its train. Freedom from sin, and so from death, is the gift of Jesus Christ to all who put their trust in Him. It is with such declaration as to sin, its nature and genesis, its consequences, its cure, still sounding in their ears, and their own self-accusing conscience ready, unless silenced, to bear Him witness, that Christ asks the Jews: "Which of you proves Me wrong in My account and judgment of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe Me?" No answer to this appeal is possible. They know that He is right, but decline to own that they are wrong. (*Ibid.*) *Christ's challenge to the world*:—He who was the Word of God never spoke words which involved consequences so momentous as these. This challenge was uttered in the presence of those who had known Him from the first; of others who had walked up and down with Him every day since His ministry began; of not a few who were watching for His halting. But one and all were silent. This was much, but there lay in the challenge not merely a confidence that He had given no occasion which any man could take hold of, but His consciousness that He had no sin. We cannot suppose that He took advantage of the partial acquaintance of His hearers with the facts of His life to claim for Himself freedom from all sin, which prerogative they could not impugn, but which all the time He knew was not rightfully His own. In this challenge He implicitly declared that, being conformed in everything else to His brethren, He was not conformed to them in this; that He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and, in the matter of sin, separate from all his fellow-men. He everywhere asserts the same. He teaches His disciples to say, "Forgive us our trespasses"; but no word implying that He needed forgiveness ever escaped His lips. Many words and acts, on the contrary, are totally irreconcilable with any such assumption. He gives His life a ransom for many, which it could not be if a life forfeited. He forgives sins, and that not in another's name, but in His own. He sets Himself at the central point of humanity, an intolerable presumption, had He differed from others only in degree, not in kind. In every other man of spiritual eminence there reveals itself a sense of discord and dissatisfaction. He sees before him heights of which he has fallen infinitely short. If he has attained to any exemplary goodness, it has only been through failure and error; he is at best a diamond which, if polished at all, has been polished in its own dust. And the nobler the moral elements working in any man's life, so much the more distinct and earnest are confessions of sin and shortcoming. But no lightest confession ever falls from His lips. There is in Him a perfect self-complacency. He is, and is perfectly, and has always been, all which He ought to be, or desires to be. Christ presented Himself to the world as the absolutely sinless One, demanded to be recognized as such by all, and bore Himself as such, not merely to men, but to God. I. WHAT ARE THE EXPLANATIONS OF THIS? Three only are possible. 1. That He had sin and did not know it. But this sets Him infinitely below the saints of the New Testament, of whom one of the saintliest has declared, "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves";

below the saints of the Old Testament who cried out with anguish when in the presence of the Holy One; below any of the sages of this world, for which of these has not owned and lamented the conflict of good and evil within him! 2. That conscious of His identity, in this matter, with other men He concealed it; nay, made claims on His own behalf which were irreconcilable with this consciousness; and, setting Himself forth as the exemplar to all other men in their bearing to God, omitted altogether those humiliations which every other man has felt at the best moments of his life to constitute the truest, indeed the only, attitude which he can assume in His presence. You will hardly admit this explanation. 3. But then, if you can accept neither the one nor the other of these explanations, you are shut up by a blessed necessity to that which the Holy Catholic Church throughout all the world has accepted, that which it utters in those words of adoration and praise, "Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord; Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father." II. THE INEVITABLENESS OF THE CHRISTIAN EXPLANATION. 1. Are any of us prepared to render unto Christ every homage short of this, to honour Him with an affection and a reverence yielded to no other, to recognize Him as nearer to moral perfection than every other, with sin reduced in Him to a minimum, the greatest religious reformer, the most original religious genius, the man most taught of God whom the world has ever seen; but here to stop short. There is no standing ground here. If the Gospels are a faithful record, and unless in all their main features they are so, the whole superstructure of Christian faith has no foundation whatever—they leave no room for any such position as this, half way between the camps of faith and unbelief, which now divide the world. When the question of questions, "What think ye of Christ?" presents itself, and will not go without an answer, you must leave this equivocal position and declare that He was much more than this, or that He was much less. 2. You will not deny that He said He was much more. If this He was not, then in saying this, He deceived others, or else that He Himself was deceived. But allowing to Him what you do, you have no choice but to reject them both. Take Him, then, for that which He announced Himself to be, the one Man who could challenge all the world, "Which of you conceiveth Me of sin?" the one champion who entering the lists, and having no blot on his own scutcheon, no flaw in his own armour, could win the battle which every other man had lost; the one physician who could heal all others, inasmuch as He did not need Himself to be healed; sole of the whole Adamic race who had a right to say, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." (*Archbishop Trench.*) *The absolute sinlessness of Christ*:—1. It has been inferred from the context that "sin" here means intellectual rather than moral failure. But the word means the latter throughout the New Testament; and our Lord is arguing from the absence of moral evil in Him generally to the absence of a specific form of that evil—viz., falsehood. As they cannot detect the one they must not credit Him with the other. 2. It has been also thought that He only challenges the detective power of the Jews. But the challenge would hardly have been made unless the Speaker had been conscious of something more than guiltlessness of public acts which might be pointed out as in some measure sinful. Sin is not merely a series of acts which may be measured and dated; it is a particular condition of the will and its presence is perceptible where there is no act of transgression. Our Lord then claims to be sinless in a very different sense from that in which a man might defy an opponent to convict him in a court of law. 3. But is sinlessness possible? It has been affirmed that experience says no, as does Scripture also. But this is not at variance with the existence of an exception to the rule. And man's capacity for moral improvement leads up to the idea of one who has reached the summit. That God should have given man this capacity points to a purpose in the Divine mind of which we should expect some typical realization. Now—I. ALL THAT WE KNOW ABOUT OUR LORD GOES TO SHOW THAT HE WAS SINLESS. The impression that He was so was produced most strongly on those who were brought into closest contact with Him. 1. After the miraculous draught of fishes St. Peter exclaims, "Depart from me, for I am"—not a weak and failing, but—"a sinful man." It is not Christ's power over nature but His sanctity that awes the apostle. Again, after the denial, a look from Jesus sufficed to produce the keenest anguish. Had St. Peter been able to trace one sinful trait, he might have felt in the tragedy the presence of something like retributive justice. It was his conviction of Christ's absolute purity which filled him with remorse. 2. This impression is observable in the worldly and time-serving Pilate, in the restless anxiety of his wife, in the declaration of the centurion, and above all in the remorse of Judas, who

would gladly have found in his three years' intimacy something that could justify the betrayal. 3. In the hatred of the Sanhedrists the purity of Christ's character is not less discernible. It is the high prerogative of goodness and truth that they cannot be approached in a spirit of neutrality. They must repel where they do not attract. The Pharisees would have treated an opposing teacher in whom there was any moral flaw with contemptuous indifference. The sinless Jesus excited their implacable hostility. 4. This sinlessness is dwelt upon by the apostles as an important feature of their message. St. Peter's earliest sermons are full of it. The climax of Stephen's indictment was that they had murdered the Just One, the very title that Ananias proclaimed to the blinded Saul. In his epistles St. Paul is careful to say that God sent His Son in the "likeness" of sinful flesh. St. Peter dwells on our Lord's sinlessness as bearing on His example and atoning death. In St. John Christ's sinlessness is connected with His intercession (1 John ii. 1); with His regenerating power (1 John ii. 29); with the real moral force of His example (1 John iii. 7). Especially is this sanctity connected in the Epistle to the Hebrews with His priestly office. Although tempted as we are it was without sin. Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. II. THIS SINLESSNESS HAS BEEN SUPPOSED TO BE COMPROMISED. 1. By the condition of the development of His life as man. (1) He learned obedience by the things that He suffered, and consequently it has been argued must have progressed from moral deficiency to moral sufficiency. But it does not follow that such a growth involved sin as its starting point. A progress from a less to a more expanded degree of perfection is not to be confounded with a progress from sin to holiness. (2) A more formidable difficulty, it is urged, is presented by the temptation. A *bonâ fide* temptation, it is contended, implies at least a minimum of sympathy with evil which is incompatible with perfect sinlessness. Either, therefore, Jesus was not really tempted, in which case He fails as an example; or the reality of His temptation is fatal to His literal sinfulness. But the apostles say, "He was tempted in all points without sin." What is temptation? An influence by which a man may receive a momentum in the direction of evil. This influence may be an evil inclination within, or a motive presented from without. The former was impossible in the case of Christ; but the motive from without could only have become real temptation by making a place for itself in the mind. How could that be while leaving sinlessness intact? The answer is that an impression on thought or sense is possible short of the point at which it produces a distinct determination of the will towards evil, and it is only when this point is reached that sinlessness is compromised. So long as the will is not an accomplice the impressions of the tempter do not touch the moral being, and it is perfectly clear in both temptations that our Lord's will throughout maintained a steady attitude of resistance. 2. By particular acts, such as—(1) His cursing the barren fig tree. But that our Lord betrayed irritation is disposed of by prophetic character of the act—the tree being a symbol of the fruitless Jewish people. (2) His expulsion of the buyers and sellers from the temple was not the effect of sudden personal passion, but strictly in the prophetical and theocratic spirit. (3) His driving the devils into the swine was an interference with the rights of property only on the denial that Jesus is God's plenipotentiary, and of His right to subordinate material to moral interests. (4) His relation to Judas, it is said, shows a want of moral penetration to say nothing of superhuman knowledge; or if not, why was He chosen? The answer is that Christ was acting as God acts in providence, not only permitting it but overruling it for final good. 3. By His denial, "Why callest thou Me good," &c. But this was merely a rejection of an offhand, unmeaning compliment. God alone is good: but the Divinity of Jesus is a truth too high for mastery by one whose eyes have not been turned away from beholding vanity. But Christ again and again places Himself in the position of this "good God," and claims man's love and obedience as such. This claim, indeed, would be unjustifiable unless well grounded. But the ground of it is His proved sinlessness, and words and works such as we should expect a superhuman sinless one to speak and do. III. THE SINLESS CHRIST SATISFIES DEEP WANTS IN THE HUMAN SOUL. 1. The want of an ideal. No man can attempt a sculpture, a painting, without an ideal; and an ideal is no whit more necessary in art than in conduct. If men have not worthy ideals, they will have unworthy ones. Each nation has its ideals, each family, profession, school of thought, and how powerfully these energetic phantoms of the past can control the present is obvious to all. There is no truer test of a man's character than the ideals which excite his genuine enthusiasm. And Christendom has its ideals. But all these, great as they are, fall

short in some particular. There is One, only One, beyond them all who does not fail. They, standing beneath His throne, say, "Be ye followers of us as we are of Christ"; He, above them all, asks each generation of His worshippers and His critics, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" 2. The want of a Redeemer. He offers Himself as such, but the offer presupposes His sinlessness. Let us conceive that one sin could be charged upon Him; and what becomes of the atoning character of His death? How is it conceivable that being consciously guilty, He should have willed to die for a guilty world? He offered Himself without spot to God—the crowning act of a life which throughout had been sacrificial; but had He been conscious of inward stain, how could He have dared to offer Himself to free a world from sin? But His absolute sinlessness makes it certain that He died as He lived, for others. 3. As our ideal and Redeemer, Christ is the heart and focus of Christendom. (*Canon Liddon.*) **If I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?** *Nominal Christians—real Infidels:*—We mourn over the professed unbelief of the age, but the practical unbelief of professed Christians is more dangerous and lamentable. This is seen in the number of theoretical believers who are still unconverted, and in those Protestant Churches who say, "The Bible alone is our religion," and yet adopt practices which are not found in it or which it condemns. To deal with the former class: I. THE TEXT SETS FORTH YOUR INCONSISTENCY. If you say, "I am not converted because I do not believe in the mission of Christ and in the inspiration of Scripture, your position is consistent though terrible, but where you believe in both and remain unconverted, your position is extraordinarily inconsistent. Remember that—1. Christ has revealed your need—(1) Of regeneration. (2) Of conversion. (3) Of returning to God. And you believe it all. Why, then, not act upon it? 2. Christ has set forth His claims. He demands: (1) Repentance—change of mind with reference to sin, holiness, Himself. (2) Faith which will accept Him as the sole Saviour and possessor of the soul. Are these demands hard? If they be just, why not accede to them? 3. Christ provides the remedy for your soul. He did not preach a gospel out of the reach of sinners, but a real, ready and available salvation. You profess this is true. Why not then receive it? The medicine offered will cure you, and you will not receive it, although you know its healing virtue. 4. Christ reveals the freeness of His grace. You say "Yes." Why then stand shivering and refusing to lay hold? If the gospel were hedged with thorns or guarded with bayonets, you would do well to fling yourself upon them, but when the door is opened and Christ woos you to come, how is it you do not enter? 5. Christ points out the danger of unregenerate souls. No preacher was ever so awfully explicit on future punishment. You do not suspect Him of exaggeration. Why then do ye not believe Him? Ye do not; that is clear. You would not sit so quietly if you really believed that in an instant you might be in hell. 6. Christ has brought life and immortality to light. What glowing pictures does the Word of God give of the state of the blessed. You believe that Jesus has revealed what eye hath not seen, &c. If you believed it you would strive to enter into the straight gate. If Christ's word be no fiction, how can you remain as you are? II. YOU OFFER SOME DEFENCE OF YOUR INCONSISTENCY, BUT IT DOES NOT MEET THE CASE. 1. "I do not feel myself entitled to come to Christ, because I do not feel my need as I should." This is no excuse. In matters relating to the body we feel first, and then believe. My hand smarts, and therefore I believe it has been wounded. But in soul matters we believe first and feel afterwards. A mother cannot feel grief for the loss of her child till she believes she has lost it, and it is impossible for her to believe that and not to weep. So if you believed in your heart sin to be as dreadful as God says it is, you would feel conviction and repentance necessary. 2. "I do not see how faith can save me." Here, again, is no excuse. Who says that faith saves? The Bible says Christ saves whom faith accepts. 3. You think the good things promised too good to be true; that conscious of being a lost sinner you have not the presumption to believe that if you were to trust Christ now you would be forgiven. What is this but to think meanly of God? You think He has but little mercy, whereas the Book which you allow to be true tells you that "though your sins be as scarlet," &c. 4. You are not quite sure that the promise is made to you. But God did not send you the Bible to play with you, and do not the invitations say, "Whosoever will?" 5. You will think of this, but the time has not yet come. If you believed as the Bible describes that life is short, death certain, and eternity near, you would cry out, "Lord, save, or I perish." III. THE REAL REASON WHY SOME DO NOT BELIEVE (ver. 45). Some of you do not believe the truth. 1. Simply because it is the truth.

Some make it because it is too severe, *e.g.*, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." 2. The Pharisees hated God's truth deliberately. You say, "I do not do that." But how long does it take to make an action deliberate. Some of you have heard the gospel forty years, and prove that you hate the truth by living in sin. You, young man, were impressed the other Sunday that you must yield to God. A companion meets you, and you did deliberately choose your own damnation when you chose sin. 3. But the Pharisees scoffed at it. Yes; and is your silent contempt any better. Conclusion: If these things be true, why not believe in them? What hinders? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The courage and triumph of truth*:—Truth has nothing to fear from the fullest investigation. Error may well deprecate all searching and sifting processes; but truth, like gold, can not only stand any *fitting* test, but welcome it. He who fears for Truth has scarcely so much as gazed on her majestic countenance, nor does he know the might of that more than diamond mirror which she flashes on the mental eye that is not willingly closed to her light. Give but a fair field, and then when Truth and Error encounter, what loyal heart can fear for the result. (*H. H. Dobney.*) *Conditions of belief of the truth*:—The condition of arriving at truth is not severe habits of investigation, but innocence of life and humbleness of heart. Truth is felt, not reasoned out; and if there be any truths which are only appreciable by the acute understanding, we may be sure at once that these do not constitute the soul's life. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) Some men are physically incapacitated for perceiving the truth. A man who is colour-blind, *e.g.*, is unable to distinguish the red rays of the spectrum. A danger signal on the railway would convey no warning to a man so constituted, and a rose for him would have little beauty. There is an analogue to this in the moral world. While the converted man perceives the warning of God's judgments and the beauty of the Rose of Sharon, the carnally-minded perceives neither. *The need of spiritual insight to the discernment of the truth*:—"Any tyro can see the facts for himself if he is provided with those not rare articles—a nettle and a microscope." These words are Mr. Huxley's. But why the microscope? Suppose the tyro should be provided with a nettle only? These inquiries point in a direction which materialists are not willing to pursue. The introduction of the microscope is an admission that even the keenest eyes cannot see certain substances, forms and movements, and great store must be set by it. It requires in material investigation precisely what is demanded in spiritual inquiry. Suppose any one should insist upon examining the nettle without the aid of the microscope, and should declare that he is unable to verify Mr. Huxley's observations. Mr. Huxley would properly reply that the inner structure and life of the nettle could not be seen by the naked eye for they are microscopically discerned. Nor can the inquirer into spiritual truth discern and understand without a spiritual organ adapted to the investigation. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Love of the truth essential to its reception*:—To whom will nature reveal herself? To the clown or the poet? The poet gets something out of "the meanest flower that blows." The wise man hears music in the wind, the stream, the twitter of birds. What does the clown hear, or the sordid man? Noises—tongues unknown and uninterpreted. Nature says precisely what Christ says: "I will manifest myself to Him that loveth me." (*Ibid.*) *Unbelief, its cause*:—Scepticism is not intellectual only, it is moral also—a chronic atrophy and disease of the whole soul. A man lives by believing something, not by debating and arguing about many things. A sad case for him when all he can manage to believe is something he can button in his pocket—something he can eat and digest. Lower than that he will not get. (*T. Carlyle.*) *The folly of unbelief*:—What would you think if there were to be an insurrection in a hospital, and sick men should conspire with sick men, and on a certain day they should rise up and reject the doctors and nurses? There they would be—sickness and disease within, and all the help without! Yet what is a hospital compared to this fever-ridden world, which goes on swinging in pain through the centuries, where men say "we have got rid of the Atonement and the Bible?" Yes, and you have rid yourselves of salvation. (*H. W. Beecher.*) "Can you tell me anything about the revision of the Bible?" asked an intelligent working man the other day. "Because I've been told they're taking out all the contradictions in it." The same man another day expressed his inaptitude for faith in these words: "Why, to look at them stars and think they're all worlds, and to believe there's something beyond all that again—it's more than I can believe." Could the attitude of unbelief have expressed itself better? The very sight that to some minds forces home the conviction that a God exists—the sight of the star-sown fields of heaven—was to this

man only a stumbling-block and rock of offence. (*C. C. Liddell.*) **He that is of God heareth God's words.**—I. HEARING GOD'S WORDS. What is implied? 1. Attention of the body. 2. Intention of the mind. 3. Retention of the memory. II. NOT HEARING GOD'S WORDS. 1. Some defiantly refuse to come where they may hear. 2. Others intend to disregard, loving the present world (2 Tim. iv. 10). 3. Others hear for a while, but continue not in well doing. (1) Truth is rejected, but it does not keep silence. (2) Truth is reviled, but it wearies not. (3) Truth is persecuted, but it does not yield. III. THE TEST. "Not of God." "Of God." 1. He loves God, and so loves His Word. 2. He is in sympathy with the Word, and so delights to hear it. 3. He wants to obey the Word, and so listens to it. But the carnal mind cannot receive the things of God. The Word rebukes him, threatens him; he hates it. (*Family Churchman.*) *The hearer of God's Word:*—The word "hear" signifies serious attention and regard (Matt. xvii. 5; Lev. xvi. 29; John x. 3: Rev. ii. 3). It is clear that all other hearing must be unprofitable, and in respect to the Word of God condemnatory. When man speaks, to hear without attending is useless; when God speaks, sinful. I. WHO THEY ARE WHO HEAR THE WORD. "He that is of God." 1. All God's true children. Not all who are brought into covenant with God; for such were the Pharisees. Holy ordinances do not necessarily convey the continuance of sonship. 2. All who are girded and governed by God's Spirit (Rom. viii. 14). 3. All who love God (Luke x. 27). II. ALL SUCH OF NECESSITY HEAR GOD'S WORDS. 1. It is not merely because they know them to be words of wisdom and life, bringing happiness here and hereafter: there is rooted in their hearts an intense desire for all good and holy things, a profound respect for all that belongs to God. It would be repugnant to their new nature to do otherwise. 2. Their own mind immediately draws a distinction between the Word of God and that of man. The latter has to be considered before it is received; the former permits no consideration. 3. Nor can there be the least evasion or compromise, no distinguishing between great and small. 4. There is no consultation of flesh and blood. It is the Word, and that is sufficient (1 Thess. ii. 13). III. THEY WHO ARE NOT OF GOD NECESSARILY NEGLECT GOD'S WORD. 1. It condemns many worldly pursuits and pleasures, and insists upon self-denial and the daily cross. Assuredly none who are not of God will listen to this, and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. 2. They do not understand the nature of spiritual truth; its promises and threatenings appeal to them in vain (1 Cor. ii. 14). 3. In proportion as men are governed by natural maxims and feelings and principles, and by their own self-will, they deprive themselves of the capacity of appreciating God's Word. (*J. Slade, M.A.*)

Vers. 48–51. **Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil.**—*The Anti-diabolism of Christ:*—I. CHRIST HONOURS THE FATHER; THE DEVIL DOES NOT (ver. 49). 1. How does Christ honour the Father? (1) By a faithful representation of the Father's character. The revelation of the Infinite in the material creation is dim compared with His who is the "faithful and true witness" and "the express image of" the Father's "Person." (2) By supreme devotion to the Father's will. He came to this world to work out the Divine will in relation to humanity, to substitute truth for error, purity for pollution, benevolence for selfishness, God for the devil—in one word, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 2. Now this is what the devil does not do. He seeks to dishonour God—(1) By misrepresenting Him, calumniating Him. (2) By opposing His will. II. CHRIST SEEKS NOT HIS OWN GLORY; THE DEVIL DOES (ver. 50). 1. Ambition and self-seeking had no place in Christ. "He made Himself of no reputation," &c. Love to the Infinite Father seemed to swallow up His *ego*-ism. He was self-oblivious. Often does He say, "I seek not my own will." Had He sought His own glory, He would have been the Leader of all armies, the Emperor of all nations, instead of which, He was born in a stable, lived without a home, and died upon a cross. 2. All this is Anti-diabolic. Ambition is the inspiration of Satan. His motto is, "Better reign in hell than serve in heaven." He cares for no one else, and would kindle hells for a thousand generations in order to maintain his own dominion and gratify his own ambition. 3. Just so far as a man loses his own *ego*-ism in love for the Infinite, He is Christ-like. Just so far as he is self-conscious and aiming at his own personal ends, he is devil-like. III. CHRIST DELIVERS FROM DEATH; THE DEVIL CANNOT (ver. 51). What does He mean by death here? 1. Not the dissolution of soul and body, for all the millions that "kept His sayings" have gone down to the grave. 2. Does He mean extinction of existence? If so, it is true. All genuine disciples of Christ will

inherit perpetual existence. This He Himself has taught (chap. vi. 40). 3. Does He mean the destruction of that which makes death repugnant to man's nature? If so, the dying experience of millions demonstrates its truth. The sting of death is sin. Take sin away, and the dissolution of soul and body becomes the brightest prospect in the pilgrimage of souls. It is a mere step over a river from a wilderness into a Canaan; the mere opening of the door from a cell into a palace. Now the devil cannot deliver from death; and if he could he would not. Destruction is the gratification of his malignant nature. He goes about seeking whom he may devour. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ's controversy with the Jews*:—I. THE ACCUSATIONS. 1. "Thou art a Samaritan," and not only worthy of the contempt of a Jew, but one whose declaration on a matter of faith was unworthy of regard, inasmuch as He was a heretic. The charge has reference—(1) To the fact that He followed not the rigid traditions of the elders, which constituted in the minds of the people, the very essence of their religion. (2) Because He had held intercourse with the Samaritans, had preached to them, and had been received by them. (3) Because in one of His recorded parables, as doubtless in others not recorded, He had commended one of this nation for his charity, and had held him up as an example to His Jewish hearers. (4) Because, as the Samaritans had mingled their own Gentile traditions with the law of Moses, so our Blessed Lord, in expounding the law, had drawn out its spiritual meaning, which was as alien to the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees as the traditions of the Samaritans. (5) There may have been also a special reference to the circumstance, that Nazareth, where He had been brought up, was nigh to the country of the Samaritans. By this first term of reproach they declared that He had no interest in the promises made by God to Israel. 2. "Thou hast a devil." They denied that He had any fellowship with the God of Israel. He had a devil—(1) Because, as they said, He did His miracles by the power of Beelzebub, the chief of the devils. (2) Because, as the devil attempted to make himself equal with God, so did Christ declare Himself to be equal to and one with the Father. (3) The seeming folly of His words and pretensions was another reason for attributing His actions to the inspiration of the Evil Spirit. He hath a devil, and is mad, why hear ye Him? II. THE DEFENCE. 1. To the first accusation He made no reply. (1) It was personal, and did not concern His life and doctrine, and so He passes it by. One mark of His sinlessness is the absence of all anger at personal slights. It is the mark of a mind enfeebled by sin not to be able to bear personal affronts, as it is the mark of a diseased body to shrink from touch. (2) Since He came to break down the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile, He would not, by replying to this charge, sanction the contempt of the Jews for the Samaritans, a people called to salvation equally with themselves. (3) He passes over this charge, it may be also, in tenderness to the Samaritans, amongst whom were many who believed on Him. When Christ would abate the pride of those who flocked around Him, which was the cause of so much of their blindness of heart, He at times used roughness; now, when He had to suffer rebuke, He answers with the greatest mildness, leaving us a lesson to be strict and uncompromising in everything that really concerns God, whilst we are indifferent to all things that merely regard ourselves. 2. "I have not a devil," He says. None of us are free from having a devil, for all sin in some measure comes from him; so that here again we have a declaration of the perfect sinlessness of the Son of Man. He, and He only, never had a devil. Again, His words reach beyond this; I cannot, He says, do these things by the power and assistance of Satan, for I at the same time honour My Father, who is the enemy of Satan (1) By the holiness of My life; for which of you convinceth Me of sin? (2) By condemning the works of the devil—murder, and lying, and all those other sins which are his special works. (3) By not attempting to do what Satan is always striving to do in seeking to usurp to himself the glory which belongs to the Father. Our Blessed Lord's argument to those who blasphemed Him is this: No one who has a devil honours God or can honour Him, but on the other hand he dishonours Him; but I honour my Father—God: therefore I have not a devil. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) *The force of the accusation*:—The rendering "devil" cannot now be improved. Wiclif's word is "fiend," which in this sense is obsolete. But every reader of the Greek must feel how little our English word can represent the two distinct ideas represented by two distinct words, here and in ver. 44. "Demon," used originally for the lower divinities, and not unfrequently for the gods, passed in the Scriptures, which taught the knowledge of the true God, into the sense of an evil spirit. Thus the word which could represent the attendant genius of Socrates came to express

what we speak of as demoniacal possession, and the supposed power of witchcraft and sorcery. Socrates is made to say: "For this reason, therefore, rather than for any other, he calls them demons, because they were prudent and knowing." The history of Simon Magus reminds us that the people of Samaria, from the least to the greatest, had been for a long time under the influence of his sorceries (Acts viii. 9, &c.), and it is probable that there is a special connection in the words here, "Samaritan" and "devil." (*Archdeacon Watkins.*) *A hard name easy*:—A hard name is easier than a hard argument. (*Van Doren.*)

Ver. 51. **If any man keep My saying he shall never see death.** I. THE CHARACTER DESCRIBED. 1. The "saying" of Christ means the whole system of truth which He has taught, and includes—(1) All the doctrines and precepts publicly inculcated by Himself as reported by the Evangelists. (2) Those which He taught more privately to His apostles, the meaning of which was disclosed after His departure. Reserve on certain points during His lifetime was necessary. Had He explicitly avowed His divinity, *e.g.*, it is hard to conceive how those prophecies which foretold His sufferings and death would have received fulfilment. After Pentecost the apostles were guided into all the truth. (3) The inspired sayings of the apostles, because dictated by the Spirit of Christ. (4) The whole canon of Scripture, for the Old Testament was written under the influence of the Spirit of Jesus. 2. To keep this "saying" implies—(1) A knowledge and belief of the Divine truth by the understanding. A man cannot keep what he does not know. This involves careful study with the use of every help, and prayer for the illumination of the Spirit. (2) Retention of it in the memory. "Ye are saved if ye keep in memory" (see 2 Peter ii. 3). This is accomplished only by continuous and diligent study and meditation. (3) Love of it. No knowledge of Christ's doctrine is of any utility, unless the heart be interested. (4) A practical attention to its requirements: its adoption as the rule of life. (5) A stedfast adherence to the cause of truth, and a profession of it according to our opportunities. To "keep" is opposed to desertion. Hence we must "abide in Christ's word." II. THE PRIVILEGE ATTACHED TO THIS CHARACTER. "Never see death" means—1. Negatively. (1) Not exemption from natural death. This is "appointed unto all men." Enoch and Elijah were exempted: so will those be who are alive at Christ's coming. And God could easily have extended the benefit of translation, but there are good reasons why He has not—(*a*) Such a course would have involved a perpetual miracle, and so have involved a waste of Divine power. (*b*) By death Christ's people become more exactly conformed to their Head. (*c*) Death maintains a constant memorial of the evil of sin. (*d*) The present abolition of death would deprive Christ's second advent of half its splendour, and render the last judgment practically useless. (2) Not continued existence merely to good men in opposition to annihilation. In this sense none shall see death. Continued existence will be the curse of the ungodly. They shall seek death, but death shall flee away from them. 2. Positively. Christ's faithful people shall not see death—(1) In its natural horrors. Apart from the gospel death is a fearful enemy; but grace transforms it into a blessing, and makes it one of the things which work together for good. "Death is yours" if "ye are Christ's"—a friendly messenger of deliverance. Hence the happy deaths of many Christians. (2) Inasmuch as the prospect of death is neutralized by that of a joyful resurrection. (*Jabez Bunting, D.D.*) *Christ's saying and the reward of keeping it*:—I. WHAT IS CHRIST'S SAYING? 1. The law, promulgated in spirit and effect in Paradise, republished at Sinai, and reinforced by the Sermon on the Mount. This law was given to create a sense of sin and of the necessity of a Saviour, and so prepared the way for—2. The gospel (Rom. viii. 2, 3). The law is the storm that drives the traveller to the shelter, the condemnation that makes the criminal long for and use the means for securing a reprieve. II. WHAT IS IT TO KEEP CHRIST'S SAYING? 1. Reading it carefully and constantly. 2. Hearing it, "Faith cometh by hearing." 3. Understanding it. What we thoroughly understand we do not easily forget. 4. Obeying it. This fixes it in the memory. III. THE REWARD OF KEEPING CHRIST'S SAYING. He shall never see—(1) Spiritual death. The word which is spirit and life is the seed of regeneration. (2) Eternal death. Christ's saying is a promise of a blessed immortality which the keeper thereof by faith has made his own. (*I. Saunders.*) *What saying is it to which our Lord refers?*—Our Lord uttered multitudes of sayings while He was upon the earth. He was a great speaker; no man spake like Him. He was the greatest of talkers; and hence innumerable sayings dropped from His

lips—parables, proverbs, criticisms, invitations, exhortations, warnings, commandments, remonstrances, encouragements, and exceeding great and precious promises. To which of His sayings, then, is it that He here refers? I would say in reply, that it is not to any single saying in particular, any detached or separate "saying," that our Lord had reference. To hit at random on any one of His multitudinous sayings would indicate an utter ineptitude for the grasp of the Saviour's ideas, or indeed for the grasp of any one's ideas. What then? The saying referred to is manifestly that grand multiple message from God to men which constituted the sum total of our Lord's teaching. Or we might put it thus: It is the sum total or condensed essence of all the revelations that were divinely made *by* our Lord, *in* our Lord, and *through* our Lord. And what is that? It is evidently the glorious gospel of God's grace, the good news and glad tidings coming from behind the veil of all terrestrial things, and manifesting to men a living, loving, compassionating, sin-hating, yet sin-forgiving God. It is, in short, the joyful announcement of free and full salvation for the chief of sinners. That, that is the "saying," the life-giving "saying," of Christ Jesus, which, if a man keeps, he shall never see death. "Whosoever liveth," said our Lord to Martha, "and believeth in Me shall never die." (*J. Morison, D.D.*) Would you wish to be in the blissful condition depicted in our Saviour's language? Then keep His saying. Keep His words. Keep His Word. Keep the truth about Himself; keep Himself, the living Word, the living gospel. Keep Him in your thoughts, affections, mind, heart. Let everything slip and pass away from you which you cannot keep side by side with Him. (*Ibid.*) *Immunity from death:*—What means the Saviour? Death is. It is a reality. It exists far and wide over the length and breadth of this world, in which we are all tenants at will. But in the profounder and only "awful" acceptation of the term, "death" will never come nigh the man who keeps Christ's saying. 1. The grave is dark. Death to the unbeliever is like a sky with neither sun, nor moon, nor stars overhead, and no prospect of a dawn on the morrow. Is it not so? Is not that the death that is looming over the impenitent? If it be, never shall the man who believes in Jesus, and who keeps the saying of Jesus, never shall he see death, never shall he die. The true believer of Christ's gospel dwells in true "light"; and lives in it. Contact with Jesus insures his illumination; and all the way along life's highways and byways he enjoys the light. 2. Many regard death as the total and final rupture and cessation of all further possibilities of sweet companionship and friendship. He who dies enters inevitably, according to their anticipation, into utter loneliness and dreariness. He is deserted for ever. But, most assuredly, there is no such death to the believing. Their true life is not cut short at the end, or arrested midway, or otherwise impaired. It has no end and no interruption. It is "life everlasting." And one of the many true elements that enter into the blessedness that is its nature is everlasting companionship with the holy and the happy in glory. 3. To multitudes death means violent removal from all their carefully accumulated treasures, all their most highly-prized possessions. Death to the unbeliever is the loss, not only of all these things, but likewise of all possibility of the enjoyment of them, and of the enjoyment of any possession whatsoever. But if so, if all this be death, then the believer in Jesus will never see it; for that which men call death, in their common parlance with one another, will only translate the believer into the possession of the fulness of life and joy. Neither things present, nor things to come, neither things below, nor things above, no depth, no height, no length, no breadth, will be able to separate the believer from that love of God and of Jesus which is the never-failing source and fountain of inextinguishable bliss. (*Ibid.*) *The unimportance of death to a Christian:*—It is a matter of small importance how a man dies. If he is prepared, if he is a Christian, it matters not how he goes to his crown. There have been some triumphant deaths, some wonderful deaths, before which the gates of paradise seem to swing open and flood them with light, and the superior splendour of the invisible turned the dying hour into the soul's nuptials. Such were the deaths of St. Stephen and Polycarp, of Latimer and Payson and Hervey, and of some known to you and to me. But such angels' visits to the dying couch are few and far between. Most souls go out in clouds or storms; in unconsciousness or pain. But what does it matter? The only sinless soul that ever descended the valley of the shadow of death cried from the Stygian darkness and solitude, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But in that hour He conquered! He vanquished death and robbed the grave of its victory. What does it matter, then, if we follow Him through the darkness to the light, through the battle to the triumph? What does

it matter if I tremble? Underneath me are the everlasting arms. What does it matter if I cannot see? He is leading me through the ebon shades. What does it matter if I seem alone? He goes with me, as He has gone so often with others before, through what seems the untrod solitudes of death. The last hour of the labourer's summer day may be hot and weary, but the rest of eventide will be sweet, and the night will be cool. The last mile of the homeward journey may burn the traveller's bleeding feet, but love and welcome will soothe the pain and wipe the pilgrim's brow. As we approach the land, the winds may be boisterous, and the waves break loud upon the rocky coast; but the harbour will throw its protecting arms around the home-bound ship, and we shall be safe. (*R. S. Barrett.*) *The antidote of death:*—I. THE ANTIDOTE ITSELF. The text suggests—1. The life-giving power of the Word of Christ. We all know something of the power of a word—of an orator on his audience, of a general on his army, of a friend on his tempted or afflicted associate. Hence, we may conceive how a saying of Christ may have power. He in fact is "the Word," and His "words are spirit and life." Thus we read that we are born again by it, and that it must dwell in us richly, which shows that the Word of Christ is the seed-corn of the soul's life, which sown in the heart germinates into the tree of righteousness. 2. The reception which the Word of Christ requires. It is necessary that it should be listened to, understood and remembered: but all this may be done without the experience of its life-giving virtue. It must as seed be hid in the soul accompanied by the energy of the Holy Ghost. We do not keep it unless we live in Christ, walk in Christ, and have our whole being fashioned after Him. Without this literary knowledge and controversial defence of it are worthless. 3. Here we see—(1) The proof of the conscious Divinity of our Lord. None else ever dared to say this. (2) The extent of His life-giving power. This wonderful saying is confined to none. (3) The necessity of a Christian life here. The antidote must be applied before the mischief has done its last and fatal work. II. THE OPERATION OF THIS ANTIDOTE. 1. Negatively. Not exemption from the common lot. (1) Constantly occuring facts forbid this. The righteous man dies as well as the sinner. (2) The necessities and frailties of our own frame forbid this. We no sooner begin to live than we begin to die. (3) Scripture forbids this. 2. Positively. The leading thought is brought out fully in chap. v. 24. (1) The penalties of the second death will be avoided. (2) The terrors of physical death will be mitigated. (3) The consequences of physical death will be overcome. (4) The soul's highest life will be perfected. Conclusion—1. See the power of Christianity. Nothing else can conquer death—no philosophy, morality, religion. 2. Hence the importance of keeping the saying of Christ—not admiring it merely. 3. What solace does this truth afford a dying world? (*H. Gammidge.*) *The undying:*—This is part of Christ's answer to the charge of ver. 48. The latter portion of the charge was answered in vers. 49, 50; the former, "Thou art a Samaritan," answered here. The Samaritans held the Sadducee's doctrine of annihilation. Christ proves that He is not a Samaritan, but He proves far more. I. A DUTY OF THE PRESENT. "If a man keep," &c. 1. The "Word" of Christ is a comprehensive term for the substance of His teaching: repentance; trust in the saving grace of God in Christ; response to the love of God; the practice of holiness, philanthropy, &c. 2. "Keeping" His Word implies that it is—(1) A revelation to be retained in the mind. (2) A stay and comfort for the heart. (3) A rule of conduct for the life. 3. "If a man" makes the statement universally applicable. Therefore its efficacy is essential, not accidental or arbitrary. II. A DOCTRINE OF THE FUTURE. "He shall never," &c. One interpretation is that certain persons mortal by nature are to be made immortal. The meaning to be preferred is that to such the earthly experience of dying will not be the same as to the unrighteous, that for them there is and will be the realization of a deathless life. Look at this—1. As a revelation. It is of the first magnitude. The *Rig Veda*—oldest of Hindoo sacred books—does not even hint this. Moses is silent, at least oracular. There gradually grew up in Judaism a hope of it. In Christ's time Jewish opinion was divided. Christ speaks clearly, authoritatively. The words are best taken simply, and mean that what makes death truly death will be removed. The sting of death, and consequent separation from God will no longer exist. As this involves a continuity of experience from the present to the heavenly state, it is obvious that the believer is conceived of as at once entering into eternal life with the first act of faith that unites him to Christ. The life thus begun and continued is one life, and must signify, therefore, more than mere duration, viz., a spiritual relation and condition. 2. As a con-

ditional promise. "If a man keep," &c., discovers—(1) The basis of this life—a "Word," or Christ Himself as the Word, *i.e.*, a spiritual, intelligible entity (Is not this mortal life built upon and out of ideas?). "My Words, they are spirit and life." The Divine life of the spirit of man is—(*a*) Word created. (*b*) Word sustained and continued. (*c*) Word enlarged and glorified. (2) That it is a contingent and not an absolute possession. "Keep." With what earnestness ought we to lay hold on this life, and so guard and cultivate it that we shall never lose it! He that keeps Christ's word will be kept by it. (*A. F. Muir, M.A.*) *Death invisible to the Christian:*—He who follows the light of life which shines from the words of Jesus, does not see death, just as one who goes to meet the sun does not see the shadows behind him. (*Rieger.*) *Christians do not* TASTE *of death:*—A daughter of Mrs. Gov. Wright recently passed away amid Tabor splendour. As she approached death, she said, "I'm going up! I'm going up! You see I'm going up on the ineffable glory. What a glorious approach!" To her husband she said, "Oh! if you could only see what I see, you would know why I long to go." To her pastor, who was reading of the "valley of the shadow of death," she said, "There is no valley." The night preceding her death, she abode in the third heaven of rapture. Being informed that her feet were in the Jordan, she said, "Oh, I am so glad!" Her last words were, "Jesus is peace." (*C. D. Foss.*) "Oh what has the Lord discovered to me this night! Oh the glory of God! the glory of God and heaven! Oh the lovely beauty, the happiness, of paradise! God is all love, He is nothing but love. Oh, help me praise Him! Oh, help me to praise Him! I shall praise Him for ever! I shall praise Him for ever." (*Robert Wilkinson.*) "Glory to God in the height of His Divinity! Glory to God in the depths of His humanity! Glory to God in His all-sufficiency. Into His hands I commend my spirit." (*Edward Perronet.*) *Believers never see death:*—His (John Wesley's) death scene was one of the most peaceful and triumphant in the annals of the Church. Prayer, praise, and thankfulness were ever on His lips. Many golden sentences, worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance, were uttered during his last hours. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." "He is all! He is all!" "There is no need for more than what I said in Bristol; my words then were—'I the chief of sinners am, But Jesus died for me!'" "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." "That is the foundation, the only foundation, and there is no other." "How necessary it is for every one to be on the right foundation!" "The Lord is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." "Never mind the poor carcase." "The clouds drop fatness." "He giveth His servants rest." "He causeth His servants to lie down in peace." "I'll praise: I'll praise." "Lord, Thou givest strength to those that can speak, and to those that cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that Thou looseth the tongue." "Jesus! Jesus!" His lips are wetted, and he says his usual grace, "We thank Thee, O Lord, for these and all Thy mercies. Bless the Church and king; and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for ever and ever." Those who look out of the windows are darkened, and he sees only the shadow of his friends around his bed: "Who are these?" "We are come to rejoice with you: you are going to receive your crown." "It is the Lord's doing," he calmly replies, "and marvellous in our eyes." "I will write," he exclaims, and the materials are placed within his reach; but the "right hand has forgotten her cunning," and "the pen of the once ready writer" refuses to move. "Let me write for you, sir," says an attendant. "What would you say?" "Nothing, but that God is with us." "Now we have done all. Let us all go." And now, with all his remaining strength, he cries out, "The best of all is, God is with us!" And again, lifting up his fleshless arm in token of victory, and raising his failing voice to a pitch of holy triumph, he repeats the heart-reviving words, "The best of all is, God is with us!" A few minutes before ten o'clock on the morning of the 2nd of March, 1791, he slowly and feebly whispered, "Farewell! farewell!"—and, literally, "without a lingering groan," calmly "fell on sleep, having served his generation by the will of God." (*H. Moore.*) *Happy dying:*—"I am so far from fearing death, which to others is the king of terrors," exclaimed Dr. Donne, "that I long for the time of dissolution." When Mr. Venn inquired of the Rev. W. Grimshaw how he did, "As happy as I can be on earth, and as sure of glory as if I were in it: I have nothing to do but to step out of this bed into heaven." *The fear of death destroyed:*—Fox relates, in his "Acts and Monuments," that a Dutch martyr, feeling the flames, said, "Ah, what a small pain is this, compared with the glory to come!" The same author tells us that John Noyes

took up a faggot at the fire, and kissing it, said, "Blessed be the time that ever I was born, to come to this preferment." When an ancient martyr was severely threatened by his persecutors, he replied, "There is nothing visible or invisible that I fear. I will stand to my profession of the name and faith of Christ, come of it what will." Hilary said to his soul, "Thou hast served Christ this seventy years, and art thou afraid of death? Go out, soul, go out!" An old minister remarked, a little before his death, "I cannot say I have so lived as that I should not now be afraid to die; but I can say I have so learned Christ that I am not afraid to die." A friend, surprised at the serenity and cheerfulness which the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine possessed in the immediate view of death and eternity, proposed the question, "Sir, are you not afraid of your sins?" "Indeed, no," was his answer; "ever since I knew Christ I have never thought highly of my frames and duties, nor am I slavishly afraid of my sins." (*Religious Tract Society Anecdotes.*) *Contrasts in death*:—One of our old Scottish ministers, two hundred years ago, lay dying. At his bedside were several of his beloved brethren, watching his departure. Opening his eyes, he spoke to them these singular words: "Fellow-passengers to glory, how far am I from the New Jerusalem?" "Not very far," was the loving answer; and the good man departed, to be with Christ. "I'm dying," said one of a different stamp, "and I don't know where I'm going." "I'm dying," said another, "and it's all dark." "I feel," said another, "as if I were going down, down, down!" "A great and a terrible God," said another, three times over; "I dare not meet Him." "Stop that clock!" cried another, whose eye rested intently on a clock which hung opposite the bed. He knew he was dying, and he was unready. He had the impression that he was to die at midnight. He heard the ticking of the clock, and it was agony in his ear. He saw the hands, minute by minute, approaching the dreaded hour, and he had no hope. In his blind terror he cried out, "Stop that clock!" Alas! what would the stopping of the clock do for him? Time would move on all the same. Eternity would approach all the same. The stopping of the clock would not prepare him to meet his God. *Realizations of the text*:—"Throw back the shutters and let the sun in," said dying Scoville M'Collum, one of my Sabbath-school boys. (*Talmage.*) "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'm going to take a leap in the dark," said to those at his bedside, "I'm 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 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.*)

Vers. 52–59. **Abraham is dead and the prophets.**—*Abraham and Jesus*:—I. THE GREATNESS OF ABRAHAM. 1. The ancestor of the Jews. "Our father," said they (ver. 53); "Your father," conceded Christ (ver. 56). It was no small distinction to be the progenitor of so renowned a race. 2. The father of the faithful. He believed in God's promise (Gen. xv. 6; Rom. iv. 20), and became the head of a spiritual progeny who will far outnumber the natural. 3. A conqueror of death. Christ's word (ver. 51) signified that to all His believing people, who were Abraham's children, and therefore to Abraham himself who had kept God's word, death was practically abolished (Matt. xxii. 32). 4. A beholder of Christ's day. Not an exultant anticipator, but an actual witness either prophetically from Moriah or

from Paradise. II. THE SUPERIORITY OF JESUS. 1. Of loftier calling. Abraham, a prophet; Christ, a Saviour; Abraham, the ancestor of the promised seed; Christ, the promised seed; Abraham, the progenitor of Christ, according to the flesh; Christ, the redeemer of Abraham, according to the Spirit. The Jews exulted in their physical connection with Abraham; Abraham in his spiritual connection with Christ. 2. Of nobler name. Abraham, a servant; Christ, the Son. Abraham called the Divine Being "God"; Christ addressed Him as "Father." 3. Of older existence. Abraham was not before He came into this world; Christ was before Abraham was born. 4. Of higher being. Abraham began to be; Christ always was. Abraham was a creature; Christ the Creator, "I am." Lessons: 1. The Supreme Divinity of Christ. 2. The power of faith. 3. The certainty of existence after death. 4. The true secret of soul joy. 5. The one object of faith in all ages and for all peoples—Christ's day. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Christ and Abraham*:—I. CHRIST IS GREATER THAN ABRAHAM (vers. 52, 53). Notice: 1. The implied denial of the Jews that Christ was greater than Abraham. In this we see (1) a sensuous interpretation, "Abraham is dead." They took death in its mere material sense; they had no profounder idea of it than the dissolution of mind from matter. The dissolution of mind from truth, virtue, happiness, God—which is of all deaths the worst, and of which corporeal death is but the palpable—type, had not entered their carnal souls. (2) Their ancestral pride (ver. 53). This led them to believe that Abraham was the greatest man in the universe, and themselves consequently as the greatest people. These two have always been among the greatest obstructions to the spread of truth. 2. The reply of Christ to this implied denial. (1) He asserts that He honoured the Father, which they did not (ver. 54). (2) He knew the Father, which they did not (ver. 55). (3) He served the Father, which they did not (ver. 55). 3. The declaration of His superiority to Abraham (ver. 56). II. CHRIST IS OLDER THAN ABRAHAM (ver. 58). This declaration struck them: 1. As absurd (ver. 57). 2. As blasphemous, and to be punished as such (ver. 59). (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Ver. 54. **If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing.**—*The Father honouring the Son*:—To honour is to do or to speak of a person so as not only to show our esteem, but to make others esteem. Thus God honoured Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, David, &c. This is specially seen in His dealings with His Son—the purpose of His delight in Him is to secure for Him the delight of all in earth and heaven. I. THE BESTOWER OF THE HONOUR. The value of the honour depends on him who bestows it. Honour bestowed for price, or by self, unworthy hands, or those incapable of judging, is worthless. It was no honour for Felix to be flattered by Tertullus. The Father, however, knows what He is bestowing, and Him on whom He is bestowing it. He is a fit judge of both the Person and the honour. We may be well assured, therefore, that the honour received by Christ is well bestowed. II. THE RECEIVER OF THE HONOUR. The Son—very God and very Man. The God-Man in whom the two natures meet. A new thing on earth and in heaven. One in whom all created and uncreated perfection meet. The only one without flaw. III. THE NATURE OF THE HONOUR. 1. It is Divine honour; but it is more. It is not only all the honour which the Father and the Spirit receive, it is something arising out of the superadded humanity, and which neither the Father nor the Spirit can receive. 2. It is human honour—honour in connection with His perfect manhood, of which He is the only example, and as such is entitled to all the honour which God intended for the race. Nay, more; honour such as Adam could not receive, because arising from His manhood's connection with the Godhead. Thus the Godhead gets an honour such as it could not have got save in virtue of its connection with the creaturehood, and *vice versâ*. There is in this way a peculiar honour created, and a peculiar vessel for receiving it. From this too springs peculiar honour to the Father such as no one else can give. IV. THE TIMES AND WAYS IN WHICH THIS HONOUR IS BESTOWED. At His birth, baptism, transfiguration, resurrection, ascension, second coming. Every day, dishonoured by man, the Father honoured Him when here. At present, in heaven, He receives glory and honour. Hereafter in His kingdom, the honour is to be fully bestowed. V. THE RESULTS OF ALL THIS. The bearings of this honour on the universe are inconceivable. It is the pledge and measure of all the blessings the universe shall receive for ever. The results are: 1. To the Father. Through this honour the Father is more fully manifested and glorified; for all that the Son receives and does is to the glory of God the Father. 2. To the Holy Spirit. It is

the Spirit's office to glorify the Son, and by means of this His Godhead is declared and illustrated, and His wisdom and power displayed. 3. To the whole Godhead. 4. To the Church. Christ's honour is hers; for all that He has is hers. The Bridegroom's glory is not for Himself alone. She shares His riches, His inheritance, His kingdom, by faith now, in reality by and by. 5. To heaven. The greatness of the King's honour adds to the glory of His palace, and metropolis. 6. To angels. He is their head as well as ours, though not so closely knit to them as to us. They are His hosts, His servants, His royal retinue, and each shines more brightly from the glory put upon Him. 7. To earth. At present we do not see any change, but the curse is to pass away, and earth to be made more fair than Paradise. For was it not His birthplace, and His body of its dust? 8. To the universe. Every planet and fragment of creation shall receive fresh lustre from this newly lighted sun. Conclusion: Let us honour Christ now. He will be honoured hereafter, but now that He receives so much dishonour let us honour Him. Sinner, honour Him by coming to Him for salvation. The honour which the Father puts upon Him is the security for a present pardon, and God honours Him by blessing you. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*)

Ver. 55. **Ye have not known Him; but I know Him.**—I. THE JEWS' IGNORANCES. 1. They knew Him not in His majesty, His infinity, His mercifulness, since they conceived of Him only after a low and material idea. 2. They knew Him as the Maker of the world, but not as the Almighty Father of mankind; they saw in Him only their own God, and refused to think of Him as the God of the whole human race. 3. They knew Him not as He is, one in essence though three in person; as the Eternal Father, by whom the Eternal Son was begotten, and from both of whom proceeds the one Sanctifying and Eternal Spirit. Hence their blindness to the meaning of the words of Christ and their rejection of Him as the Messiah. 4. They knew Him not through the way of obedience to His laws, without which there can be no real knowledge of the Father. Thus, although their faith came from God, and was based upon His revelation of Himself, their works were from Satan, and in this way they proved that they knew not God who is One in His faith and in His works. Thus were they liars, not because they said He had a devil, which is not the meaning here, but because they declared that they knew God whilst every one of their actions declared that they had no true real knowledge of Him. II. CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE. 1. As being Himself God, of the same substance and nature with the Father, dwelling from all eternity in the bosom of the Father, and so always beholding Him as He is in His essential Godhead. 2. As the man Christ Jesus He knew Him, since He had the knowledge of Divine things by impartation from the Father. 3. As man, again, He knew Him through His perfect obedience to the whole will of the Father, and His doing all things which were well pleasing in the sight of the Eternal Father. We also, if we would receive and retain God in our thoughts, and come to the knowledge of Him, must receive and keep His saying. (*W. Denton, M.A.*)

Ver. 56. **Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day.**—*Abraham's vision of Christ's day* (Christmas-day Sermon):—Here is joy, joy at a sight, at the sight of a day, and that day Christ's, and no day is so properly His as His birth-day. First, Christ has a day proper to Him. "My day." Secondly, this day is a day of double joy—"rejoiced," "was glad." Thirdly, this was so to Abraham. Lastly, all this nothing displeasing to Christ, for it is spoken to the praise of Abraham that did it, and to the dispraise of the Jews who did it not. We are now disposing ourselves to this, and have a threefold warrant. 1. We have Abraham for our example. We do but as he in making Christ's day a day of joy. 2. Abraham's example approved by Christ, who commends the patriarch, not that he rejoiced at the sight of Him, but of His day. Verily, the speech is in honour of Christmas. 3. He reproves the Jews for not doing herein as Abraham, which is against them that have a spleen at this feast, and think they can joy in Him and yet set by His day. Nay, love Him, love His day. They tell us that to keep it they would Judaize (Gal. iv. 10), but the context shows not to keep it is to Judaize. I. THE OBJECT. "My day." 1. Not as the Son of God. He has no day. (1) Day and night are parts of time, but His goings forth are from eternity (Micah v. 2). (2) If we would improperly call it a day, no day to be seen (1 Tim. vi. 16). (3) If we could see it and Him in His Deity, yet there is small joy. 2. But as the Son of Man He hath more days than one; but this notes one above the rest, a day with the double article. There are

two such eminent days. Of His Genesis, and of His Exodus; of His nativity and His passion. (1) Not of His passion; for that was none of His (Luke xxii. 53), but ours: and no day, but rather night; and no day of joy (Luke xxiii. 48). (2) But of His birth, and so the angel calls it (Luke ii. 11). And His day because every man has a property in His birthday; as kings in the day of the beginning of their reigns; as Churches, when they are first dedicate; as cities, when their first trench is cast. And a day of joy in heaven and earth (Luke ii. 10–14): to all people, not only on and after it, but before, and so to Abraham. Of course "day" must be taken for the whole time of Christ's life; yet that time had its beginning on a day, and that day even for that beginning may challenge a right in the word. II. THE ACTS. 1. Abraham's first act—his desire. (1) The cause of it. Why should Abraham so desire two thousand years before? What was it to him? You remember Job's Easter (xix. 25). The joy of this was the same as Abraham's Christmas; even that a day should come when his Redeemer should come into the world. For a Redeemer he needed, and therefore desired His day (Isa. xxix. 22). The time when he had this day first shown him he complains of his need (Gen. xviii. 27). (2) The manner of it. We may take measure of the greatness of the day by the greatness of his desire. The nature of the word is, "he did even fetch a spring for joy," and that not once but often. He could not contain his affection, it must out in bodily gesture. Think of a staid, discreet man being so exceedingly moved; and to do all this only in the desire. 2. Abraham's second act. "He saw it," though "afar off" (Heb. xi. 13), "as in a perspective glass" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). He did not know precisely the day, but that such a day should come. How did he see it? (1) Not as if he could not see it unless Christ had been in the flesh in His day. So Simeon saw (Luke ii. 30). But better than this, for if Simeon had not seen in Abraham's manner, he had been no nearer than the Jews who stoned Christ. (2) If not with the eyes, then how? There is in every man two men—outward and inward. Now if there be an inward we must allow him senses, and so eyes (Eph. i. 18); it was with these that Abraham saw, and by no other do we see. (3) By what light saw he? He was a prophet, and might be in the Spirit, and have the vision clearly represented before him; but he was a faithful man (Gal. iii. 9), and saw it in the light of faith (Heb. xi. 1, 27). (4) Where was this and when? The text is enough, but the Fathers hold that he saw his birth at Mamre, His passion at Moriah (Gen. xvii. 19, xviii. 10). But this day he saw at Mamre. Christ was in person there, one of the three. 3. Abraham's third act. He that was glad that he should see it must needs be glad when he did see it; accomplishment is more joyful than desire. And what grounds (Gen. xxvi. 4)! Conclusion: The reference to us. 1. Our desire. We have greater cause to desire this day because we have greater need. 2. Our sight is much clearer than his. For though we see as he, and he as we, by the light of faith; yet he in the faith of prophecy yet to come, we in the faith of history now past. 3. Our joy is to be above his, as we have the greater cause and the better sight. Rules for our joy. (1) Here are two sorts—(*a*) Our exultation, a motion of the body. (*b*) The other, joy, a fruit of the spirit. Let the former have its part, but should not have so large an allowance of time and cost as to leave little or nothing for the spirit. (2) That our joy in Christ's day be for Him. We joy in it as it is His. The common sort wish for it and joy in it as it is something else, viz., a time of cheer and feasting, sports and revelling, and so you have a golden calf's holiday. (*Bp. Andrewes.*) *Abraham's sight of faith*:—I. THE GROUND OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH—the promise of God (Gen. xii. 3, xxii. 18). To open this promise we must inquire—1. What was this seed? We must distinguish of a twofold seed; that to whom the blessing was promised, and that in whom both Abraham, his seed, and all nations were to be blessed (Gen. xvii. 7). Now this promise was either to his carnal seed or to his spiritual seed (Gal. iii. 7). But then there was another seed—the Messiah. 2. What was this blessedness? All the good which results to us from God's covenant. (1) Our reconciliation with God consisting of—(*a*) remission of sins (Psa. xxxii. 1, 2), which is included in the blessing of Abraham (Gal. iii. 8). (*b*) Regeneration (Acts iii. 25, 26). (2) Eternal life. (*a*) The patriarchs sought it by virtue of this promise (Heb. xi. 13–15). (*b*) Unless this had been included God could not act suitably to the greatness of His covenant relation (Heb. xi. 16; Matt. xxii. 31, 32). II. THE STRENGTH OF HIS FAITH. 1. His clear vision of Christ. "He saw my day." Three things argue the strength of bodily sight. (1) When what we see is far off. Thousands of years intervened, yet they went to the grave in full assurance. The nature of faith is that it can look upon things absent and future as sure and near, but without it man looks no

further than present probabilities. (2) When there are clouds between. Now when the promise was made it was impossible in the course of nature for Abraham to have a son; but when the son was miraculously given he was commanded to sacrifice him. Now to strive against these and other difficulties argues strong faith (Rom. iv. 18). (3) When there is little light to see by. The revelation was obscure; the patriarchs had only Gen. iii. 15; Abraham's was a little clearer, but it was a small glimmering compared with what we enjoy. Yet they could do more with their faith than we with ours. What, then, is this clear vision of Christ to us? How shall we judge of the strength of our faith by this? Ans.—(1) As to Christ there is a sight of Him—(*a*) Past. To see Him whom we have not seen, as if we had seen Him in the flesh, is the work of faith (Gal. iii. 1). (*b*) Present. To see Him so as to make Him the object of our love and trust (John vi. 40; Acts vii. 56). (*c*) Future. We must be assured of His second coming and that we shall see Him (Job xix. 25–27). (2) As to the glory and blessedness of the world to come. Faith is the perspective of the soul, by which it can see things distant as present (Heb. xi. 26, vi. 18, xii. 2). 2. His deep affection or rejoicing in Christ. (1) No other affection will become Christ but great joy (Luke ii. 10, xix. 6; Acts xiii. 48, viii. 39, xvi. 34). (2) The reasons for this joy. (*a*) The excellency of the object in Himself and His work (John iii. 16); in His necessity to us (Micah vi. 6, 7; Psa. xlix. 7, 8; Job xxxiii. 24); in His benefit (1 Cor. i. 30, 31). (*b*) The subjects are delivered from their misery and find their happiness in God. (*c*) The causes—the Holy Ghost and faith as His instrument (Rom. xiv. 17; 1 Thess. i. 5; Rom. xv. 13; 1 Pet. i. 8). (3) The nature of this joy and its solid effects. (*a*) It enlarges our hearts in duty and strengthens us in the way of God (Neh. viii. 10; Psa. cxix. 14). (*b*) It sweetens our calamities (Heb. iii. 17, 18). (*c*) It draws us off from the vain delights of the flesh (Psa. iv. 7, xliii. 4). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Abraham beholding Christ's day*:—I. THE DAY OF CHRIST. Not a period of twenty-four hours, but, as is usual in the Bible, a dispensation. 1. Some of the remarkable days that Abraham saw. (1) Looking back he saw the day when the Everlasting Father embraced Abraham and all His chosen in Christ and designed their salvation (Prov. viii. 23). (2) The day of Christ's incarnation. "In thy seed," &c. (3) The day of Christ's oblation. (4) The day of Christ's resurrection. (5) The day of Christ's ascension. (6) The day of Pentecost. (7) The day of judgment as winding up the dispensation and completing the fulfilment of the promise. 2. The characteristics of this day. It was a day of—(1) Light. (2) Gladness. (3) Life. (4) Love. (5) Peace. (6) Salvation. II. THE BLESSED VIEW WHICH FAITH TAKES OF THIS DAY. 1. It could not have been a sensible view—for sense never can discover God. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. 2. It was a spiritual view—a sight by faith. Faith, like the bodily eye, is—(1) A recipient organ. (2) An assuring organ. When a man sees a thing he cannot be mistaken if his sight is good, so a man cannot believe without knowing he is saved. (3) A directing organ. By the eye we are guided in our daily life, and by faith we walk in the light. (4) While a small, the eye is a capacious organ. What a wide prospect it can take in! So the least faith pierces the invisible. (5) An impressible organ. As scenes are impressed on the retina, so is Christ on faith. III. THE JOY AND GLADNESS ARISING OUT OF THIS SIGHT. It was not carnal but spiritual joy, including—1. Spiritual health (Psa. xxxiii. 1). 2. Soul satisfaction (Psa. xxxvi. 8). 3. Enlargement of soul. 4. It is cordial, hidden and unknown to the world, lasting, matchless and transcendent. (*T. Bagnall-Baker, M.A.*) *Christian piety in relation to the future:* Christian piety—I. TURNS THE SOUL TOWARDS THE FUTURE. Piety seems to have turned Abraham's mind to the "day" of Christ. This refers, undoubtedly, to Christ's incarnation, personal ministry, and spiritual reign. Nineteen long centuries rolled between. Still he saw it. In relation to the future, Christian piety—1. Gives an interesting revelation of it. Science, poetry, literature, shed no light on the on-coming periods of our being; but the Bible does. It opens up the history of the race. 2. Gives a felt interest in the blessedness of the future. It gave Abraham a felt interest in the day of Christ. It gives the good a felt interest in the glories that are coming. And what glorious things are on their march! II. FASTENS THE SOUL UPON CHRIST IN THE FUTURE. "My day." To the godly Christ is everything in the future. Do the rivers point to the sea, the needle to the pole, the plants to the sun? Does hunger cry for food, life pant for air? Even so does the heart of piety point to Christ in the future. He has a "day," a universal day of His glorious revelation to come. III. BRINGS JOY TO THE SOUL FROM THE FUTURE. Abraham was "glad"—1. With a benevolent gladness; he knew the world would be blessed by

Christ's advent. 2. With a religious gladness; he knew that God would be glorified by His advent. Several reasons might make us glad as we think of the coming day of Christ. (1) There will be a solution of all difficulties. (2) A termination of all imperfections, physical, mental, spiritual. (3) A consummation of unending blessedness. Conclusion: Learn—1. The congruity of Christianity with the prospective tendency of the soul. The soul is always pointing to the future. Christianity meets this tendency and satisfies it. 2. The antidote of Christianity to the forebodings of the soul. Some souls are always boding evil, and well all the ungodly may. Christianity lights up the future. 3. The fitness of Christianity to the aspirations of the soul. Wonderful is the good after which some souls are aspiring in the future. The present and the material have lost for them their attractions. Man cannot aspire after anything higher than that which Christianity supplies. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ seen afar off*:—A very lofty mountain, rising in lonely grandeur on the horizon to cleave the blue sky with its snowy pinnacles, is descried from afar. We see it a long way off—from where hills and heights, shaggy forests, silent uplands, and busy towns, and all other individual objects that lie between, are lost in distance, and present the appearance of a level plain. So, just so, Adam and Eve descried a child of theirs rising above the common level of mankind, at the long distance of four thousand years. Of the millions who were to spring from them and people the earth of which they were the lonely tenants, this distinguished child was the only one on whom, on whose birth, and life, and death, and works, their weeping eyes and eager hopes, were fixed. *Christ before Abraham*:—But how did Abraham see Him and His day? One answer is, Abraham was in heaven when the Son of God left the seat of glory and came to earth. He saw the return of the trooping bands of angels whose faces flashed out in the sky above the plains of Bethlehem, and whose voices sang the anthem of incarnation, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" All heaven was stirred from its centre to its outermost rim over the coming of Christ to earth and over the great work which brought Him among men. Abraham was in the midst of this stir. There is another answer. You find it upon the page of Old Testament history. There we are taught that the Son of God did not always maintain invisibility prior to Bethlehem. Under the former religious economy He fellowshiped with men. He walked with Adam in Eden and communed with him in the cool of the day. There is quite a long chapter in the Old Testament concerning His visit to Abraham: how He found his tent; what Abraham was doing; how He was received; how a kid was dressed and cakes were baked; how He ate and refreshed Himself at Abraham's table; even a report is given of the conversation which passed between them. From the declaration of superiority to Abraham, the Jewish ideal of superior human greatness, Jesus passes to the declaration of His equality with God. Christianity's Christ is a distinct and a well-defined person. Everything about him is sharply cut and fearlessly stated. He speaks for himself. He entraps no man into discipleship. He is not afraid of the light, nor of the witness-stand, nor of the crucible. He asks no blind faith, but submits himself to scrutiny. The man with a true Christ is a true man. The Christ and the man always correspond. (*David Gregg.*)

Ver. 58. **Before Abraham was, I am.**—Here the Saviour claims with a double "Amen" the Incommunicable Name (Exod. iii. 14). It signifies unchangeable essence and everlasting duration. This is the name which the Jews for centuries had not dared to utter. Silently they had read it, used another in its stead, revered and adored it. Now the humble Nazarene openly assumes and claims it. God's word to Moses implies the impossibility of a full definition of the name, or that finite creatures could not comprehend it if given. He does not say, "I am their Light, Life, Guide, Strength, or Tower." He sets His hand to a blank, that faith may write her prayer. Are believers weary? I am their strength. Poor? I am their riches. In trouble? I am their comfort. Sick? I am their health. Dying? I am their life. I am justice and mercy, grace and goodness, glory, beauty, holiness, perfection—all-sufficient through eternity. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *I am*:—This title teaches us—I. THE SELF-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST. The creature is a dependent being; God alone is independent and self-existent. II. HIS UNCHANGEABLENESS. Change is written on everything earthly. The billows of a thousand generations may sweep over the rock, but it is steadfast. Jesus is "the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever." III. HIS ALL-SUFFICIENCY. We are at liberty to write what we like after "I am." Whatever you want to make you happy, put in

there. (*J. M. Randall.*) *The eternity of Christ:*—With filial pride the Jew thought of "Father Abraham." So hearing of our Lord's lofty claims they asked, "Art thou greater than he?" "Yes. He rejoiced to see My day." With prophetic vision, doubtless; but surely more than this is meant. When did Christ's "day" begin? Away back at the time of the first promise it broke. God, called also "the Angel of the Lord," or Christ Himself temporarily assuming human form, appeared to Abraham more than once, and perhaps here is a reference to a revelation of Christ, brighter than the rest, but made known to none other. Then the Jews said, "Thou art not fifty years old," &c. Our Lord replied (literally), "Before Abraham was brought into being, I exist." The statement is not that Christ came into existence before Abraham, but that He never came into being at all. The Jews understood this as a Divine claim, and took up stones against Him as a blasphemer. 1. Then we think of the eternity of Christ. There never was a point when He began to be. Not so with man, angels, the universe. Go back eighteen hundred years to the time of Abraham; back further still to the time of Noah, Enoch, Adam; back before any creature existed: "In the beginning was the Word," &c. Meet Him anywhere in eternity past or in eternity to come, and He says, "I am." 2. How can we think of the eternity of Christ? What know we of eternity? Suppose the patriarchs were living now, with what awe should we listen to their words weighty with the experience of millenniums. But they had a beginning. Let the ages be reckoned back to when the world was not, and added to those which shall follow till it shall cease to be, and what shall we pay for the stupendous sum total? But this is not eternity. Call in angelic numeration, and gather into one gigantic aggregate the sands of the shore, the drops of the ocean, and the stars of the sky; what would it be? Only a spot of spray to the immeasurable ocean. 3. But the eternity of Christ is a doctrine most blessed and practical, because related to the Divinity of Christ. We need a Divine as well as human Saviour, and we have one in the "I am." I. Is Christ eternal? THEN ASSURED IS THE LIFE OF ALL LIVING THINGS, "By Him all things consist." Because He is eternal, the stars wax not dim; they are as bright to us as they were to Abraham. Because He is eternal, the flowers of each coming spring are as fair as their blooming ancestry in the dawn of the world. Because He lives, "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest . . . shall not cease." Because He lives man lives. How sweet and fresh the beauty of the new-born child! The hand of the Eternal has moulded it. And so come the successive generations of children. The years bring changes, and the man is unlike the child. Yet the soul that lives in Christ is never old; it is "renewed day by day." II. Is Christ eternal? THERE IS HOPE, THEN, FOR EVERY MAN. Withdrawn from human sight, He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Stephen saw Him, and Paul, and John; and now He reaches forth His invisible hand to save. III. Is Christ eternal? THEN WE HAVE ONE ABIDING FRIEND. We can lose much here; much, thank God, that it is well to lose—ignorance, bad habits, sin. But there are some bereavements that impoverish us, through injustice, misfortune, accident, loss of friends. But if Christ is ours we have an eternal possession. He loves us to the end. Lose what we may, who can be poor with Him. "Who shall separate us," &c. IV. Is Christ eternal? THEN HIS KINGDOM THOUGH DELAYED SHALL COME. We wonder at the tardy steps of Truth. But what are the millenniums to Christ? His name shall endure for ever. (*G. T. Coster.*) *The pre-existence of Christ:*—Does it appear that Christ was conscious of having existed previously to His human life? Suppose that He is only a good man enjoying the highest degree of intercommunion with God, no reference to a pre-existent life can be anticipated. There is nothing to warrant it in the Mosaic revelation, and to have professed it on the soil of Palestine would have been regarded as proof of derangement. But believe that Christ is the Only-begotten Son of God, and some references to a consciousness extending backwards into a boundless eternity are to be looked for. Let us then listen to Him as He proclaims, "If a man keep My saying He shall never see death" (ver. 52). The Jews exclaim that by such an announcement He assumes to be greater than Abraham. The response to this is, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day," &c. Abraham had seen the day of Messiah by the light of prophecy, and accordingly this statement was a claim on the part of Jesus to be the true Messiah. Of itself such a claim would not have shocked the Jews; they would have discussed it on its merits. They had latterly looked for a political chief, victorious but human, in their expected Messiah; they would have welcomed any prospect of realizing their expectations. But they detected a deeper and less welcome meaning. He had

meant, they thought, by His "day," something more than the years of His human life. At any rate, they would ask Him a question, which would at once justify their suspicions or enable Him to clear Himself (ver. 57). Now if our Lord had only claimed to be a human Messiah He must have earnestly disavowed any such inference. He might have replied that if Abraham saw Him by the light of prophecy, this did not of itself imply that He was Abraham's contemporary. But His actual answer more than justified the most extreme suspicions, "Before Abraham was, I am." In these tremendous words the Speaker institutes a double contrast in respect both of the duration and the mode of His existence, between Himself and the great ancestor of Israel. Abraham had come into existence at some given point of time, and did not exist until his parents gave him birth. But "I AM." Here is a simple existence, with no note of beginning or end. Our Lord claims pre-existence indeed, but not merely pre-existence; He unveils a consciousness of Eternal Being. He speaks as one on whom time has no effect, and for whom it has no meaning. He is the "I AM" of ancient Israel; He knows no past as He knows no future; He is unbeginning, unending Being; He is the eternal "Now." This is the plain sense of his language, and perhaps the most instructive commentary on its force is to be found in the violent expedients to which Humanitarian writers have been driven in order to evade it. (*Canon Liddon.*)

Ver. 59. **Then took they up stones to cast at Him.**—Stones of the visible Temple cast at the corner stone of the Temple of God. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The Jews and Jesus*:—Followeth now the issue of this long dispute, and particularly of this last contest. They look upon Him as so absurd in what He had just spoken that they will reason no more, but seek to cut Him off as a blasphemer; and He takes no more pains to convince them, but delivers Himself miraculously from their fury. Whence learn—1. Malicious persecutors will not hearken to truth, though never so clearly told them; but when all arguments fail them, they will betake themselves to violence; for "then they take up stones to cast at Him," wherein they were injurious, in returning Him the reward of a blasphemer, who had told them the truth, and unjust, in their tumultuous procedure, and not taking a legal way. And this is it which may be expected of all contradictors of Christ's doctrine, if they get power and be not bridled. 2. It is lawful for God's servants to withdraw from the fury of bloody persecutors, when the persecution is personal, as Christ's example doth teach. 3. Our blessed Lord did condescend to sanctify all the weak means prescribed to His people in hard times, in His own person; for, He who could have destroyed them, "hid Himself," and made use of fleeing, "He went out," &c. 4. Christ can disappoint persecutors, and deliver His people, even in greatest extremity; for, when they have Him among their hands in the Temple, He first "hid Himself," and then "went out of the Temple, going through the midst of them," &c. Either he dazzled their eyes, and made Himself invisible, both when He hid Himself, and went away; or having done so for a while, while he hid Himself, He did bind up their hands that they could not touch Him when He went openly through them out of the Temple. And so He evinced His great power even in His infirmity, and so also doth He make His people prove strong while they are weak, and perfects His strength in their weakness. (*G. Hutcheson.*) *Hatred of the truth*:—Truth is hated because—I. IT SEES TOO DEEPLY. II. SPEAKS TOO PLAINLY. III. JUDGES TOO SEVERELY. (*Schmur.*) **Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the Temple.**—*Christ and His Church in a bad world*:—The escape of our Lord was no doubt a great miracle. As an old Divine remarks on it, "Christ here hides Himself, not by shrinking behind partition walls, nor by interposing anything else between them and His own Body, but by the power of His Godhead making Himself invisible to those who sought Him." Once before, as it seems, He had wrought the same wonder, but not in the same place, nor among the same people (Luke iv. 29, 30). Thus, as another old writer observes, "you may understand that our Lord's passion was endured not of constraint, but willingly: that He was not so much taken by the Jews, as offered by Himself. For when He will, He is taken; when He will, He escapes; when He will, He is hanged on a tree; when He will, they can lay no hold on Him. "St. John says, He hid Himself; St. Luke does not say so—therefore it may be, that in the one case His enemies could not see Him, any more than Balaam could the angel; in the other case, that though they saw Him, the hand of God was on them in some remarkable way, to keep them from laying hands on Him. Another circumstance much to be observed, in our Lord's manner, in both these two several miracles, is His passing immediately

from His danger and the midst of His enemies, to the performance of works of mercy among worthier and more thankful people. When He became visible again, it was to heal those who had need of healing. The particular way in which at present I wish to consider this great miracle is the following: How it throws light on the true condition of Christ and His servants here in this evil world. It shows us what the true Church of Christ and what true Christians must expect; and it shows us also how they may behave themselves, in such trials, worthy of Him whom they serve. The plain doctrine of Scripture is, that as affliction is the lot of all men—for man is born to trouble as surely as the sparks fly upward—so persecution is the lot of Christians. They declare themselves in baptism bound to be always at war with the world and the devil; and the world and the devil for their part will never leave them alone. But further: the attack on our Lord on this occasion seems to show what way of thinking it is, and what particular part of the Church's doctrine, which is most apt to draw on itself the censure and enmity of the world. Why did the Jews try to stone our Lord? because He represented Himself as having been before Abraham. So a while after, when He plainly said to them, "I and My Father are one," they presently took up stones to stone Him. And His final condemnation to death by the High Priest went on no other ground. Thus it has ever been between Christ and the wicked world. They would hear him teach many things—speak in praise of love and charity, or utter His great unspeakable promises. But when it comes to this, You are members of Christ, walk worthy, then, of the vocation wherewith ye are called; Christ, who accounts you part of Himself, is the Most High God; you, as united to Him, are partakers of the Divine Nature; therefore you must really keep the commandments, you must be inwardly and really holy as He is holy: when this kind of doctrine is put forth, and urged home to the hearts of men, they grow uneasy, and start objections, and make difficulties, and say it is requiring too much; they never can come up to so high a standard, and they take people to have become their enemies, who talk to them in such a tone. This of course makes our duty, in respect of God's Truth and worship, harder to perform; but it does not in the least make it obscure or doubtful. We must not neglect, or forget, high and mysterious doctrines, or severe rules, because those with whom we are concerned are impatient of being put in mind of them; yet again, we must so teach them as they may be able to bear—tempting them as little as possible to irreverent hearing and careless forgetting. Jesus Christ, His hour being not yet come, retired out of the way of His enemies, and gave them time to consider and repent. So it becomes us, when we bear witness to the truth, to be full of that great charity, which will make us put ourselves in the gainsayers' place, and always consider what is most likely to do them good, and bring them to a better mind. As for example: if a bad or profane word is spoken in our hearing, it can never of course be right to seem amused at it, or in any way to become partaker of the sin; but it may often be best not openly to rebuke it at the time, but rather to turn the discourse for the present, and await some opportunity, when we can speak with the offender alone, and he is otherwise more disposed to listen to us. This is withdrawing the name of our Lord out of the way of reproach, as He did His Person from the stones that were cast at Him. Only we must be very careful, that we do not so retire through cowardice or sloth, or out of care what men may say of us: and the proof of this will be, if we seek anxiously afterwards for opportunities of doing the good, which we thought we could not do at that time; and if we deny ourselves something for the sake of doing it. (*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times."*)

CHAPTER IX.

VERS. 1–25. **And as Jesus passed by He saw a man which was blind from his birth.**—*Jesus and the blind man*:—I. CHRONIC BLINDNESS. 1. A type of spiritual need (ver. 1; Eph. iv. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Luke ii. 34; Isa. lix. 9; Prov. iv. 19; Isa. lix. 10). 2. Common to the human race (ver. 2; Rom. iii. 23; Psa. xiv. 3; 1 John v. 19; Rom. v. 12, 14, 21). II. HELP GRANTED. 1. For the glory of God (ver. 3; John vii. 18, viii. 49, 50, xi. 4, xiv. 13). 2. Because the time was short (ver. 4; John xii. 35, xiii. 1, xiv. 12; Matt. xxvi. 24; Luke xii. 50). 3. To show Christ's errand

on earth (ver. 4; John iii. 17, iv. 34, vi. 38; Luke ii. 49; Psa. xl. 7; 1 John iv. 14). 4. To fulfil prophecy. (1) As light of the world (ver. 5; Mal. iv. 2; Luke i. 78; Num. xxiv. 17; Isa. ix. 2, xlii. 6). (2) As opener of eyes of blind (ver. 6; Isa. xxix. 18, xxxii. 3, xxv. 5, xlii. 7, 16). 5. To reward faith (ver. 7; Matt. ix. 22, 29, xiii. 58, xv. 28; Acts iii. 16). III. DOUBTS OF UNBELIEVERS. 1. As to the reality of the miracle (ver. 9; John vii. 12; Matt. ix. 3, 24, xxviii. 15; Acts i. 13). 2. As to the fitness of the time (ver. 14; Matt. xii. 2, 10; John v. 16, 18; Luke vi. 7). 3. As to the character of Jesus (ver. 16; John vii. 20, ix. 24, 29; Luke xv. 2; Matt. xi. 19; Mark iii. 22). (*S. S. Times.*) *Jesus and the blind man*:—Here are three distinct types of character all seeking for information. 1. The gossip-loving neighbours whose sole desire seems to have been to see or hear some new thing. 2. The prejudiced Pharisees who are bound not to know anything that conflicts with their cherished views. 3. The parents who are afraid that they know too much. 4. The one man who did know something and was not afraid to own it. I. THERE WERE MANY THINGS THE BLIND MAN DID NOT KNOW. He had never till now seen the light of day. Objects familiar to a child, grass, trees, sun, moon, &c., were unknown to him. His creed was very short and contained but one article, but this was the most important because containing that rarest of all knowledge—self-knowledge. What do you know, boy or girl? Something about grammar, arithmetic, geography, &c? But do you know something about yourself? Here you are in the world; you know that in some sense, but do you realize it as the man did his blindness, so that it affects every action and thought? Do you know that you will not stay in the flesh for ever? "Yes, ever since I wrote in my copy-book, 'All men are mortal.'" But do you know it as the man knew that he was blind, so that you are willing to accept the gift of heaven through Christ? II. WHAT THE BLIND MAN KNEW HE KNEW THOROUGHLY. About this one article he had no question. There was no "if" or "perhaps" about it, no room for Agnosticism in it. He had only one answer for his neighbours and the Pharisees, and could not be cajoled or frightened out of what he knew. It is best to believe a little thoroughly than much superficially. Not that creeds are to be despised, but as a matter of fact every man has his own private creed which does not coincide with all the creed of his church, but which is a matter of experience. This man's creed was, "One thing I know; whereas I was blind," &c. The deaf mute's creed was, "One thing I know, whereas I was dumb," &c. So with the cleansed leper. These creeds differed in their premises, but they all led to the same conclusion, that there was one Healer. We may have been brought to our belief through different doors—one through that of sorrow, another through that of providential deliverance, &c., yet there is one conclusion, that Jesus is the only Saviour of sinners. III. THE GRADUAL WAY IN WHICH HE APPROACHED TO A KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST. 1. He is only conscious of an unusual presence in the throng about him who exerts a strange influence over him, then stops and anoints his eyes, commands him to wash, which doing he sees. At once he says, "A man that is called Jesus," &c. That is something. He has time to think the matter over. 2. When the next questioner asks, "What sayest thou of Him"? he answers unhesitatingly, "He is a prophet." He is getting on rapidly now. Not more quickly do his newly-opened eyes take in the marvels of nature than his newly-awakened spiritual vision takes in the glories of Christ's character. 3. Next he hears them call Jesus a sinner. Nay, he says, "God heareth not sinners"—a further step. The healer is a sinless one. 4. A moment later he avers that Jesus comes from God. 5. A little later comes worship of and faith in Christ as the Son of God, where he reaches the limit of knowledge. IV. NOTE THAT VERY LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST IS SUFFICIENT FOR SALVATION. A child knows more than that beggar did of Christ, but he knew enough to do as he was bidden, and that was enough to save him. Christ did not wait until he fully apprehended His character before He healed him. "He that willeth to do His will shall know," &c. V. THERE IS ONE CLASS IN THIS STORY WHO MADE THEMSELVES THE WORLD'S LAUGHING-STOCK—the Pharisees. They would not believe their own eyes. They were so eager to establish their point that they made themselves ridiculous. There are many people now who disbelieve in the face of stronger evidence, and who do not believe for the same reason as the Pharisees—because they will not. VI. AN OUNCE OF EXPERIENCE IS WORTH A TON OF THEORY. The blind man, alone and ignorant, had the advantage of the whole college of rabbis because he had experience on his side. He could establish a fact when they could only ask questions. It is better to know one thing than to guess a good many. (*Sermons by the Monday Club.*) *The history of the man who was born blind*:—1. The

miracle, or the power of the love of Christ. 2. The trial, or the power of upright simplicity and gratitude. 3. The issue, or the victory of faith over the strongest temptation. 4. The profound interpretation and lofty significances of the event. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *The healing of the man born blind*:—I. THE GREATNESS OF HIS AFFLICTION. His blindness—1. Deprived him of an important means of knowledge. The blind may acquire a word knowledge of men and things, but he is powerless to form any corresponding meutal picture. Locke speaks of one who, after listening to an explanation of scarlet, thought it resembled the blast of a trumpet; and so of the man here. There he stands at the gate of the Temple; his features familiar to the worshippers, but the gorgeous service within, and all the life and beauty without, he had never beheld, and as he now stood beneath the Redeemer's gaze he was unconscious whose pitying look rested on him. We are all born blind. The eyes of the soul are there, but they see not. For many years some have heard the disfiguration our moral visage described and the beauty of Jesus depicted, and are as insensible to both as this blind man. 2. Denied him a grand source of enjoyment. The eye is the channel of some of our purest pleasures. The blind know nothing of the beauties of nature, art, literature, friendship; and the spiritually blind are dead to the perception of a Father's presence and a Father's love. 3. Unfitted him for the discharge of life's duties. Instead of being able to care for others, he needed others to care for him. He whose mind is blinded by unbelief, prejudice, or passion can never rightly discharge his duty. The light of God's renewing grace within is the only sufficient qualification for doing the works of righteousness. II. THE MANNER OF HIS CURE. 1. There was the Divine employment of a material element. A medicinal value was attributed to the saliva, but the clay could only have further injured the eyes. So that the ointment was not an assistance to Divine power but only to human faith. 2. There was implicit obedience to the Divine command. Without question or debate, and actuated only by hope of cure, the man did as he was told. Whatever God appoints as a condition of blessing we are bound to instantly accept. If He commands us wash in the Saviour's blood, and move with the feet of prayer to the place of healing, it is for us not to question but to obey. 3. There was the evident operation of Divine power. The clay and Siloam were only outward and visible signs of Christ's curative energy. The cure of spiritual blindness is possible only to the power of God. Neither priestly incantations nor clay-cold creeds can make the blind to see. III. THE CHARACTER OF HIS TESTIMONY. 1. It was the embodiment of personal experience. He does not attempt to explain the *how* of the cure, nor does he allow himself to be shaken by the Pharisees' objection to the Author of his cure. He keeps to the one thing he knows. There is no evidence so valuable as experimental. If we have been brought out of darkness into marvellous light no objector can destroy that fact of consciousness. 2. It was sustained by visible proof. His neighbours could not at first agree as to his identity, there was so great a change. So by their fruits regenerate Christians are known. 3. It was borne with unflinching boldness. He dared and suffered that which a Jew dreaded most. It is an easy thing to confess Christ when the confession involves no sacrifice. But to witness for Him when convenience and custom would counsel silence; to lose a good situation rather than deny our Lord—that requires courage. But Christ made up to the man more than he had lost, and so He will do to us. (*W. Kirkman.*) *Opening the eyes of one blind from his birth*:—I. THE PRELIMINARIES OF THIS MEMORABLE MIRACLE. 1. A strange question (ver. 2). 2. A conclusive reply (ver. 3). 3. A solemn reflection (ver. 4). 4. A glorious announcement (ver. 5). II. THE PECULIAR MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS WROUGHT. 1. The action (ver. 6). 2. The command, "Go" (ver. 6). The design of which was—(1) To try the man's faith, as Naaman's was tried. (2) To give greater publicity to the miracle. 3. The result, "Came seeing" (ver. 7). III. THE VARIOUS DISPUTES AND INQUIRIES WHICH THE MIRACLE OCCASIONED. Several parties are introduced. 1. The man's neighbours and casual acquaintances (vers. 8–12). 2. The Pharisees (ver. 13, &c.). 3. Our Lord (ver. 35, &c.). *Congenital blindness*:—While I was living in Geneva I became acquainted with Dr. Dufour of Lausanne, just after his successful operation on a patient blind from birth. The case is by no means unprecedented, but it is not common, and when it occurs, the study of the processes by which one thus put in possession of a new sense comes to the intelligent use of it, and to the power of apprehending anything in the mind by means of it, is a study of the profoundest interest both to the physician and to the mental philosopher. There are very apt to be circumstances unfavourable to such study.

The form of blindness from birth which is susceptible of cure is that of "congenital cataract;" and this is often so complicated with other defects of the organ of vision that even after it is removed the patient cannot see distinctly; or there is a deficiency of the intellectual faculties; or the original blindness was not complete, so that the case does not furnish an example of the actual beginning of vision; or the operation is effected at an age at which the child cannot give a full and intelligent account of his sensations. The case which Dr. Dufour treated was that of a man of twenty, both whose eyes had been covered from birth by an opaque chalky deposit which barely permitted him to perceive a difference between light and darkness; only when a strong colour was made to shine obliquely into the pupil he had been able to recognize the difference between red, yellow, and blue. But he had never seen the form of anything, a surface, or an outline. After the operation the patient was kept for a considerable time in a dark room with the eyes bandaged; and at last when the healing was sufficiently advanced, he was brought to the light. He groped, and sought for leading, and behaved so like a blind man that the doctor began to doubt whether there was not a deeper seated blindness that would defeat the effect of his operation. The patient was seated with his back to the window, and the doctor, in front, moved his hand to and fro over his black coat. "Do you see anything?" he asked. "Yes," said the patient; "I see something light." (He already knew the difference between light and darkness). "What is it?" "It's—it's—it's—" This is all that could be got from him. The doctor tried once more, putting his hand before the patient, sometimes at rest, sometimes in motion. "Do you see anything move?" "Move?" The doctor kept trying, and the patient gazed intently; but the most of an answer that could be got from the young man was that he saw "something white." The next day the patient was seated again as before, and the doctor showed him a watch. He said at once, "I see something bright." "Is it round or square?" No answer. "Do you know what square means?" He made the shape with his hands, and likewise a circle. But all the time, looking eagerly at the watch, he was totally unable to tell whether it was round or square. The next day the same question was put, with the same failure to answer. At length the doctor let him touch the watch. Instantly he spoke up: "It's round! It's a watch!" Two strips of paper were shown him. He could not tell by the eye which was the longer, or whether they were of equal length, until he was allowed to touch them. He was shown two pieces of paper, one square, the other round. "Do you see any difference between these papers?" "Yes." "What is the difference?" No answer. "Well, one of them is round, and the other square; which is the square?" He hesitated awhile, and being told to touch them, he laid his hand on the square piece, and, feeling the corner of it, exclaimed, "This is the square!" Then he handled the round piece attentively, and from that time forth had no difficulty in distinguishing round objects by the eye. The results of a long series of careful experiments with this patient is thus summed up: His visual sensations were clear and definite enough, but he had no power of interpreting them. Each sensation required a special intellectual act of comparing the impression on the eye with the impression on the touch. The image of external objects impressed on his retina was nothing to him but an assemblage of outlines and colours, in which he perceived no order, and from which he derived no notion, whether of form, or of distance, or of motion. This result corresponds to the result reached in the half-dozen like cases that have been studied and recorded, beginning with Cheselden's famous case in 1728. The incident of restoration of sight to the blind has been used in modern fiction by Wilkie Collins in "Poor Miss Finch," and by Bulwer in "The Pilgrims of the Rhine," and used in a way utterly irreconcilable with fact or possibility. Shakespeare, as might be expected, deals more shrewdly with the subject ("King Henry VI.," part 2). Now, it is a very notable fact, that in the gospel accounts of the healing of the blind, written in an age when "it had not been heard since the world began that any one had opened the eyes of a man born blind," there is not a syllable that is inconsistent with the facts of psycho-physiology as they have been demonstrated so many centuries later. The most ingenious tale-writers of our own day fall inadvertently into such inconsistencies. These plain narrators of eighteen hundred years ago avoid them. How? They must have been going by facts that they had seen. It was in my thought to speak of the *pædagogic* interest of the case. Dr. Dufour was so unprepared for the incapacity of perception in his patient, that he was ready to believe his operation a failure, because of the slenderness of the first results. Is

there any commoner source of discouragement to teachers than their own mistake in taking too much for granted? Is it easy to under-estimate the acquired knowledge of a little child? A careful statistical study of "The Contents of a Child's Mind," lately made by the examination of candidates for the primary schools of Boston, yielded results of a sort most instructive to the teachers of primary classes, as showing how often those notions which we should assume as a matter of course as being part of the mental furniture of the least and dullest, are lacking in the minds even of bright children. (*L. W. Bacon, D.D.*) *Characteristics of blindness*:—I knew such a blind man once—sharp, shrewd, clever. I was staying on the Cornish coast, and the good man of the house sat in the settle by the fire. I was anxious to make his acquaintance, and seeing he was blind, I said, with as much sympathy as I could, "Yours is a great affliction, my friend." To my astonishment he got up and turned upon me angrily, and denied it utterly. "No, it is not," said he—"not a bit." And he groped his way out. His wife hurried in to apologise and explain. "Oh, sir, I am so sorry; I meant to have asked you not to say anything about my husband's blindness. He always gets so angry. You know, he thinks eyes are such stupid things. And he can do a great deal more without his eyes than many men can do with them." That blind man opened my eyes. I watched henceforth most carefully, and I think I learned this—that, generally speaking, a blind man is not conscious of his infirmity. A deaf man sees that he is deaf, but a blind man cannot see that he is blind. As the result of my altered manner I got an invitation to address some two or three hundred blind people. I was almost shocked at the reason given for asking me. "He won't pity us." Not pity the poor blind!—why, it was the appeal that had often diverted my earliest pence from some indulgence. But I knew what they meant, and was glad that they had discerned my knowledge—the blind only know that they are blind by being pitied. (*M. G. Pearse.*) *Characteristics of the miracle*:—1. It is only related by St. John. 2. Like each of the few miracles in St. John, it is described with great minuteness and particularity. 3. It is one of the four miracles wrought in Judæa, or near Jerusalem, mentioned in St. John. He records eight great miracles together: four in Galilee—turning the water into wine, healing the nobleman's son, feeding the multitude, and walking on the water (chaps. ii., iv., and vi.); and four in Judæa—purifying the Temple, healing the impotent man, restoring sight to the blind, and raising Lazarus (chaps. ii., v., vi., and ix.). 4. It is one of those miracles which the Jews were especially taught to expect in Messiah's time: "In that day shall the eyes of the blind see out of obscurity" (Isa. xxix. 18). 5. It is one of those signs of Messiah having come, to which Jesus particularly directed John the Baptist's attention: "The blind receive their sight" (Matt. xi. 5). 6. It was a miracle worked in so public a place, and on a man so well known, that it was impossible for the Jerusalem Jews to deny it. It is hardly necessary, perhaps, to bid any well-instructed Christian observe the singularly instructive and typical character of each of the eight miracles which John was inspired to record. Each was a vivid picture of spiritual things. Hengstenberg observes, that three of the four great miracles wrought by Christ in Judæa, exactly represent the three classes of works referred to in Matt. xi. 5: "The lame walk, the blind see, the dead are raised up" (John v., ix., xi.). (*Bp. Ryle.*) *General remarks on the miracle*:—More miracles are recorded as to the blind than any other disease. One of palsy, one of dropsy, two of leprosy, two of fever. Three dead were raised, but four blind were restored to sight. Some writers extend the number to six (Matt. xii. 22). Isaiah alludes oftener to curing the blind than to the removal of any other form of misery. This miracle strikes us with the greater power—the only one born blind (ver. 32). (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Miracle authenticated*:—Renan declared himself ready to believe a miracle in case it be examined and established by a committee especially nominated and authorized beforehand for that purpose. Should we not be almost tempted to speak of a holy irony of history, which has already fulfilled this arbitrary demand many centuries before it was uttered? For, in truth, an examination is here conducted by the most acute and hostile eyes, the witnesses are called, opinions are heard, and the various possibilities are weighed against each other as though on gold scales—and what is the result? It is this. While the miracle remains incomprehensible, its invention is inconceivable. I know what your answer will be when I ask you, whether you regard these particulars as invented—the astonishment of the neighbours; the diversity of opinions; the dissention of the Pharisees; the cunning and forbearance of the parents; the immovable calmness, the increasing frankness, the confidence of the man in pre-

senting the knowledge of his experience as of equal weight with the knowledge of the Pharisees; and that humble confession of his faith in our Lord. We are no more surprised that the restored blind man was cast out than we hear him confessing after this event that Christ is the Son of God. It would excite our wonder more if one or the other of these circumstances had not been mentioned. In fact, as we look at the critical objections that are presented with the most important air imaginable, we can hardly refrain from asking, "Are these men serious or jesting?" (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*) *Instances of blindness*:—Homer, Ossian, Milton, Blacklock (only saw the light five months, yet linguist and poet), Sanderson, celebrated Mathematician and Lucasian Professor at Cambridge (blind before one year old); Euler, mathematician; Huber (Nat. Hist., "Habits of Bees"); Holman, traveller round the world; William Metcalf, builder of roads and bridges; John Metcalf (Manchester), guide to those travelling through intricate roads by night, when covered with snow, afterwards a projector and surveyor of roads in different mountainous parts, most of the roads about the Peak, and near Buxton, were altered by his direction; Laura Bridgman, neither sight, hearing, nor speech, yet learned to know herself a sinner, and Christ a Saviour; Milburn, the blind American preacher; Prescot, the historian; Goodrich ("Peter Parley"); Rev. J. Crosse, Vicar of Bradford. Hence learn—1. God's sovereignty in creation: Why were you born blind? (Matt. xi. 26). 2. God's goodness in providence: that blind men so often see more than those who have sight. The blind are proverbially cheerful. 3. God's riches in grace. *Spiritual blindness*:—A gentleman, in passing a coal mine in Pennsylvania, saw a field full of mules. In answer to his inquiry a boy told him: "These are the mules that work all the week down in the mine; but on Sunday they have to come up to the light, or else in a little while they go blind." So with men. Keep them delving and digging in dust and darkness seven days in a week, and all the days of the fifty-two weeks in a year, and how long can they be expected to have any discernment for Divine things? The eyes of their understandings are necessarily bedimmed. *Christ's sight of sinners*:—This man could not see Jesus, but, what was better, Jesus could see him; and we read, "As Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth." Many other blind men there were in Israel, but Jesus saw this man with a special eye. I think I see the Saviour standing still, and looking at him, taking stock of him, listening to his quaint speeches, noting what kind of man he is, and exhibiting special interest in him. This morning there is one in the Tabernacle who cannot see Jesus, for he has no spiritual eyes; but I am convinced that my Master is now looking at him, searching him from head to foot, and reading him with discerning eye. He is considering what he will make of him by-and-by, for he has the great and gracious intent that He will take this sinner, who is spiritually like the blind beggar, and enlighten him, and give him to behold His glory. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The compassion of Christ*:—"He saw," &c. This was enough to move Christ to mercy, the sight of a fit object. (*J. Trapp.*) *Types of character in relation to Christ's work*:—As this chapter is the history of one event, its several sections may be thus treated;—Those who consciously need the work of Christ; those who are speculatively interested in it; those who are malignantly prejudiced against it; those who are heartily interested in it; and those who are experimentally restored by it. Looking at the blind man as representing the consciously needy class note —I. THE WRETCHEDNESS OF THEIR CONDITION. 1. This man was afflicted with blindness. Those windows through which the soul looks out upon, and which the soul lets in the beauty of God's creation, had never been opened. 2. He was afflicted with beggary. He lived perhaps all his life on the precarious charity of those who visited the temple. 3. He was afflicted with social heartlessness. With what pain must he have heard the question of ver. 2. This was a common error among the Jews; but the whole book of Job seems to have been written to correct it, and Christ Himself exposed it (Luke xiii. 1-4). The sufferings of individuals are no just criterion of moral character. Spiritually all in their unregenerate condition are as needy as this man. Alas! but few realize it. II. THE NATURE OF THEIR DELIVERANCE. This is—1. The predetermined work of God (ver. 3). Christ does not mean that either was free from sin, but that sin was not the cause of the blindness, but that the blindness was to afford scope for His remedial agency. God's restorative agency reveals Him often in more striking aspects than even His creative and preserving. 2. Was effected by Christ (ver. 4). This He did—(1) Systematically, not capriciously or desultorily, but by a Divine programme. He did the right work in the right place, on the right person, at the right time. (2)

Diligently. He knew that His work was great, but His time limited. These works suggest that—(*a*) There is a Divine purpose in every man's life. (*b*) A Divine work. (*c*) A Divine limit. (3) Appropriately (ver. 5). He assumes a character corresponding to the exigencies of the sufferer. To the woman at the well He was "living water"; to the sisters of Lazarus, "the Resurrection and the Life." (4) Unasked; as He "passed by." (5) Instrumentally (ver. 6). (*D. Thomas D.D.*) *Christ and the blind man*:—I. INFIRMITIES AND DISABILITIES MAY BE THE OCCASIONS FOR SHOWING THE DIVINE POWER AND GRACE. "But that the works of God should be made manifest in him" was the infallible solution of this trouble. The calamities and penalties under which multitudes lie are clearly of their own intelligent seeking. If the works of God are made manifest in them, it is but the stern and startling exhibition of the fact that "he is not mocked," and that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Here we have illustration of how small and empty our measures and judgments are apt to be, when they would gauge the purposes and deeds of the Infinite. What confusion and rebuke when he stoops to offer the true explanation! In a flash, as it were, he solves much of the mystery of the existence of evil and sorrow in the world. He does not deny the means by which they have appeared. Adam or one's parents may have violated some beneficent rule of life and the child comes into being, having the marks of it, the curse of it. A remote or near offender may have doomed Byron to the club-foot, and Cowper to melancholia, and the Emperor William to a withered arm. The keenest experts are often baffled in tracing the genesis of disease. All agree that "affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground." Here God has prepared the ground on which to display the marvels of his power. Beautiful characters may appear, as the brilliant blossom on the ugly and thorny cactus. And not for the observers' sake simply, but chiefly for those subject to infirmity is it laid upon them. If patience and restfulness of spirit and self-forgetfulness can be thus developed, it is well. These are God's works. "Philosophy may infuse stubbornness," said Cecil, "but religion only can give patience." If correct estimates of worldly and unworldly treasures can be gained only in the white-heats of furnace pains, then these are well. Every untoward condition of our human life has some beneficent and glorious possibility in it. God only knows what that is. He only can bring it out. II. DILIGENCE IN IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES. III. OUTWARD MEANS THE TEST OF FAITH. Some ignore His Church, its ordinances and methods, as needless in the regeneration of society or of the individual. But some movement must be made to catch its message; some step toward its cleansing pools; some regard for its simplest rites there must be before any who have "closed their eyes lest haply they should perceive" can obtain the Christly healing. IV. JESUS REVEALS HIMSELF TO THOSE WHO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE, AND CONFIRMS THEIR FAITH. They who escape the great fight of affliction because they are Christ's do it perhaps to their own loss. Not so real, so vivid, is He to those who have much beside. Fame and ease and abundance may dull that strong and saving sense of His presence which is the disciple's chief need. (*De Witt S. Clark.*) *Christ and the blind man*:—Wherever help was most needed thither His merciful heart drew Him, and whoever craved pity and succour gravitated to Him as streams to the sea. Others, who are immersed in their own satisfactions, may find this a very comfortable and happy world. They do not see the sorrows for which they have no sympathy, and pass by the griefs which they do not feel. In their presence the wounded instinctively hide themselves away, and the eloquence of want is suppressed and silent. While the gardener is bending over the prone and helpless plant, seeking how he may lift it up and restore it to bloom and beauty, wise botanists begin to botanize—"Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" I. THE PROBLEM. Here is a problem, old as man is old, and wide as the world is wide, the vast problem of evil—the existence of pain in the universe of a good God. Jesus does not say that this man or his parents had never sinned. All pain is not penal. Pain may be remedial, medicinal—a means of grace, a surgery of soul—a crucible of character, a revelation of the Divine goodness, an ultimate disclosure of the Divine glory. His blindness is an infirmity, not a punishment. It is something given, and not something inflicted. II. THE MIRACLE. The works of God are at last to be made manifest. The method of the miracle here as everywhere is a method which keeps the miraculous as close as possible to ordinary means and agencies. He always sought some fulcrum in nature on which to rest the leverage of supernatural power. He startles with results, never with processes. He honours nature even when He would transcend

nature. But the works of God are made manifest in no startling and spectacular way. As the dawn widens into the day, so this child of darkness is led into the marvellous light. Having anointed the blind man's eyes, Jesus said, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." He sends him away from Himself, away from His own ministry, to the ministry of nature, to the recuperative energies which are beating in every pulse of creation. There is a human as well as a Divine side in all this great mystery of human healing and human redemption. The man is a small but necessary factor in the redemptive process, in the ultimate result. When Jesus would test our faith He gives us not merely something to believe but something to do. Action is the ultimate speech of conviction, the measure of its strength, the test of its sincerity. The faith that worketh is a faith which may be counted on. The test of a locomotive is not the noise in the whistle, but the pull in the cylinders. Every escape from ignorance into intelligence, from weakness into power, from savagery into civilization, from darkness into the light, is by way of the Pool of Siloam—is a salvation by faith. III. THE TESTIMONY. The return of this man, radiant in the joy of vision, was the sensation of the hour. He was not overawed by their authority, nor deceived by their sophistry. He could not be coerced into suppression nor corrupted into a lie. Against all blandishment and all abuse that indomitable man was loyal to his benefactor and true to himself. IV. THE RECOGNITION. Such fidelity was too rare and too precious to fail of its reward. (*Boston Homilies.*) *The opening of the eyes of a man born blind*:—Even amid the fury of the crowd Christ was entirely self-possessed, and the incident here recorded may have been introduced by the Evangelist for this, among other reasons, that he might bring out, by the force of the contrast that is here suggested between the excited violence of a multitude and the calmness of Christ, the vast, nay, infinite, superiority of Jesus to all other men. He was not excited. The beginning of all good to the sinner is when Jesus sees him thus; even as it was His perception of the ruined state of man, at first, that moved Him to become the Redeemer of the race. Now here we have a great general law pervading the Providence of God. It does not explain the origin of evil, but it shows how God brings good out of evil, and therefore helps to reconcile us to its existence. The anointing of the eyes with clay formed in the manner here described, was better calculated to make a seeing man blind, than to make a blind man see. Why, then, was such an application made? Perhaps to help the faith of the man who was to be cured. It gave him something to build upon. It gave him something to build upon. It raised his hope—nay, it led him to expect a cure; and that helps to account for the promptitude of his obedience. Then the command, "Go, wash in Siloam," suggests that in spiritual operations God has His work, and we have ours. Now let us observe two things in this brief account of a great miracle. The first is, the promptitude of the man's obedience. "He went away, therefore, and washed." Without any delay; without any reluctance; probably, also, without any misgiving—he went and did what he was told. Then observe also the perfection of the cure, "He came seeing." Seeing is a thing which, in all ordinary cases, needs to be learned. What Jesus did for him, He did perfectly; and when He opens the soul's eyes, they see clearly and correctly "wonderful things out of God's law." I have time now for only two practical lessons and to get them we shall go back to the very beginning of this remarkable chapter. I. The first is, THAT THE MAINTENANCE OF A CALM AND UNTROUBLED SPIRIT IS ESSENTIAL BOTH TO THE PERCEPTION AND PERFORMANCE OF THE WORKS WHICH OUR FATHER HAS GIVEN US TO DO. Peace of spirit is essential if we would keep ourselves abreast of our opportunities and do each work at its own hour. Let us try to imitate the Saviour here; and to this end let us cultivate entire confidence in God, for trust in Him is peace. II. The second practical lesson is, THAT THE RAISING OF QUESTIONS IN THE DOMAIN OF MERE SPECULATION INTERFERES WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PRESSING DUTIES OF PRACTICAL LIFE. Not the speculative, but the practical, demands our care. (*W. M. Taylor.*) *The Saviour and the sufferer*:—I. THE SAVIOUR. What He was then in giving sight, He is still in giving salvation. Notice His peculiar traits in this miracle. 1. Compassion. Christ saw the blind man before His disciples saw him, and His look awakened their interest. Everywhere we read of His sympathy with those in trouble. He saw what others would gladly refrain from seeing—the woes of men (ver. 1). 2. Omniscience. He saw the past history of this man and His parents; and saw, too, his future history, how boldly, nay, how doggedly he would confess Christ, and how abundantly he would glorify God. He saw in this blind beggar splendid possibilities. So He saw Paul in the perse-

cuting Saul, the reformer in the monk Martin Luther. So He sees what every man may become under Divine grace (vers. 2, 3). 3. Activity. Seeing these possibilities in this man He set at work to bring them out. His aim was to make out of this beggar a man of God. Toward this all instrumentalities combined—the clay, the pool, the tests to the man's character from neighbours and rulers. Do we realize that Jesus is taking the same pains to bring out of us the best that is in us (ver. 4–7)? 4. Kingly authority. He gave His command like a king, "Go, wash." There were man-made customs in the way, but He brushed them aside as one who spoke with authority. The hearts of men need just such a Master as this (ver. 7). 5. Divine power. Only the Divine physician could give sight to the blind-born. And only the Son of God has the right to claim the faith and worship of men (vers. 7, 35–38). II. Turn we now to THE SUFFERER: A most interesting character, as unfolded by the Gospel-writer. Note his condition, and his steps from darkness to light. 1. His darkness. He was like the sinner, who cannot see God; whose nature is undeveloped, and who gropes in ignorance. Note texts showing blindness as a type of sin (John xi. 10; xii. 35; Rev. iii. 17; Isa. lx. 2; Eph. iv. 18; 1 Cor. ii. 14). 2. His opportunity. One day Jesus of Nazareth passed by, looked upon him, and called to him. This was the opportunity of his life. Such an opportunity comes to every soul when God's Spirit strives within him, or God's Church invites him to salvation. 3. His obedience. This was the obedience of faith. 4. His transformation. A wonderful change, from darkness to light, placing the man in new relations with the universe. But it is a greater change when God converts a soul and makes all things new. 5. His testimony. Notice how positive, how repeated, how consistent was this man's testimony to the work wrought in him. He did not falter when his witnessing cost him expulsion from the synagogue. So should every one tell his experience of salvation. (*J. L. Hurlbut.*) *The Light of the world*:—Jesus was passing out to avoid stoning; but without fear or hurry. An object of misery arrests His attention, and in spite of danger He stops. I. A SAD CASE. The blind man had never seen father, mother, friend, books, landscape. As the miracle was a "sign" of salvation, blindness is typical of the condition of the sinner. 1. The blind man was reduced to the necessity of guiding himself through the lower sense of touch. He picked his way through the streets with the point of his staff or the instinct of his dog. So the sinner guides himself by merely earthly considerations. He feels his way by the staff of interest, pleasure, opinions of others, &c. 2. The blind man has no idea of distance or of the relation of one object to another. He knows only those things he can feel all over. He may grope round a tree, but he can form no idea of its position in the landscape; he may have some idea of the earth he treads on, but none of its relation to the heavenly bodies. So the sinner has no proper notion of the connection between this life and the next, or of the relation of spiritual things to God. He may be more than usually expert in other departments, even as a blind man may have a more delicate touch; but in this region he is helpless. 3. One point of difference is to be noted. This man's blindness was a misfortune (ver. 2, 3). He was not to blame for it; but the sinner's blindness is culpable. He has kept his eyes shut so long that the capacity for seeing has gone. Satan blinds the sinner, it is true, as the Philistines blinded Samson; but as Samson was to blame for letting himself fall into the enemies' hands, so is the sinner. II. A SINGULAR SAYING (vers. 4, 5). 1. An essential dignity. These are strange words if Jesus was a mere man. Had He been insane we could have put them aside; but He had a mind of exquisite balance. Had He been a vain man, we might have set them down to vanity, but we know He was humble. Had He been untruthful, we might have pronounced them false; but we know that He was incapable of a lie. Therefore we can explain them in harmony with His general character only when we understand them as used by one who was God. 2. An official subjection. Though God, Jesus as incarnate was in a condition of voluntary humiliation. Yet the "must" refers not to external compulsion, but to an inner impulse; it was the language of love within. 3. A limited opportunity. His work was to be done in a given time. This would elapse when His "hour" was come, and He would say, "It is finished." III. A GRACIOUS CURE. Christ had no stereotyped method. He varied the accessories, probably from some reference to the character of the individuals (Matt. ix.; Mark viii. 23). It seems strange that He should seal up the man's eyes into a blinder darkness; but sometimes He acts in this way (*e.g.*, Saul) when He opens the eyes of the soul. In any case, the whole procedure was a trial of the man's faith, for there was nothing in the means. IV. A SIMPLE TESTIMONY

(ver. 11), which was consistently maintained, and was impregnable because experimental. He was not to be argued or bullied out of it. So with the convert. When men ask How? He cannot tell; he only says, "I went and heard such a sermon, &c., and I came away and believed, and now I am a new man." There is no evidence like this. Lessons: 1. Let us beware of uncharitable judgments, and guard against supposing that uncommon suffering indicates uncommon sin. Job was not a sinner above others, but God was glorified in him above many. 2. Let us work while the day lasts. Dr. Johnson had "the night cometh" engraved on the dial of his watch; let us have the truths they teach written on our hearts. 3. Let us have compassion on the blind; and if we cannot open their eyes, let us, at least, seek to mitigate their misery. 4. Let us tell simply and eagerly what Christ has done for us. (*Christian Age.*)

Vers. 2–3. **Who did sin, this man, or his parents?**—*What the Master and what the disciples saw:*—At such a time it was very wonderful that He should see anything but the way out. His life was in peril. The plot was thickening, the pursuers were more than ever determined to murder Him. At such times men are likely to see only what concerns themselves and their own safety. It is a blessed proof of the way in which that most gracious heart lay open to all the sorrow and needs of men. Find out what people see, and you will know what they are. People mostly see what they look for; and they look for what they want. It is curious to listen to the account of what people have seen; how some saw a dress, and some a face, and some saw nothing. "He looked for the worms, I for the gods," was the complaint of a certain singer. Jesus saw a blind man. Some people are very blind to blind men. There is, you know, a colour blindness, that cannot discern certain colours. There is, too, an inner colour blindness, that never sees sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity. It looks on the bright side of things by looking away from all that is wretched. Ah, never was there such an eye for sad hearts as Jesus Christ's. Once seeing the blind man, He can go no further. Pharisees and perils are alike forgotten. Pity saw her opportunity, and she could not be denied. Oh, what a Christ is this! Well may His name be called wonderful. And the only Christianity that is worth the name is that which makes us like Him. So that however we be driven, harassed, threatened, there is within the soul a great atmosphere where love dwelleth. In this great London of ours, with its turmoil of the streets, the hurry of the thousands on its pavements, the roll and rumble of its traffic—yet you know how God's sky bends over it, and God's great sun shines upon it, and God's kindly stars do look down upon it. That is the very purpose of Christ's coming—to open up in our narrow, little, earthly, busy lives a whole heaven of pity, of love, of gracious help. The Master saw a blind man. What did the disciples see? His face was full of pity only; theirs was full of a curious prying. With them it was a case for dissection, a poor body for their anatomy, and they began at once with the scalpel knife. "Master, who did sin," &c.? Alas! how full the world is of people who are ready to cast stones at those who are down—stones that may break no bones, but that do bruise spirits and break hearts! What a strange lack of feeling! And what an extraordinary notion! Bad enough to be blind, and bad enough to be poor; but to be both might well move our pity. But no; to be poor shows that he is bad; to be blind shows that he must be very bad. It is a horrible notion! Yet it lives and thrives to-day. Would not any stranger coming into our midst suppose that the rich people must be good—born good? It is the poor who are so bad—so very bad. Who are city missionaries for, and tract distributors, and district visitors, and Bible women? All for the poor; until one might think that the Scripture, which says that the poor have the gospel preached to them, implies that the rich do not need it. Has it not been said in scores of good books that the subject was born of "poor but pious parents"? Why, indeed, the but? "Of rich but pious parents" is a phrase I never heard, and yet it were the greater wonder. Cold-blooded discussion of great social problems that involve the lives of men and women and little children is bad enough, but ten thousand times worse is it when good people stand tip-toe and look down from their lofty superiority with cold, steel eyes and lips of scorn and talk of the poor as a "drunken, lazy lot." It is enough to provoke men and women to curse the very name of religion. Nothing could be more unlike that blessed Saviour who saved the world by loving it. What a gulf is there oftentimes between the Master and His followers! Very notable is the answer of Jesus. "This blindness has not

come from sin, but for your sakes, that His blindness may open your eyes; for you are blind except this blind man give you sight." A Divine homœopathy, like curing like. I constantly have my eyes opened by blind men. I never know, indeed, that I have any eyes until I see a blind man; then I go on my way thanking God for this wondrous gift of sight. That he may show forth the works of God. Who most enriched the world when Christ was upon earth—the rich man or the beggars? Think how infinitely poorer all the ages had been if, when Christ came, there had been no sick, no suffering, no need in the world. What depths of tenderness, what hope for all men, what mighty helpfulness, what revelations of Christ are ours to-day, because there sat of old blind beggars and such needy sufferers! Surely when men are rewarded according to their service, these shall have great recompense. (*M. G. Pearse.*) *The purpose of chronic suffering*:—While our Lord perceived only another opportunity of lifting a shadow, the disciples caught a new chance of repeating the weary and worn question of the ages as to the source of the shadow. Christ did not find any fault with His followers for inquiring; only He asserted that they had entirely misapprehended the philosophy of the poor creature's history. And then He immediately put forth His almighty power, and bestowed upon him his sight as a new sense. Note—I. THE PATIENCE OF JESUS IN BEARING WITH HUMAN MISCONCEPTIONS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE. It would be unfair for one to indulge in any sharp comment upon the ignorance of the disciples. For other explanations of the origin of evil are in vogue and have continually been offered quite as wild as that which they proposed. II. THE DISPOSITION OF SOME MEN TO INTERPOSE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD'S WORLD. One of the ancient theories employed to reconcile suffering with benevolence, and relieve its mystery, has kept its place till our day—the existence of two spirits or principles of good and ill, warring with each other. The classic notion was that the jealous deities antagonized each other's plans on Olympus. Wrathful gods and goddesses cut at those who confronted them, and men sometimes were caught on both sides, like unfortunate cloth between the shears. There were furies as well as fates; and it was the elements of disturbance in heaven which stirred up the affairs of mortals so on the earth. This story corrects everything in such a heathen mistake. III. THE RECORD OF FOOLISH JUDGMENTS IN THE BIBLE IS NOT TO BE TAKEN AS AN INSPIRED DECISION. Some island people, when Paul was shipwrecked, openly stated that the reason why a viper fastened on his hand was because he was in all likelihood a murderer. When Job's trials were at the highest, his miserable comforters accused him of sin, and that he had been in some way a hypocrite. It is an old and common insinuation which interprets misfortunes very much as Jesus' followers did on this occasion; and it is to be feared that this ungenerous world will never admit its mistakes in such particulars. Men call other people's troubles judgments; and their own calamities. IV. SUFFERING HAS SOME UNMISTAKABLE CONNECTION WITH SIN SOMEWHERE. For when our Lord told His disciples that neither this man nor his parents had sinned, we are not to understand Him as pronouncing them sinless. What He intended was that it was in no sense either a reckless calamity or a righteous retribution; for he was blind his whole life. And yet, we are not at liberty to pass by the warning which Christ gave, when the surmise was made concerning some on whom the tower of Siloam fell. A real connection must be admitted between the guilt of the race and the pain of the race. The conscientious conviction of mankind has a basis of truth. The wisest man there ever was on earth was inspired to say: "As the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come." V. ALL CHRONIC PAIN IN ANY LIFE IS PART OF THE WISE PLAN OF GOD. Such a life, which, no doubt, had to himself seemed restrictive when men talked about the beauties that never gleamed in on his soul, was one definite part of the Divine purpose in the plan of redemption. And so in that splendid flash of vast disclosure, it was revealed that the eventful history of those darkened eyes was just a piece of God's biography, rather than of man's—a chapter in the book that records the dealings of our Maker with His creatures. And all this worried existence on earth was already written on the luminous pages of a volume of annals in heaven, before the blind baby was born in Judæa. VI. SUFFERING IN THIS WORLD, IN ALMOST EVERY INSTANCE, MAY BE ASSUMED TO HAVE A VICARIOUS REACH. There is in it an element bearing outwardly on others. Some trials are the direct punishment of personal transgression; and others are the hereditary consequences of parental wickedness. But there is a class of chronic disabilities which seem beyond any reference to sin. Such may have in them a discipline for those nearest the sufferer. Who

shall say how much this blind man's darkness may have been instrumental in mellowing the tempers and softening the hearts of his family? Hardly any household can be found now in which there is not some victim of pain; and those who are watching and waiting are likely to grow gentle and considerate, and ingenious with expedients of alleviation, under the long scholarship. VII. THOSE WHO ARE UNDER SUCH DISABILITIES ARE MOST OFTEN THE BRAVEST. Generally the bystanders put the questions, rather than those who are under the infliction. It was the disciples, and not the blind man, who raised the inquiry. For the poor groper never really knew what he lacked in his senses; he was only like a man who is told that it is a pity he has no ear for music; he cannot be made to appreciate the symphony the musicians give him. Possibly he had borne the life into which his deprivation drove him so long that he had become quite tame about it. There is nothing more beautiful or helpful than the cheer of some who are shadowed by great trials. VIII. UNDERLYING EVERY GIFT OF OUR LOVING SAVIOUR IS A SUPREME SPIRITUAL GRACE. When the wonder of healing had been wrought, was the final cause of the man's blindness reached? Had he served but the same purpose as the jars of water, the fish with the coin, the barren fig-tree, the barley loaves? Had he groped around all these years in order to be ready when Christ wanted a thing to work a miracle upon? And had he when he had become an evidence of Christianity, and when he had humbled a few Pharisees to there vanish? No, indeed! He was looked up in the Temple, where he was using his new eyes, and there a fresh benediction met his believing soul. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Blindness a talent to be used for God's glory*:—The excellent Mr. Moon, of Brighton, the blind friend of the blind, was present at a recent meeting of blind people at Manchester, and among the remarks he made was this: "When I became blind, as a young boy, people condoled with my mother on the 'heavy dispensation' with which I was afflicted. They were wrong, my friends. God gave me blindness as a talent to be used for His glory. Without blindness I should never have been able to see the needs of the blind." It is worthy of note that this excellent man, Mr. Moon, as one of the uses of this "talent," has given the gospel published, in raised type, in nearly two hundred different languages and dialects to the blind throughout the world! *Blindness leading to Spiritual sight*:—"Rob Roy" says in his description of Mr. Mott's mission to the blind at Beyrout: "That poor fellow who sits on the form there was utterly ignorant. See how his delicate fingers run over the raised types of his Bible; and he reads aloud, and blesses God in his heart for the precious news, and for those who gave him the avenue for truth to his heart. 'Jesus Christ will be the first person I shall ever see,' he says; 'for my eyes will be opened in heaven.' Thus even this man becomes a missionary. At the annual examination of this school one of the scholars said, 'I am a little blind boy. Once I could see; but then I fell asleep—a long, long sleep—I thought I should never wake. And I slept till a kind gentleman, called Mr. Mott, came and opened my eyes; not these eyes,' pointing to his sightless eyeballs, 'but these,' lifting up his tiny fingers; these eyes. And, oh! they see such sweet words of Jesus, and how He loved the blind.'" **Who did sin, this man, or his parents?**—*Explanations of the disciples' question.* 1. Some think that the Jews had imbibed the common Oriental notion of the pre-existence and transmigration of souls from one body to another, and that the disciples supposed that in some previous state of existence this blind man must have committed some great sin, for which he was now punished. 2. Some think that the question refers to a strange notion current among some Jews, that infants might sin before they were born. In support of this view they quote Gen. xxv. 22 and Gen. xxviii. 28, 29. 3. The most probable view is, that the question arose from a misapplication of such passages of Scripture as the second commandment, where God speaks of "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" (Exod. xx. 5), and from a forgetfulness of Ezek. xviii. 20, &c. There are few notions that men seem to cling to so naturally, as the notion that bodily sufferings, and all affliction, are the direct consequences of sin, and that a diseased or afflicted person must necessarily be a very wicked man. This was precisely the short-sighted view that Job's three friends took up when they came to visit him, and against which Job contended. This was the idea of the people at Melita, when Paul was bitten by the viper, after the shipwreck: "This man is a murderer." (Acts. xxviii. 4). This appears to have been at the bottom of the question of the disciples: "There is suffering;

then there must have been sin. Whose sin was it?" (*Bishop Ryle.*) *Suffering: its causes and privileges*:—There was no special connection between the parents' sin in this instance and the blindness of their offspring. "On the contrary," Christ seems to say, "great sufferers are not always or of necessity great sinners, or the children of great sinners. Far otherwise. There is pain and suffering caused by no vice in the sufferer, inherited from no transgressions of their parents: pain and suffering, not indeed created by God, but allowed by God, allowed in mercy as a favour, and in proof of love. The natal blindness of this afflicted man was for the glory of God." And to suffer for such a purpose and with such a result is not a punishment but a privilege—a distinct and honourable privilege. This Divine philosophy of suffering was a new revelation given to the world by Jesus Christ. It was a revelation which apparelled suffering in robes of attractiveness, and turned the murmurs of lamentation into songs of rejoicing. The apostles gloried in suffering, directly the purpose of it had been unfolded and interpreted by their Lord. When they understood that the cause of suffering lay sometimes in the privilege of the sufferer to be the means of the manifestation, through his sufferings, of the Divine glory, they "rejoiced in their infirmities, if so be the power of God might be manifested in them." They "counted it all joy" when it pleased God to let them fall into manifold trials, inasmuch as their trials afforded an opportunity for the glorification of God. Many other acknowledged advantages flow from suffering. It tends to wean men from the world, to purge away the dross of selfishness and strip off the tinsel from conceit. There is nothing like an abundance of trouble for keeping a man straight and helping him to remember his prayers. Suffering is not seldom thus its own reward. . . . Yet it is one thing to realize the benefits of suffering, another and far higher thing to realize its privilege. Think, *e.g.*, of the man blind from his birth. How many long and weary hours he had sat near the Temple Gate, dark, lonely, miserable! How dreary his existence had been—sightless and hopeless, a stranger to the sense of beauty, looking only through the deep darkness of life to the still deeper darkness of death! And yet how truly privileged he was! What a recompense after all those years of weary blindness to be permitted to be the instrument for "showing forth the glory of God!" It was worth being a blind and desolate beggar for! We, of this latter day, are not permitted to be the instruments for showing forth the glory of God miraculously. Our blind do not receive their sight, our dead are not raised, our lepers are not cleansed. But none the less truly does every Christian glorify God in his suffering body and his suffering spirit, whenever, by sweet holiness of patience, and heavenly-minded rejoicing in tribulation, he convinces the world that though the cause of all suffering is sin, yet no Christian suffering is without privilege. (*J. W. Diggle, M.A.*) *Blindness not judgment*:—A German pastor had made an engagement to preach before a meeting of the Gustavus Adolphus Society, at a distance of eighteen miles from his village. He had to walk all the way. The weather, which was fine at first, changed to violent rain, so that after walking half way with great difficulty, it seemed hopeless to proceed, as he could hardly drag his feet out of the mire. Greatly cast down, he found himself impatiently asking why it should rain so just that day, when he espied a solitary cottage, and gladly sought shelter in it. A young and sad looking woman was nursing her babe. Being invited to rest and dry himself, the pastor soon found that the beautiful babe was the cause of the mother's sorrow, for he had been born blind. "The worst of it is," said the poor woman, "no doubt it is all my fault; such a misfortune could only befall a child on account of its parents, for the poor dear children are innocent enough. For the last four months I have been tormenting myself to discover by what sin I can have brought upon it such a calamity." Her tears choked her voice, and she sobbed convulsively. The poor creature was quite ignorant of this beautiful story, but the pastor read it and expounded it. When he prepared to resume his toilsome walk, it was with feelings of joy and gratitude not unmingled with shame. He confessed how the rain had vexed him, and that he had repeatedly asked "Why it must fall just to-day." "Oh, my dear sir" she replied joyfully, "I know very well!" (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) **Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.**—*Christ's explanation of suffering*:—1. The man was sitting near to the Temple. It has been the custom in all ages for the needy of all kinds to get as near as they can to God's house. It is on their part an instinctive homage to religion. If any man become known as professing religion he will have many applications for his pity. A congregational collection is the resort of every

charitable institution. 2. If Jesus had seen this man on His way to or from worship, His conduct would not have excited special wonder. But it was when driven from the Temple and with His life in peril. But He forgot His danger in the fulness of His pity. 3. The disciples supposed that by making the man a subject for pity, Christ made him a fit subject for speculation. Some thought this calamity a fruit of parental sin, others a punishment for prospective guilt. They were wrong, but not so wrong as those who believe that sin will never be punished at all. 4. Christ's solution of their difficulties suggests some important reflections. I. THAT SUFFERING IS THE FRUIT OF SIN. Our Lord did not deny this incontestible principle in general, but only in this particular case. God's laws in relation to the body, those of chastity, sobriety, industry and cleanliness, cannot be broken with impunity. If drunkenness and debauchery were checked the welfare of the country would be promoted and pestilence confined to a narrower region. If our great cities were governed with wisdom, if they were properly drained, the poor properly housed, the water pure and abundant, disease would be checked and good morals and happiness promoted. Asylums for the destitute, and hospitals for the sick are great necessities and embodiments of Christian loving kindness; but there wants something more than grappling with results, a grappling with the prolific cause. The great work of the Christain Church then is to deal with sin. Without sin our gaols would be superfluous, our workhouses not one tithe of their present magnitude, and half our hospitable beds empty. II. THAT A GOOD DEAL OF SUFFERING IS NOT THE FRUIT OF SIN. People sometimes say "had there been no sin there had been no sorrow." But where does the Bible say so? It is true that in heaven there is no sorrow, but then that is a place of rest and recompense, whereas earth is a place of trial and discipline. But there is this startling fact that the only sinless Being the world ever saw "learned obedience by the things which He suffered." Don't then say in the case of a given sufferer "Here is the wrath of God," for the varied forms of affliction are often Divine appliances for testing our principles, developing our graces and practising our virtues. III. PERSONAL SUFFERING IS SOMETIMES FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS, that their patience may be disciplined, their sympathy elicited, their character get its necessary training. It was so in the case of Lazarus—"I am glad I was not there," &c. But some may ask, "What is to become of the people who bear the cross that others may have these opportunities?" Leave them with God. He has a vast universe and long ages to recompense them in. Jesus wore a crown of thorns, how glad to-day He is that He wore it! Mary and Martha were glad after he was raised that their brother died. Look at some of the sorrows of life. Why do the thorns grow? That you may have to pull them up and get improvement of character from the weeding. Why are children born ignorant and helpless? That you may care for them and teach them. Why do accidents happen? That you may minister. (*C. Vince.*) *Our proper attitude towards mysteries*:—Before a confessed and unconquerable difficulty (such as the origin and extent of evil) my mind reposes as quietly as in possession of a discovered truth. (*T. Arnold, D.D.*) *Origin of evil*:—Wise men will regard the entrance of evil as a man views a fire already begun in his house: it is too late to ask "How came this?" or "Where did the fire begin?" His single question will be, how he and his family and property can be secured. (*R. Cecil, M.A.*) *Christ and the blind man*:—1. We may learn from it to abstain from those superficial and dogmatic judgments on human life which, seeming to honour God with ready explanations of evil, really dishonour Him, and which are often cruelly unjust to men. Evil is in the world, and man is sinful as well as unfortunate. Wickedness works wretchedness, and penalty follows iniquity as echo follows voice, or pain the incision of the knife. But not all pains are punishments. Let despairing as well as cynical doubt be silent. Great as sin is, God is greater. Where sin abounds, grace superabounds. This is not the devil's world, but God's. 2. Let us learn that the supreme business of life is unselfish service, and that the time for service is now. 3. Let us learn the wisdom and power of Jesus' method in reaching men. He authenticates Himself to men by His works as well as by His word—not merely by miraculous works, but by works that are Divine in their goodness. The Healer and Helper of men thus convincingly justifies His claim of Divine kinship. Bring men face to face with Jesus; then they too, like the blind man who was healed, will at last say, "Lord, I believe," and their faith will express itself in homage and service. 4. Finally, let us learn the true nature of faith. Faith is not mere credulity, it is an attitude and an act of the soul. Its object is not a proposition, but a person. It reposes not on greatness or power alone, but on goodness. (*History, Prophecy, and Gospel.*) *The blind man's eyes opened; or, practical Christi-*

anity:—Observe how little disconcerted our Lord was by the most violent enmity. Almost the moment after He had escaped stoning, He paused before and healed the blind man. One of His most noticeable characteristics was His marvellous calmness in the presence of His foes. The reasons were—1. He was never elated by the praise of men. 2. His unbroken communion with the Father. 3. His heart was so set upon His work that He would not be turned from it. Note—I. THE WORKER—a well-earned title. 1. There are many who ignore sorrow. The easiest thing to do with wicked London is not to know much about it. There are sights which might melt a heart of steel and make a nabob generous. But it is an easy way of escaping from the exercise of benevolence to shut your eyes. It is not so with Jesus. He has a quick eye to see the blind beggar if He sees nothing else. 2. There are others who see misery but instead of diminishing it, increase it by cold logical conclusions. Poverty they say is brought on by drunkenness, laziness, &c. Sickness is caused by wicked habits and neglect of sanitary laws. This may be true, but don't teach it till you are ill yourself. The disciples held this view and Job's comforters. Cheap moral observations steeped in vinegar make a poor dish for an invalid. But Christ "Upbraided not." 2. Others, who if not indifferent or cruel to sorrow, speculate where speculation is worthless. There is the question of the origin of evil. Such was the subject here proposed—foreseen guilt or hereditary taint? The master breaks up the fine speculation by practical service. "Father," said a boy, "the cows are in the corn. How ever did they get in?" "Boy," said the father, "never mind how they got in, let us hurry to get them out." Postpone the inquiries till after the day of judgment, just now our business is to get evil out of the world. A man saw a boy drowning and lectured him on the imprudence of bathing out of his depth. Let us rescue him and tell him not to go there again. 3. In this non-speculating, kind, helpful spirit, let us imitate the Master. What have we done to bless our fellow-men? But if Jesus be such a worker what hope there is for us who need His services! II. THE WORKROOM. Every worker needs a place to work in. Christ selected the fittest place, 1. One of the works of God is creation, and if Jesus is to perform it He must find out where something is missing which He can supply. The blind man gave occasion for Christ to give sight. If there is anything wanting in you there is room for Christ to work; if you are perfect there is no room. 2. This man's ignorance required almighty aid. God can not only create, He can illuminate. This man was as dark in mind as in body. He did not know the Son of God. Is that your case? Are you converted? Then there is space in you for Christ to work by converting grace. If you were not lost, you could not be saved. 3. All affliction may be regarded as affording opportunity for the mercy work of God. Whenever you see a man in trouble, do not blame him and ask how he came there, but say "He is an opening for God's almighty love." And do not kick at or be cast down by your own afflictions, regard them as openings for mercy, and the valley of Achor shall be a door of hope. Sin itself makes room for God's mercy. How could the unspeakable gift have been bestowed if there had been no sinners. III. THE WORK BELL. You hear in early morning a bell which arouses the workers from their beds. Christ's work-bell was the sight of the blind man. Then he said "I must work." The man had not said anything, but his sightless eyeballs spoke eloquently to the heart of Jesus. 1. Why must He work? Because—(1) He had come all the way from heaven on purpose. (2) He had inward impulses which forced Him to work. 2. Let us learn this lesson. Wherever we see suffering, feel "I must work." 3. What a blessing if you want to be saved to know that there is an impulse on Jesus to save! IV. THE WORK DAY. 1. This is meant of our Lord's earthly life. There was a certain day on which He could bless men, and that over He would be gone. He occupied thirty years in getting ready for it, and then in three years it was done. And how much He crowded into them! Some of us have had thirty years of work and have done very little; what if we have only three more. If we omit any part of our life work we can never make up the omission. No appendix is possible to the book of life. 2. If our Lord was so diligent to bless men while here, He is not less diligent now. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 4. **I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day.**—When the Master (Him who sent) who has entrusted a task to the worker gives the signal, the latter must continue to work as long as the hours of labour last. This signal Jesus had just recognized; and even though it was the Sabbath He could not delay obeying it till to-morrow. He might perhaps at this moment have been contemplating the sun descending towards the horizon. "When the night comes" said He, "the workman's labour ceases. My work is to enlighten the world as the sun

does; but in a short time I, like him, shall disappear, and my work will cease. Hence I have not a moment to lose." (*F. Godet, D.D.*) 1. Nothing could discourage Christ from doing His work (Luke xiii. 32). 2. All Christ's works were the works of God (chap. iv. 34; v. 30–36; vi. 38; Luke xxii. 42). 3. Christ was obliged to do what He did—"I must." (1) Not as God (Phil. ii. 6); but (2) as man. (3) As Mediator (chap. v. 30). 4. Christ had His time limited wherein to do His work (Acts ii. 23). 5. Christ in that time did finish His work (chap. xvii. 4). Which was—(1) To demonstrate Himself to be what He was (chap. x. 25). (*a*) The Son of God. (*b*) Sent from the Father (chap. v. 36). (*c*) The true Messiah (chap. xx. 31). (2) To redeem mankind from sin (Acts iii. 26), and misery (1 Thess. i. 10). Than be thankful to Christ and love Him (1 Cor. xvi. 22); believe in Him (chap. iii. 16; imitate Him (1 Cor. xi. 1). I. WE OUGHT TO DO THE WORKS OF HIM THAT SENT US. 1. Works of piety (1 Cor. vi. 20). (1) Loving God (Matt. xxii. 37). (2) Trusting on Him (Prov. iii. 5). (3) Submitting to Him (1 Sam. iii. 18; Luke xxii. 42). (4) Fearing Him (Isa. viii. 13). (5) Rejoicing in Him (Phil. iv. 4). Thanking the Father for our creation; believing the Son for our redemption; hearkning to the Spirit for our sanctification. 2. Works of equity to our neighbours (1) so as to wrong none (Levit. xix. 11–13). (2) So as to help all (Gal. vi. 10). 3. Works of charity to the poor (1 Tim. vi. 17–19). (1) Obediently to God's command. (2) Proportionably to our means (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, 17). 4. Works of sobriety. (1) Keeping the flesh under (1 Cor. ix. 27). (2) And so mortifying all our sins (Gal. iii. 5). II. WE ARE TO DO THESE WORKS WHILE IT IS DAY. 1. What is meant by day? (1) The time of life (Job. xiv. 6). (2) The time of grace (Luke xix. 42). (3) The present time (Psa. xcv. 7; Heb. iii. 7). 2. "Why should we do these works presently." Consider—(1) How much time has been spent in vain. (2) How uncertain you are—(*a*) Of life (Isa. ii. 22). (*b*) Of your senses and reason (Dan. iv. 32, 33). (*c*) Of the gospel (Rev. ii. 5). (*d*) Of the motions of God's Spirit (Gen. vi. 3). 3. The longer you procrastinate the harder it will be. 4. You cannot do it in the world to come (Eccles. ix. 10). 5. You are in continual danger till the work be done. 6. Objections. (1) I'll consider it—it is not a thing to be considered but to be done. (2) When my present business is over I'll begin (Matt. vi. 33)—all other business must give way to this. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Day and night*:—To speak of life and death as day and night is so natural that one does not think of it as a metaphor. Every man has his day. One longer, another shorter; one bright, another shaded and even stormy. Then night falls perhaps suddenly, as in the tropics, where there is no twilight; perhaps with a gentle descent as in the north or south. I. THE BREVITY OF THE DAY. Christ would impress us with the value of time and opportunity and to lay out our short day to good account. How brief His was, yet in calm trust He worked on and found it long enough in which to finish His work; and the Jews with all their craft could not shorten it by one hour. II. THE WORK OF THE DAY. Christ's was to open the blind man's eyes. In this we cannot follow Him, but in the general direction and use of life we must. 1. We must work in order to live. Idlers are few, and are not to be envied. Jesus did not claim exemption from this rule. In his obscurity at Nazareth He earned the plain bread of a carpenter's table, and afterwards only accepted the ministrations of others as a recognition of His public work. Thus He would have us industrious in our daily callings. 2. Our first work is to believe on Him (chap. vi. 28, 29). This excludes working for justification. Our good works cannot obliterate our misdeeds. Divine grace is our only refuge. Yet this must not be turned into a bed of sloth. The law said—Do and live! The gospel says—Live and do! 3. There is the obligation to do good unto all men, &c. The care of our own spiritual life is apt to become morbid unless accompanied by unselfish exertion for others. III. FOR ALL THERE IS BUT A DAY. The time is long enough for the work but too short to allow trifling. It is well when men begin early. Alas, some are no more than morning Christians. They promise well in childhood, but as morning passes on to noon they fall away (Hosea. vi. 4). Others postpone their religion till the evening. This is to run a dreadful risk, for the night may come suddenly; and even if they do find time it is a poor homage to God to offer the dregs of life. IV. DAY IS FOLLOWED BY NIGHT. In western countries, through the exigencies of trade, night is often turned into day. But in the East when the sun goes down work closes (Psa. civ. 20–23). Here part of the thought is that rest follows toil. How welcome is night to those who have spent a long and busy day, when "He gives His beloved sleep." But this night is brief and is only a prelude to the eternal morning. (*D. Fraser, D.D.*) *The day and its toil*:—1. The works of God

mean (1) such as are God appointed. Christ wrought as one in possession of a chart, each hour charged with its special commission. Hence the speed and certainty with which each work was done. Amidst all the multiplicity of His activities He never hesitates, recalls a step, or regrets it, "Faithful to Him that appointed Him," during these long years of self-repression at Nazareth, and up to the time when He died at the moment the Father had appointed. (2) Such as are God revealing. There is not an act that is not in some way reflective of God or contributive to our knowledge of God, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," and every relation and step adds its own special touch to the picture. His miracles of mercy tell something of the Father's love; His miracles of judgment of the Father's wrath. The Cross discloses every attribute of the Father at once. 2. Making allowance for the difference of power and vocation, the works of the servant should possess the same twofold character as those of the master. Here we have the Christian theory of work. Much is said about work now-a-days. But work for work's sake is a doubtful evangel to preach. Inactivity has its sins, but so has work. Some work till they are carnalized. Wrong work may be done, and right work wrongly. Let us illustrate the rule as it runs through a threefold relationship. (1) Toward the world our work should be—(*a*) God assigned. Our daily callings, however worldly or menial, can be conscientiously regarded as the appointment of God. But here inclination, parental wishes, advantageous prospects, &c. often hold sway. There are few things more critical than the choice of a profession, and one may miss one's way grievously. But let us feel "This is the task appointed me," and then we may regard it as sacred, and among the works of Him who hath sent us. (*b*) God revealing. Your faithfulness will be a miniature of Him who is faithful in all things; your punctuality will be God-like because a reflection of Him who is true to His promises; your patience under business provocations will resemble His longsuffering, who is slow to wrath; your conscientiousness will be the reflection of Him who never begins but He finishes. Nor will any vocation be too mean for this. from the statesman down to the shop lad the principle is the same. (2) Towards the Church. Our works—(*a*) Must be God appointed. "But," some say, "I have no special sphere in the Church. Beyond the fact that I avail myself of its privileges Church life has no interest for me. What was assigned to me as my work I found unsuitable or too taxing." The excuse will hardly pass muster. Christ "is as one taking a far journey, and left His house, and gave every man his work." That house is the Church. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a husbandman who went out . . . to hire labourers for his vineyard." That vineyard is the Church; and it can scarcely be argued that they who enjoy the shelter of the one and the fruits of the other can absolve themselves from the duty of serving in them. More generous and consistent is the spirit which says, "Give me some door to keep, some plot to till. Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (*b*) When once we feel our work God appointed we shall try to make it God revealing in its thoroughness, for the God we represent is a God of order; in its perseverance because we testify to a God who faints not, neither is weary; in its humility, not losing interest in a work because others are preferred in it, realizing that I bear witness to a God who "humbled Himself." (3) Towards your personal life and the care and culture it demands. Pre-eminently is this task the appointment of God, for His will concerning us is our sanctification: and pre-eminently, too, is the task a revelation of God "for herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." II. THE MOTIVE. If Christ kept before Him a coming night much more should we. For Christ knew the length of His day, and could have told how many hours were left, but we are ignorant here. We know what lies behind, and how we have cheated ourselves with purposes and dreamings, but we cannot cheat time. With some the freshness and dew of the morning have given place to the burden and dust of the mid-day; with some that is succeeded by a grey and monotonous afternoon; while others are passing on amidst the frosts and dreariness of the fast falling twilight. And the thought may never have been faced, yet "the night is coming to me." What shall we say to these things? "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," &c. (*W. A. Gray.*)

Work:—A speculative question was put to Christ, and this is His answer, "You may think, talk, argue, I must work." The Saviour has a greater respect for work than for speculation. I. A NECESSITY TO LABOUR. With Christ it was not "I may if I will," "I can if I like," but "I must." The cords which bound Him, however, were the cords of duty—the cords of love bound Him who is love. 1. It was because He loved them so well that He could not sit down still and see them perish. 2. The sorrow without compelled Him. That blind

man had touched the secret chord that set His soul on work. 3. He had come into this world with an aim that was not to be achieved without work; and therefore He must work because He desired to achieve His end. The salvation of the many the Father had given Him; the finding of the lost sheep, &c.—He *must* accomplish all this. 4. Do we feel that we must work? (1) There are those who feel that they must be fed. (2) There are others who feel that they must find fault. (3) Others who will dodge anyhow to get off any task. Do be a Christian or else give up being called one! (4) But some must work. Why? To be saved? No; but because they are saved and Christ's love constrains them to save others. II. A SPECIALITY OF WORK. There are plenty who say, "I must work" to get rich, to support a family, to become famous. Christ did not pick or choose. He worked the "works," not some but all, whether of drudgery or honour, suffering or relief from suffering, prayer or preaching. It is easy to work our own works, even in spiritual things, but difficult to be brought to this "I must work," &c. Many think it their business to preach who had much better hear a little longer. Others think their work the headship of a class, whereas they would be useful in giving away tracts. Our prayer should be, "Show me in particular what Thou wouldst have me to do." All Christians have not yet learned that each is personally to do the will of Him that sent him. We cannot work by proxy. III. A LIMITATION OF TIME. Christ the immortal says this. If any one could have postponed work it was He. Work—1. While it is day to you. Some days are very short. Young brother or sister, your sun may go down ere it reaches noon. Mother, if you knew you had only another month, how you would pray with your children! So Sunday-school teacher. 2. While it is day with the objects of your care. You will not have the opportunity of speaking to some in London to-morrow, for they will die to-night. With some their "day" is brief although they may live long; it is only the one occasion when they go to a place of worship, when there is sickness in the house and the missionary enters, when a Christian comes across their path. IV. A REMEMBRANCER OF OUR MORTALITY. "The night cometh." You cannot put it off, however much you may dread it. It comes for the pastor, missionary, father, mother, &c. The warrior who loses a battle may yet live to win the campaign; the bankrupt may yet be rich; but if you lose the battle of life you shall never have it to fight again, and bankruptcy in spiritual service is bankruptcy for ever. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The work of life*:—Note—I. THAT TO EVERY MAN A WORK IS GIVEN. What is it? 1. Negatively: Not—(1) business; (2) pleasure; (3) learning—however important these may be relatively. 2. Positively: to "work out our own salvation," &c. This is a work—(1) Of repentance; (2) of faith; (3) of obedience. 3. Without Christ in this great work we can do nothing; but His grace is sufficient for us. II. THAT A PERIOD OF TIME IN WHICH THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS WORK MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED IS ASSIGNED TO EVERY MAN. Within the day of life there are days specially favourable. 1. The day of youth. 2. The day of health. 3. The day of religious opportunity. 4. The day of spiritual influence. III. THAT AT THE EXPIRATION OF THE ALLOTTED SEASON THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS WORK IS IMPOSSIBLE. "The night cometh"—1. Of affliction. 2. Of religious abandonment. 3. Of death—"when no man can work." (*J. Bowers.*) *Work, and work rightly*:—It is not enough to work, we must work in the right way. To do this—I. WE MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE WORK, and since it is Divine, by God Himself. It is not by might nor by power, physical or intellectual. There is no tendency in the unconverted to seek the Father's glory, and therefore we must be regenerated by the Spirit. Excitement may press us into the field, an anxious feeling may give us a momentary energy, but a few cold blasts from the world, and a little of the irksomeness of the task will soon extinguish the flame and drive us from the field. II. WE MUST WORK WITH ALL OUR HEART. God's demand is not "Give me thy body or thine intellect" but "thy heart." Half-heartedness in His cause is an abomination in His sight. God will not have a man swing between the world and Himself, halting between two opinions. And surely the character of the Master, the nature of the work and its reward, are enough to engage the energies of the whole soul. III. WE MUST WORK EXPECTING SUCCESS. We are not to imagine that we embark on an impossibility; if we do we shall lose nerve and fail in application. We must be buoyed up by the conviction that God will bless us in our labour of love. This He pledges Himself to do, and this should stimulate us, especially when we remember that success means the salvation of souls, and that God has granted this to other labourers. IV. WE MUST WORK AND NOT BE ASHAMED OF IT. There is a good deal of cowardice in religious work which contrasts strangely with the courage we

display in business, &c. And yet if manliness be demanded in anything it is in this. We are to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, witnesses for God, and are to act in capacities where boldness is the one thing needful. And what is there to be ashamed of?—the Master? the work? the fellow-workmen? the reward? Remember—1. The object you have in view. Would you be ashamed to awaken the sleeper in the burning house, to cry to the foundering sailor to grasp the rope? 2. That if you are ashamed of Christ here, He will be ashamed of you at the Judgment. V. WE MUST WORK THOUGH WE SEE NO PROSPECT OF SUCCESS. Duty is ours, results are God's. But we have room for encouragement, for the unlikeliest field has often become the most prolific. Remember Mary Magdalene, the dying thief, Saul of Tarsus. But, whatever the likelihood or otherwise of success, we must work. We must realize that we are our brother's keeper, and not wait to inquire about his characteristics, but acquaint him with his want and bring the supply. If he rejects it that is his responsibility, not ours. VI. WE MUST WORK HARD—1. Because the adversary is active. 2. Because our time is drawing to a close. (*J. McConnell Hussey, D.D.*) *The Divine dignity of work*:—Like Jesus—I. WE HAVE EACH OUR MISSION. We are Divinely sent. It is by no act of ours that we are here, by no migration from a pre-existent life, still less did we construct this abode of ours. Yet here we are on the theatre of this particular world, and as its lords to replenish and subdue it, but confined to it. Whence have we this range, so large and yet so defined? Because we have a definite mission, which missed or marred, the result is tragic. II. WE HAVE EACH A PRACTICAL MISSION. We are sent to "work." There are some nobles who are sent on mere missions of pageantry or pleasure; one as ambassador, to gratify at some refined court his taste for music and the fine arts. Another, fond of travel, contrives in this way to see classic or romantic lands. But man's mission from the King of kings is sternly practical. Had he kept his first estate it would have been so, for work is Divine and older than the fall. All legitimate work is—1. Productive. Other is not so—the thief, *e.g.*, the marauding conqueror, the publican. But the mechanic, merchant, explorer, &c., are productive, whether of food, comforts, wealth, or knowledge, which is power. 2. Ennobling, directly contributing to the decencies and moralities of life as may be seen when we contrast the condition of the poorest in this city with that of the savage. The Jews had an excellent proverb: "He that has not learned to work, is brother to him that is a thief." From this let every man learn to honour productive and useful work wherever found. Let not the operative refuse the name of workman to the thinker, because the fabric of his thoughts cannot be seen; for our manufactures, buildings, machines are but the vesture of previous thought. And let not the non-manual class look down on the brawny arm and horny hand! for they are the solid basis of the social pyramid. III. WE HAVE A MISSION TO DIVINE AND GOD-LIKE WORKS. 1. Our daily callings, if they are honest and honourable, and done inside our Father's vineyard, and for Him, and not outside the sacred ground as done for man merely or self. "I have not time to serve God" was once said to an evangelist. "God wants no more of your time than you give to the devil," was the reply. 2. The more special works God has laid upon us in the culture of personal religion and in the works of philanthrophy. We need but read the context to find out what works Christ meant, such works as are grouped in the formula, "He went about doing good." 3. The bulk of these works is individually not great but little. The entire pyramid of human progress is made up of littles. The vast ocean is made up of drops, and the great globe of atoms; and just so in the intellectual, moral, and spiritual world life is made up of little duties. Great and brilliant services are possible only to a few, and in rare emergencies, and weighed against the ordinary, they are but of small account. What keeps the world moving is not the great deeds of kings, conquerors, &c., but the brave, patient, prayerful work of fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, &c. 4. In order to these little works being good works there is a previous work, viz., believing in Jesus and being reconciled to God. IV. WE HAVE A MISSION THAT IS URGENT. 1. Beware of the many things that seek to rob us of one day. 2. Time lost can never be retrieved. 3. Time is inestimably precious for all our interests, but infinitely more as involving our eternity. 4. Flee to Jesus without delay, for "now is the accepted time," &c. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The benefit of work*:—In seeking others' good we achieve good ourselves. I know of no way to get rid of a good deal of the prevalent dulness and drowsiness and spiritual *ennui* with which many Christians are afflicted than by shaking it off like cobwebs and going to work. Work is the pre-requisite of growth, and exercise of health and development.

When good people tell me about being in a saddened condition, and confess to spiritual stagnation, it does not seem wonderful at all. The man who does not work has no right to expect anything but distrust, dissatisfaction, and ultimate degradation, and he will get it. For any Christian man to suppose that he is simply a sanctified sponge, to continuously absorb the light and life of others and grow, is sheer nonsense. He will by and by rot! He will not be able to keep even with salt. If you would be healthily developed, work. If there is a single organ in the body that is weak, use it well, and strength will come to it. So with regard to your spiritual life. There is no such beneficent arrangement for spiritual growth, like the effort to prove a blessing to mankind. (*Family Churchman.*) *The work of life*—I. OUR HEAVENLY FATHER SENT US INTO THIS WORLD TO DO HIS WORK AND TO LIVE FOR HIS GLORY. We are bidden to "replenish the earth and subdue it"; fill it, that is, with all things right and good, and bound to do our best to make ourselves and all men more like the true image of the Holy God, and to leave the world better than we found it. II. OUR LIFE ON EARTH IS AS A DAY, AND NO MORE THAN A DAY. It has its morning, for preparation; its sunny hours, for labour; its evening, for meditation; and then the night cometh, when all is over. Life is but as a day; no more. Wherefore it is folly and madness to indulge ourselves in the fancy that we have time to loiter, a time to be idle. No. The longest day is short enough for all that a wise man wishes to put into it; and the longest life is not too long to spend in the earnest seeking after God. For the soul of man is like some primeval forest, which contains in itself a glorious fertility, and an almost boundless capacity for bearing fruitful harvests for the careful tiller of the soil; but until it is tilled and tended, it is but the haunt of wild beasts—it is but a rank, dark, silent, wilderness, where the ranker and more noxious the weed, the stronger and ruder is its growth; but if the brave husbandman begins to labour, if the sun of heaven shines through the sullen gloom, and the winds of God blow softly through the branches, and the watchful eye seeks out the poisonous plants, and the careful hand fosters the fruitful soil, then, by and by, but only after a long time of travail, the wilderness and the solitary place will be glad, and the desert will rejoice and blossom as the rose. (*A. Jessop, D.D.*) *Earnest views of life:*—Christian earnestness has for its elements—I. A CONSCIENTIOUS ESTIMATE OF THE WORTH OF TIME. Life is not a day too long. Go into the Mint, and you will find the gold-room constructed with double floors. The upper one acts like a sieve, and the lower one catches and retains the infinitesimal particles of gold which are sifted through. Every human life needs some such contrivance for the economy of fragments of time. Lord Nelson said: "I have always been fifteen minutes before the time, and it has made a man of me." Napoleon said: "Remember, that every lost moment is a chance of future misfortune." Sir Walter Scott, when asked what was the secret of the marvellous fertility of his pen, replied: "I have always made it a rule never to be doing nothing." An intruder upon the morning study hours of Baxter apologized: "Perhaps I interrupt you." Baxter answered rudely, but honestly: "To be sure you do." The spirit of such men, refined by Christian culture, is the spirit with which, in the Christian view of life, time is to be valued. Every life is made of moments; a kingdom could not purchase one of them. An earnest man will often reckon time as if he were on a death-bed. There are hours in every man's life in which the tick of a watch is more thrilling to an earnest spirit than the roll of thunder. There come moments in which the beat of a pulse is more awful than the roar of Niagara. II. ABSTINENCE FROM FRIVOLITY OF SPEECH. Do we adequately revere the sacredness of language? All nations have a tradition that it came down from heaven. We all have respect for a man of reticent speech. If a man talks twaddle, there is more hope of a fool than of him. The Scriptures pronounce him a great man who can rule his own spirit; but the chief element in that power is the power to govern his tongue. Many times one word has saved life. Peace and war between rival nations have often trembled in scales which the utterance of one word has decided. A certain man attributed his salvation to one word in a sermon preached by Whitefield. "A word spoken in season, how good is it!" There are men who specially need to correct the overgrowth of risibility in their habits. They make a pet of frivolous speech. There are men whose reputation for levity was so great that their very rising in a public assembly set going a ripple of laughter before they had opened their lips. There are worse things in the world than a laugh, but no earnest man will make a business of it. Men of frivolous tongue are apt to have a frisky intellect. That is worse than St. Vitus's dance. A certain

nervous disease relaxes the risible muscles from control, and gives to the countenance the smile of idiocy. So are there certain minds which by habitual levity of tongue become morally idiotic. They cannot think intensely, nor feel profoundly. In God's estimate of things, what must be the verdict when such a debilitated mind is weighed in the balances! What must be the ending of such an impoverished and wasted life? "The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips." III. THE CONSECRATION OF LIFE TO GREAT DESIGNS. Aurungzebe, an Indian prince, had lived, as other Oriental monarchs do, in selfish and sensual indulgences. In a farewell letter to his son he says: "I came a stranger into the world, and a stranger I go out of it. I know nothing about myself, what I am or what is my destiny. My life has been passed vainly, and now the breath which rose is gone, and has left not even a hope behind." This is in every respect just what the Christian idea of life is not. A Christian life in its true conception is a great and a good one. It is devoted to objects worthy of a man. Dr. Arnold expresses it in brief when he says: "I feel more and more the need of intercourse with men who take life in earnest. It is painful to me to be always on the surface of things. Not that I wish for much of what is called religious conversation. That is often apt to be on the surface. But I want a sign which one catches by a sort of masonry, that a man knows what he is about in life. When I find this, it opens my heart with as fresh a sympathy as when I was twenty years younger." One of the merchant princes of Philadelphia made it a rule to build at his own cost one church every year. When he began his career he was a mechanic, engaged in making trinkets. But one day the thought came to him: "This is a small business; I am manufacturing little things, and things useless to the world." It was no sin, but it did not seem to him a man's work. It made him restless till he changed his trade, and became as expert in the manufacture of locomotives as he had been before in that of earrings and gewgaws. The Christian spirit in the very germ of it is essentially a great spirit, an ambitious spirit, which is not content till it identifies life with great and commanding objects. It puts into a man the will to do, and so develops in him the power to do grand things, in which the doing shall be as grand as the thing done. Christianity has bestowed on the world a magnificent gift in the single principle of the dignity of labour. It is a sublime thing to work for one's living. To do well the thing a man is created for is a splendid achievement. A rich fool once said to a rising lawyer: "I remember the time when you had to black my father's boots, sir." "Did I not do them well?" was the reply, and it spoke inborn greatness. Our Lord disclosed the same spirit when in His early boyhood He said: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Every Christian young man has his Father's business to attend to, and he is not a full-grown man till he gets about it. IV. THE RESOLVE TO GIVE LIFE TO THE SAME OBJECTS FOR WHICH CHRIST LIVED. Trades and professions, and recreations even, can be made Christ-like. He was a mistaken and untrained Christian who gave up a large practice at the bar, because, he said, a man could not be a Christian lawyer. A man can be a Christian in anything that is necessary to the welfare of mankind. Everything in this world belongs to Christ, and can be used for Him. One of the humblest of the mechanical trades has been glorified by the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was a carpenter. Making money is a Christian thing, if a man will do it in Christian ways. If it is some men's duty to be poor, it is other men's duty to be rich. Both should identify life with Christ's life. This was Paul's ambition: "To me to live is Christ." Let a man once get thoroughly wrought into and through his whole being the fact that this world is to be converted to Jesus Christ, and that his own business here is to work into line with God's enterprize in this thing, and he cannot help realizing in his own person the Christian theory of living. He will meditate on it, he will study it, he will inform himself about it, he will talk of it, he will work for it, he will dream of it, he will give his money to it, if need be he will suffer for it and die for it. Such a life of active thoughtful sympathy with Christ will make a man of anybody. No matter who or what he is, no matter how poor, how ignorant, how small in the world's esteem, such a life will make him a great man. Angels will respect him. God will own him. (*A. Phelps, D.D.*) *Two ways of lengthening life*:—An eminent divine suffering from a chronic disease, consulted three physicians, who declared, on being questioned by the sick man, that his disease would be followed by death in a shorter or longer time, according to the manner in which he lived; but they unanimously advised him to give up his office, because, in his situation, mental agitation would be fatal to him. "If I give myself to repose," inquired the divine,

"how long will you guarantee my life?" "Six years," answered the doctors. "And if I should continue in office?" "Three years at most." "Thank you, gentlemen," he replied; "I should prefer living two or three years in doing some good to living six in idleness." (*Whitecross.*) *The spur:*—I. THE GREAT MASTER WORKER. 1. He takes His own share in the work, "I." How encouraging! It is enough for the general if he directs the battle, but Jesus fought in the ranks. As the great Architect He supervises all, yet He helps to build the Spiritual Temple with His own hands. It made Alexander's soldiers valiant, because, when they were wearied with long marches, he dismounted and walked with them; and if a river had to be crossed in the teeth of opposition, foremost amidst all the risk was the general. 2. He laid great stress on the gracious work which was laid upon Him. There were some things He would not do—dividing inheritances, &c. But when it came to the work of blessing souls, this He must do, and He did it with all His might. The unity of His purpose was never broken. 3. He rightly describes this work as the work of God. If ever there was one who might have taken the honour to himself it was Jesus; yet He ever says, "The Father doeth the works." He sets us the example of confessing that whatever we do God does it and should have the glory. 4. He owned His true position. He had not come forth on His own account. He was not here as a principal, but as a subordinate, an ambassador sent by the king. God gave Him a commission and the grace to carry it out. 5. He threw a hearty earnestness into the work He undertook. Though sent, the commission was so genial to His nature that He worked with all the alacrity of a volunteer. He was commissioned, but His own will was the main compulsion. 6. He clearly saw that there was a fitting time to work, and that this time would have an end. He called his lifetime a day: to show us that He was impressed with the shortness of it. Thou hast but a day—youth is the morning, manhood the noon, old age the evening. Be up and doing, for beyond that is night. But as with Christ, so with us. We cannot die till our day is over. II. OURSELVES AS WORKERS UNDER HIM. 1. On us there rests personal obligation. We are in danger of losing ourselves in societies and associations. The old histories are rich in records of personal daring. There is little of that now because fighting is done so much by masses and machinery. So our Christian work is in danger of getting mechanical, so much *en masse* that there is barely room for singular deeds of valour. Yet the success of the Church will lie in this last. Each man should feel "I have something to do for Christ which an angel could not do for me." 2. Our personal obligation compels us to just such work as Christ did. We are not called meritoriously to save souls, for He is the only Saviour, but we are called to enlighten them. This work must be done, whatever else is left undone. And how paltry is every other gain compared with that of a saved soul! We have our secular callings and ought to have them, but we have a high calling of God in Christ, and while other things may be this *must* be. 3. It is God's work we are called upon to do. What greater motive can we have than to have a Divine work and Divine strength to do it? Your mission is not less honourable than that of angels, and how blessed it is! How desperate the case of those we are sent to save, and how short the time in which to save them! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **The night cometh when no man can work.**—Although our Lord's ministry began late, it was marked by incessant activity. His disciples marvelled at it, and He accounts for it by the fact that He had much to do and but little time to do it in. This declaration is worth attention. It is not wise to dwell in a cold sense of death. Dying need not be gloomy; but life has a certain duration, and there is allotted to every man a certain round of duties; and as in a journey a man divides the distance into stages according to the time he has to accomplish it, so a man ought to look forward to death in order to accomplish in life the things that are to be done. The husbandman says, "If my ground does not receive the seed early in the spring, I shall have no harvest in the autumn. I know the measure of the summer and labour accordingly." I. I address THOSE WHO LIVE AIMLESS LIVES. Many of you will not live long, and yet there are incumbent upon you great duties toward God, man, yourselves. You may not be stained with vice; but there is great wrong done by every man who in life has no plan but that of idly floating out of one day into another. That is to surrender the dignity of life and to make yourselves like the gauzy ephemerides that float in the air. But you are not born to be insects, and however cheerful you may be you ought to answer the great questions: "What am I born for? how long have I to stay here?" II. I also address THOSE WHO ARE ALWAYS

INTENDING TO DO THE THINGS THEY ADMIRE. How many are saying, "When there is a more convenient season it is my purpose to reform." But no man is wise who does not say day by day, "What I do I must hasten to do, for life is not very long for me." For whatever you mean to do you have no time to spare. Putting off till prosperity is established is substantially putting off for ever. They who late in life attain to any considerable excellence are rare exceptions. Men usually plant in childhood the seeds which blossom and bear the fruits on which they feed in later years. III. IN THE SPIRIT OF THIS TEACHING MAN SHOULD MEASURE CERTAIN PRACTICAL DUTIES. 1. It is part of a Christian man's duty to make provision for his household. No man has a right to leave out of view the fact that he may be taken away, and when that is the case the bread-winner is gone. It is wicked therefore for a man, because he admires his wife and loves his children, to live beyond his means to gratify their tastes or whims. Where a man does this, when the collapse comes there is nothing but misery. 2. It is a Christian man's duty to secure the provision he has made. There are many men whose business is in such a state that if they were to die their affairs would be like a ship from whose rudder the pilot has been shot down. "Set thy house in order," then. Make your will, and have your affairs so straight that it will be easy to wind them up and dispose them according to your wishes. IV. THE SENTIMENT OF THE TEXT RULES IN THE RELIGIOUS SPHERE. 1. In personal spiritual growth. The time for the development of the graces, the acquisition of knowledge, the contraction of good habits is brief—make the most of it. 2. In Christian work. If you have anything to do for the poor, for the Church, for the world's purity and happiness, you have no time to lose. And yet how few, however active, are using the whole economy of their natures according to the power that is in them? (*H. W Beecher.*) *The night cometh*:—Therefore —I. DO NOT SET YOUR AFFECTIONS ON EARTHLY THINGS. Wealth, reputation, pleasure, &c., will then perish. You would not tie your earthly happiness to a flower that is to fade at sunset; and is it more reasonable for a being who is to live for ever to choose for his portion what must pass from his grasp whenever the sun of this short life goes down? II. DO NOT REPINE AND LOSE HEART AMID YOUR CARE AND SORROWS. The occasions of these last only for life's little day, and dark as that day may be, it will drag through at last. And sweet as is the evening hour of rest for the labourer, that is nothing to the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Let this prospect infuse courage and hope to endure our loss and to bear our cross. III. DO NOT WEARY OF YOUR DUTIES. Some of them are delightful enough, but others are burdensome; but the time is coming when both will be laid aside and the reward bestowed. IV. WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION, for that can only be accomplished during the day. And who knows how many hours remain and what accident may not cut it short? (*A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.*) *The night cometh*:—There is a difference between the ancient Oriental and the modern Occidental idea of night, owing to the comparative security of life and property in modern times. In the ancient East (and it is so still in the modern East), the man who camped outside of the city walls was liable to attack from prowling Bedouins, from professional thieves, and from wild animals; while he who slept within city walls hardly dared to venture out of doors by night, for fear of the troops of half-savage dogs that scoured through the narrow streets, fighting each other for the offal which they found there. The darkness was also the time when evil spirits had most power: Lilith, the female demon, and Asmodai, and other evil spirits, hid in dark places during the day; but during the night they issued forth to prey upon mankind. A certain trace of this same feeling is seen in the evil epithets applied to night by the classical writers. The night is "terrible," "destructive." To these writers, as well as to the Orientals, the night was the time of peril and of enforced cessation from work. To us, night is the period of repose and safety. (*S. S. Times.*) *Diligence in the work of religion*:—I. THERE IS A WORK ALLOTTED TO EVERY MAN TO BE PERFORMED WHILE HE LIVES IN THE WORLD. 1. As he is a member of the body politic, he is obliged to contribute his proportion of help to the public as sharing the benefits of society. 2. As he is a subject of a spiritual kingdom, he is to pursue the interest of his salvation. He is sent into this world to make sure of a better. These two capacities are very different: by the former a man is to approve himself a good citizen; by the latter a good Christian. The former too is subordinate to the latter, and when it clashes with it must give way. According to these capacities there is a double work. 1. Temporal, by which a man is to fill some place in the commonwealth by the exer-

cise of some useful profession; and God, who has ordained society and order, accounts Himself served by each man's diligent pursuit, though of the meanest trade, and requires no man to be praying or reading when he ought to be hammering or sewing. The great Master is still calling upon all His servants to work: a thing so much disdained by the gallant and epicure, is yet the price which God and Nature has set upon every enjoyment (2 Thess. iii. 10). 2. Spiritual. This is threefold. (1) To make our peace with God. God is indeed reconciled by the satisfaction made by Christ, and peace is now offered, but upon conditions, viz., repentance and faith. (2) To get our sins mortified. For after we are transplanted into a state of grace, we are not to think that our work is wholly done. Every man has sinful habits with which he is to wage war, and this is the most afflicting part of his duty. (3) To get his heart replenished with the proper virtues of a Christian. Christianity ends not in negatives. No man clears his garden of weeds, but in order to the planting of flowers and herbs. And as every trade requires toil, so this. II. THE TIME OF THIS LIFE BEING EXPIRED, THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF PERFORMING THIS WORK. There is no repenting, believing, doing the works of charity in the grave. A day notes—1. The shortness of it. What is a day but a few minutes' sunshine, an indiscernable shred of that life which is itself but a span. God allows us but one day, which shows what value He puts on our opportunities by dispensing them so sparingly. Our life is a day's journey, therefore it concerns us to manage it so that we may have comfort at our journey's end. 2. Its sufficiency. A day, short as it is, equals the business of the day; and he that repents not during his short life would not were it prolonged five hundred years. 3. Its determinate limitation. As after a number of hours it will unavoidably be night, and there is no stopping the setting sun, so after we have passed such a measure of our time, our season has its period—we are benighted, and must bid adieu to our opportunities. III. THE CONSIDERATION OF THIS OUGHT TO BE THE MOST PRESSING ARGUMENT TO EVERY MAN TO USE HIS UTMOST DILIGENCE IN THE DISCHARGE OF THIS WORK. 1. The work is most difficult. It is "warfare," "wrestling," "resisting the devil," and "unto blood." "Agonizing" before the door is closed to enter in. Hard work, and little time to do it in. He that has far to go and much to do should rise early, and mate the difficulty of the business with the diligence of the prosecution. 2. It is necessary, in so far as it is necessary for a man to be saved; which argument will be heightened by comparing this necessity with the limitation of time. There is no to-morrow in a Christian's calendar. (*R. South, D.D.*) *Time cannot be lengthened out by man*:—As the light was fading away on the evening before the battle of Waterloo, Napoleon, pointing towards the setting sun, said, "What would I not give to be this day possessed of the power of Joshua—enabled to retard thy march for two hours!" (*J. Abbott.*) *The inevitableness of death*:—"The time is short"—or as we might perhaps render it, so as to give the full force of the metaphor, "the time is pressed together." It is being squeezed into narrower compass, like a sponge in a strong hand. There is an old story of a prisoner in a cell with contractile walls. Day by day his space lessens. He saw the whole of that window yesterday; he sees only half of it to-day. Nearer and nearer the walls are drawn together, till they meet and crush him between them. So the walls of our home, which we have made our prison, are closing in upon us. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The need of preparation for death*:—A young prince asked his tutor to give him some instruction about preparing for death. "Plenty of time for that when you are older," was the reply. "No," said the child; "I have been to the churchyard and measured the graves, and there are many shorter than I am." A courtier, who had passed his life in the service of his prince, having fallen dangerously ill, the prince went to visit him, accompanied by his other courtiers. He found him in an agony of suffering, and at the point of death. Touched with the sad spectacle, he said, "Is there anything I can do for you? Ask unhesitatingly, and fear not that you will be refused." "Prince," replied the sufferer, "in the sad situation in which you see me, I have but one thing to ask of you; give me a quarter of an hour of life." "Alas!" said the prince, "what you demand is not in my power to give; ask something else, if you wish me to aid you." "Oh, what!" said the dying man, "I have served you for fifty years, and you cannot give me a quarter of an hour of life! Ah! if I had served the Lord thus faithfully, He would have given me, not a quarter of an hour of life, but an eternity of happiness." Very soon after he died. Happy if he himself profited by the lesson which he gave to others on the nothingness of human life and the necessity of working out

one's own salvation. (*Ponder and Pray.*) *The folly of delay* :—After the battle of Chancellorsville, General Hooker, instead of quickly following up his victory with another attack, delayed it for a day. The golden moment was thus lost, and it never afterwards appeared to the same extent. Soldiers' legs have as much to do with winning great victories as their arms. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Definite workers* :—Generalities in religion are always to be avoided, more especially generalities in service. If a man waits upon you for a situation, and you say to him, "What are you?" if he replies, "I am a painter," or "a carpenter," you can find him work perhaps; but if he says, "Oh! I can do anything," you understand that he can do nothing. So it is with a sort of spiritual jobbers who profess to be able to do anything in the Church, but who really do nothing. I want my conscript brethren to-night to consider what they are henceforth going to do, and I beg them to consider it with such deliberation, that when once they have come to a conclusion that they will not need to change it, for changes involve losses. What can you do? What is your calling? Ragged schools? Sunday schools? Street preaching? Tract distribution? Here is a choice for you; which do you select? Waste no time, but say, "This is my calling, and by God's grace I will give myself up to it, meaning to do it as well as any man ever did do it." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Lost opportunities* :—"Ah! Mr. Hervey," said a dying man, "the day in which I ought to have worked is over, and I now see a horrible night approaching, bringing with it the blackness of darkness for ever. Woe is me! When God called, I refused. Now I am in sore anguish; and yet this is but the beginning of sorrows. I shall be destroyed with an everlasting destruction." *A motive for diligence* :—The old naturalists, who tell us a good many things which are not true, as well as some which are, say that the birds of Norway always fly more swiftly than any others, because the summer days are so short, and therefore they have so much to do in such a little time. Surely we should fly more swiftly to do our Lord's work if we would only meditate upon the fact that the day is so short, and that the night is so near at hand. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *All must work* :—"Oh! I could not do much," says one. Then do what you can. No one flower makes a garden, but altogether the fair blossoms of spring create a paradise of beauty. Let all the Lord's flowers contribute in their proportion to the beauty of the garden of the Lord. "But I am so unused to it." Then, my brother, that is a very powerful reason why you should do twice as much, so as to make up for your past idleness. "Oh! but I am afraid nothing would come of it." What has that to do with you? God has promised a blessing, and if the blessing should not come in your day, yet, if you have done what the Master bade you, you will not be blamed for want of success. "Sir," asks another, "will you give me some work to do?" "No, I will not; for if you are good for anything, you will find it for yourself." (*Ibid.*) *Work while it is day* :—In the Californian bee-pastures, on the sun-days of summer, one may readily infer the time of day from the comparative energy of bee-movements alone: drowsy and moderate in the cool of the morning, increasing in energy with the ascending sun, and at high noon thrilling and quivering in wild ecstasy, then gradually declining again to the stillness of night. Is it not, or should it not be, a picture of our life? (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Responsibility to God* :—Daniel Webster was present one day at a dinner-party given at Astor House by some New York friends, and, in order to draw him out, one of the company put to him the following question: "Would you please tell us, Mr. Webster, what was the most important thought that ever occupied your mind?" Mr. Webster merely raised his head, and passing his hand slowly over his forehead, said, "Is there any one here who doesn't know me?" "No, sir," was the reply; "we all know you, and are your friends." "Then," said he, looking over the table, "the most important thought that ever occupied my mind was that of my individual responsibility to God." Upon which subject he then spoke for twenty minutes. (*Ibid.*) *Work while it is day* :—When some one expostulated with Duncan Matheson, the evangelist, that he was killing himself with his labours, and ought to have rest, he replied: "I cannot rest while souls are being lost; there is all eternity in which to rest after life is done." (*Ibid.*) *Life a sphere of work* :—We are not sent into life as a butterfly is sent into summer, gorgeously hovering over the flowers, as if the interior spirits of the rainbow had come down to greet these kisses of the season upon the ground; but to labour for the world's advancement, and to mould our characters into God's likeness, and so, through toil and achievement, to gain happiness. I would rather break stones upon the road, if it were not for the disgrace of being in a chain gang, than to be one of those contemptible joy-mongers, who are so rich and so empty that they are

continually going about to find something to make them happy. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *We must work with our whole heart*:—It is one of the first and last qualifications of a good workman for God that he should put his heart into his work. I have heard mistresses tell servants when polishing tables that elbow-grease was a fine thing for such work; and so it is. Hard work is a splendid thing. It will make a way under a river, or through an Alp. Hard work will do almost everything; but in God's service it must not only be hard work, but hot work. The heart must be on fire. The heart must be set upon its design. See how a child cries! Though I am not fond of hearing it, yet I note that some children cry all over; when they want a thing, they cry from the tips of their toes to the last hair of their heads. That is the way to preach, and that is the way to pray, and that is the way to live: the whole man must be heartily engaged in holy work. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christians feel that they must work*:—When I have been unable to preach through physical pain, I have taken my pen to write, and found much joy in making books for Jesus; and when my hand has been unable to wield the pen, I have wanted to talk about my master to somebody or other, and I have tried to do so. I remember that David Brainerd, when he was very ill, and could not preach to the Indians, was found sitting up in bed, teaching a little Indian boy his letters, that he might read the Bible; and so he said, "If I cannot serve God one way, I will another. I will never leave off this blessed service." (*Ibid.*) *Work is healthful*:—On one occasion a neighbouring minister warned Dr. Morison, of Chelsea, that he was doing too much work. "Depend upon it," said Dr. Morison, "the lazy minister dies first." Six months afterwards he was sent for by his friendly monitor, and found him dying. "Do you remember what you once said to me?" inquired the dying man. Stunned by finding his words so vividly remembered at this time, he replied, "Oh, don't speak of that." "Yes, I must speak of it," said his friend. "It was the truth! Work, work while it is called day; for now the night is coming, when I cannot work." *Soul winning is our work*:—I like that expression of Mr. Wesley's preachers, when they were asked to interfere in this or that political struggle, they replied, "Our work is to win souls, and we give ourselves to it." Oh, that churches would listen to this just now! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *We must do God's work*:—There are men, there are women—men and women of high capacities, of great mental endowment—who, in every division of human thought and human labour, have furrowed their track deep in the fields of history. There are men, as you all know, of scientific attainments, who have been powerful in illuminating the meaning of the laws of God with regard to the physical creation before the minds of their fellow-men; men who have drawn out the secrets from this world, who have exposed to us the meaning of much that once we believed to be almost magical, and now is known to be only natural. There are men of historical power, who have been able to co-ordinate the various human motives and thoughts which have gone to form the springs of history, until they have succeeded, in part at least, in reading some of those general laws of our Great Creator, even in fields belonging not strictly to His divine revelation. There are, again, men of artistic faculties, who have been able—in throwing out thoughts upon canvas, which have startled us, sometimes with the beauty of execution, and always with the wonderful mystery of various colourings, combining into one picture before the eye—have been able, I say, thereby to exhibit to us things that all mankind, more or less, have dreamed of, but that all mankind found themselves incapable to express. There have been men—as you and I, who live in this great city, know—who, by the mere activity of their life, have left a very deep impress upon their generation. But, after all, when we turn to the Christian life, we have to acknowledge, even without the divine revelation, that all that kind of work, all that outcome of what is mere human activity, is not at all work in the sense in which Christ means it, as becoming and glorifying an immortal. Not at all! (*Knox Little.*) *We must do our work promptly*:—In the private journal of a lady in New York, recently deceased, were found these words: "I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow-creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." *To every man his work*:—We have all of us special endowments; each has got some place in the providential ordering of God; not one soul but has his or her place. God has given each a work. His will for you is to be measured by the capabilities that you have. Some have power of brain, some of heart, some of hand. Some can illuminate a quiet home by the tender brightness of a holy life; some can lead vast masses of their

fellow-creatures by a splendid example of energetic and determined fixity of purpose; some can think of God with peculiar depth and power in quiet times, when alone with Him. They can so meditate that the meditation of their soul is felt, rather than heard, by those who associate with them in life. Some can go forth into the great working world, and speak or do a work for God amongst those around them. But for each one, old or young—O loved of God! O child of Jesus! O turned to the Master with a whole heart and a loving determination!—for each, therefore for you, there is a special work in the history of this universe. (*Knox Little.*) *Signs of night:*—You will find within your breast the waning power of the exercise of influence you had in your home; you find the difficulty, more than ever, of fighting down some wretched habit for which not only do you want forgiveness, but which, too, you desire to conquer for the love of Jesus; you find, perhaps the witness of a failing memory, or of failing health; you find that in some way or other the finger of God is touching you. The world may not see it; friends may not read it; those who are dear to you may not tell it; but you know it—the witness, whatever it is, is come—is coming. It speaks to you in the silence of the night. It wakens with you when you waken in the morning; it travels with you as a settled consciousness, when you are going about the world; it is the whisper of that unrelenting law of unchanging changefulness—"the night is coming." (*Ibid.*) *The works of God:*—The utter restfulness which filled the heart of the Lord Jesus is beautifully manifested in the introductory verses of this chapter. I. THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH GOD'S WORKS ARE DONE. The phrase, "works of God," is a familiar one throughout this Gospel. To do them fed the Redeemer's soul (chap. iv. 34); they were in an ever ascending scale (chap. v. 20); they were of a certain definite number, given Him to finish (chap. v. 36); they were the signs and seals of His mission (chap. x. 38); they were not His own, but wrought through Him by the Father (chap. xiv. 10); they were unique in the history of the world (chap. xvi. 24); they were definitely finished ere He left it (chap. xvii. 4). But it becomes us to learn the conditions under which they were wrought, that we may be able to do those greater works of which He spoke. 1. His heart was at rest in God. Nature herself teaches the need of repose for the putting forth of her mightiest efforts. It is in the closet, the study, the cave, the woodland retreat that problems have been solved, resolves formed, and schemes matured. It is not possible for us all to have a life of outward calm. But beneath all the heart may keep its Sabbath. 2. He was specially endued with the Holy Spirit. 3. He was willing that the Father should work through Him. II. THE NEED FOR THESE WORKS. "A man blind from his birth." If there is need for the works of God to be manifested, we must be at hand, and willing at all costs to manifest them. If there is the opportunity for the glorifying of Christ, we must not be slow to seize it. Make haste, the night is coming, in which no man can work. What works await us yonder we cannot tell. But the unique work of healing blindness and enriching beggary is confined to earth, and we must hasten to do all of this allotted to us before the nightfall. He lives intensely whose eye is fixed on the fingers of the dial, as the poor sempstress works swiftly whose last small wick of candle is rapidly burning down in its socket. III. THE SUBJECT OF THESE WORKS. What a contrast between the opening and the close of the chapter. The soul ignorant of Christ owns Him as Son of God. And all this because of the individual interest our Lord took in him. 1. He detected what was working in his mind. Beneath that unpromising exterior were the elements of a noble character. 2. He developed the latent power of faith. It was there, but it had nothing to evoke it, and yet it must be evoked ere Christ could give him sight. He could feel, though he could not see. 3. He found him when cast out by all besides. Does not Jesus always steal to our side when we are cast out, or deserted by our friends? 4. He answered his hunger for faith. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" If we live up to what we know, at all costs, we shall most certainly be led into further discoveries of truth. We think we are going to plough a field, and we suddenly come on a box of treasure, struck by our plough, which makes us independent of work for the rest of our lives. And so obedience passes into worship, and we see that He who has made our life His care, tending us when we knew Him not, is the Christ of God, in whom are hid all the riches of time, all the treasures of eternity: and we worship Him. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *We must not trifle:*—Rev. Charles Simeon kept the picture of Henry Martyn in his study. Move where he would through the apartment, it seemed to keep its eyes upon him, and ever to say to him, "Be earnest, be earnest! don't trifle, don't trifle!" And the good Simeon

would gently bow to the speaking picture, and, with a smile, reply, "Yes, I will be in earnest; I will, I will be in earnest; I will not trifle; for souls are perishing, and Jesus is to be glorified." O Christian! look away to Martyn's Master, to Simeon's Saviour, to the Omniscient One. Ever realize the inspection of His eye, and hear His voice. (*S. J. Moore.*)

Ver. 5. **As long as I am in the world I am the Light of the world.**—The Word as Light visited men before the Incarnation (chap. i. 9, &c.; comp. v. 38; Rom. ii. 15, &c.); at the Incarnation (chap. viii. 12; xii. 46; iii. 19-21; comp. xi. 9, &c.); and He still comes (chap. xiv. 21); even as the Spirit who still interprets His "name" (chap. xiv. 25; xvi. 13; comp. 1 John ii. 20-27). St. John draws no distinction in essence between these three different forms of revelation, in nature, in conscience, and in history; all alike are natural or supernatural, parts of the same harmonious plan. But man has not independently light in himself. The understanding of the outward revelation depends upon the abiding of the Divine Word within (chap. v. 37, &c.). Love is the condition of illumination (chap. xiv. 22, &c.). And the end of Christ's coming was that those who believe in Him may move in a new region of life (chap. xii. 46), and themselves become sons of light (chap. xii. 35, &c.), and so in the last issue of faith have the light of life (chap. viii. 12). (*Bp. Westcott.*) *Christ, the Light:*—Among all created excellencies, none can be borrowed more fitly representing Christ, than that of light. 1. Light is *primum visibile*, the first object of sight: and Jesus Christ, whom the apostle styles "God over all, Blessed for ever," is *primum intelligibile*. 2. Light being the first thing visible, all things are seen by it, and it by itself. Thus is Christ among spiritual things, in the elect world of His Church (Eph. v. 13, 14; 2 Cor. iv. 3). The rays of Christ's light are displayed through both His Testaments, and in them we see Him (Psa. xxxvi. 9). 3. No one is ignorant there is light; yet what light is few know (Job xxxviii. 19). The "generation" of Christ "who shall declare?" (Isa. liii. 8). 4. Light resembles Christ in purity: it visits many impure places, and lights upon the basest parts of the earth, and yet remains most pure and undefiled. Though Christ was conversant with sinners, to communicate to them His goodness, yet He was "separate from sinners," in immunity from their evil (Heb. vii. 26). 5. The light of the sun is neither parted nor diminished, by being imparted to many several people and nations, that behold it at one time: nor is the righteousness of this Sun of Righteousness either lessened to Himself or to individual believers, by many partaking of it at once: it is wholly conferred upon each one of them, and remains whole in itself. 6. The sun hath a vivifying power, a special influence in the generation of man. The sun we speak of is the proper and principal instrument in man's regeneration (chap. i. 4). 7. The sun drives away the sharp frosts and the heavy fogs of winter, it clears the heavens, decks the earth with variety of plants and flowers, and awakes the birds to the pleasant strains of their natural music. When Christ, after a kind of wintry absence, returns to visit a declining Church, or a deserted forsaken soul, admirable is the change that He produces, &c. (Isa. lv. 12, 13; Cant. ii. 10-13). 8. All darkness flies before light: so Christ arising in the world made the day break, and the shadows flee away, the types and shadows of the law, ignorance, idolatry, the night of sin, misery, &c. All the stars, and the moon with them, cannot make it day in the world: this is the sun's peculiar: nor can nature's highest light, the most refined science and morality, make it day in the soul; for this is Christ's (chap. viii. 12, xii. 35; Psa. xix.; Wisd. vii. 26, 27; St. Luke i. 78, 79; Eph. v. 8). (*Abp. Leighton.*) *The Light of the world:*—I. CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. 1. I am the Light of the world (John ix. 5). 2. That was the true Light (chap. i. 9). 3. For a Light of the Gentiles (Isa. xlii. 6). 4. A Light to lighten the Gentiles (Luke ii. 32). 5. He that followeth Me . . . shall have the Light (John viii. 12). 6. I am come a Light into the world (chap. xii. 46). 7. The Sun of righteousness (Mal. iv. 2). 8. The Dayspring from on high (Luke i. 78). 9. The Bright and Morning Star (Rev. xxii. 16). 10. The Daystar (2 Pet. i. 19). II. CHRISTIANS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. 1. Walk as children of light (Eph. v. 8). 2. Ye are all the children of light (1 Thess. v. 5). 3. Ye are the light of the world (Matt. v. 14). 4. That ye may be the children of light (John xii. 36). 5. Let your light so shine (Matt. v. 16). 6. The path of the just is as the shining light (Prov. iv. 18). 7. He [John] was a burning and a shining light (John v. 35). 8. Among whom ye shine as lights in the world (Phil. ii. 15). 9. Let us put on the armour of light (Rom. xiii. 12). 10. They that be wise shall shine (Dan. xii. 3). (*S. S. Times.*) *Light in death:*—For the last day or two he (Sir D. Brewster) was attended by his

friend, Sir James Simpson, a man of kindred genius and of kindred Christian hopes. "The like of this I never saw," he said, as we met him coming fresh from the dying chamber. "There is Sir David resting like a little child on Jesus, and speaking as if in a few hours he will get all his problems solved by Him." For in that supreme hour of dawning immortality his past studies were all associated with the name and person of the Redeemer. "I shall see Jesus," he said; "and that will be grand. I shall see Him who made the worlds," with allusion to those wonderful verses in Hebrews which had formed the subject of the last sermon he ever heard, a few weeks before. Thus, tracing all to the Creator-Redeemer, he felt no incongruity even in these hours in describing to Sir James Simpson, in a "fluent stream of well-chosen words," some beautiful phenomena in his favourite science. Reference was made to the privilege he had enjoyed in throwing light upon the "great and marvellous works of God." "Yes," he said, "I found them to be great and marvellous, and I felt them to be His." He had little pain but such as came from intense weakness. The light was with him all through the valley. "I have had the light for many years," he whispered slowly, and with emphasis; "and oh, how bright it is! I feel so safe, so satisfied!" And so, in childlike reliance and adoring love, he gently fell asleep in Jesus on the evening of Monday, February 10th, 1868. On the Saturday following he was laid beside kindred dust. (*Sunday at Home.*)

Ver. 6. **He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and He anointed the eyes.**—*The blind made to see, and the seeing made blind*:—I. We have here OUR LORD UNVEILING HIS DEEPEST MOTIVES FOR BESTOWING AN UNSOUGHT BLESSING. It is remarkable that out of the eight miracles recorded in this Gospel, there is only one in which our Lord responds to a request to manifest His miraculous power; the others are all spontaneous. In the other Gospels He heals sometimes because of the pleading of the sufferer; sometimes because of the request of the compassionate friends or bystanders; sometimes unasked, because His own heart went out to those that were in pain and sickness. But in John's Gospel, predominantly we have the Son of God, who acts throughout as moved by His own deep heart. That view of Christ reaches its climax in His own profound words about His own laying down of His life: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go unto the Father." So, not so much influenced by others as deriving motive and impulse and law from Himself, He moves upon earth a fountain and not a reservoir, the Originator and Beginner of the blessings that He bears. Thus, moved by sorrow, recognizing in man's misery the dumb cry for help, seeing in it the opportunity for the manifestation of the higher mercy of God; taking all evil to be the occasion for a brighter display of the love and the good which are Divine; feeling that His one purpose on earth was to crowd the moments with obedience to the will, and with the doing of the works of Him that sent Him; and possessing the sole and strange consciousness that from His person streams out all the light which illuminates the world—the Christ pauses before the unconscious blind man, and looking upon the poor, useless eyeballs, unaware how near light and sight stood, obeys the impulse that shapes His whole life. "And when He had spoken this" proceeds to the strange cure. II. So we come, in the next place, to consider CHRIST AS VEILING HIS POWER UNDER MATERIAL MEANS. This healing by material means in order to accommodate Himself to the weak faith which He seeks to evoke, and to strengthen thereby, is parallel, in principles, to His own incarnation, and to His appointment of external rites and ordinances. Baptism, the Lord's Supper, a visible Church, outward means of worship, and so on, all these come under the same category. There is no life nor power in them except His will works through them, but they are crutches and helps for a weak and sense-bound faith to climb to the apprehension of the spiritual reality. It is not the clay, it is not the water, it is not the Church, the ordinances, the outward worship, the form of prayer, the Sacrament—it is none of these things that have the healing and the grace in them. They are only ladders by which we may ascend to Him. III. Then, still farther, WE HAVE HERE OUR LORD SUSPENDING HEALING ON OBEDIENCE. "Go and wash." As He said to the impotent man: "Stretch forth thine hand"; as He said to the paralytic in this Gospel: "Take up thy bed and walk"; so here He says, "Go and wash." And some friendly hand being stretched out to the blind man, or he himself feeling his way over the familiar path, he comes to the pool and washes, and returns seeing. There is, first, the general truth that healing is suspended by Christ on the compliance with His conditions. He does not simply say to any man, Be whole. He could and did say so sometimes in regard to bodily healing. But He cannot do

so as regards the cure of our blind souls. To the sin-sick and sin-blinded man He says, "Thou shalt be whole, if"—or "I will make thee whole, provided that"—what?—provided that thou goest to the fountain where He has lodged the healing power. The condition on which sight comes to the blind is compliance with Christ's invitation, "Come to Me; trust in Me; and thou shalt be whole." Then there is a second lesson here, and that is, Obedience brings sight. "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine." Are there any of you groping in darkness, compassed about with theological perplexities and religious doubts? Bow your wills to the recognized truth. He who has made all his knowledge into action will get more knowledge as soon as he needs it. "Go and wash; and he went, and came seeing." IV. And now, lastly, we have here OUR LORD SHADOWING HIS HIGHEST WORK AS THE HEALER OF BLIND SOULS. The blind man stands for an example of honest ignorance, knowing itself ignorant, and not to be coaxed or frightened or in any way provoked to pretending to knowledge which it does not possess, firmly holding by what it does know, and because conscious of its little knowledge, therefore waiting for light and willing to be led. Hence he is at once humble and sturdy, docile and independent, ready to listen to any voice which can really teach, and formidably quick to prick with wholesome sarcasm the inflated claims of mere official pretenders. The Pharisees, on the other hand, are sure that they know everything that can be known about anything in the region of religion and morality, and in their absolute confidence in their absolute possession of the truth, in their blank unconsciousness that it was more than their official property and stock-in-trade, in their complete incapacity to discern the glory of a miracle which contravened ecclesiastical proprieties and conventionalities, in their contempt for the ignorance which they were responsible for and never thought of enlightening, in their cruel taunt directed against the man's calamity, and in their swift resort to the weapon of excommunication of one whom it was much easier to cast out than to answer, are but too plain a type of a character which is as ready to corrupt the teachers of the Church as of the synagogue. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The use of means*:—Our Lord would teach us, by His peculiar mode of proceeding here, that He is not tied to any one means of doing good, and that we may expect to find variety in His methods of dealing with souls as well as with bodies. May He not also wish to teach us that He can, when He thinks fit, invest material things with an efficacy which is not inherent in them? We are not to despise Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because water, bread, and wine are mere material elements. To many who use them, no doubt they are nothing more than mere material things, and never do them the slightest good. But to those who use the sacraments rightly, worthily, and with faith, Christ can make water, bread, and wine, instruments of doing real good. He that was pleased to use clay in healing a blind man may surely use material things, if He thinks fit, in His own ordinances. The water in Baptism, and the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, while they are not to be treated as idols, ought not to be treated with irreverence and contempt. It was, of course, not the clay that healed the blind man, but Christ's word and power. Nevertheless the clay was used. So the brazen serpent in itself had no medicinal power to cure the bitten Israelites. But without it they were not cured. The selection of clay for anointing the blind man's eyes is thought by some to be significant, and to contain a possible reference to the original formation of man out of the dust. He that formed man with all his bodily faculties out of the dust could easily restore one of those lost faculties, even sight, when He thought fit. He that healed these blind eyes with clay was the same Being who originally formed man out of the clay. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The use of common agencies*:—This cure is distinguished from most others by the careful use in it of intermediate agencies. Christ does not merely speak the word; there is a process of healing, and the use of these agencies is part of the sign to which St. John wishes to draw our attention. If the other signs testified that there is an invisible power at work in all the springs of our life—that there is a Fountain of life from which these springs are continually renewed—did not this testify that there is a potency and virtue in the commonest things; that God has stored all nature with instruments for the blessing and healing of His creatures? The mere miracle worker who draws glory to himself wishes to dispense with these things lest he should be confounded with the ordinary physician. The Great Physician, who works because His Father works, puts an honour on earth and water as well as upon all art which has true observation and knowledge for its basis. He only distinguishes Himself from other healers by showing that the source of their healing and renovating power is in Him. We have put our faith and our science at an immeasurable distance from each other. May not the separation lead

to the ruin of both. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *The meaning of Christ's action:*—Jesus would not try weak faith too sternly. Just as you would not give a little child the moral law in all its baldness and harshness to keep, but first sweeten the way of obedience by little rewards and promises which become helps to the doing of right, so the kindly Healer of all deals with the people, who were as little children in faith and spiritual insight. He knew a medicinal value was attributed to saliva for diseases of the eye. It was a little harmless giving way to superstition to let the man have the help of his old belief, such as it was. If you could heal a child's hurt by the magic of a word, the child would not feel half as cured as if you had applied some salve. Jesus applies harmless salve that the man might be helped to believe by having something external done to him. Your straitlaced dogmatists will never see the kindly spirit of such action as this. They would see the man blind all his days before they would "pander" to such notions. Theirs are the unkindly hands which try to make the child climb to heaven by, first of all knocking down the ladders of childish fancy which its untaught thinking has reared, instead of fixing their ladder to the end of the child's. Jesus is more kindly reasonable. He does not attempt to argue the notion out of the man's mind. He simply lets it alone, and helps the man through his grandmotherly beliefs to healing, and finally to a strong faith in the Divine power. If my child believed that the Heavenly Father came down to the park every night to wrap up the birds in their nests I would not destroy that idea of Providence till I could graft a richer one upon it. Let us learn the Christlike lesson of being weak to the weak and ignorant to the ignorant. (*E. H. Higgins.*) *The way of faith criticised by the world:*—It meets with many modern criticisms. In the first place, the mode of cure seems very eccentric. Spat and made clay with the spittle and the dust! Very singular! Very odd! Thus odd and singular is the gospel in the judgment of the worldly-wise. "Why," saith one, "it seems such a strange thing that we are to be saved by believing." Men think it so odd that fifty other ways are invented straightway. Though the new methods are not one of them worth describing, yet everybody seems to think that the old-fashioned way of "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" might have been greatly improved upon. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The way of faith glorifies Christ:*—Suppose, instead thereof, He had put His hand into His pocket and had taken ont a gold or ivory box, and out of this box He had taken a little crystal bottle. Suppose He had taken out the stopper, and then had poured a drop on each of those blind eyes, and they had been opened, what would have been the result? Everybody would have said, "What a wonderful medicine! I wonder what it was! How was it compounded? Who wrote the prescription? Perhaps He found the charm in the writings of Solomon, and so He learned to distil the matchless drops." Thus you see the attention would have been fixed on the means used, and the cure would have been ascribed to the medicine rather than to God. Our Saviour used no such rare oils or choice spirits, but simply spat and made clay of the spittle; for He knew that nobody would say, "The spittle did it," or "It was the clay that did it." No, if our Lord seems to be eccentric in the choice of means, yet is He eminently prudent. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 7. **Go wash in the pool of Siloam.**—Rounding the southern end of Ophel, the south-east span of Moriah, you reach this famous pool. It is fifty-two feet long and eighteen feet wide, some piers, like flying buttresses, standing on its north side, while part of a column rises in the middle of it. These are the remains of an old church, built over it 1,300 years ago, or a monastery of the twelth century. The miracle invested the pool with such peculiar sacredness that baths were erected under the ancient church, to let the sick have the benefit of the wondrous stream. You go down eight ancient stone steps to reach the water, which is used by the people for drinking, washing their not over clean linen, and for bathing. Everything around is dilapidated. At the north end a small tunnel opens in the rock, bringing the water from the spring of the Virgin, which lies 1,700 feet higher up the valley. This ancient engineering work is about two feet wide, and from two to sixteen feet in height, with a branch cut due west from it to a shallow basin within the line of the ancient walls, where a round shaft more than forty feet deep has been sunk to reach it. On the top of this a great chamber hewn in the rock, with a flight of steps leading down to it, made it possible for the citizens, by covering and hiding the spring outside, to cut off the supply of water from an enemy, while themselves, by means of this striking arrangement, enjoying it in safety without leaving their defences. A notable discovery connected with the cutting of the

main tunnel was made in 1880 by a youth while wading up its mouth. Losing his footing, he noticed, as he was picking himself up, some letters cut in the rocky side, which proved to be an inscription left by the workmen when they had finished their great undertaking. From this it appears that they began at both ends, but as engineering was hardly at its best 3,000 years ago their course was very far from being exactly straight, windings of more than two hundred yards, like the course of a river, marking their work. There are several short branches showing where the excavators found themselves going in a wrong direction, and abruptly stopped, to resume work in a truer line, when at last they met they proved to be a little on one side of each other and had to connect their excavations by a short side cutting. Prof. Sayce thinks that this undertaking dates from about the eight century B.C., and Prof. Muhlan refers it to the time of Hezekiah, while others think it in part, at least, a relic of the early inhabitants of Jerusalem before David. The depth of the tunnel below the surface, at its lowest, is one hundred and fifty feet. The slope is very small, so that the water must always have flowed with a gentle leisure from the spring to the pool (Isa. viii. 6). The remains of four other basins have been discovered, which were apparently once connected with the pool, and a little way from it down the valley, is an ancient "Lower Pool," but now has its bottom overgrown with trees, the overflow from the higher pool having for centuries trickled past it instead of filling it. This is known as the Red Pool—from the colour of its soil—and is famous for an old mulberry-tree said to mark the spot where Isaiah was sawn asunder by Manasseh. The Virgin's Well, from which the whole supply comes, lies at the bottom of two flights of broken stone steps—thirty in all—and has the glory of being the only spring rising in the Temple Mount. The taste of the water is very unpleasant, from its having filtered through the vast mass of foul rubbish on which the city stands, and which has been soaked by the sewage of many centuries. The sides of the tunnel are covered to a height of about three feet with thin red cement, very hard and full of pounded potsherds. The bed is covered with a black slimy deposit two or three inches thick, which makes the water still worse at Siloam than at the Virgin's Well. Still from time to time water-carriers come to fill their skins, and women with their great jars on their shoulders. Yet Siloam must have been far livelier than now in olden times, when a fine church rose over the spring and pilgrims bathed in the great tank beneath it. Already in the days of Christ, perhaps from the thought of the healing powers of the pool as issuing from Moriah, it must have been the custom to wash in it, else the blind man would hardly have been directed in so few words to do so. (*C. Geikie, D.D.*)

Which is by interpretation, Sent.—By a solemn and daily libation, the fount of Siloam had figured during the recent feast as the emblem of theocratic favours and the pledge of all Messianic blessings. This rite harmonized with the Old Testament, which had already contrasted this humble fountain with the brute force of the foes of the theocracy (Isa. viii. 7). We have seen that Jesus applied to Himself the theocratic symbols of the feast; why should He not in the present instance also express by an act what He had hitherto declared in words. By adding to the real blindness, which He alone could cure, that artificial and symbolic blindness which the waters of Siloam were to remove, He declared *in fact:* What Siloam effects typically I accomplish in reality. Perhaps it is by the symbolic part given to Siloam that the explanation "Sent" of the Evangelist must be explained. In a philologic point of view, the correctness of John's translation is not disputed, and the origin of the name has been explained by the circumstance that the water of the pool was "sent" from the distant spring of the Virgin, or because springs are regarded in the East as gifts of God. In any case, Israelite consciousness was struck by the fact that the spring flowed from the Temple hill, the residence of Jehovah, and had from the prophetic era attached to this water, a Messianic signification. It was undoubtedly this relation, with which the mind of the whole nation was penetrated, that John meant to bring forward in the parenthesis. Go to Siloam (the typically sent), to cleanse thyself from what causes thine artificial blindness; come by faith to Me (the really Sent), who alone can cure thy blindness, both physical and moral. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *The way of faith is simple:*—"Go wash in the pool." Go to the pool, and wash the clay into it. Any boy can wash his eyes. The task was simplicity itself. So is the gospel as plain as a pikestaff. You have not to perform twenty genuflections or posturings, each one peculiar, nor have you to go to school to learn a dozen languages, each one more difficult than the other. No, the saving deed is one and simple. "Believe and live." Trust, trust Christ; rely upon Him, rest in Him. Accept His work upon the cross as the atonement for your sin, His

righteousness as your acceptance before God, His person as the delight of your soul. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith and obedience*:—He obeyed Christ blindly. He looked not upon Siloam with Syrian eyes as Naaman did upon Jordan, but, passing by the unlikelihood of a cure by such means, he believeth and doth as he was bidden. His blind obedience made him see. Let God be obeyed readily without reasoning or wrangling, and success shall not be wanting. (*J. Trapp.*)

Vers. 8–13. **The neighbours, therefore . . . said, Is not this he that sat and begged.**—*Types of character in relation to Christ's work—Those who are only speculatively interested in the work*:—As a stone cast into a lake throws the whole mass of water into agitation, producing circle after circle to its utmost bounds, this healing threw into excitement the whole social sphere in which it occurred. "No man liveth unto himself." What affects one will affect many. Society is a chain of which every man is a link, and the motion of one link may vibrate through the whole chain. Society is a body of which every man is a member; the pulsation of one heart will throb through every limb. The feelings produced in this case were various. Note, concerning inquiries of the class we here deal with—I. THEIR LACK OF EARNESTNESS. They related—1. To the identity of the man. The question (ver. 8) seems to have been asked out of mere curiosity. Their difficulty (ver. 9) arose partly from the change the opened eye would make in his countenance, giving it a new character; and partly from the unaccountableness of the result. 2. To the method of his restoration (ver 10). In this there is no ring of earnestness, only curiosity. 3. To the whereabouts of the Restorer (ver. 12). But what is He? All they meant was we should like to see this wonder worker. Those who have a mere speculative interest in Christianity are constantly asking such questions with no genuine thirst for truth. II. THEIR LACK OF GENEROSITY. They utter no congratulatory word. Had they been true men, the event would have touched them into the enthusiasm of social affection. But there is not one spark of it. Their intellect seems to move in ice. So is it ever with this class. There is no heart exultation over the millions Christianity has blessed, only a cold inquiry about details. III. THEIR LACK OF INDEPENDENCY (ver. 13). They brought Him to the judicial court to try the question of His identity. They were not in earnest enough to reach a conclusion that would satisfy themselves. Conclusion: How lamentable that there should be a class only speculatively interested in the wonderful works of Christ. What then men saw should have led them to hearty acceptance and consecration. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The change effected in the man*:—The want or the sudden presence of an eye, much more of both, must needs make a great change in the face; those little balls of light, which no doubt were more clear than nature could have made them, could not but give a new life to the countenance. I marvel not if the neighbours, who had wont to see this dark visage led by a guide, and supported by a staff, seeing him now walking confidently alone out of his own inward light, and looking them cheerfully in the face, doubted whether this were he. The miraculous cures of God work a sensible alteration in men, not more in their own apprehension than in the judgment of others. So, in the redress of the spiritual blindness, the whole habit of the man is changed. Where before his face looked dull and earthly, now there is a sprightly cheerfulness in it, through the comfortable knowledge of God and heavenly things. (*Bishop Hall.*) *I am the man myself*:—In a town filled with Romanists, Gideon Ouseley, as was his custom, hired the bellman to announce through the streets the preaching in the evening. The man, afraid of opposition, uttered the announcement timidly and indistinctly. Ouseley, passing in the street, heard him, and taking the bell, rang it himself, proclaiming aloud, "This is to give notice, that Gideon Ouseley, the Irish Missionary, is to preach this evening in such a place, and at such an hour. And I am the man myself?" (*Stevens' "History of Methodism."*) *We ought boldly to confess Christ*:—We do not bear enough testimony for our Lord. I am sure I felt quite taken aback the other day when a flyman said to me, "You believe that the Lord directs the way of His people, don't you, sir?" I said, "That I do. Do you know anything about it?" "Why," he said, "Yes. This morning I was praying the Lord to direct my way, and you engaged me; and I felt that it was a good beginning for the day." We began talking about the things of God directly. That flyman ought not to have been the first to speak: as a minister of the gospel I ought to have had the first word. We have much to blame ourselves for in this respect. We hold our tongues because we do not know how a word might be received; but we might as well make the experiment. No harm could come of

trying. Suppose you were to go into a place where persons were sick and dying, and you have medicine about you which would heal them, would you not be anxious to give them some of it? Would you say nothing about it because you could not tell how it might be received? How could you know how it would be received except by making this offer? Tell poor souls about Jesus. Tell them how His grace healed you, and perhaps they will answer, "You are the very person I need; you have brought me the news I have longed to hear." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *How Christian lost his burden:*—He ran thus till he came to a place somewhat ascending, and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below in the bottom a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the cross his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome and said with a merry heart, "He hath given me rest by His sorrows and life by His death." (*J. Bunyan.*) *Jesus all in all to new converts:*—In this man's mind, as soon as ever he received sight, "a man that was named Jesus" came to the forefront. Jesus was to him the most important person in existence. All that he knew of Him at first was, that He was a man that was named Jesus; and under that character Jesus filled the whole horizon of His vision. He was more to him than those learned Pharisees, or than all his neighbours put together. Jesus was exceeding great, for He had opened his eyes. By-and-by, fixing his mind upon that figure, he saw more in it, and he declared, "He is a prophet." He boldly said this when he was running great risks by doing so. To their faces he told the carping Pharisees "He is a prophet." A little further on he came to this, that he believed Him to be the Son of God, and worshipped Him. Now, my dear friend, if you are saved by Jesus your star must set, but the star of Jesus must rise and increase in brilliance till it becomes no more a star, but a sun, making your day, and flooding your whole soul with light. If we are saved Christ Jesus must and will have the glory. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Converts must testify of Christ:*—After this man had received sight his testimony was all of Jesus. It was Jesus that spat, it was Jesus that made the clay, it was Jesus that anointed his eyes. So will it be in your mind with the gospel of your salvation: it will be "Jesus only." It is Jesus who became the surety of the covenant, Jesus who became the atoning Sacrifice, Jesus is the Priest, the Interposer, the Mediator, the Redeemer. We know Jesus as Alpha, and Jesus as Omega. He is the first, and He is the last. In your salvation there will be no mistake about it, and no mixture in it; you will have nothing to say about man, or man's merit, or man's will; but on the head which once was wounded with the thorns, you will put all your crowns. Jesus did it, did it all, and He must be praised. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 13–18. **They brought to the Pharisees him.**—*The first examination of the Man:*—I. AN IMPORTANT ADMISSION. The Pharisees recognized that the man saw (ver. 13). If therefore he had been previously blind, there must have been a miracle. II. AN IRRELEVANT QUESTION. They wished to know *how* the man had received his sight (ver. 15), when all that they had to determine was whether he had received his sight. III. A STRAIGHTFORWARD ANSWER. The man having nothing to conceal, gave a simple recitation of what had taken place (ver 15). IV. A PALPABLE EVASION. Some of the Pharisees attempted to avoid giving judgment as to the miracle by pronouncing on a question that was not before them, viz., the character of Christ, whom they declared could not be "from God," because He kept not the Sabbath (ver. 16). V. A SOUND CONCLUSION. Others reasoned that the miracle had been proved, and decided that the worker of such a "sign" could not be a sinner, and therefore could not have really violated the Sabbath law (ver. 16). VI. A SAFE DEDUCTION. The healed man inferred, as Nicodemus had done (chap. iii. 2), that the Physician who had cured him was a prophet (ver. 17). VII. A DISINGENUOUS PROCEDURE. The matter seemed settled and the miracle made out; but the hostile party, unwilling to allow a verdict so favourable for Jesus to go forth, determined to hold the man an imposter, or at least to suspend their judgment until they had heard the man's parents. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Types of character in relation to Christ's work—Those who are bitterly prejudiced against it:*—Four things marked the character of these Pharisees. I. THEY WERE TECHNICAL RATHER THAN MORAL IN THEIR STANDARD OF JUDGMENT (ver. 16). Christ, in performing the miracle on the Sabbath, struck a blow at their prejudices, and declared "The Sabbath was made for man." Instead of thanking God that their poor brother had been healed, and seeking

acquaintance with the Healer, they endeavour to make the whole thing a ceremonial crime. They had more respect for ceremonies than for souls. They exalted the letter above the spirit, the ritual above the moral. II. THEY WERE BIASSED RATHER THAN CANDID IN THEIR EXAMINATION OF EVIDENCE. They had made up their minds not to believe, and all their questionings and cross-questionings were intended to throw discredit on the fact. They did not want evidence, and if it came up they would suppress or misinterpret it. This spirit is too common in every age, and shows the blindness of prejudice and the heartlessness of technical religion. III. THEY WERE DIVIDED RATHER THAN UNITED IN THEIR CONCLUSIONS. "There was a division." There were some, perhaps Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, touched with candour, who could not but see the Divinity of the act. Infidels ridicule Christians for their divisions, whilst they themselves are never agreed. Error is necessarily schismatic; evil has no power to unite. IV. THEY WERE MALIGNANT RATHER THAN GENEROUS IN THEIR AIMS. Had they been generous they would have been disposed to believe in the mission of the Divine Restorer. Instead of that they repudiate the fact. Their browbeating of the young man, their accusation that Christ was a sinner, and their excommunication of those who believed on Him show that the malign not the benign was their inspiration. Conclusion: This class is not extinct. There are those who are bitterly prejudiced against Christianity everywhere. They are proof against all evidence and argument. Prejudice turns a man's heart into stone. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Power of prejudice:*—Voltaire once said, "If in the market of Paris, before the eyes of a thousand men, and before my own eyes a miracle should be performed, I would much rather disbelieve the two thousand eyes and my own too, than believe it." So here, these men, fleeing as they do from the light and choosing the darkness, take up the matter over again, in the hope of being able to detect some traces of fraud. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) What will not prejudice do? It was that which made the Jews call Christ a Samaritan, a devil, a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. It was that which made them hale the apostles to their governors, and cry out, "Away with them! it is not fit that they should live." It was this made Ahab hate the upright Micaiah, and the Athenian condemn the just Aristides, though he had never seen him. It was this made the poor man, who knew not what John Huss's doctrine was, so busy and industrious to carry wood for his funeral-pile, and as zealous to kindle it, inasmuch that the martyr could not but cry out, "O holy simplicity!" It is this sets men against consideration of their ways, and makes them give out that it will crack their brains and disorder their understanding. (*Anthony Horneck.*) *True conversion evident to all:*—None of the Pharisees said to him, "Are you sure you can see?" Those twinkling eyes of his, so full of fun and wit, and sarcasm, were proofs most plain that he could see. Ah! your friends at home will know that you are converted if it is really so; they will hardly want telling, they will find it out. The very way you eat your dinner will show it. It will! You eat it with gratitude, and seek a blessing on it. The way you will go to bed will show it. I remember a poor man who was converted, but he was dreadfully afraid of his wife—not the only man in the world that is in that fear—and therefore he was fearful that she would ridicule him if he knelt to pray. He crept upstairs in his stockings that he might not be heard, but might have a few minutes' prayer before she knew he was there. His scheme broke down. His wife soon found him out. Genuine conversion is no more to be hidden than a candle in a dark room. You cannot hide a cough. If a man has a cough, he must cough; and if a man has grace in his heart, he will show grace in his life. Why should we wish to hide it? Oh, may the Lord give you such an eye-opening this day that friends and relatives shall know that your eyes have been opened! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 16. **This Man is not of God because He keepeth not the Sabbath day.**—It is interesting to note that one of the things which is specially forbidden in the talmudic law of the Sabbath is the application of saliva to the eyes on that day. It was not permissible to anoint the eye itself with wine on the Sabbath; but one might, without guilt, wash his eyebrows in wine. In the case of saliva, however, it was not permissible to anoint even the outside of the eyes on the Sabbath. Jesus, in the mode of cure which He adopted, infringed one of the rules of the Talmud; probably with the very purpose of showing his contempt for the traditions of man by which the word of God was made void. (*S. S. Times.*) *Uncharitable judgments:*—There is no word or action but may be taken with two hands; either with the right hand of charitable construction, or the sinister interpretation of malice and suspicion; and all things do succeed as they are taken. To construe an evil action well

is but a pleasing and profitable deceit to myself; but to misconstrue a good thing is a treble wrong to myself, the action, and the author (Rom. xiv. 10). (*Bp. Hall.*) There is an odious spirit in many men, who are better pleased to detect a fault than commend a virtue. (*Lord Capel.*)

Vers. 19–23. **Is this your son?**—*The testimony of the man's parents:*—I. JOYFUL RECOGNITION. They identified him as their son. The neighbours could only say he was like the beggar they had known (ver. 9): the man's parents had no doubt. II. SORROWFUL CONCESSION. The son's report as to his blindness was correct. He had never known the light of day. III. CAUTIOUS NEGATION. They declared ignorance of how the miracle had been wrought; so far, at least as their own observation went. IV. PRUDENT SUGGESTION. The questioners might inquire of their son, who was responsible and was able to answer for himself. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Types of character in relation to Christ's work—Those who practically ignore it:*—The parents who instead of avowing that Christ had healed their son, evaded the question for fear of the Jews. That they felt some interest in one who had conferred such a benefit on their son can scarcely be doubted, but it was not enough to make them courageous for the truth. The great majority now belong to this class. They have no prejudice against Christ, but they have not sufficient interest in Him to avow Him. The parents ignored Christ's work—I. ALTHOUGH THEY HAD EVERY OPPORTUNITY OF KNOWING IT. This is the case with millions—wherever they look there are monuments of Christ's beneficent operations. In every social circle is some faithful disciple ready to proclaim Him. II. WHEN GRATITUDE SHOULD HAVE URGED THEM TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT. Christ had given their son a capacity to contribute to their interests. All that is solutary in government, ennobling in literature, fair in commerce, loving in friendship, progressive in intelligence, morality and happiness must be ascribed to Christ. Take from England all she owes to Christ and you leave her in all the confusion, horrors and cruelties of heathenism. III. FROM COWARDLY MEANNESS OF SOUL (ver. 22). Is not Christ ignored to-day from the fear of losing property, sacrificing friendships, &c. Strange that thousands who have the courage to confront an army are too cowardly to avow Christ. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Cowardly testimony is despicable:*—They answered obliquely and over-warily; but Christ deserved better of them. Squirrels ever set their holes to the sunny side. Politic professors, neuter-passive Christians will be sure to keep on the warmer side of the hedge; neither will they launch farther into the sea than they may be sure to return safely to the shore. (*J. Trapp.*) **By what means he now seeth we know not.**—*Agnosticism:*—This means Not-know-ism, or Know-nothing-ism, and describes the state of mind of those who say about God, the Bible, and the spiritual world, that they do not know anything. They do not deny, are not profane atheists, they occupy a negative position. Amongst them are distinguished men to whom we are much indebted; but if they are right, we are fatally wrong. We ought, therefore, to find out what foothold we have. 1. There is a Book which professes to tell us about God, the spiritual world and the future. They ignore its testimony, saying they do not know who wrote it, or by what authority it was written. This is a very serious responsibility in relation to such a Book—a Book so distinctively moral in its tone. 2. If we are at liberty to ignore such evidence as is tendered without giving our reason, there is no ground for believing anything in history. I do not know that geology has made any progress. But there are the books which prove it; but I ignore them; they may be corrected; I know nothing of the men who wrote them, or their qualifications. If you tell me they do not claim infallibility, I reply that fallibility constitutes no claim on my confidence. Suppose I say that I cannot be troubled with the examination of fallible theories, and that I will wait until some theory is finally established; then that very theory would bring upon it the identical charge brought against the Bible, viz., that it staggers mankind by the supremacy of its claim. 3. Now the Bible is as positive in its statements as possible. "Thus saith the Lord." This fact increases the responsibility of those who ignore the Book. The mere claim of course settles nothing, nor does ignoring the claim. Our object is to ascertain with all the positiveness of positive science what we unquestionably know about the Bible. If certain facts are established we are entitled to say to agnostics, "Why herein is a marvellous thing," &c. (ver. 30). I. It is a fact THAT BAD MEN DISLIKE IT, AVOID IT, AND ARE AFRAID OF IT. As a practical argument this amounts to a great deal. No unrighteousness can be vindicated by Christian revelation; not only so; no unholy thought or dishonourable motive is tolerated by it. For these reasons bad

men do not consult it, guilty men flee from its judgments, mean men shrink from its standards. If a ruler is a terror to evil doers, the presumption is that he represents the spirit of justice; and if the Bible is avoided by bad men the presumption is that its moral tone is intolerable to their reproachful consciences. II. It is a fact THAT WHERE IT IS RECEIVED AND THOROUGHLY ACTED UPON THE RESULT IS A PURIFIED MORALITY. You will find the proof of this alike in the humblest and loftiest circles. When men stand up in the court of this world and give their histories, names, and addresses, you are bound either to accept their evidence or disprove it. It is trifling with a great question simply to ignore it. The change they attribute to Christianity is a fact or not a fact; and if it be scientific to mark the progress of a horse's development, it cannot be despicable to trace the advances of a human mind. III. It is a fact THAT IT COMPELS THOSE WHO REALLY BELIEVE IT TO EXERT THEMSELVES IN EVERY POSSIBLE WAY FOR THE GOOD OF MANKIND. It does not leave this an open question. It allows no ignoble ease, smites every self-indulgent excuse, and approves all labour for others. If a man falls below this standard he brings upon himself unsparing condemnation. IV. It is a fact THAT IN THOSE COUNTRIES THAT ARE NOTED FOR ALLOWING THE FREE USE OF THE BIBLE, LIBERTY, EDUCATION, SCIENCE, ARE HELD IN THE HIGHEST HONOUR. This is not a matter of speculation. It is proved in England, Germany, and America. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) **He is of age; ask him; he shall speak for himself.**—*Speak for yourself. A challenge:*— 1. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN SAVED MEN ARE COMPELLED TO SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. 1. When their friends desert them. These parents were willing to own that the young man was their son, and that he was born blind; but they would not go any further for fear of excommunication. So, declining any responsibility, for they had a well-founded confidence in their son's power to take care of himself, they threw upon him the onus of giving an answer likely to incur obloquy, and backed out of it. There are times with young people when their parents turn the cold shoulder to them, and some who hold back suspiciously, leaving others to champion the Master's cause when it comes to a hard push, quietly observing something about casting pearls before swine. But the most likely explanation of such cowardice is that they have no pearls to cast. It is lamentable how many seem afraid to compromise themselves. But whenever a man finds himself thus deserted, let him say gallantly, "I am of age; I will speak for myself." 2. When they are much pressed. The Pharisees question the man very closely, and he does not seem to have been disconcerted, but acquitted himself grandly. When we are brought to book, let us not be ashamed to own our Lord. If it comes to a challenge, let us say boldly, "I am on the side of Christ." 3. When others revile and slander our Lord. When they said "This man is a sinner," "He hath opened mine eyes," was the response; and when they averred that they knew not whence Christ was, the man twitted them on their marvellous ignorance, and fought for his Healer so trenchantly that they threw away the weapons of debate and took up stones of abuse. When men speak ill of Christ, shall we be quiet? No! let us throw the gauntlet down for Him. Christian people do not take half the liberty they might. If we speak of religion, or open our Bibles in a railway carriage, it is "cant." They may play cards, and utter all sorts of profanity with impunity. In the name of everything that is free we will have our turn. So we see that there are times when men, however quiet and reserved, must speak. II. IT IS ALWAYS WELL TO BE PREPARED TO SPEAK FOR YOURSELF. When the parents said, "Ask him," there was a little twinkle in their eye as much as to say, "You will catch a Tartar." He can speak for himself. We want Christians of this sort who, when asked about their faith, can so answer as to be more than a match for their adversaries. 1. Cultivate a general habit of open heartedness and boldness. We have no need to push ourselves and so become a nuisance and a bore; but let us walk through the world as those who have nothing to conceal. 2. Be sure of your ground. "Whether He be a sinner or no I know not." So he offered no opinion on a subject on which he could not be positive. But when he had a hard fact there was nothing vague in his statement (ver. 25). And there are some of you in whom such a change has taken place. Put your foot down, then, and say, "You cannot misjudge this." 3. Have the facts ready to adduce (ver. 11). Let them have the plan of salvation, as you first perceived it, very plainly put before them. "Be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you." 4. Be prepared to bear abuse (ver. 28, 34). The man cared not an atom for their insinuations. Their scorn could not deprive him of his sight. He merely shook his head and said, "I can see." Some people are very sensitive of "chaff"; but what a baby a man is who cannot brave a fool's laugh! What does it matter if

you are twitted with being a Methodist if you are saved? They will be tired of teasing when they find that our temper triumphs over their senseless tricks. 5. Feel intense gratitude to the Saviour for what He has done. III. EVERY SAVED MAN SHOULD WILLINGLY SPEAK FOR HIMSELF ABOUT CHRIST. 1. Are we not all debtors to Christ if, indeed, He has saved us? How can we acknowledge the debt if we are ashamed of Him? 2. We each of us know most about what He has done for us. No one else can know so much. 3. The more individual testimonies are borne to Christ the more weight there is in the accumulated force of the great aggregate. A sceptical lawyer attended an experience meeting amongst his neighbours and took notes. When he reviewed the evidence he said, "If I had these persons in the witness-box on my side, I should feel quite sure of carrying my case. Though each has told his own tale, they all bear witness to the power of God's grace to change the heart. I am bound to believe after this testimony." And he did, and became a Christian. Do you say, "They can do without my story." Nay, it has its own special interest, and may touch the heart of somebody like yourself. (1) You are only a nursemaid, but your testimony will suit another lass like yourself. Who could have told her mistress that there was healing for Naaman but the captive maid? (2) You are old and feeble; but you are just the man whose few words have full weight. (3) You are only a working man; but who can tell working men about your changed character and home like yourself? IV. AS EVERY CHRISTIAN, BEING OF AGE, HAS TO SPEAK FOR HIMSELF, WE MEAN TO DO IT. You cannot all preach, and should not try; if you all did, what a tumult there be! And there would be no hearers left if all were preachers. Your work is to speak and to let your influence be felt among your servants, children, tradespeople. You say "I am so retiring." Well, then drop a little of your modesty, and distinguish yourself a little more for your manliness. A soldier who was retiring in the day of battle they shot for a coward. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Accountability*:—I. INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY. The Bible lays down no clearly-defined line between the ages when God does and does not regard the child morally accountable for sinful actions. This must depend on the varying circumstances of intelligence, temperament, and social surroundings of the child. But the time does come when with no hesitation we can throw upon the youth's conscience the full weight of his individual responsibility, saying with emphasis: "He is of age." He must answer "for himself." II. PARENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY. Up to a certain age the parent has no doubt of the salvation of the child. The Saviour's atonement satisfies the requirements of every child dying at an early age. Nevertheless, during this tender age character is being formed for future development; and God holds the parents accountable for the manifold influences that are affecting the child's mental and moral vision, saying to them: "Is this your son?" "How then doth he now see?" Does your child "see" kindly glances, Christ-like actions, devout conduct, devotional observances, &c. III. MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY The spirit of Cain has impregnated human history. "Am I my brother's keeper" is still largely the covert of a mean soul that wants to shirk the duty of fraternal help and counsel, or defence. The fear that here padlocked the parents' lips is a sin that thrives in too many hearts. How often has an accused one gone to the grave under a dark cloud that might have been dispersed, if friends had been found of sufficient courage to contradict patronizing accusers. But no! Speaking the truth would have damaged the selfish interests of those who said: "Let him speak for himself." IV. THE PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF CHURCH RELATIONS. Our knowledge of each other is very limited. Large significance belongs to the apostle's words: "We know in part." An individual presents himself for Church membership. The question goes round, and very properly so, "What do you know of him?" But our knowledge here often proves strangely false, whether the testimony is *pro* or *con*. The voice of God is, "Let him speak for himself." Take the applicant on personal confession, unless his or her life is palpably false. Was not even Judas admitted on personal confession? When the falsity of character is seen then is the time for unchurching. We are familiar with the account of the poor Scotch woman, who, on applying for church membership, was so ignorant of the theological queries put to her by her pastor, that she was sent away as temporarily disqualified. On leaving, she said, with deep emotion: "I canna speak for Him, but I could die for Him." (*The Study.*) *Speak for Christ*:—A Christian man (Mr. Moody) in a Western city resolved that he would never allow a day to pass without speaking to some one on the subject of personal salvation. He was returning home late one evening, burdened with the thought that the day had gone by, and no one had been invited to Christ. He saw a man leaning against a lamp-post, put his hand gently on the shoulder of the stranger, and said, "May I ask you if you love the Lord Jesus Christ?" The stranger resented the freedom, and replied

curtly, that that was a personal matter in which nobody else had any concern. But the Christian replied kindly, that they were fellow-travellers to another world, and one could not be indifferent whether others had a good hope of entering heaven. After a few more words had passed between them, they parted, the Christian fearing that he had given offence, but carrying the matter to the closet for earnest prayer. Three months after, just as he had retired for the night, a knock was heard at the door. He inquired what was wanted; and a gentleman replied he would like to see him. On opening the door, he recognized the stranger met at the lamp-post. The latter grasped him convulsively by the hand, and said, "The question you put to me, 'Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?' has been ringing ever since in my ear; and I have come to ask you what I must do to be saved." They prayed and talked together; and in a few days the stranger was rejoicing in the hope of pardon. He became an earnest and devoted Christian. (*E. Foster.*)

Ver. 22. **If any man did confess that he was Christ.**—*Confession of Christ*:—1. Confession, ὁμολογεῖν, is—(1) To say the same thing with others. To agree with. (2) To promise. (3) To acknowledge, to declare a person or thing to be what he or it really is. 2. To confess Christ is therefore to acknowledge Him to be what He really is and declares Himself to be. (1) The Son of God; (2) God manifest in the flesh; (3) The Saviour of the world; (4) The Lord. I. The NATURE of this confession. 1. It is not enough that we cherish the conviction in our hearts, or confess it to ourselves, to God, or to friends who agree with us. 2. It must be done publicly, or before men, friends and foes: amid good and evil report; when it brings reproach and danger as well as when it incurs no risk. 3. It must be with the mouth. It is not enough that men may infer from our conduct that we are Christians. We must audibly declare it. 4. This must be done—(1) In our ordinary intercourse. (2) In the way of God's appointment, *i.e.*, by Baptism and the Lord's Supper. 5. It must be sincere. "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord," &c. It is only when the outward act is a revelation of the heart that it has any value. II. ITS ADVANTAGES. 1. It strengthens faith. 2. It is a proof of regeneration, because it supposes the apprehension of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 3. It is an indispensable condition of salvation. Because—(1) God requires it. (2) Not to confess is to deny. (3) Denial implies want of faith or devotion. 4. Christ will acknowledge them who acknowledge Him—publicly, before the angels, and to our eternal salvation. III. ITS DUTY. 1. It is not merely a commandment. 2. It is the highest moral duty to acknowledge the truth, and especially to acknowledge God to be God. 3. It is the most direct means we can take to honour Christ, and to bring others to acknowledge Him (see Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8; Mark viii. 38; Rom. x. 9–10; 2 Tim. ii. 12; 1 John iv. 2, 15). (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) **He should be put out of the synagogue.**—*Excommunication* (*cf.* chap. xvi. 2; Luke vi. 22):—1. The lightest kind of excommunication continued for thirty days and prescribed four cubits as a distance within which the person may not approach any one, not even wife and children; with this limitation it did not make exclusion from the synagogue necessary. 2. The severer included absolute banishment from all religious meetings, and absolute giving up of intercourse with all persons, and was formally pronounced with curses. 3. The severest was a perpetual banishment from all meetings and a practical exclusion from the fellowship of God's people. It has been sometimes supposed that the words of Luke vi. 22—(1) "Separate you;" (2) "reproach you;" (3) "cast out your name" refer to these gradations, but probably the only practice known in the time of our Lord was that which was later regarded as the intermediate form, falling short of perpetual banishment, but being, while the ban lasted, exclusion from all the cherished privileges of an Israelite. (*Archdeacon Watkins.*)

Vers. 24–34. **Then again called they the man.**—*The second examination of the man*:—I. INTIMIDATION. The hostile section sought to overbear the man's judgment by their superior knowledge and position. They, the heaven-appointed leaders of the people and guardians of morality, were satisfied that Christ was a sinner. He had broken the Sabbath by manufacturing clay and spreading it over the man's eyes as an artizan might have plastered it upon a wall. Consequently there could have been no such thing as a miracle; and he had better confess himself a deceiver and Christ an imposter (ver. 24). To all this the man opposes his personal experience (ver 25). II. ENTANGLEMENT. By cross-examination they hoped to make him contradict himself (ver. 26). But the man, too clever to be caught by such an

artifice (Prov. i. 17), declined their invitation, reminding them that he had supplied all the information he possessed, and inquiring, with fine irony, if they desired to become Christ's disciples (ver. 27). III. REPROACH. They reviled Him as the follower, not of Moses, the great commissioner of Jehovah, but of a nameless fellow about whom no one knew anything (ver. 29). To this the man replied with crushing logic how no honest mind could evade the conclusion that Christ must at least be a prophet no less than Moses (vers. 30–33). IV. EXPULSION. They could not answer the man's syllogism, but they could do what foiled controversialists commonly do (ver. 34). Lessons: 1. The danger of approaching religious questions with pre-conceived notions. 2. The power Christianity has to convince all sincere inquirers of its heavenly origin. 3. The duty of standing true to Christ in the face of all opposition. 4. The certainty that Christ's witnesses will suffer persecution. 5. The helplessness of man's wisdom in opposing the truth. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Types of character in relation to Christ's work—Those who are consciously restored by it:*—We find the man doing two things which are done by all who are spiritually restored by Christ. I. MAINTAINING TRUTH IN THE FACE OF FIERCE OPPOSITION. See how he holds his own. 1. In a noble spirit. His conduct stands in sublime contrast to that of his parents and others concerned. Mark—(1) His candour. Hearing men disputing, without hesitation he says "I am he." Outspokenness is the ring of a great nature. (2) His courage. In defiance of the Sanhedrim he declares that the hated Jesus was his Healer. The genuine alone are brave; honest souls dread a lie more than the frowns of a thousand despots. (3) His consistency. In spite of all questions and brow-beating, he never varies in his statements. Truth is that subtle element which alone gives unity to all the varied parts of a man's life. Error makes man contradict himself. The whole subject shows us that there may be grandeur of soul where there is social obscurity and physical infirmity. 2. By sound argument. (1) His answer was built upon consciousness (ver. 25). The logic of a school of Aristotles could not disturb his conviction. It is so with a true Christian: he feels the change and no argument can touch it. 3. His argument was formulated by common sense. When his judges pressed him (ver. 26) he reproves them for repeating questions already answered and with withering irony asks (ver. 27). He states his argument thus: that his cure, of which he was conscious, was a miracle (ver. 30), which they could not deny. Is it not a doctrine with you that no one without Divine authority can perform miracles? Why ask such questions? And not only has the Healer Divine authority but a holy character (ver. 31). II. FOLLOWING CHRIST WHEN CAST OUT FROM MEN. The best men in every age are "cast out" by the ungodly. But, when cast out, what became of him? 1. Christ sought him (ver 35), and found him out. Sometimes men have found Christ out by their own searching, *e.g.*, Zacchæus and Bartimæus. But here Christ finds the man out, as He did the woman of Samaria, irrespective of His search. 2. Christ revealed Himself to him (ver. 35–37). 3. Christ was followed by him (ver. 38). (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Carping criticism:*—My hearers, this was a wretched business, was it not? It was a very poor business to go to the house of God to criticize a fellow-mortal who is sincerely trying to do us good. Was it Carlyle who spoke of the cricket as chirping amid the crack of doom? I am apt to think that many people are like that cricket; they go on with their idle chit-chat when Christ Himself is set before them on the cross. Assuredly this is poor work. I am hungry; I come to a banquet; but instead of feasting upon the viands I begin to criticize the dress of the waiters, abuse the arrangements of the banqueting-hall, and vilify the provisions. I shall go home as hungry as I came; and who will be blamed for it? The best criticism that you can possibly give of your friend's entertainment is to be hearty in partaking of it. The greatest honour that we can do to Christ Jesus is to feed upon Him, to receive Him, to trust Him, to live upon Him. Merely to carp and to question will bring no good to the most clever of you. How can it? It is a pitiful waste of time for yourself, and a trial of temper to others. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 25. **One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.**—Truly did Christ say, "I came not to send peace on the earth." Little did the man dream of the stir the miracle would make. So our blessings often get us into trouble, and become tests of character. The man here was tested as to whether he would stand by the truth. Let us not imagine that we can travel through life unchallenged. All the circumstances here are of a deeply interesting character. 1. Look at the parents. Sometimes you will find character transmitted with marvellous accuracy.

"Like parents, like children." Occasionally children degenerate from the type of their parents, and in others are a manifest improvement. This seems to have been the case with this young man. His parents were timid. This fear of man always brings a snare. What multitudes there are who dare not tell the truth or do the right for fear of the Gentiles, or the Church, society, or clique. There is no hope for them but in that perfect love which "casteth out fear." 2. Look at the Pharisees. They heard enough, surely, for conviction, but they were afraid of the conclusion, and hence sought to terrify the parents and extract a contradiction from the young man. Then they reviled him. Men must have keen eyes who can detect in these men any of that instinctive love of truth which is vaunted as the glorious attribute of humanity. "Men love darkness," &c., is the testimony alike of Scripture and experience. Men are much more anxious to have the truth on their side than to be on the side of truth. The mind does not turn to the truth as the flower turns to the sun. No one is very sanguine of dislodging men from a theology which screens them in their sins, or in separating them from an iniquitous traffic in which they are gaining wealth; and the more truth you put before them, the more they will hate both you and it. 3. Note, as in the case of the young man, that experimental evidence of religion is marked by—I. ITS CERTAINTY. "One thing I *know*." 1. It is too common to imagine that the term knowledge ought to be restricted to science, and is too strong to be introduced into the realm of religion, where we can only expect strong probability. But it would be strange if the greatest and most essential realities were the most doubtful. Men think of religion as something shadowy and impalpable. They can understand what can be placed on a table and seen and fingered, but to talk of strong and weak faith, high and low hopes, knowing whom you have believed, &c., as fanaticism. 2. It must be acknowledged that religious assurance does not rest on precisely the same grounds as in other relations. From the fact that religion involves the exercise of the moral faculties, its evidence must not be such as to overbear irresistibly these moral conditions. A religion that should make its evidence glare upon us like the sun would be no religion at all. If religion be the willing service of the soul, the soul must be left free in its exercise. To leave no room for doubt would be to reduce religion to the low level of material things. God is not as visible as His universe; but those who are willing to see Him come at length to believe in Him as firmly as in the universe, and just as they say every house is built by some man, whether they have seen him or not, so they exclaim, "He that built all things is God." 3. With this exclamation we affirm that the evidence which God has supplied to give the soul religious assurance is as abundant as any that He has given us on any matter. There is in the Word of God, and may be in our life, enough evidence to make our salvation the most assured thing in the universe. Other evidences are of great value. When men are showing the actual rooting of Christianity in the soil of history, it is for us to welcome their efforts. But this sort of evidence must be inaccessible to many. "To the poor the gospel is preached," and this preaching was meant to be its own light and proof, so that men should say, "One thing I know," &c. 4. When one carries his evidence within him he is thrice armed. Not that every strong feeling indicates faith. We may have a fanatical joy, and be the dupes of sentimentalisms and early prejudices. But where we can distinctly recognize that we are not what we once were; that God, who was scarcely at the circumference of our life, is now its centre; that Christ, who was once a root out of a dry ground, is not the altogether lovely, &c., this is evidence that can withstand the assaults of men and devils. II. ITS MODESTY. "*One* thing." He strictly stated the facts as he knew them. What is required of a witness is to testify what he knows, and no more. His thoughts and speculations will compromise his evidence and render it worthless. Had the man reasoned with the learned Pharisees they would have worsted him. He did not philosophize about the mode of his cure, because he knew nothing about it. And so with spiritual illumination. We can form no philosophy of salvation. It transcends our reason. It is accomplished in different ways, as in the case of Lydia and the jailor. Sometimes men know the time and instrumentality; sometimes they do not. The main thing is, Am I saved? Are these doctrines you cannot comprehend? Do men puzzle you with the mysteries of the Trinity, the origin of evil, Providence, prophecy? Oppose to them the one thing you know. 1. "One thing." It might seem a scanty knowledge, but it is with knowledge, as other things, its value is determined by what constitutes its object matter. You might possess a thousand jewels, but one Koh-i-noor would outweigh them all. 2. "One thing," but what a

thing—the one thing needful. (*E. Mellor, D.D.*) *The blind man's creed*:—1. A whole chapter is taken up with this poor man. This is unusual. Though an author be inspired, we can tell what he enjoys. An evangelist, as well as a Gibbon, betrays his interest and his sympathies. 2. In some unusual way the blind man was wrought into the plan of Christ's ministry. He had been born blind, and remained so that when Jesus passed by he might be ready to be healed by Him. All lives and events are wrought into that scheme. 3. The blind man was the first confessor. He was the sort of person that our Lord found it pleasant to do something for. He was ready to do what he could for himself, and what he could not do the Lord would do for him. Unlike Naaman, willingness was one characteristic of him, sturdiness was another. He spoke his mind at the risk of excommunication. His thoughts were distinct, and therefore his utterances were so. Crisp thinking makes crisp speaking. Let us look at his creed. I. IT WAS SHORT. A creed with one article. Soon it enlarged, but it all developed out of this "one thing," &c. It is no matter whether a creed be long or short, provided a man believes it as this man believes his. What would a Christian be capable of if he so believed the Apostles' Creed? If a creed is believed, the longer it is the better; otherwise the shorter the better. Creed is like stature, it has to be reached by the individual, by slow growth from a small beginning. The vitality of a seed will determine how much will come out of it. Every fire begins with a spark. Some of us are trying to believe too much; not more than is true, or more than we ought, but more than we have at present inward strength for. We may extinguish a fire by putting on too much fuel. II. IT WAS FOUNDED IN EXPERIENCE. "I know I see." You notice how close the connection between the creed and the confessor. His creed was not separable from himself. It was wrought in him, and so was one he could not forget. Whenever the sun shone or a star twinkled, he would feel his creed over again. *We* might be perplexed to tell what we believe if we had it not in print to refer to; but experience can dispense with type. We used to hear a good deal about experiencing religion: is the expression going because the thing is going? Christ works a work in me and I feel it. That is experiencing religion, although the feeling may be differently marked in different people. Even the truths of God to become my true creed have got to be reproduced in the soil of my own thinking and feeling. Faith is languid because experience is languid. The creed of our confessor began in one article, but it did not end there. Soon we hear him saying he believed that Christ was the Son of God. Our creeds have got to come out of our experience of God, and not out of our Prayer Book. That is a poor tree that looks and measures as it did a year ago. He is a poor believer who believes exactly as he did a year ago. III. IT WAS PERSONAL AND PECULIAR. Two living Christians cannot believe alike any more than two trees can grow alike. Two posts may. Two men only think alike, as they think not at all, but leave it to a third party to do it in their stead. Excessive doctrinal quietness implies lethargy. It is only dead men who never turn over. In nothing does a man need to be loyal to his individuality as in his religion. This is what makes the Bible so rich. The inspired writers did not throw away their peculiarities. Each man's experience will be characteristic, and so, then, must his creed be that grows out of it. A man's proper creed is the name we give to his individuality, when inspired by the Holy Ghost. Is it not a splendid tribute to Jesus that we can each of us come to Him with our peculiarity and find exactly that in Him which will meet and satisfy it? There is only one Christ, but He is like the sun, which shines on all objects and gives to each what helps it to be at its best. No two alike, the sea not the forest, &c., but each finding in the sun that which helps it to be itself perfectly. The poor man obtains from Him just what he needs, and the rich man, the Fijian, and the Greek, &c. IV. IT DID NOT EMBARRASS ITSELF WITH MATTER FOREIGN TO THE MAIN POINT. "Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not." The point with him was that he could see, not how he could see. Sight does not consist in understanding how we see, nor health in understanding the organs of the body, nor salvation in knowing how we are saved. The physician can cure an ignorant man as readily as a scholar, because his medicine does not depend on the intelligence of the patient; so Christ can be the physician of all, because salvation consists just simply in being saved. (*C. H. Parkhurst, D.D.*) *Experimental evidence*:—There is a man who is enjoying his food. He seems healthy and strong. He says he is so. You assure him, however, that his mode of life is wholly wrong. You have been reading some learned work on dietetics, and, full of theoretic wisdom, and you warn him that he is not observing the due proportions of nitrogen and carbon and

the other elements, and that, according to your principles, he ought to be out of health and ready to perish. With what calmness he listens to your serious homily, and smiles as he finishes his repast! He is but an ignorant man, knows nothing about the high-sounding names you have used to denote the chemical constituents of food, tells you that whether he is eating according to learned books or not he knows not, but one thing he knows, that what he does eat agrees with him, strengthens him, and enables him to do his work; and so he lets learned men and books talk on. A friend has been sick, and is now recovering. You ask him what medicine he has been taking, and on learning it you are astonished. On hearing who his physician is, you venture a doubt as to his qualifications, whereon the valetudinarian says, "Well, I know nothing about the properties of medicine, or the technical qualifications of the physician; but one thing I know, that every dose of the medicine has been to me like life from the dead." This was the spirit of the reply of the healed man. (*E. Mellor, D.D.*) *"We know" :*—One cannot but notice how constantly the phrase "we know" occurs. The parents of the man used it thrice. The Pharisees have it on their lips in their first interview with him—"We know that this man is a sinner." He answers, declining to affirm anything about the character of the Man Jesus, because he, for his part, "knows not," but standing firmly by the solid reality which he "knows" in a very solid fashion, that his eyes have been opened. So we have the first encounter between knowledge which is ignorant and ignorance that knows, to the manifest victory of the latter. Again, in the second round, they try to overbear the cool sarcasm with their vehement assertion of knowledge that God spake to Moses, but by the admission that even their knowledge did not reach to the determination of the question of the origin of Jesus' mission, lay themselves open to the sudden trust of keen-eyed, honest humility's sharp rapier-like retort. "Herein is a marvellous thing," that you *know-alls*, whose business it is to know where a professed miracle-worker comes from, "know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes." "Now *we know*" (to use your own words) "that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth." Then observe how, on both sides, a process is going on. The man is getting more and more light at each step. He begins with "A Man which is called Jesus." Then he gets to a "prophet," then he comes to "a worshipper of God, and one that does His will." Then he comes to "If this man were not of God," in some very special sense, "He can do nothing." These are his own reflections, the working out of the impression made by the fact on an honest mind, and because he had so used the light which he had, therefore Jesus gives him more, and finds him with the question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Then the man who had shown himself so strong in his own convictions, so independent, and hard to cajole or coerce, shows himself now all docile and submissive, and ready to accept whatever Jesus says—"Lord, who is He, that I might believe on Him?" That was not credulity. He already knew enough of Christ to know that he ought to trust Him. And to his docility there is given the full revelation; and he hears the words which Pharisees and unrighteous men were not worthy to hear: "Thou hast both *seen* Him—with these eyes to which I have given sight—and it is He that talketh with thee." Then intellectual conviction, moral reliance, and the utter prostration and devotion of the whole man bow him at Christ's feet. "Lord, I believe; and he worshipped Him." There is the story of the progress of an honest, ignorant soul that knew itself blind, into the illumination of perfect vision. And as He went upwards, so steadily and tragically, downwards went the others. For they had light, and they would not look at it; and it blasted and blinded them. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The power of a fact :*—This man, who is released from his native blindness by Christ, is one of the strongest characters which the Gospels paint for us about the person of our Lord. Follow him through the chapter, and through all its various situations and discussions, and you feel that he is the man of the most real manhood among them all—disciples, neighbours, parents, and Pharisees. Wherein does his great strength lie? What is it that makes him so real and firm a man? It is, I believe, the consciousness of a fact, a great fact, in his life's history. "One thing I know," he says, "that whereas I was blind, now I see. That is the great, wonderful event which has happened to me, which fills all my consciousness, before which everything else is little, which influences and colours everything, and the remembrance of which rules me." In every knot of men which clusters around him, with their little wondering questions of curiosity or malice, he simply tells his one great fact

We can hardly think of him as the former beggar. He is too imperious for a beggar now. 1. See how this man first appears after his cure by Christ. The neighbours and his former acquaintance gather around him, and begin to question as to his identity: "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some said, "Yes, this is he." Others, "He is like him." But he said, "I am he." There is the first effect of the coming of this great fact into his life, to make him honest in regard to self. It is as if he had said, "Here is a great event that has happened to me, unprecedented and marvellous. I am its subject. Such an attention has been bestowed upon me and my wants and my condition as I never heard of, as shows that I am the object of care to a Divine mind and power. A new value has been given to my nature. I have a new, stronger sense of self. Yes, I am he. I was blind, and now I see. I will not leave you to dispute my identity." That is the first great value of the consciousness of a fact in one's life-history, the new honest view of self and its value. Oh, my friends, the system which teaches us to know ourselves the best is that which brings the greatest fact into our history—the gospel and its fact. And yet multitudes of us go through life, while all about us, above us, and beneath us point to us, "Is not this one for whom Christ died? Is not this one of those wonderful saved human natures?" and we practically deny ourselves, because our consciousness is so dead. 2. Go on in the chapter to the next appearance of this man who knows one thing—the critical event of life. See how concentrated it makes him! They ask him, "Where is He, your healer?" He says, "I know not. All I know is this." To know one great fact and to be full of it makes him unwilling to guess a conjecture about other things. He either knows or he knows not. He has learnt what true knowledge is. We should save much stumbling and sorrow in life if we would not so often build the air-castles of conjecture and live in them as though their walls were of the solid masonry of real knowledge. The disaster is most serious in the spiritual sphere, when one does not know where to say, "I know," and where "I know not," when religion is only a broad field of conjecture. Many are anxious concerning such unessentials as the origin of evil, predestination, spiritualism, the exact nature of the future life, &c.; forgetful that, the one fact of practical religion—man's salvation and purification by Christ—being known, you may for the present safely say, "I know not," to other items which cannot be yet known in the same personal way. 3. The chapter goes on to furnish another instance of the strengthening value of this one possession of the healed man. It makes him a messenger, a continual repeater of his wonderful story, as often as he can relate it. Any man, however ignorant and humble, is listened to if he have a genuine event of life to tell. Facts never grow old. This man, the relater of a fact, represents Christianity. Christianity has gone on from age to age, from circle to circle, giving its simple, solid, eventful message—human redemption and enlightenment by Christ. 4. But, still again, as this man so full of his story tells it, the Pharisee says to him, "Give God the glory. Do not ascribe it to this Man. He is a sinner." They endeavour to hush his statement by a command, "Do not say, He (Jesus) opened mine eyes." That is to say, these men were striving to do what has been a very usual human infatuation—to legislate against events, by simple authority, as when the old Saxon king sat by the water's edge and with his kingly decree forbad the sea to come nearer or its tide to rise higher. These men did not appreciate the firmness of a fact. They did not know that commands were merely pebbles that rebounded shattered from its rocky undisturbed surface. All men fall into this error—good men legislating against an evil fact, evil men legislating against a good fact. To bid it be different is nothing at all. This is another value of the blind man's possession. He was instantly above all mere commands, all mere human assertion of power. This is the value of Christianity always—its exaltation of a man above earthly power. The world, by its persecution or force and might, says, "Deny Christ." But if you conceive of Christ and His gospel as the world's great fact, if His influence is an event in your own life, you will be able to answer, "How can I deny a fact? I should only stultify myself to do that. One thing I know, I was blind, and now I see. That will last after your command has been forgotten." There is no fear, no servility in this man, who is armed with his great conscious fact of life, beggar as he had been of old. The Pharisees cast him out. Ay, and the worse for them. They cast out the only man resting on solid truth, and remained upon their fictions. 5. Once more, as this man goes out into the outer cold solitariness of excommunication, yet happy and warm in the garment of the consciousness of that wonderful miracle, Christ meets him, and says, "Now you must believe on Me, for you have seen

Me." Think how it must have sounded, how the warm heart must have been doubly grateful for that word "seen." "Yes, I see at last, I see, I who was blind." It is as if Christ were echoing his own thoughts, his own one piece of all-absorbing knowledge. Now, that piece of knowledge must lead to belief. Fact must lead to faith. A fact merely means a thing done, and there must be a doer, greater in his invisibility than the great thing itself in its visibility. That is the faith of Christianity; it rests on real events, on actual things done. It does not ask faith with no basis. But it furnishes the greatest event of history as a foundation, an event happening to us and yet not through our means; and any man full of that great event will say, "I will and must believe in its doer." Just as the building which has the broadest base upon the ground can rise to the highest upward point in safety, so he who is fullest of the greatest seen fact of life is fullest also of the richest, most aspiring, most practical and most spiritul faith. (*Fred Brooks.*) *The experimental evidence of Christianity*:—Here we see a practical conviction of the claims of Christ set against speculative doubts of those claims; and so this dispute between the restored blind man and the Pharisees is a symbol of what often happens in the world. It would be easy to find men now who have doubts concerning Christianity born of intellectual inquiry, which they find it impossible to appease; while there is another class of persons who feel a confidence in Christianity born of inward experience, which it would be impossible to overthrow. And if two persons representing these two classes should meet and attempt a discussion, they could not understand each other, for their souls would not touch. The believing man could not confute nor dispel the doubts that would be reported to him by his opponent, because he had never felt those doubts, and could not judge of their validity. The sceptical man could receive no immediate aid from the practical conviction of the believer, for that conviction could not be translated from feeling into effective statement in words. One is troubled with doubts about the miracles; the other can tell only of the sweet peace of Christian duty and a sense of pardoned sin. One cannot see that the links are complete in the historical chain of evidence for the authenticity of the four Gospels; the other can only answer that the words of those Gospels have nourished his soul, and made life a more noble experience, and bereavement less painful, and the tomb less dark. One cannot be entirely sure that such a person as Christ ever lived; the other feels that it is his highest privilege to follow the spirit of the recorded Christ and to be a disciple of His published temper. One may anxiously be waiting for the last book by some great German theological scholar, to settle or confirm his wavering mind upon some point of the evidence; the other strengthens his faith by the daily responses that are vouchsafed to Christian prayers. One questions from a darkened intellect; the other answers from a sunlit soul. One cannot but say, from the force of the doubts which his philosophy has started, "As for this Man Jesus, I know not from whence He is"; the other replies, "Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that you know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes!" A truly Christian man, although he may never have looked into a volume of the evidence for the genuineness of the Christian records, feels a testimony for the Christian religion in his own heart which raises him above scepticism about the record. Jesus referred to this proof when He said (chap. vii. 17). Perhaps such a man had long been wholly selfish and worldly. But by being brought within the circle of Christian influences his best faculties have been awakened and developed. And now he sees life in a different light. The wisdom and goodness of God are suggested to him from every side of nature; it is a delight to cherish a sense of reliance upon the Deity and to feel at all times that God is the Father; the darkness of selfishness is exchanged for the deep satisfaction of devotion to duty, the slavery of passion for the peace of purity, the misery of fear for the joy of love, the fever thirst after worldly goods for the serene bliss of faith, and holy longings for the favour of God and the perfectness of Christ; existence is recognized as a spiritual privilege, death regarded as the door to immortality, and the universe becomes a temple for the worship of the Almighty. Find a heart in which this conversion of principles, feelings, and aims has been experienced, and you find a heart that feels an immovable conviction of the truth of Christianity. Its peace, its joys, its consciousness of spiritual health, its insight into a new world of which before it had no conception, all bear testimony to the reality of Christ's religion. (*T. Starr King.*) *Experience the condition of Church membership*:—When Moody, the great evangelist, wanted to join the Church in Boston, under the pastor of which he had been awakened, he was questioned about doctrines, and

seemed to know nothing about them. He could only say, "Whereas I was blind, now I see." He applied to this Church three times before he could get in. (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *An undoubted cure*:—George Moore once dislocated his shoulder, and after suffering great agony for weeks, all the surgeons failing to relieve him, he went to Mr. Hutton, the bone-setter, who in a few minutes gave him lasting relief. He was much taken to task then by his professional friends for going to a quack. "Well," said he, "quack or no quack, he cured me, and that was what I wanted. Whereas I was blind, now I see." (*S. Smiles.*) *Living Christians an argument for Christianity*:—An unhappy woman who has associated herself with a notorious atheist in this country, went down to a great northern city in England to deliver a lecture against Christianity, and the object of her able deliverance was to prove that Christ was a myth. A great crowd of working-men assembled to hear her, drawn together, as I believe they often are on such occasions, a good deal more by curiosity than by sympathy with the lecturer. When the lady had finished, a man got up at the other end of the room and said, "My friends, you know me. I have lived among you for twenty-five years. Twenty-five years ago I was a drunken brute. I used to beat my wife and make my home a hell upon earth. Now, this lady says that Jesus of Nazareth is a myth. I am not quite sure that I know what a myth is, but I suppose that she means that He never existed, or, at any rate, is not what we declare Him to be. Now, my friends, twenty-five years ago, when I was a drunken, wife-beating rascal, Jesus of Nazareth met me and opened my eyes, and I saw that I was a sinner, and He forgave my sins; and you know what a change took place in me then, and you know what sort of a man I have been for the last twenty-five years. Perhaps the lady will be kind enough to explain me." Down he sat. The lady said that she could not explain him, and she did not deliver the two other lectures in that course, I have no doubt that she was perfectly familiar with all that Strauss has written, and with what Renan says, and with the difficulties which the great men of science have suggested, and she went down to that northern city flushed with the anticipation of victory; but there was one very awkward fact which she had overlooked—that there happened to be living in that very city a well-known man whose eyes Jesus of Nazareth had opened twenty-five years ago. What is the use of making most difficult and endless inquiries into the origin of ancient documents until you have explained me? And standing here addressing some whom I shall never meet again until we meet at the judgment-seat, I present myself as a living witness. What you have to explain is me. My mind goes back twenty-three years, when, in a beautiful little village in Wales, Jesus of Nazareth opened my eyes, and I saw that He was my Saviour, and that God was my Father; and in that light I have been walking with perfect happiness for twenty-three years. That is what you have to explain, and you are in a very great difficulty, because there are so many of us. Two thousand years ago there was only one at Jerusalem, and they were able to dispose of him pretty quickly. They lost their tempers; and bullied him, and finally excommunicated him. But you cannot excommunicate us all. Let every man speak of that which he knows. (*H. P. Hughes, M.A.*) *Agnosticism and Christian experience*:—Is there a God? Don't know! Is the soul immortal? Don't know! If we should meet each other in the future world will we recognize each other? Don't know! This man proposes to substitute the religion of "Don't know" for the religion of "I know." "I know whom I have believed." "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Infidelity proposes to substitute a religion of awful negatives for our religion of glorious positives, showing right before us a world of reunion and ecstasy, and high companionship, and glorious worship, and stupendous victory; the mightiest joy of earth not high enough to reach to the base of the Himalaya of uplifted splendour awaiting all those who on the wings of Christian faith will soar toward it. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Conversion a real experience*:—This man knew that he could see. Possibly some of you have been decent people all your lives, and yet you do not know whether you are saved or not. This is poor religion. Cold comfort! Saved, and not know it! Surely it must be as lean a salvation as that man's breakfast when he did not know whether he had eaten it or not. The salvation which comes of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is conscious salvation. Your eyes shall be so opened that you shall no longer question whether you can see. He could see, and he knew that he could see. Oh, that you would believe in Jesus, and know that you have believed and are saved! Oh, that you might get into a new world, and enter upon a new state of things altogether! May that which was totally unknown to you before be made known to you at this hour by

Almighty grace. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Value of a personal knowledge of salvation*:—I recollect the lesson which I learned from my Sunday-school class: I was taught, if the other boys were not. Though yet a youth, I was teaching the gospel to boys, and I said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." One of them asked somewhat earnestly, "Teacher, are you saved?" I answered, "I hope so." The boy replied, "Teacher, don't you know?" As if he had been sent to push the matter home to me, he further inquired, "Teacher, have you believed?" I said, "Yes." "Well, then," he argued, "you are saved." I was happy to answer, "Yes, I am"; but I had hardly dared to say that before. I found that if I had to teach other people the truth I must know and believe its sweet result upon myself. I believe, dear friends, that you will seldom comfort others except it be by the comfort with which you yourself are comforted of God. (*Ibid.*) *The value of experience*:—A hundred thousand tongues may discourse to you about the sweetness of honey, but you can never have such knowledge of it as by taste. So a word full of books may tell you wonders of the things of God in religion, but you can never understand them exactly but by the taste of experience. (*N. Caussin.*) *Personal knowledge valuable*:—The first qualification, then, of a faithful witness is a personal knowledge of the facts to which he witnesses. If a witness in a court of justice begins to talk of what he thinks, feels, and believes, "Oh! hush, hush," says the judge, "we can't have that; we want to know what you know—what you have seen, heard, and felt of this case;" and these are the sort of witnesses Jesus Christ wants, who get up and say, "I know!" That is what the Lord Jesus Christ wants—people who know, who experience, who realize, who live the things they witness to. This is what the world is dying for—people who can get up and say, "I know." **What did He to thee.**—*The quibbles of infidelity*:—Pertness and ignorance may ask a question in three lines, which it will cost learning and ingenuity thirty pages to answer. When this is done the same question will be triumphantly asked again next year, as if nothing had ever been written on the subject; and as people in general, for one reason or other, like short objections better than long answers, in this mode of disputation, if it can be styled such, the odds must ever be against us; and we must be content with those of our friends, who have honesty and erudition, candour and patience, to study both sides of the question (chap. x. 25). (*Bp. Horne.*) Infidelity can only go round and round the same topics in an eternal circle, without advancing one step further. It produces no new forces: it only brings those again into the field which have been so often baffled, maimed, and disabled, that in pity to them they ought to be dismissed, and discharged from any further service (Acts xix. 28, 34). (*J. Seed.*) **Will ye also be His disciples?**—Bold irony this—to ask these stately, ruffled, scrupulous Sanhedrists. Whether he was really to regard them as anxious and sincere inquirers about the claims of the Nazarene prophet! Clearly here was a man whose presumptuous honesty would neither be bullied into suppression, or corrupted into a lie. He was quite impracticable. So, since authority, threats, blandishments had all failed, they broke into abuse, "Thou art His disciple," &c. "Strange," he replied, "that you should know nothing of a man who has wrought such a miracle as not even Moses wrought; and we know that neither he nor anyone else could have done it unless he was from God." What! Shades of Hillel and Shammai! Was a mere blind beggar, a natural ignorant heretic, altogether born in sins, to be teaching *them*? Unable to control any longer their transport of indignation, they flung him out of the hall, and out of the synagogue. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) **Thou art His disciple.**—I. THE CHARACTER OF A TRUE DISCIPLE. This was the first name attached to Christ's followers. It is a correlative to His title, "Teacher": hence they who received His instructions were His disciples. And when they obtained the more distinctive name of their Master, this was recognized, "The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch." Names are but arbitrary signs of things, and are really characteristic no further than as the things themselves exist. The Christians were no worse for being called Nazarenes, and Judas was no better for being called an apostle. Hence the necessity of distinguishing between the proper and the lax use of words. A man may be a disciple universally or really. Such a distinction is coeval with the use of the term. "Many of His disciples went back," "Ye are My disciples *indeed*." A true disciple—1. Believingly embraces the doctrines of Christ. They are received into His heart as the basis of conduct; they are the mould which gives its impression to the character. Such doctrines as credible, require faith; as authoritative, bind; as graciously given, are to be used for the benefit of a guilty and erring mind. So close is the affinity between Christ

and His truth, that believing His Word is believing in Him. But it is one thing to believe the gospel to be true, and another to believe its necessity to our own well-being; the former will make a man a disciple in name, the latter in truth. 2. Cherishes an ardent affection for Christ's person. Faith is His word by realizing to the mind His great excellencies and gifts, engages its esteem, desire, and delight. It opens the springs of gratitude and awakens the purest sensibilities. This love is a master grace, leading a train of other virtues, which receive their highest worth from it. 3. Devotes himself to the cause of Christ—giving himself up to Christ's disposal—living or dying. This devotedness includes self-denial, confession of Christ before men, lively activity in extending His kingdom. II. THE NECESSITY AND IMPORTANCE OF BEING A TRUE DISCIPLE. 1. From the absolute requirement of God, "My son give me thy heart." Everything short of this is robbery. He who delays obedience holds out his enmity against God; and can this succeed? 2. From a principle of consistency. Shall God be treated as we deem it base for man to be treated? In common affairs mere outward respect is insulting. With whom do men trifle when they assume the form of godliness without a care of the power. 3. From a regard to our safety and peace. (*Congregational Remembrancer.*)

Ver. 31. **Now we know that God heareth not sinners.**—*True and not true* :—1. It is ill to wrench passages of the Bible out of their context, and treat them as infallible scripture when they are only sayings of men. By acting thus foolishly we could prove that there is no God (Psa. xiv. 1), that God hath forgotten His people (Isa. xlix. 14), that Christ was a winebibber (Matt. ix. 19), and that we ought to worship the devil (Matt. iv. 19). This will never do. We must inquire who uttered the sentence before we venture to preach from it. 2. Our text is the saying of a shrewd blind man who was far from being well instructed. It is to be taken for what it is worth; but by no means to be regarded as Christ's teaching. The Pharisees evidently admitted its force, and were puzzled by it. It was good argument as against them. It is true or false as we may happen to view it. I. IT IS NOT TRUE IN SOME SENSES. We could not say absolutely that God heareth not sinners, for—1. God does hear men who sin, or else He would hear no one: for there is no man that sinneth not (1 Kings viii. 46); not a saint would be heard, for even saints are sinners. 2. God does sometimes hear and answer unregenerate men. (1) To show that He is truly God, and make them own it (Psa. cvi. 44). (2) To manifest His great compassion, whereby He even hears the ravens' cry (Psa. cxlvii). (3) To lead them to repentance (1 Kings xxi. 27). (4) To leave them without excuse (Exod. x. 16, 17). (5) To punish them, as when He sent quails to the murmurers (Numb. xi. 33), and gave Israel a king (1 Sam. xii. 17), in His anger. 3. God does graciously hear sinners when they cry for mercy. Not to believe this were—(1) To render the gospel no gospel. (2) To deny facts. David, Manasseh, the dying thief, the publican, the prodigal, confirm this testimony. (3) To deny promises (Isa. xl. 7). II. IT IS TRUE IN OTHER SENSES. The Lord does not hear sinners as He hears His own people. 1. He hears no sinner's prayer apart from the mediation of our Lord Jesus (1 Tim. ii. 5; Eph. ii. 18). 2. He will not hear a wicked, formal, heartless prayer (Prov. xv. 29). 3. He will not hear the man who wilfully continues in sin, and abides in unbelief (Jer. xiv. 12; Isa. i. 15). 4. He will not hear the hypocrite's mockery of prayer (Job xxvii. 9). 5. He will not hear the unforgiving (Mark xi. 25, 26). 6. He will not hear even His people when sin is wilfully indulged, and entertained in their hearts (Psa. lxvi. 18). 7. He will not hear those who refuse to hear His Word, or to regard His ordinances (Prov. xxviii. 9). 8. He will not hear those who harden their hearts against the monitions of His Spirit, the warnings of His providence, the appeals of His ministers, the strivings of conscience, and so forth. 9. He will not hear those who refuse to be saved by grace, or who trust in their own prayers as the cause of salvation. 10. He will not hear sinners who die impenitent. At the last He will close His ear to them, as to the foolish virgins, who cried, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" (Matt. xxv. 11). Conclusion: One or two things are very clear and sure. 1. He cannot hear those who never speak to Him. 2. He has never yet given any one of us a flat refusal. 3. He permits us at this moment to pray, and it will be well for us to do so, and see if He does not hear us. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The return of prayers*:—It is difficult to determine which is the greater wonder, that prayer should produce such vast and blessed effects, or that we should be unwilling to use such an instrument for procuring them. The first declares God's goodness, the second our folly and weakness. That "God heareth

not sinners" was a proverbial saying and supported by Scripture (Job xxvii. 9; Psa. lxvi. 18; Prov. i. 28; Isa. i. 15; Jer. xiv. 10, 12). The proposition may be considered—1. According to the purpose of the blind man: God heareth not sinners in that they are sinners, though a sinner may be heard in his prayer to confirm his faith. God hears him not at all in that wherein he sins; for God is truth and cannot confirm a lie. 2. In a manner that concerns us more nearly; *i.e.*, if we be not good men, our prayers will do us no good. God turns away from the unwholesome breathings of corruption. I. WHOSOEVER PRAYS WHILE HE IS IN A STATE OF SIN, HIS PRAYER IS AN ABOMINATION TO GOD. This truth was believed by the ancient world; hence the appointment of baptisms and ceremonial expiations. 1. It is an act of profanation for an unholy person to handle holy things and offices. 2. A wicked person, while he remains in that condition, is not a natural object of pity. 3. Purity is recommended by the necessary appendages of prayer—(1) fasting, (2) almsgiving, (3) and by the various indecencies which are prohibited, not only for their general malignity but because they hinder prayer, such as unmercifulness, which unfits us to receive pardon for our own trespasses; lust and uncleanliness which defile the temple and take from us all affection to spiritual things. 4. After these evidences of Scripture and reason there is less necessity to take notice of those objections derived from the prosperity of evil persons. If such ask things hurtful and sinful if God hears them not it is in mercy; but there are many instances of success in improper prayers which have turned out to the disadvantage of the petitioners. II. MANY TIMES GOOD MEN PRAY, AND NOT SINFULLY, BUT IT RETURNS EMPTY. Because although the man may be, yet the prayer is not in proper disposition. Prayers are hindered—1. By anger, or a storm in the spirit of him who prays. Prayer is an action or state of intercourse exactly contrary to the character of anger, its spirit being gentle and meek, and its influences calm and soothing. 2. By indifference and easiness of desire. He that is cold and tame in his prayers has not tasted the delight of religion and the goodness of God; he is a stranger to the secrets of His kingdom. What examples we have of fervency in Scripture, more particularly in the case of Christ and St. Paul! Under this head may be placed cautions against—(1) Want of attention, which is an effect of lukewarmness and infirmity, which is only remedied as our prayers are made zealous and our infirmities are strengthened by the Spirit. (2) Want of perseverance. When our prayer is for a great matter and a great necessity, how often do we pursue it only by chance or humour; or else our choice is cool as soon as it is hot, and our prayer without fruit because the desire does not last. If we would secure the blessing we must pray on until it comes. 3. By the want of their being put up in good company. For sometimes an obnoxious person has so secured a mischief that those who stay with him share his punishment as the sailors did Jonah's. But when good men pray with one heart, and in a holy assembly, when they are holy in their desires and lawful in their authority, then their prayers ascend like the hymns of angels. III. WHAT DEGREES AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF PIETY ARE REQUIRED TO MAKE US FIT TO BE INTERCESSORS FOR OTHERS AND TO PRAY FOR THEM WITH PROBABLE EFFECT. No prayers, of course, can prevail with regard to an indisposed person; as the sun cannot enlighten a blind eye. 1. Those who pray for others should be persons of extraordinary piety. This is exemplified in the case of Job (xlii. 7, 8) and Phinehas. It was also a vast blessing entailed on the posterity of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; because they had great religion they had great power with God. A man of little piety cannot water another man's garden and bless it with a gracious shower; he must look to himself. But what an encouragement this is to a holy life; what an advantage it may be to our relatives, country, &c. How useless and vile the man whose prayers avail not for the meanest person! And yet every one in a state of grace may intercede for others, a duty prescribed throughout Scripture. 2. We must take care that as our piety, so also our offices be extraordinary. He that prays to reverse a sentence of God, &c., must not expect great effects from a morning or evening collect, or from an honest wish. But in our importunity we must not make our account by a multitude of words, but by measures of the spirit, holiness of soul, justness of the desire, and the usefulness of the request to God's glory. We must not be ashamed or backward in asking, but our modesty to God in prayer has no measures but these—self-distrust, confidence in God, humility, reverence and submission to God's will. These being observed our importunity should be as great as possible, and it will be likely to prevail. 3. It is another great advantage that he who prays be a person of superior dignity or employment. For God has appointed some person by their callings to pray for

others, as fathers for their children, ministers for their flocks, kings for their subjects. And it is well this is so, since so few understand their duties to themselves and others. But if God heareth not princes, of what necessity is it that such should be holy. IV. THE SIGNS OF OUR PRAYERS BEING HEARD. This requires little observation; for if our prayers be according to the warrant of God's Word, and if we ask according to God's will what is right and profitable, we may rely on the promises, and be sure that our prayers are heard. (*Jeremy Taylor.*)

Ver. 32. **Since the world began it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.**—This was quite true at the time. In 1728, Dr. Cheselden, of St. Thomas's Hospital, for the first time gave sight to a man who had been blind from his youth up, and since then couching has been several times performed on those who were born blind. With regard to this man note—I. THE PECULIARITY OF HIS CASE. 1. It was not the case of want of light; that might have been remedied. There are millions who have no light, and while we cannot give men eyes we can give them light. There are children of God who walk in darkness and are immured in Doubting Castle. May it be ours by explanation and example to illumine them. 2. This was not a case of accidental blindness. Here again man's help might have been of service. Persons who have been struck with blindness have been recovered. We can do much in cases where blindness is traceable to circumstances, *e.g.*, to prejudice, which might be removed by a wise and tender statement of the truth. 3. The man was blind from his birth. His was a blindness of nature which, therefore, baffled all surgical skill. (1) Since the beginning of the world no one has opened the eyes of one afflicted with sin. Man's understanding is blind because—(*a*) His whole nature is disordered. His other faculties act upon his mind and prevent it operating in a proper manner. (*b*) His natural pride and self-reliance revolt against the gospel. (*c*) He judges spiritual things by the senses, and with as much success as a man who measures the heavens with a foot rule. (*d*) He is at a distance from God and consequently does not believe in Him. If we lived near to God our understanding would be clarified by its contact with truth. (2) Some imagine that they can open the sinner's blind eye—(*a*) By rhetoric. As well hope of sing a stone into sensibility. Sinners have been dazzled a thousand times by the pyrotechnics of oratory and have remained as blind as ever. (*b*) By argument; but reason alone gives no man the power to see the light of heaven. (*c*) By earnest gospel appeals; but how many in our congregations are proof against these! II. THE SPECIALITIES OF THE CURE. Not of this man's only. 1. It is usually accomplished by the most simple means. It is very humbling to a preacher to find that God cares little for him or his sermon, and that a stray remark of his in the street is what God has blessed. Souls are not usually converted by bodies of divinity and theological discussions. When David put off Saul's armour and took the sling and the stone he slew the giant. We must keep to the simple gospel plainly preached. The clay and the spittle were not an artistic combination, yet by these and a wash in Siloam eyes were opened. 2. In every case it is a Divine work. No eye is ever opened to see Jesus except by Jesus. Blindness of soul yields only to the voice which said, "Let there be light." 3. It is often instantaneous, and when the eye is opened it frequently sees as perfectly as if it had been always seeing, though in other cases it is gradual. 4. It brings new sensations, and therefore should surprise us. Do you remember the first sight you had of Christ? There is fixed in the memories of some of us the first time we saw the sea, or the Alps, but these were nothing. It is not surprising that young converts should get excited. 5. It is very clear to the man himself. Others may doubt but not he. 6. The restored faculty is capable of abundant use. The man who could see the Pharisees could by and by see Jesus. Once give a man spiritual sight and he has a capacity to see Divine mysteries. III. THE CONDITION OF THE HEALED MAN. 1. He had strong impressions in favour of his Healer. First He was a prophet, then the object of worship. No man has his eyes opened without intense love for Jesus, and without believing in His Deity, and worshipping Him as the Son of God. 2. He becomes from that moment a confessor of Christ, the first of his class. If the Lord has opened our eyes we shall not hesitate to say so. 3. He became an advocate for Christ, and an able one, for the facts which were his arguments baffled his adversaries. You will never meet infidelity except with such facts. 4. He was driven out of the synagogue. One of the worst things that can happen as far as this world is concerned is to know too much. If you will bravely keep abreast of

the times you may be tolerated, but if you get ahead of it you must expect ill-treatment. 5. Christ found him. What a blessing to lose the Pharisees and to find the Saviour! What a mercy when the world casts us out! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 35–38. **Jesus heard that they had cast him out and . . . said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?**—*The verdict of Christ on the whole case:*—I. THE DEMAND CHRIST MAKES UPON THE HUMAN HEART—Faith (ver. 35). 1. Personal. It must be the trust of the individual soul. 2. Immediate. It must be exercised now without delay. 3. Intelligent. It must be directed to the right object—the Son of God. II. THE HOMAGE CHRIST ACCEPTS FROM THE HUMAN HEART—Worship (ver. 38). 1. Adoring: more than outward courtesy and formal obeisance—even the prostration of the spirit. 2. Believing: rooted in and proceeding from the soul's faith in Christ. 3. Joyous. III. THE WORK CHRIST PERFORMS ON THE HUMAN HEART—Judgment (ver. 39–41). 1. Indirect. It follows as an inevitable result of His presenting Himself as the Light of the World. 2. Real. It infallibly results in—(1) Separating men into two classes—"the not seeing" and "the seeing." (2) Retributively acting upon them in accordance with their ascertained characters and dispositions. 3. Progressive. This work is going on as truly and efficiently as when Christ was upon earth. 4. Permanent. Lessons: 1. The importance of ascertaining in which group one is placed by Christ's judicial work. 2. The necessity of faith corresponding in fulness to the revelation of Himself which Christ has given. 3. The propriety of making Christ the object as well as the ground and medium of our worship. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The excommunicated man:*—I. THE AFFLICTIVE SITUATION OF THIS MAN—cast out. When he was a blind beggar he was an object of compassion; but much more now. At that time he would have the favour of friends and the advantage of religion—but he was now an outcast from society and the Church. II. THE ATTENTIVE REGARD OF CHRIST. 1. Jesus heard. His ear is always open to cases of distress. 2. Jesus found. "The Lord knoweth them that are His," and where they are, and how they are. III. THE INTERESTING CONVERSATION WHICH PASSED BETWEEN THEM. 1. The question implying the indispensableness of faith. 2. The reply. (1) Natural "Who is He." (2) Sincere. "That I might believe." 3. The response suggesting the proper object for restored vision. IV. THE PLEASING RESULT. 1. The man's faith. 2. His open declaration of his faith. 3. His worship. Reflections. 1. Men may suffer for the sake of Christ. 2. Those who do suffer lose nothing by it. 3. To act honestly according to the light we have is the way to be favoured with greater illumination. 4. When we are most earnest in our inquiries after Christ, then He is nearest to us. (*F. Kidd.*) *The important question:*—I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION. 1. It is of great extent and includes things of the highest moment. It is not am I a Churchman or a Dissenter, &c., but am I a believer in Christ, regenerate or unregenerate? a friend of God or His enemy? on my way to heaven or hell? 2. We are apt to take it for granted that we believe in Christ without sufficient evidence. But if we hate to be imposed upon in little matters let us not impose upon ourselves in this. Is it a thing of inheritance or of conscious exercise? 3. The decision of this question can be in no way hurtful to us, but may be much to our advantage. If we do not believe and are not saved, now is the accepted time, believe now. 4. The question will be decided some day. Whether a believer or not will be ascertained at the judgment-seat. II. ITS APPLICATION. 1. Have we ever been convinced of sin? We must know that we are diseased ere we trust the physician. 2. Have we ever been stripped of our vain hopes and carnal confidences? Till we have we shall not see the necessity of Christ. 3. What is our disposition with respect to real godliness? If we do not love holiness we shall not believe (1 Tim. i. 15). 4. Is Christ exceedingly precious to our esteem? An infallible evidence of saving faith (1 Pet ii. 7). 5. Have we peace (Rom. v. 1). (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *The test question:*—I. THE QUESTION IN RELATION TO CHRIST. 1. We have before us a distinct personality. 2. The Divinity of Christ is the resting place of faith. How miserable the attempts to reduce Him to a teacher or martyr! II. THE QUESTION IN RELATION TO OURSELVES. It is here—1. We resolve all doubts and find a firm foundation for our faith. 2. We find relief and rest. 3. We commune with God. 4. We advance towards the consummation of our life. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *The supreme inquiry:*—I. THE NATURE OF THE BELIEF. Not mere intellectual assent to some truth; not belief requiring learning or research. Jesus addressed a blind beggar. II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION. The Jews affirmed that the man was "born in his sins." Jesus asked nothing about his pedigree, creed, or past

life. 1. He requires only an answer to this one question. 2. It is a question that must be answered prior to any progress in spiritual life. It is life's watershed. 3. On its answer hangs the fate of eternity. III. THE PERSONAL CHARACTER OF THE QUESTION. 1. Every man must have it. 2. Each man must answer it for himself. IV. BUT ONE OF TWO ANSWERS CAN BE GIVEN. Yes or no. You cannot evade it. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *Believing on the Son of God*:—This question was addressed to one solitary man. Jesus comes into personal contact with single individuals. "Thou." "Whom?" It was a large question, especially when the man was smarting under a bitter penalty. Yet Jesus knew his want and met him at the point of conscious need, ready to more than compensate him. I. WHAT IS FAITH? Note—1. Its simplicity. Whatever mysteries there may be in the Bible, this about believing is very plain. A converted Hindoo when asked what it was, replied, "The heart clasping Jesus Christ." 2. Complete surrender to Christ. The frank simplicity of a little child, giving itself entirely into the hands of the Father, full dependence in the Father's power and love, a simple trusting and resting without concern about the next step, and the next. But people say that this is an irrational thing and altogether unmanning. Not so; you invest your money in the Government Funds, and would be surprised at any question of the reasonableness of the act, and yet you do not think about the nature of those funds. You hold a Government security, and feel perfectly safe in trusting the source of your income in the hands of the State. You decide to cross the Atlantic; the sea-worthiness of the vessel and the skill of the captain are the only matters of concern. Assured of these you give yourselves entirely into the hands of the officer. But is not this irrational. Ought you not first to study ship-building and navigation, and then, standing on your manliness, persist in taking a share in the management of the vessel? Now this surrendering of self to Christ is God's plan of saving humanity and conveying it to heaven. 3. This believing in the Son of God is a saving act. Not that faith itself saves, however. It is the link that connects to Christ, who saves. It is not the door but the hand that knocks; not the sun but the eye that sees the sun. 4. This faith is elevating in its tendency. There is, first of all, a breaking down of poor, proud self, and then a giving back, not of the old self in its original impurity, but renewed, cleansed and arrayed in the robe of righteousness. And in answer to this faith a tide of gracious influences sets in which gives the soul beauty, richness, expansion, dignity, making the believer a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. 5. This faith is life—the highest thing that can be said about it. This life is a conscious, healthy, happy, ever-growing life. II. THE OBJECT OF FAITH—"The Son of God." 1. A person, not a system. Jesus did not ask the man about his former life or religious whereabouts, nor did He inform him about His doctrines or the nature of His kingdom. One thing only is of moment—faith in Him. All else will follow from that. And the man was concerned about nothing else. "Who is He?" One may have a clear belief in Christianity and yet be devoid of saving faith. He may be able to prove it Divine and yet know nothing of its salvation. Notice the "on," suggesting dependence, trust, reliance, which is something more than "in." 2. Christ is every way adapted as the object of faith. One with the Father and yet submissive as a Son. We must keep close to this truth, or Christ's sacrifice is deprived of its power. If Christ is not Divine, He is a sinner, and if a sinner, in the least degree, He cannot atone for others, but needs atonement for Himself. When a great good is promised, the question is, Has the promiser the power and will to redeem his engagement? The New Testament is emphatic on these two qualities in the Son of God. All power is given unto Him, and He says to the wide world, "Come unto Me." III. CHRIST IS THE APPOINTED AND ONLY OBJECT OF FAITH. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin," and what need we of any other? for the claims of heaven and needs of earth are met. 1. This faith is the only source of life to the Church. Architecture, music, wealth, fashion, talent, &c., will not keep a church alive. 2. This faith is the secret of Church aggression. 3. This faith is the spring of the Church's beauty. (*J. H. Higgins.*) *Faith reasonable*:—Faith is a plant which is intended to rise upward by twining round the pillar of evidence. (*Bp. Alexander.*) *An important question*:—I. THE NATURE OF THIS QUESTION. Faith implies—1. Implicitly to credit the records of God concerning His Son. 2. Genuine trust in Him, sealed by the Holy Spirit. 3. Divine reception of Him. 4. It is also to realize His gracious presence in the soul in the lively exercise of every Christian duty. II. HELPS TOWARDS ANSWERING THIS QUESTION. 1. Faith is a Divine principle, and is Divinely bestowed. 2. Faith is a self-evident principle, and if you believe on

Christ you are assured of it. 3. Faith is a victorious principle, and conquers all adverse powers. 4. Faith is a practical principle, and evinces itself in believers. III. REASONS WHY AN ANSWER SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THIS QUESTION 1. This question is most important, both from the person proposing it, and the tremendous consequences connected therewith. 2. This question is personal. 3. This question is simple, and not complex; so that under the Divine and covenant teaching of the Holy Ghost, a child may understand it. 4. This question is doubtful, because all men have not faith. (*T. B. Baker, M.A.*) *A vital question:*—I. THE QUESTION PROPOSED—1. Relates to Christ as the eternal Son of God. 2. Refers to faith in Christ as the Son of God. 3. Relates to each individually. II. SOME EVIDENCES OF BEING ENABLED TO ANSWER THE QUESTION. If we really believe we shall—1. Remember the means of bringing us into faith. 2. Have the Spirit in our souls. 3. Highly esteem and value Christ. 4. Enjoy peace and comfort of mind. 5. Be filled with love to God and the Church. 6. Be subject to the authority of Christ. III. THE PERSONS TO WHOM THE WORDS MAY BE ADDRESSED. 1. To all who have been baptized in the name of Christ. 2. To all who only profess Christianity. 3. To all who manifest much zeal in the cause of Christ. 4. Let Christians inquire after the evidences of their faith. 5. Let Christians pray to grow in faith. 6. He that hath not faith must perish. 7. All the blessings of the gospel are given to faith. Improvement: (1) The true believer is in an infallible state of salvation now. (2) The true believer is in possession of internal assurance. (3) The true believer is in possession of internal peace. (4) The true believer will live with Christ in glory. (*Ibid.*) *Faith in Christ:*—A Christian merchant had in his employ a man awakened to a sense of sin, and earnestly desiring salvation, but stumbled at this believing on the Son of God—its very simplicity was a problem. His employer sent him a note, asking him to his office on a certain day, at a given hour. Promptly, at the specified time, the man appeared at the office. His master looked up in feigned surprise, and said, "Well, James, did you want to see me?" "Your note, sir," said the servant, showing him the missive. "Oh, yes, my note, then you really believed I was sincere when I sent you that?" "Of course I did," said James emphatically, but with surprise. "Then you really thought I would keep this appointment." "I had no doubt about it," again with surprise. "Well, here is a strange thing," said the merchant, "I sent you this one short note asking for this interview, and you promptly respond with the utmost confidence, and yet Jesus Christ has given you so many invitations to go to Him, and accept His pardon, and you will not, because of unbelief." "Is it like that?" said the man, light breaking in upon his mind. "Just like that, James. Go to Christ as promptly and as trustingly as you have come to me, and pardon and peace are yours;" and, acting on this simple plan, the servant found the Son of God as his Saviour. (*J. H. Higgins.*) *The unknown Christ:*—1. The man is cast out, but he carries with him the immovable conviction of ver. 33. Every power for good in this world is of God, whether in the form of material science, conquering disease, and lightening labour; or in that of political and social reform, purifying the polity of nations and making the brotherhood of man more real; or in that of spiritual teaching, stirring deeper fountains and casting higher lights. Let us believe that "every good and perfect gift cometh from God." 2. The rumour of his expulsion reaches Christ, and indignation at the injustice done, and yearnings after a soul so true and simple, unite in urging Him instantly to seek the despised outcast. And so through the great Jerusalem of the world Christ is still passing, seeking every brave and honest witness to the vision he as yet sees. Be faithful to your sense of duty at whatever cost, and Christ, though unseen, is following you to find you. 3. Christ perceived that the man was able to bear a purer light than that of nature, that his trust in divine goodness had prepared him for the manifestation of the life of God. So He puts the question, "Dost thou believe," &c., and lifts the man's thoughts above the circumstances of the hour. There is no dwelling on the recent miracle, no indulgence in invective against the Pharisees, no discussion of the man's prospects. It was as if a little crowded, noisy room were changed for the vastness and hush of a great cathedral. Let us be thankful to the Master who is still arresting us as we go on our selfish, earthly way with the same tranquilizing, purifying question. 4. Certain underlying beliefs are assumed in the words of our Lord. (1) The fatherhood of God. The duty here is no vague abstraction. Most religions have a faint glimmering of Christ's truth—but it was left for Christ to start the cry in the prodigal, "I will arise and go to my father." (2) But Christ claimed to be in an unique sense the Son of God, and the

man so understood Him. Messianic ideas were started in the man's mind by the question, and his thoughts would go back to that fourth form which was seen walking in the Babylonian furnace. He, therefore, simply asks, "Who is He," &c. The tones of our Lord's voice probably revealed who the questioner was, for this was the first time the man had seen Jesus. 5. Spiritually the man was in a quickened state. His fidelity to truth had been manifested amidst sore temptations. His religious convictions had been forced into practical assertion. And now, whilst his ears are yet ringing with the taunts of sacerdotal pride, and whilst he is trembling with righteous indignation against those who blasphemed goodness, this wondrous stranger demands faith in Him for whose coming every pious Israelite yearned. All that the man had ever believed and felt now welled up into that "Who is He." Have we not here the attitude of many honest and reverent thinkers to-day in the presence of the great problems of religion and life? The great question now is, "What think ye of Christ?" And the answer is gathering volume and distinctness which confesses Him the Son of God and the Son of Man. The inspiring purpose of the man was "that I may believe," and the same purpose underlies much of modern intellectual restlessness. 6. "Thou hast both seen Him," &c., was the reply of Christ. It is possible then to be in the presence of Christ, and yet not know Him to be the Son of God. The world is full of Christ's presence. (1) Hospitals, orphanages, &c., witness that Jesus is still passing through the crowded highways of modern life. These spring from the seeds which Christ sowed; yet there are those who fail to recognize Him. (2) Still more is Christ a living presence in those He sends forth on missions of mercy at which the world is filled with reverent wonder. (3) And shall we not claim for the Church the indwelling presence of her Lord. 7. But there are grounds for the hope that all who approach in the spirit of the man born blind, evidences of Christ's power and presence, will say with him, "Lord, I believe." (*J. R. S. Harrington.*) *Relationship with Christ and its obligations*:—I. THOSE WHO ARE IN ANY WAY CONNECTED WITH CHRIST ARE UNDER OBLIGATIONS TO FAITH IN HIM WHICH CORRESPOND WITH THAT CONNECTION. This man was connected with Christ—(1) By the reception of sight—a dispensation of providence. (2) By his defence of Christ against the cavillings of the Pharisees. This was before he was united to Christ by faith and formed the basis of Christ's appeal. So now—1. There are those who possess temporal advantages which may be traced directly to Christ. (1) We are born in a land distinguished by liberty, knowledge, civilization, benevolence; but once there were no such things. All who are born on British soil owe their national advantages to Christ. Hence we may with propriety ask, "Thou who art reaping the benefits which Christ, by the establishment of His kingdom, has conferred upon your native country, 'Dost thou believe'"? &c. (2) Take the case of pious households. How much are the children of godly parents, and servants of godly masters indebted to the Saviour. By gratitude such seem to be bound to inquire after the Son of God, and to regard Him as their Lord and Saviour. 2. There are those who identify themselves with the kingdom of Christ. This man might have enjoyed the miracle, and yet never have defended Christ and brought trouble upon himself. But he could not do this, and so was identified by the Pharisees with the cause of Christ. On this ground Christ made His appeal. "The Pharisees by your conduct imagine you have this faith; have you?" And are there not men who defend Christianity against the infidel and the scoffer, Christ's Deity against the Socinian, spiritual Christianity against Popery, who are not yet connected by the faith which saves to Christ? To such, therefore, we appeal. If gratitude would seem in one case consistency in the other should constrain. Is it consistent to be mixed up with Christianity nominally? Is it right to be thought a disciple of Christ without believing on Him? II. THE COURSE WHICH THOSE WHO ARE EXTERNALLY CONNECTED WITH CHRIST SHOULD PURSUE. 1. The man began to inquire, and inquiry is the course for those to whom the narrative applies. For what? not for a creed, an *ism*, ordinances, church government, but for Christ. We may know the former which will not save, and not know the latter who will. 2. For what end are we to inquire? Not for the qualification of curiosity or so as to be able to dispute about theology. All truth is revealed not to be speculated upon, not to be judged by reason and be either rejected or received; but for faith "that I might believe." III. THE FACILITIES WHICH SUCH POSSESS IN THE PURSUIT OF THIS COURSE. "Thou hast seen Him," &c. We have present access to Christ, not, it is true, as this man had, but He is here as really in His spiritual presence. 1. He is here in the testimony we have in the Bible concerning Him. You may find patriarchs, prophets, evangelists, and apostles revealing Christ. 2.

Go to converted men, there you have Christ's image, faint and imperfect, it is true, but real; ask them what they have tasted and felt concerning Christ. 3. You have access to the ministry of the gospel which is the ministry of Christ, "for we preach not ourselves," &c. 4. The Holy Ghost was given to testify of Christ. You have not to cry, "O! that I knew where I might find Him." In all these ways "Thou hast both seen Him," &c. IV. THE END WHICH THOSE WHO PURSUE THIS COURSE WILL ATTAIN. 1. Faith in Christ must follow this inquiry, "Lord, I believe." "Faith cometh by hearing." He who is a sincere inquirer will be guided; God never left such to wander. Listen not to those who say 'tis no use to seek: God has said that those who seek shall find. 2. Faith in Christ will never be a secret. The soul that regards Christ as the Son of God must at once tell Him so. "He worshipped Him." Conclusion: There is a day coming when all must hear this question put to them. You may put off the answer to it now but not then. Answer it now. (*S. Martin.*) *True Christians will learn of any one*:—A mortified man will yield to learn of any one. A little child shall "lead them." Learned Apollos was instructed by a couple of poor teutmakers. (*J. Trapp.*) *Faithfulness not unnoticed by God*:—The pious Lutheran minister at Berlin, Paul Gerhard, was deposed from his office, and banished the country in 1666 by the elector, Frederick William the Great, on account of the faithful discharge of his ministerial duties. Not knowing whither to go, he and his wife passed out of the city, and finally stopped at a tavern, oppressed with care and grief. Gerhard endeavoured to comfort his partner by the text, "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." Then he wrote a hymn embodying this sentiment. Before he had finished its perusal, the agents of Duke Christian of Mersburg invited him to an interview with that prince, by whom he was appointed Archdeacon at Luebben. *The importance of believing*:—The root of a tree is a ragged and a jagged thing—no shape, no proportion, no comeliness in it, and therefore keeps itself in the earth, as unwilling to be seen; yet all the beauty that is in the tree—the straightness of the bulk and body, the spreading fairness of the branches, the glory of the leaves and flowers, the commodity of the fruits—proceed from the root: by that the whole subsisteth. So faith seems to be but a sorry grace, a virtue of no regard; devotion is acceptable, for it honours God; charity is noble, for it does good to men; holiness is the image of heaven, therefore beauteous; thankfulness is the tune of angels, therefore melodious. But what is faith good for? Yes: it is good for every good purpose—the foundation and root of all graces. All the prayers made by devotion, all the good works done by charity, all the actual expressions of holiness, all the praises sounded forth by thankfulness, come from the root of faith, that is the life of them all. Faith doth animate works, as the body lives by the soul. (*J. Spencer.*) *The importance of self-examination*:—It is a great deal better to sift an affair to the bottom than it is to be always tormented by suspicion. If I must go to sea, and I suspect the soundness of the vessel, I shall demand that the ship be surveyed, and that I know whether it is a rotten old coffin, or whether it is a good substantial ship. I do not think it is a healthy state of things for man to be always singing—"'Tis a point I long to know." Brother, you ought to know whether you love the Lord or no. Your love must be very cold and feeble if it be a matter of question. Warmth of love proves its own existence in many ways. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith must lay hold on Christ*:—Look at that locomotive as it snorts like a giant war-horse to its place in the station at head of the train. You have in that engine power of amplest capacity to drag at swiftest pace the far-stretching carriages. Boiler, tubes, pistons, fire, steam—all are in perfect order; and that broad-browed man gives assurance of tried ability to guide the charge committed to him. You look: carriage after carriage is filled, the hour has struck, the bell rung; and yet there is no departure, no movement, nor would be till "crack of doom," if one thing remained as it now is. Aha! the lack is discovered: the uniting hooks that bind engine and train together were wanting. They have been supplied. Like two great hands, they have clasped; and a screw has so riveted engine and carriage, that they form, as it were, one thing, one whole; and away through the dark sweeps the heavy-laden train with its freight of immortals. Mark! no one ever supposes that it is the uniting hook, or link, or coupling that draws the train. A child knows that it is the engine that draws it. Nevertheless, without that hook, or link, or coupling, all the power of the engine were of no avail; the train would stand still for ever. Exactly so is it in the relation of faith to Christ. It is not our faith that saves us, but Christ. (*A. B. Grosart.*)

Vers. 39–41. **For judgment I have come into the world.**—*Christ's mission to the world*—I. HAS TWO APPARENTLY OPPOSITE RESULTS. 1. Of these—(1) One is the greatest blessing: "That they which see not might see." All unregenerate men are blind spiritually. God and the moral universe are as much concealed from them as the beauties of this mundane scene are from those born blind. They grope their way through life and stumble on the great future. A greater blessing is not conceivable than the opening of the spiritual eye. It involves the soul's translation into the real paradise of being. (2) The other is the greatest curse: "That they which see," &c., *i.e.*, that those who are unconscious of their blindness and conceitedly fancy they see would be incalculably injured. By rejecting the remedial agency of Christ they would augment their guilt and gloom. These two results are taking place every day. 2. Of these—(1) One is intentional. The grand and definite purpose of Christ is to give "recovery of sight to the blind." (2) The other is incidental and directly opposed to His supreme aim. It comes because Christ does not coerce men, but treats them as free agents, and also because of the perversity of the unregenerate heart. As men may get food out of the earth or poison, fire out of the sun that shall burn them to ashes, or genial light that shall cheer and invigorate them, so men get salvation or damnation out of Christ mission. II. IS MISINTERPRETED AND ABUSED. 1. Misinterpreted (ver. 40). Dost thou mean that we, educated men, trained in the laws and religion of our forefathers, and devoted to the work of teaching the nation, are blind? They would not understand that our Lord meant blindness of heart. So the great purpose of Christ's mission has ever been misinterpreted. Some treat the gospel as if its object were to give a speculative creed, an ecclesiastical polity, a civil government, a social order, while they practically ignore that its grand object is to open the spiritual eyes of men, so that they may see, not men's forms and phenomena, but spiritual realities. 2. Abused (ver. 41). Notwithstanding My mission, "Ye say, We see." With Me you have the opportunity of illumination; without that your blindness would be a calamity, but now it is a crime. "Therefore your sin remaineth." If, like this man, you were without the power of seeing, and had no opportunity of cure, you would have no sin; for no man is required to use a power he has not. What should we think of a man living in the midst of beautiful scenery but refusing to open his eyes? But the case of the spiritually blind, with the faculties of reason and conscience and the sun of the gospel streaming on them, is worse than this. "Men love darkness rather than light," &c. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The opening of the eyes:*—The man had been blind all his life; he was blind that morning; now, at night, he saw. The wonderful beauty of the world had burst upon him. The greatest luxury of sense that man enjoys was his, and he was revelling in its new-found enjoyment. He was intensely grateful to the Friend who had given it to him. He loved Him and thanked Him with his whole heart. And just then Jesus steps in and questions him; not, "Are you glad and grateful?" but, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" It is a new thought, a new view altogether. We can almost see the surprise and bewilderment creep over his glad face. He had it on his lips to thank his Friend, and lo! suddenly he was dealing with God, and with the infinite relations between God and man. I. THE LORD'S QUESTION. What does it mean? This: Are you glad and grateful for these things as little separate sensations of pleasure? That amounts to nothing. Or are you thankful for them as manifestations of the Divine life to yours, as tokens of that fatherhood of God which found its great utterance, including all others, in the Incarnation of His Son? That is everything. No wonder that such a question brings surprise. It is so much more than you expected. It is like the poor Neapolitan peasant, who struck his spade into the soil to dig a well, and the spade went through into free space, and he had discovered all the hidden wealth of Herculaneum. No wonder there is surprise at first; but afterward you see that in the belief in a manifested Son of God, if you could gain it, you would have just the principle of spiritual unity in which your life is wanting, and the lack of which makes so much of its very best so valueless. If you could believe in one great utterance of God, one incarnate word, the manifested pity of God, and the illustrated possibility of man at once—then, with such a central point, there could be no more fragmentariness anywhere. All must fall into its relation to it, to Him, and so the unity of life show forth. II. THE MAN'S ANSWER. "I do not know," he seems to say, "I did not mean anything like that; I did not seem to believe, but yet I have not evidently exhausted or fathomed my own thought. There is something below that I have not realized. Perhaps I do believe. At any rate I

should like to. The vague notion attracts me. I will believe if I can. Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" The simplicity and frankness, the guilelessness and openness of the man makes us like him more than ever. There is evidently for him a chance, nay, a certainty, that he will be greater, fuller, better than he is. Some natures are inclusive; some are exclusive. Some men seem to be always asking, "How much can I take in?" and some are always asking, "How much can I shut out?" One man wants to believe; he welcomes evidence. He asks, "Who is He, that I may believe on Him?" Another man seems to dread to believe; he has ingenuity in discovering the flaws of proof. If he asks for more information, it is because he is sure that some objection or discrepancy will appear which will release him from the unwelcome duty of believing. We see the two tendencies, all of us, in people that we know. Carried to their extremes, they develop on one side the superstitious, on the other the sceptical spirit. More than we think, far more, depends upon this first attitude of the whole nature—upon whether we want to believe or to disbelieve. To one who finds the forces of this life sufficient, an incarnation, a supernatural salvation, is incredible. To one who, looking deeper, knows there must be some infinite force which it has not found yet—some loving, living force of Emmanuel, of God with man—the Son of God is waiting on the threshold and will immediately come. III. How will He come? Read THE LORD'S REPLY. "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." The teaching that seems to me to be here for us is this—that when Christ "comes," as we say, to a human soul, it is only to the consciousness of the soul that He is introduced, not to the soul itself; He has been at the doors of that from its very beginning. We live in a redeemed world—a world full of the Holy Ghost for ever doing Christ's work, for ever taking of the things of Christ and showing them to us. That Christ so shown is the most real, most present power in this new Christian world. Men see Him, talk with Him continually. They do not recognize Him; they do not know what lofty converse they are holding; but some day when a man has become really earnest and wants to believe in the Son of God, and is asking, "Who is He that I may believe on Him?" then that Son of God comes to him—not as a new guest from the lofty heaven, but as the familiar and slighted Friend, who has waited and watched at the doorstep, who has already from the very first filled the soul's house with such measure of His influence as the soul's obstinacy of indifference would allow, and who now, as He steps in at the soul's eager call to take complete and final possession of its life, does not proclaim His coming in awful, new, unfamiliar words, but says in tones which the soul recognizes and wonders that it has not known long before, "Thou hast seen Me, I have talked with thee." (*Phillips Brooks, D.D.*) *Sight for those who see not*:—Jesus has come into the world for judgment, but not for the last and unchangeable judgment. "His fan is in His hand." He sits as a refiner. His cross has revealed the thoughts of many hearts, and everywhere His gospel acts as a discoverer, a separater, a test by which men may judge themselves if they will. Light no sooner comes than it begins to judge the darkness. When the gospel comes, some hearts receive it at once, and are judged to be "honest and good ground," and "come to the light, that their deeds may be made manifest," &c. Other hearts at once hate the truth, because their deeds are evil. Observe—1. Wherever Christ comes the most decided effects will follow. Whoever you are, the gospel must be to you a savour of life or of death, antidote or poison, curing or killing. It will make you see, or else, because you fancy you see, its very brightness will make you blind. If you live without it, you will die; if you feel that you are dead without it, it will make you live. 2. Christ has come that those who see not may see. (1) The gospel is meant for people who think themselves most unsuited for it and undeserving of it; it is a sight for those who see not. (2) Since Christ has come to open men's eyes, I know He did not come to open those bright eyes that seem to say, "No oculist is needed here." When there is a charity breakfast the invited guests are not the royal family. So Christ comes to the needy. 3. Let us take the blind man for a model. I. HE KNEW THAT HE WAS BLIND, and took up his proper position as a beggar. Many of you are too high, and must come down. You fancy that you have kept the law from your youth, are and all that you ought to be. As long as you think thus the blessing is delayed. But some of you say: "I scarcely know my condition. I am not right, I know; I feel so blind." You are on your way to a cure. II. HE HAD A SINCERE DESIRE TO BE ENLIGHTENED. Christ heals no one who evinces no desire to be healed. III. HE WAS VERY OBEDIENT. As soon as the Lord said, "Go, wash," he went; he had no Abana and Pharpar which he preferred to the pool.

That is a good word in the prophet, "O Lord, Thou art the Potter and we are the clay." What can the clay do to help the potter? Be pliable. IV. WHEN HE SAW, HE OWNED IT. The least that you can do for your Healer is to confess Him. V. HE BEGAN TO DEFEND THE MAN WHO OPENED HIS EYES. When the Lord opened the eyes of a great blind sinner, that man will not have Him spoken against. Some of your genteel Christians do not speak for Christ above once in six months. VI. WHEN HIS EYES WERE OPENED, HE WISHED TO KNOW MORE. "Who is He?" And when he found that He was the Son of God, he worshipped Him. If you have not seen Jesus of Nazareth to be "very God of very God," you have seen nothing. VII. HOW IS IT THAT SUCH BLIND MEN COME TO SEE? 1. They have no conceit to hinder Christ. It is easier to save us from our sins than from our righteousness. 2. They refuse to speculate; they want certainties. When a man feels his blindness, if you discuss before him the five nothings of modern theology, he says: "I do not want them: there is no comfort in them to a lost soul." 3. They are glad to lean on God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Are we blind also?**—All quarrelling is about the application of general granted rules to personal private cases. (*Epictetus.*) Tbere is no such hindrance to proficiency as too timely a conceit of knowledge (Rev. iii. 17; Luke viii. 13, 15). (*Dr. Hammond.*) I suppose that many might have attained to wisdom had they not thought they had already attained to it (Jer. viii. 8, 9; Isa. xlii. 18–20). (*Seneca.*) It is a woeful condition of a Church when no man will allow himself to be ignorant (Psa. xii. 4). (*Bp. Hall.*) **If ye were blind, ye should have no sin.**—*The sense of sin leads to holiness and the conceit of holiness to sin:*—Some of the most significant of Christ's teachings are put in the form of a verbal contradiction: "He that findeth his life shall lose it," &c.; "Whosoever hath not from him shall be taken," &c. But the impressiveness of the truth taught is all the greater from being couched in terms that would nonplus a mere verbal critic. It is so with regard to ver. 39 and the text. I. THE SENSE OF SIN CONDUCTS TO HOLINESS upon the general principle of supply and demand. This law holds good—1. In our earthly affairs. If one nation requires grain from abroad, another will sow and reap to meet the requisition. If our country requires fabrics it cannot well produce, another will toil to furnish them. From year to year the wants of mankind are thus met. 2. In the operations of Providence. God's goodness is over all His works. He opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing. Famines are the exception and not the rule. Seedtime and harvest fail not from century to century, and there is no surplus to be wanted. 3. In the kingdom of grace. If God is ready to feed the ravens, He is more ready to supply the spiritual wants of His sinful creatures. He takes more pleasure in filling the hungry soul than the hungry mouth. "If ye, being evil," &c. If there were only a demand for heavenly food as importunate as there is for earthly, the supply would be at once forthcoming in infinite abundance. For no sinful creature can know his religious necessities without crying out for a supply. Can a man hunger without begging food? No more can a conscious sinner without crying, "Create in me a clean heart," &c. And the promises are more explicit in respect to heavenly blessings. You may beg God to restore you to health, to give you a competence, and He may not see fit to grant your prayer. But if you say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," you will certainly obtain an answer, for this will not injure you as the other may; and God has expressly said that it is always His will that man should seek mercy, and always His delight to grant it. Come, then, for all things are now ready (1 John v. 14, 15). II. THE CONCEIT OF HOLINESS LEADS TO SIN. We are met at the very outset with the fact that a conceit is in its own nature sin. It is self-deception. The disposition of the Pharisee to say, "We see," is an insuperable obstacle to every gracious affection. Christianity is a religion for the poor in spirit. Conceit opposes this, and puffs up a man with pride and fills him with sin. 1. Religion is a matter of the understanding, and consists in a true knowledge of Divine things. Self-flattery is fatal to all spiritual discernment. (1) It prevents a true knowledge of one's own heart. The Pharisee who said, "God, I thank Thee," &c., was utterly ignorant of his own heart, and impervious to any light that might fall upon it. (2) It precluded all true knowledge of God. Humility is necessary to spiritual discernment. God repulses a proud intellect, and shuts Himself up from all haughty scrutiny. "To this man will I look," &c. 2. Religion is a matter of the affections, and the injurious influence of a conceit of holiness in these is even more apparent. Nothing is more deadening to emotion than pride. If you would extinguish all religious sensibility within yourself, become a Pharisee. Conclusion: 1. The practical lesson is the necessity of obtaining a sense of sin.

So long as we think or say that we "see" we are out of all saving relations to the gospel. The foundation of true science is willingness to be ignorant, and so it is in religion. The instant a vacuum is produced the air will rush into it, and the instant any soul becomes emptied of its conceit of holiness, and becomes an aching void, and reaches out after something purer and better, it is filled with what it wants. 2. As an encouragement to this we may depend on the aid of the Holy Spirit. (*Prof. Shedd.*) *Blind yet seeing*:—A blind boy, that had suffered imprisonment at Gloucester not long before, was brought to Bishop Hooper the day before his death. Mr. Hooper, after he had examined of his faith and the cause of his imprisonment, beheld him steadfastly, and the water appearing in his eyes, said unto him, "Ah! poor boy, God hath taken from thee thy outward sight, but hath given thee another sight much more precious; for He hath endued thy soul with the eye of knowledge and faith." (*J. Trapp.*) *Help for the needy*:—I have felt a wonderful satisfaction in feeding a poor half-starved dog that had no master and nothing to eat. How he has looked up with pleasure in my face when he has been fed to the full! Depend upon it the Lord Jesus Christ will take delight in feeding a poor hungry sinner. You feel like a poor dog, do you not? Then Jesus cares for you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The emptiness of self-righteous boasting*:—The governor of a besieged city threw loaves of bread over the wall to the besiegers, to make them believe that the citizens had such large supplies that they could afford to throw them away; yet they were starving all the while. There are some men of like manners; they have nothing that they can offer unto God, but yet they exhibit a glittering self-righteousness. Oh! they have been so good, such superior people, so praiseworthy from their youth up; they never did anything much amiss; there may be a little speck here and there upon their garments, but that will brush off when it is dry. They make a fair show in the flesh with morality and formality, and a smattering of generosity. Besides, they profess to be religious: they attend Divine service, and pay their quota of the expenses. Who could find any fault with such good people? Just so; this profession is the fine horse and trap with which they too are cutting a dash just before going through the court. There is nothing at all in you, and there never was. (*Ibid.*) *Misery of unconscious blindness*:—In this unconsciousness lies the heart of the mischief. Helpless man is unconscious of his own helplessness. Because they say, "We see," therefore their sin remaineth. If they were blind and knew it, it were another matter, and signs of hope would be visible; but to be blind and yet to boast of having superior sight, and to ridicule those who see, is the lamentable condition of not a few. They will not thank us for our pity, but much they need it. Eyes have they, but they see not, and yet they glory in their far-sightedness. Multitudes around us are in this plight. When the prophet says, "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes," we can only wonder where we should put them all if they were willing to assemble in one place. (*Ibid.*)

CHAPTER X.

Introduction: The occasion of Christ's teaching:—The special form which the discourse here takes is probably and almost certainly due to the actual presence of a sheepfold with the shepherds and their flocks. We know that Bethesda was near the "sheepgate," which is possibly to be identified with a covered portion of the pool of Siloam. We have, in any case, to think of an open fold surrounded by a wall or railing, into which, at eventide, the shepherds lead their flocks, committing them, during the night, to the care of an under-shepherd, who guards the door. In the morning they knock and the porter opens the door, which has been securely fastened, and each shepherd calls his own sheep, who know his voice and follow him. But we must remember that our Lord's mind and theirs was full of thoughts ready to pass into a train like this. "Thy servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers" (Gen. xlvii. 3), was the statement of the first sons of Israel, and it was true of their descendants. Their greatest heroes—Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Daniel—had all been shepherds, and no imagery is more frequent in psalm or prophecy than that drawn from the shepherd's work. We must fill our minds with these Old Testament thoughts if we would understand the chapter. Let any one

before commencing it read thoughtfully Psa. xxiii; Isa. xl. 11; Jer. xxxiii. 1–4; Ezek. xxxiv; and especially Zech. xi. 4–17, and he will have the key which unlocks most of its difficulties. We have, then, the scene passing before their eyes, and the Old Testament thoughts of the shepherd connected as they were, on the one hand with Jehovah and the Messiah, and on the other with the careless shepherds of Israel, dwelling in their minds; and we have in the events which have just taken place, that which furnishes the starting-point and gives to what follows its fulness of meaning. The Pharisees claimed to be shepherds of Israel. They decreed who should be admitted to and cast out from the fold. They professed to be interpreters of God's truth, and with it to feed His flock. Pharisees, shepherds! What did they, with their curses and excommunications, know of the tenderness of the Shepherd, "who shall gather the lambs with His arm," &c.? Pharisees, feed the flock of God! What had they, with their pride and self-righteousness, ever known of the infinite love and mercy of God; or what had their hearts ever felt of the wants and woes of the masses of mankind? This blind beggar was an example of their treatment of the weaker ones of the flock. The true Shepherd had sought and found this lost sheep, who is now standing near, in His presence and that of the false shepherds. He teaches who the shepherd is and what the flock of God really are. (*Archdeacon Watkins.*) *The pastoral similitudes:*—I. FOUR ARE ON THE SIDE OF GOOD; and in all these may be various manifestations of Christ. 1. The door, as affording the sole admission to the Father. 2. The porter as bearing the keys of David, the keys of death and of hell. 3. The shepherd as the guide and guardian of the sheep. 4. And Himself the sheep also, as being made one with them, in order that He might be a sacrifice for them. II. FOUR ARE ON THE SIDE OF EVIL. 1. The thieves. 2. The robbers; both such as enter not by the door, but prey upon the flock, whether Pharisees, infidels, or heretics. 3. The mercenary, who, though he may enter by the door, is of those who "seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." 4. The wolf, which is the enemy of the sheep, under whatsoever form he may assume. (*I. Williams, B.D.*)

Vers. 1–18. **He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold.**—*Shepherdhood:*—The simple lesson which our Lord intended to teach in this familiar passage has often been strangely mistaken. The minds of men have been so fixed upon certain ecclesiastical conclusions which have been commonly derived from it, that the simpler but far profounder teaching which the Master had in mind to give has been overlooked. He was not defending the formal authority of His own or of any office. He was not discussing the regularity or lawfulness of His own or of any ministry. He was not pointing out the mode of entrance into shepherdhood, but He was telling how the function for all true shepherdhood must be discharged. He was laying down the rule of good conduct and right service in all true leadership—a rule which He Himself exemplified and fulfilled, and which all must obey who hope in any degree to be worthy leaders of men. He was propounding a lesson which it behoves all men to ponder well who hope to influence their fellow-men for good rank, office, order, culture, property—be the authority, the privilege, the right of these what they may, the eternal law of God, as exemplified in the life of His Son, and taught in His Holy Word, and illustrated in human history, is this: that none of these, no matter how commissioned or sent, can exercise any real shepherdhood over men except as they are in sympathy with them. This is true in Church and State; of the employers of labour; of the heads of households; of civil rulers and political leaders; of bishops, priests, and deacons—the power to lead men lies in sympathizing with them, and walking in the same way with them. The man of influence is the man of sympathy; the man of power is the man of service. He that loves is he that leads. He that serves is he that rules. Think for a moment, and you will see why it must be so. Man is free. The soul is free in the truest, deepest sense of the word. God royally made it so, and even He cannot control it by any merely external force or power. It is free to think, to will, and choose, to love, and no mere force or authority from without can control it in these operations in which its sovereign self-hood is realized. You may chain the limbs of a man—you may coerce his actions or even his words; but how can you get into communion with the soul, and rule its will and affections? There is only one way. If you would influence men intimately, profoundly, really, no matter what your authority or station, you must enter into sympathy with them. You must walk in the same path and enter in by the same door, or you can never be the shepherd of the sheep. This is what St. Paul meant when he sang the praise of love (1 Cor. xiii.). Among

men love is power. And a greater than St. Paul taught the same lesson and confirmed it by His own Divine experience. The Good Shepherd proved and illustrated His own good shepherdhood by sympathy and love. It was by no flash of splendour or miracle of external power that He proved His Divine leadership over the hearts of men; but by coming to walk with them, to toil and hunger, and suffer with them. He entered into mortal life by the same lowly door of human birth; He passed through it by the same path of toil and daily care; He made His exit from it through the same portal of suffering and death. In life and death He walked with the sheep. Therefore He could say, "I am the Good Shepherd, not merely because I am commissioned and sent of My Father, not merely because I wield the power of omnipotence," but "I am the Good Shepherd," He said, because "I know My sheep and am known of Mine." (*Bp. S. S. Harris.*) *Jesus the Good Shepherd*:—Note—I. THE INDIVIDUAL CARE AND GUIDANCE OF OUR LORD for every soul that trusts Him. In modern stock raising in Western lands there is nothing of that personal knowledge and attachment which bound together an Oriental shepherd and his flock. 1. It is an infirmity of Christian people to suppose that they are lost in the crowd, that God deals with them in the gross as a general might deal with his army, with rare notice of individuals least of all of privates. Yet in nothing do we wrong Him more. "The hairs of our head are all numbered." 2. Christ showed nothing clearer than His attention to every personal want within His reach. We have reason as Paul had to appropriate His atoning work as though it were our monopoly (Gal. ii. 20; Heb. ii. 9). Indeed He promises a friendship so intimate that it becomes a system of cipher messages between them and their Lord (Rev. ii. 17). 3. We talk about how to convert "the masses," when we had better think of single souls. II. THE SINGULAR COMMUNITY OF SYMPATHY BETWEEN CHRIST AND CHRISTIANS (ver. 4, 14, R. V.). It is compared for closeness and depth to that which subsists between the Father and the Son. 1. In Christ's case we might charge His knowledge on His omniscience, but we cannot so account for ours. Take Christ upon His more human side and you have the explanation. Who has not felt the mystic thrill of sympathy and repulsion when we discover the congenial or uncongenial to ourselves in another character. So Christ felt the unlikeness to Himself of hatred, falseness; but He was drawn with unerring affinity towards the faintest uprisings of human penitence and trust. 2. "My sheep know *Me*"; not merely something about me. Not by the mere investigation of the shepherd's clothing or crook, to see if both are genuine, as men puzzle themselves over churches, creeds, ordinances. But as one friend recognizes another by a glance if he can be seen; by his voice if out of sight. The test of truth is the character within us. We know God by resembling Him. These Jews could not be satisfied with our Lord's credentials, but certain Samaritans felt the Divine life (chap. iv. 42). III. GOD'S EXCLUSIVE WAY OF MERCY. Thebes had a hundred gates, but salvation only one (ver. 9). An engine off the track is not more a failure than a man off the track of God's conditions. All entrance to spiritual hope and safety is through Christ. He will endure no rival. Mingle anything with Him as our hope and the mixture fails. IV. THE ADVANTAGES TO WHICH CHRIST OPENS THE DOOR (ver. 9). 1. Safety. It reminds us of some fugitive running for his life to the city of refuge. 2. Liberty. A Christian is no jail-bird, so closely guarded that he finds himself a prisoner. No slave on a plantation, but a child in the family. He knows the truth, and that makes him free to go where and do what he pleases if he only pleases right. 3. Plenty. V. THE GRAND PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S ADVENT (ver. 10). Nothing is so precious as life. It was forfeited by sin; but Christ restored it at the expense of His own (ver. 11). And it is to be had now. The young are eager to "see" and "enjoy life." And they are right if they will not look for it in the wrong way. In Christ is the way to gain it, not in the low average of worldly attainment, but "more abundantly" in all that makes life worth living. VI. THE METHOD OF CHRIST'S RULE. "Leadeth"—"goeth before." An Eastern shepherd does not drive his flock; and Christ goes before, never behind, saying not "Go," but "Come." (*C. S. Pomeroy, D.D.*) *The Shepherd and the flock*:—I. THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE SIMILE. 1. To Israelites. From the beginning they had been shepherds; hence all along God had been calling Himself their Shepherd. 2. To Christians. The gathered force of all that psalmists sang and prophets spoke has come down to the "little flock." II. THE ANALOGIES SUGGESTED BY THE SIMILE. 1. The shepherd is the rightful owner of the fold, and treats his flock in an honest way. He enters by the door, is recognized as the master, and has no semblance of the thief, &c. 2. The shepherd is the true pastor of the sheep. He admits responsibility for the care he has assumed. A

hireling would flee, a robber steal and kill, but the good shepherd has thoughtful and affectionate care for the whole flock. 3. Between the pastor and the flock there is the relation of individual acquaintance. III. THE APPLICATION OF THE SIMILE. 1. Christ as a Saviour sustains an individual relationship to every soul He saves. Each needs the atonement and the work of the Spirit precisely as each needs the entire sunshine and atmosphere in order to see and breathe. 2. Christ as a leader is acquainted with every Christian personally. He knows if he is absent from the communion table, and looks at him when he imagines himself out of sight as to love or duty. 3. Christ as a model expects each believer to be wholly conformed to His likeness. It is not to be supposed that one Christian is to exhibit gentleness and another force, &c. 4. Christ as a master is specially direct in laying His commands on every individual He chooses. He knows the one He wants and calls him by name—Samuel, Zacchæus, Mary, Simon, Saul. 5. Christ as a comforter deals with each believer as His personal friend (Isa. xliii. 1-2). 6. Christ as a judge will close His last account with each individually and alone (Matt. xxv.). (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *The fold of the sheep*:—A place of—I. SEPARATION. II. SUPERVISION. III. SAFETY. (*S. S. Times.*) *The fold and the door*:—Not to enter by the door is a characteristic of Oriental thieves, from the Nile to the Ganges. When a tent is to be attacked, the common method is to approach it under cover of the darkness, cut a hole large enough to crawl through, and then silently to enter and as silently to retire with the booty. Bolder robbers will occasionally dig through the walls of a house in the same way. The experience of a British officer in India affords a curious illustration of the skill of Oriental thieves. During the officer's absence in the evening, a man crept quietly up to the tent without attracting the attention of the sentry on guard, cut an opening in the rear of the tent, and began to collect his booty. While he was engaged in this process, the officer returned. The Hindoo instantly fixed himself, silent as a statue, close to the tent wall, with arm drawn up and hand slightly extended. The officer came in, and proceeded in the half-darkness to prepare for rest. Noticing the extended hand of the thief, and mistaking it for a pin of some sort, he hung his helmet and his coat upon it. The thief stood silently holding the helmet and the coat until the officer was asleep, when he retired as he came, taking the helmet and the coat with the rest of his booty. Next morning the hole in the tent and the missing "pin" told the whole story. (*Ibid.*) **Climbeth up some other way.**—1. Even thieves and robbers seek a place within the fold. 2. The basest motives may impel to a place in the fold. 3. Any way but God's way suits base men. 4. Some climb up rather than walk in; they prefer works to faith. (*Ibid.*) *Wrong ways to heaven*:—Let the Pagans, the Jews, the heretics say, "We lead a good life." If they enter not by the door, what availeth it? A good life only profiteth if it lead to life eternal. Indeed, those cannot be said to lead a good life, who are either blindly ignorant of, or wilfully despise the end of good living. No one can hope for eternal life who knows not Christ, who is the Life, and by that door enters the fold. (*Augustine.*) *Entrance without qualification*:—George Moore tells the following striking incident: "After I had been about two years in London, I had a great and anxious desire to see the House of Commons. I got a half-holiday for the purpose. I didn't think of getting an order from an M.P. Indeed I hadn't the slightest doubt of getting into the House. I first tried to get into the Strangers' Gallery, but failed. I then hung about the entrance to see whether I could find some opportunity. I saw three or four members hurrying in, and I hurried in with them. The door-keepers did not notice me. I walked into the middle of the House. When I got in I almost fainted with fear lest I should be discovered. I first got into a seat with the name of 'Canning' upon it. I then proceeded to a seat behind, and sat there all the evening. I heard Mr. Canning bring forward his motion to reduce the duty on corn. He made a brilliant speech and was followed by many others. I sat out the whole debate. Had I been discovered I might have been taken up for breach of privilege." (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Climbing up some other way into heaven*:—I heard of a man some time ago who was going to get into heaven in his own way. He did not believe in the Bible or the love of God, but was going to get in on account of his good deeds. He was very liberal, gave a great deal of money, and he thought the more he gave the better it would be for him in the other world. I don't, as a general thing, believe in dreams, but sometimes they teach good lessons. Well, this man dreamed one night that he was building a ladder to heaven, and he dreamed that every good deed he did put him one round higher on this ladder, and when he did an extra good deed it put him up a good many rounds; and in his dream he kept going,

going up, until at last he got out of sight, and he went on and on doing his good deeds, and the ladder went up higher and higher, until at last he thought he saw it run up to the very throne of God. Then in his dream he thought he died, and that a mighty voice came rolling down from above: "He that climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber," and down came his ladder, and he woke from his sleep, and thought: "If I go to heaven, I must go some other way." My friends, it is by the way of the blood of Christ that we are to go to heaven. If a man has got to work his way there, who will ever get there? (*D. L. Moody.*)

Thieves and robbers.—These words do not constitute a tautology or mere rhetorical amplification (Obad. 5). The one and the other appropriate what is not theirs, but the thief by fraud and in secret (Matt. xxiv. 43; John xii. 6; *cf.* Exod. xxii. 2; Jer. ii. 26), the robber by violence and openly (2 Cor. xi. 26; *cf.* Hos. ix. 1; Jer. vii. 11). The one steals, the other plunders, as his name in the Greek (as our own from *raub*, "booty"), sufficiently declares. The latter should be substituted for the former in Matt. xxi. 13; xxvi. 55; Luke x. 30; xxiii. 39–43. (*Archbp. Trench.*)

Sheep to be fed, not sheared:—Dr. Johnson declined a rectory in youth with "I cannot in conscience shear the sheep which I am unable to feed."

Vers. 3–5. **To him the porter openeth.**—*The porter of the door:*—Who is the Porter? Christ we know is the Door. He says so Himself (vers. 7, 9). But who is the Porter? An old Father of the Church writes, "Christ is the Door of the fold, and the Keeper of the Door, as well as the Shepherd of the sheep He is the Truth, and opens Himself and reveals to us His Truth." But in spite of this—all very beautiful—all most true in a certain sense, yet not the whole truth, we must seek elsewhere for a satisfactory explanation of this difficulty. I say difficulty, because a distinct personality is ascribed to the Porter. He opens the Door. "To him the Porter openeth." It is through His instrumentality that both the true shepherds and the sheep enter into the fold. No! The only satisfactory explanation is to see in the Porter the office and work of God the Holy Ghost. Our understanding is darkened, our hearts are sealed, our ears are closed, unless the Porter openeth. Even the fold of Christ's Church is closed against us unless the Porter openeth the Door in holy baptism. The presence of the Lord is real in the blessed Sacrament of the altar, but unless the Porter openeth, His presence is not real to us. Many thronged around Him, but only one poor woman touched Him and was healed; so at the altar the virtue to heal is there, but the power to draw it into our soul's health is to the heart touched by the breath of the Spirit—to him the Porter openeth! So it is with the words of absolution—they pass along with a sound and leave no blessing behind unless the Porter openeth. And so it is with the Bible—we read our Bibles, but unless the Porter openeth, the voices of the evangelists and apostles are but as a pleasant tale: listened to, but soon forgotten, or they are like "the idle wind that we regard not!" And then there is that other book—the book of Nature—which lies open before us. But we hear no sounds in the noisy brook, we see nothing in the opening buds and flowers of early summer; but once the Porter opens the door, then suddenly—"Earth's crammed with heaven, And every common bush afire with God." Or if we look upon the pages of history. To the natural man they contain only a record of battles lost and won, a long succession of kings, some good, some bad, of dynasties set up or hurled to the ground; but when the Porter opens wide the door, and the light falls upon the pages, then we seem to read between the lines. We see how evil haunts the wicked person to destroy him and his seed for ever, we see men sowing the wind and in after years, long after the sowing has faded from the memory, reaping the whirlwind! To read history without the illumination of the Holy Spirit is like looking at a beautiful landscape by the pale light of the moon. We see indeed the dark forms of the hills standing out; we note the trees in their solemn gloom; we hear and see the white foam splashing against the rocky shore; but the flowers and blades of grass, the leaves with their countless tints, the life and colour of the whole scene can only be seen by the light of the clear, noon-day sun. So the manifold workings of the Holy Spirit in every successive generation can only be seen when the Porter has opened the door and enlightened our understanding, and given us a right judgment in all things. (*J. Louis Spencer.*)

The Advent message of the Baptist:—I. WE HAVE BEEN LOOKING AT THE PORTER ALREADY THIS ADVENT, AND HE HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN THE SAME. We have seen some sitting there; we might have seen others. At one time, as we saw, it was the patriarchs who were sitting there. And they said: "Go after Him, follow Him. His promise

is true and faithful: He will never leave thee nor forsake thee." And the angels sat there and taught us the thrice holy hymn, and how the incense goes up before the throne, and the worship of the elders, and the great water-rush of the Alleluias, whose spray falls in a golden mist over our worship here below; and they said: "Go out with Him, and going through the vale of misery use it as a well." And their message was, "Worship Him." And the Law sat there in its sternness and said, "You must," and "You shall not," and so braced us up. And the prophets sat there, with their messages from another world, their devotion and their calm endurance. And they said, "Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." Yes; and we might have paused to see sitting there also the Gentile world with its splendid natural virtues, its beauty, dignity, and strength, and have heard them point us to the beautiful Shepherd, and bid us aim always at the true, the beautiful, and the good. But to-day we must contemplate the last figure that sat at the gate of the sheep-fold—the precursor of the Shepherd of His people, the forerunner of the King. Then, when the Jewish fold was about to give up its sheep, once and for all, to be merged into something higher, there sits St. John the Baptist; and his message is repentance. His message to the sheep, as they pass out to forget him, to leave him, to lose him, in another and mightier than himself is, "Repent." "To Him the porter openeth." The Baptist is the last and truest teacher and porter of the Jewish Church, and his great message is, "Repent." II. And now let us turn to St. John the Baptist, and see WHAT REPENTANCE IN HIS MOUTH MEANT AS A PREPARATION FOR CHRIST. And we are attracted at once with the dignity, the magnitude of the word. It is not quite the most popular method—Repent. And when he said this, he asked them to feel sorrow. The Pharisee must feel, "Well, I have made a false start." This satisfaction is not a good sign; the remedies I have chosen have not been painful, but they have not touched the seat of the disease. The knife and the burning is what I need. Oh, that sore! It is a humiliating thought to remember how it came there as I tear away the covering which conceals it. And he meant more than this. They were baptized of him in Jordan "confessing their sins." It would be easy and in perfect good taste to soften down the too striking contour of a proud individuality with a confession which does but "bless with faint blame." But no, he wants more. He wants each to face for himself the accumulation of a lifetime, to watch the tale of sin mounting up to its deadly total, until like a spendthrift, who having had a general idea that he had been extravagant, is astonished as each bill adds its quota to the heavy debt, some forgotten, some under-estimated, some put aside to another day—he faces the accumulating mass and realizes the enormity of the debt which he believed that he some day would be able to pay if God would but extend patience to him. No; repentance on any other principle would lack, I had almost said, that business-like air which should characterize all our dealings with our souls. It would lack that element of humble acknowledgment which, when it concerns ourselves, we call an apology, to an all-knowing God who, indeed, can trace far better than we can right up into the hidden springs of motive, the history of our sins, but yet waits for us with our own mouths to tell Him. And then he had for each his own method of amendment. Such is the message of that porter who held the gate at the last moment before the Dawn, such was his teaching of repentance which was to prepare the way of the Lord. III. AND STILL THE MESSAGE OF THE NEARER ADVENT IS REPENTANCE. Would that we learned more that penitence is a pre-requisite to entering on the service of God! And then, lastly, "Repent" is the message before the last, the final coming of the Lord to each soul in death. And here again the Church, just about to give up the sheep into the hands of the Good Shepherd, still murmurs through the voice of the porter—"Repent." And so the porter waits the coming of Christ to claim His own. "Repent." His voice is stern, but the light gets brighter, the heaven is ablaze, His footsteps sound across the distance, the Bridegroom cometh go ye forth to meet Him. (*W. C. E. Newbolt, M.A.*) *The conscience a porter*:—The moral nature does not jar at the entrance of Christ or of the "Truth as it is in Jesus." The porter, which is the conscience and heart of man, never refuses the answer to the true voice. (*Monday Club Sermons.*) *The office of a true shepherd*:—It is not the chief shepherd who is here spoken of, but an under shepherd, a minister of Christ. I. HE IS LED INTO HIS OFFICE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. "To him the porter openeth" (Acts xiv. 27; 1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12; Col. iv. 3). II. HIS TEACHING IS RECOGNIZED AS FROM GOD. "The sheep hear His voice." This can only be when it is drawn from and is in harmony with God's Word. III. HE FAITHFULLY

ACQUAINTS HIMSELF WITH HIS PEOPLE. "He calleth His own sheep by name." He is familiar with the names, faces, and circumstances of His flock. IV. HE SETS BEFORE HIS FLOCK AN EXAMPLE THEY MAY SAFELY FOLLOW. "He leadeth them out." In His teaching and life He points the way they may safely go—"allures to brighter worlds and leads the way." Every shepherd will have to give an account for his flock to the Good Shepherd (1 Pet. v. 4). (*Family Churchman.*) **He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.**—*The personal love and lead of Christ* :—I. THE PERSONAL LOVE OF CHRIST. The parable is designed to correct the belief that while God has a real care of the Church He can have no personal recognition of its individual members. There could not be a greater mistake. 1. For the relation God holds to objects of knowledge is different in all respects from that which is held by us. Our general terms, man, tree, &c., are names of single specimens extended to species, and comes to stand for millions of men, &c., we never can know. But God does not generalize in this manner. His knowledge of wholes is real and complete as being a distinct knowledge of particulars. Whatever particulars exist were known by Him as being thought before they became fact. Holding in His thought the eternal archetypes of species, He also thought each individual in its particular type as dominated by the common archetype. This on God's part is inevitable; for the sun can no more shine on the world without touching every atom than God can know or love whole bodies of saints without knowing or loving individuals. Being a perfect mind and not a mere spark of intelligence like us, He cannot fall into our imperfections when we strain ourselves to set up generals to piece out and hide our ignorance. 2. One of the great uses of the Incarnation was to humanize God that we might believe in His personal love. In Christ was visible one of us and was attentive to every personal want of the world. When a lone woman came up in a crowd to steal as it were some healing power He would not let her off in that impersonal, unrecognizing way. He even hunts up the youth He has healed of his blindness and opens up to him the secrets of His Messiahship. He tasted death for *every* man. He calls us friends because He is on the private footing of personal confidence, and promises a friendship so personal that it shall be a cipher of mutual understanding, giving us a white stone and in the stone a new name which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. 3. Every particular work of this Gospel shows how personal it is. What is communion that is not fellowship with particular souls? We speak of the Holy Spirit as falling on communities, but He reaches the general body only through individuals, save that there is an effect of mutual excitement, which is secondary, and comes from their sense of what is revealed in each other and under the power of the Spirit in each. So with everything included in salvation, in the renewing, fashioning, guidance, discipline, and final crowning in glory; so that a Christian is finally saved not as some one led forth in the flock, but as the Master's dear Simon, James, Martha, whose name is so recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life. 4. It is in this view that the Church in baptizing her children takes with a beautiful propriety the "Christian name," in which Christ recognizes the child's discipleship. II. THE PERSONAL LEAD OF CHRIST. 1. Here is the glory of Christ as a Saviour that He goes always before, never behind, His flock. He begins with infancy that He may show a grace for childhood. He is made under the Law and fulfils all righteousness, that He may sanctify the law to us and make it honourable. He goes before us in temptations that we may bear them after Him. He taught us forgiveness by forgiving His enemies. He bore His cross and commands us to bear it after Him. And then He went before us in the bursting of the grave, and ascended as our Forerunner whom we are to follow even there. 2. This spirit entered into those whom He gave to lead the flock. They followed Him in the regeneration and took it upon them as their Master's law to require nothing in which they were not forward themselves. "Follow me as I follow Christ." We have seen it differently—teachers that lay heavy burdens on men's shoulders, feeding themselves out of charities extorted from the poor; philanthropists publishing great swelling words of equality and tapering off in virtues they neither practise nor like. All such drive a flock. Applications: 1. Men make a great mistake when they regard Christian life as a legal and constrained service. This image represents the freedom of the disciple. He is led by a personal influence and answers to the name by which he is called. No Christian is to go to his duty because he must, but only because his heart is in it, for his heart is in his Master's love, and he follows Him gladly. 2. We discover what to think of that class who aspire to be specially faithful but are principally strenuous in putting forward and laying burdens on others, and slide over their own deficiency in the

very things they insist on, by extolling the modesty which does not profess to be an example to others. How much more faithful and modest should we be if we judged only as we practiced, and fortified our words by our example! 3. Consider what is true of any disciple who is straying from Christ that his Shepherd still cares for him, and calls him personally. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *The personal relationship between the Shepherd and the sheep:*—You are seated by your fireside on a winter night when the announcement is made—"A friend has come!" That announcement makes you benevolently expectant; yet your state of mind is then only vague and uncertain, for there are friends, and friends. But in the next moment the name is spoken, or the face of your friend shines in the door of your room; and that face appearing, or that name uttered, in a moment calls up the proper feeling. No other face appearing there, nor any other name that could be pronounced in your hearing, would call up exactly the same feeling. Each friend has his own place in your heart, and gets his own welcome when he comes. There is a general affection which you bear to all your friends; there is a specific and differentiated affection which you bear to each. So it is with the Shepherd and the flock. The whole flock is known, and loved, and led; but each has separate and individual love and leading. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The calling of the sheep:*—We of the West are accustomed to give names to dogs, horses, and even to cows, and are not surprised that these animals are intelligent enough to recognize their own names. In the ancient East, it was not unusual to give names to sheep in the same way. The classical scholar will recall the instance in Theocritus, where the shepherd calls several of his sheep to him by their individual names. I. CHRIST CALLS—1. How. 2. Whom. 3. Whence. 4. Whither. 5. Why. II. CHRIST CALLS BY NAME. 1. By our worldly names; for He knows each personally and particularly. 2. By our spiritual names; for He knows our standing and destiny. (*S. S. Times.*) *The individualizing knowledge of Christ:*—It is hard to realize that Jesus has an individual acquaintance with each of us separately. The very thought is bewildering in its magnitude, in view of the myriads of the redeemed. I once heard General Grant say that when he was colonel of a regiment he knew every man of his command by name; but as he rose in command he found it necessary to diminish the scope of his knowledge of individuals, until, when he was at the head of the entire army, he gave little thought to individuals below the rank of a division commander. An army comrade of mine, who was with General Sherman's army in its northward march from Savannah, told me of an incident which illustrated in another way the magnitude of the thought that every soldier had a personal individuality. The army was passing along a rarely frequented roadway in North Carolina. A woman stood in the doorway of her cabin, and saw regiment after regiment of men similar in appearance and dress pass by, until, as the thousands upon thousands came and went, she said in wonderment: "I reckon you 'uns ain't all got names." It seemed to her an impossibility that each soldier was a distinct and recognized identity. It would have seemed stranger yet to think that one man could know each soldier there by name. Yet far beyond these suggestions of human limitation of personal knowledge and of personal sympathy, there comes the assurance that Jesus knows His every disciple by name, and that He daily and hourly speaks loving words of tenderness and counsel and guidance accordingly. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *The leading of the flock:*—We have here not a mere everyday description of the shepherd's act, but a precise statement of a definite historical situation. The time had come for Jesus to lead His flock ont of the theocracy which was devoted to destruction. He recognized the sequel of this inevitable rupture in the expulsion of the man (chap. ix. 24), in the decree of excommunication which struck both Himself and His followers, and generally in the violent hostility of which He found Himself the object. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Christ's guidance:*—He always comes to "lead," never to linger and stay. If He finds one so wounded and torn and near to death as to be unable to follow, He will lay that sheep on His shoulder. If He finds a lamb faint and homeless, He will "carry it in His bosom." But in most instances He gives from the first the strength to follow, and expects it to be used. "He leadeth them out"—"out," of course, from the whole natural sinful life, from all its darkness and misery, into the light and joy of acceptance; "out" of infantine feebleness into manly strength; "out" of narrow views into wider; "out" of first experiences into more matured; "out" of mistakes and disappointments into wiser ways and better fortunes; "out" of dreamy indolence into those activities by which alone it can be escaped; "out" of overstrained activity into some quiet hour or time of "refreshing from the presence

of the Lord;" "out" of besetting sin into waiting duty. Sometimes you think if the Good Shepherd were really leading you it would be into other fields than those through which you have of late been passing. Be careful here. I have seen a shepherd, on a bitter snowy day, gathering all his sheep carefully to the windy side of the hill. The silly creatures, left to themselves, would all take the other side; they would go straight to the most dangerous places, to the sheltered spots where the deep snow-wreaths form silently, in which they would soon find at once a refuge and a grave. On such a day the life of some of the sheep depends on facing the blast. The shepherd would not let the youngest, he would not let the weakest one of the flock, lie down in the shelter. For the very love he bears it, "he calls it by name, and leads it out," or drives, or carries—even in such an hour as that—facing the bitter wind and the blinding snow! And if we knew the personal love of Christ, we shall not be so apt to distinguish and select certain special modes for its manifestation as alone suitable and proper. One mode will seem to us almost as good as another if it be the one that He selects, and we shall hear the loving voice in the darkness as well as in the light; in the roar of the wintry storm as in the hush of the summer silence. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) **He goeth before them.**—This is a sight which may still be seen in the East. With us sheep are driven; with the Orientals they are led. The shepherd goes on before, and the sheep follow after, much as dogs follow their master in the West, but without the briskness and vigour of dogs. It is not unusual to see the shepherd leading the sheep thus, and at the same time carrying upon his shoulder some tender youngling of the flock. I. CHRIST PRECEDES—1. To open the way. 2. To present an example. 3. To destroy the enemies. II. HIS FLOCK SHOULD FOLLOW—1. Closely. 2. Obediently. 3. Courageously. 4. Hopefully. (*S. S. Times.*) *Christ the Leader of His people:*—I have read of a distinguished general who conducted an army by forced marches through a sterile as well as hostile country. They were footsore, worn, and weary; supplied with the scantiest fare, and toiling all day long, through heavy sands, and beneath a scorching sun. Yet his brave men pressed on—such as fell out of the line by day, unless shot down by the foe who crouched like tigers in every bush, and hung in clouds on their flanks and rear, rejoining their ranks in the cool and darkness of the night. Thus this gallant army, undaunted and indomitable, accomplished a great achievement in arms. And how? They were inspired by their commander. Foregoing the privileges of his rank, he dismounted from his horse to put himself not only at the head of his men, but on a level with them. He shared their hard bed; he lived on their scanty rations; every foot they walked he walked; every foe they faced he faced; every hardship they endured he bore; and with cheek as brown, and limbs as weary, and couch as rude as theirs, he came down to their condition—touched by their infirmities, and teaching them by his example what part to act, and with what patience to endure. They would have followed him to the cannon's mouth—his cry not Forward but Follow. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) **They know his voice . . . they know not the voice of strangers.**—*The voice of the shepherd known:*—An American, who was travelling in Syria, saw three native shepherds bring their flocks to the same brook, and the flocks drank there together. At length one shepherd arose and called out "Men-ah! Men-ah!" the Arabic for "Follow me." His sheep came out of the common herd and followed him up the hillside. Then the next shepherd did the same, and his sheep went away with him, and the man did not even stop to count them. The traveller said to the remaining shepherd—"Just give me your turban and crook, and see if they will not follow me as soon as you." So he put on the shepherd's dress and called out "Men-ah! Men-ah!" but not a sheep moved. "They know not the *voice* of a stranger." "Will your flock never follow anybody but you?" inquired the gentleman. The Syrian shepherd replied, "Oh, yes; sometimes a sheep gets sick and then he will follow any one." Is it not so with the flock of Christ? (*Christian Age.*) *Sheep will not follow strangers:*—A man in India was accused of stealing a sheep. He was brought before the judge, and the supposed owner of the sheep was present. Both claimed the sheep, and had witnesses to prove their claims; so it was not easy to decide to whom the sheep belonged. Knowing the habits of the shepherds and the sheep, the judge ordered the animal to be brought into court, and sent one of the two men into another room while he told the other to call the sheep. But the poor sheep not knowing the voice of the stranger would not go to him. In the meantime, the other man in the adjoining room growing impatient gave a kind of a "chuck," upon which the sheep bounded away towards him at once. This "chuck" was the way in which he had been used to call the sheep, and it was at once decided

that he was the real owner. (*W. Baxendale.*) *False teachers not trusted*:—This verse justifies true Christians in not listening to false teachers. For leaving their parish church, perhaps under these circumstances, many reproach them. Yet the very men who reproach them would not trust their worldly affairs to an ignorant and dishonest lawyer, or their bodies to an incompetent doctor! Can it be wrong to act on the same principles for our souls? (*T. Scott, M.A.*) *False teachers shunned*:—Placilla, the Empress, when Theodosius (senior) desired to confer with Eunomius the heretic, dissuaded her husband very earnestly; lest, being perverted by his speeches, he might fall into heresy. Anastasius II., Bishop of Rome (497), whilst he sought to convince Acacius the heretic, was seduced by him. A little leaven soon soureth the whole lump. One spoonful of vinegar will soon tart a great deal of sweet milk, but a great deal of milk will not so soon sweeten one spoonful of vinegar. (*J. Trapp.*) *Satisfaction only in following Christ*:—It is said that man is a religious animal. He must have some religion. To any Christian it must be the religion of Christ: that or none. We cannot go back to paganism. We cannot return to Judaism. Judaism is nothing but a promissory note. If Christ is not the Messiah, that note is two thousand years past due, and daily becoming more worthless and more hopeless. We cannot go to Mahomet, riding armour-clad and blood-stained, leading us to a life of revenge and a heaven of sensuality. We cannot accept Brahmanism, with its vedas and its Hindoo gods, with its metaphysical quibbles and its social tyrannies. Every woman, and every man with wife and sister and daughter says, We will have no Brahmanism. We cannot be atheists, and say, "There is no God!" for then would Nature's heart cease to beat, and we could only stand orphaned by its mighty corpse, and wait without hope till we are buried at last in the same eternal grave of rayless night. (*R. S. Barrett.*) **I am the Door of the sheep.**—*The connection between the two similitudes*:—The picture (vers. 1–5) which described the forming of the Messianic flock, and its departure from the theocratic fold was a morning scene. This, which describes the life of the flock when formed and led by the Messiah, is taken from a scene at mid-day. The sheep go at will in and out of a fold situated in the midst of the pasture. When they desire shelter they enter it: when hunger urges them they leave it, for its door is constantly open to them. They thus possess both safety and abundance, the two essentials to the prosperity of the flock. In this new image the shepherd disappears, and it is the door which plays the chief part. The fold no longer represents the ancient covenant, but Messiah's salvation, and that complete happiness which believers who have accepted Him enjoy. In the former parable, God caused the porter to open the door to the shepherd; in this the Messiah Himself is to His sheep the door of a constant and daily salvation. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *The door and the shepherds*:—I. THE DOOR. 1. Of the sheep—the entrance through which a soul passes into God's fold. This Christ claims to be—(1) Personally. "I," not My teaching, example, propitiation. (2) Exclusively. "The." As a Saviour Christ stands alone, shares His honours with no colleague, not even with a Moses, far less with a Zoroaster, Confucius, Mohammed, angel, virgin, priest, or pope. (3) Universally—"any" (Heb. vii. 25). (4) Certainly—"Shall be saved." (5) Completely: Salvation—(*a*) The most desirable in quality; perfect freedom. (*b*) The most abundant in quantity; ample satisfaction. 2. To the sheep—the entrance by which the shepherds find access. This also Christ claims to be, and therefore no one has a right to be shepherd who does not—(1) Derive such an office from Christ (Eph. iv. 11). (2) Approach men through His own personal acquaintance with Christ (2 Cor. iv. 13). (3) Seek to lead men to a believing acceptance of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 2). (4) Devote himself to the spiritual edification of those who have believed on Christ (Eph. iv. 12; 1 Tim. iv. 6; 2 Tim. iv. 2). II. THE SHEPHERDS. 1. False. (1) The time they appeared—"before Christ." (2) Their character—"thieves, &c." (3) Their objects—to steal, kill, &c., for their own enrichment (ver. 10). (4) Their experience (ver. 8). 2. The true Shepherd. (1) Whence He came: from above, from heaven, from God. (2) When He appeared: in the fulness of the times. (3) What He sought: the welfare of God's flock—(*a*) That men might have life. (*b*) That believers might have it abundantly (chap. i. 16). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Christ the Door*:—1. None can enter without the permission of Christ. 2. Without the knowledge of Christ. 3. Without the image of Christ. 4. Without faith in the blood of Christ. 5. Without sharing in the blessedness of Christ. Christ is the door to a right understanding of nature, providence, history, the Bible. By Him alone we have access to the Father, the enjoyment of salvation, the title to heaven.

(*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Christ the Door:*—The simile is at first sight a strange one. A door is seldom a thing of beauty or impressiveness—a mere instrument of convenience. Yet upon further thought there will come to mind so many uses that admiration will take the place of surprise. A door is an emblem—1. Of separation. On one side are the passions, the driving cares of the world; on the other love and quietness. 2. Of protection. The things that are happening in the community roll up to the door and, like a wave on the beach, they break and pass away. And we can bring up our childreu, thanks to the Door, in the midst of temptations safely. 3. Of hospitality. To keep an open door is equivalent to the declaration that one employs it as one instrument of pleasure to others. At the door too we greet the returning children and the much prized guests. When Christ, therefore, called Himself a door no more significant symbol could well have been selected. He is the Door to the home. Christ is the door—I. FOR THE TROUBLED. There is no sound in the household sweeter than the opening and closing door when love reigns. All day long the father strives at business. The whole day has been full of care and wrangling. The head is hot and the limbs weary. But the day is over at last and he prepares for home. He draws near. The door opens. The children hear it and run. Now every wrinkle is gone and he looks round with a sense of grateful rest and thanks God that the sound of that shutting door was the last echo of the thunder of care and trouble. "I am the Door," says Christ; opening you shall be within the circle of love. What the home is to the troubled that is Christ to those who know how to make use of Him. Speak ye that have proved it. Mothers who have been sustained in the midst of troubles that rasped the soul to the very quick: fathers who have gone through the burden and heat of the world. There are bereaved hearts who need the refuge you have found. Publish the invitation you have accepted. "Come unto Me all ye," &c. II. FOR THE PETITIONER. If the journey of the hearts of petitioners to the doors of men of wealth, influence, wisdom, skill, could be written, how full of pathos it would be! Who can imagine the solicitude of one delicately reared but reduced to poverty as she seeks aid that she may rescue from suffering and death her offspring. Torn between delicacy and affection how hesitating she goes to the door of the rich man for help! But it is opened, and scarcely has she seated herself before her benefactor comes and makes her sorrow his own. But have there not been those who have gone to Christ for themselves or their children with as little faith, with anguish unspeakable? And, or ever they knew it, the cloud was lifted; the door was opened; the Christ was manifest; and His bounty flooded their souls. III. FOR THE DOUBTER. There is no experience more dreary for a noble nature than doubt. It may do for dry natures; but I would rather have superstition. Admitting that that is dead at the root, yet, like a tree covered with mistletoe, there is some life and freshness. But the doubter is dead from top to root. Or he may be compared to one lost in a snow-storm in an open prairie. The road he travels on is soon obliterated. There is now nothing by which he can direct his course. He begins to be uncertain and is alarmed. With this comes exertion, which makes matters worse. He wanders round and round, grows chilly and numb, drowsiness steals over him; and, just as he is tempted to take the fatal rest, he discerns a light, follows it, stumbles upon the door of the cottage, which bursts open, and there he sinks down as one dead. But behind that door he is safe. And so there are those who have wandered from church to church, from theory to theory, from belief to unbelief. Round and round they wander; as they are about to give up there comes the opening of a door through which streams the light of Christ. Men want to be argued out of doubt; but what men need is not more reasoning, persuading, showing, but more Christ. Only love can cure. IV. FOR THOSE WHO IN RELIGION FIND UNEXPECTED HEART RICHES. There are many who live in a plain way, unconscious that there are great treasures near, and are brought unexpectedly into a full fruition of them. How many go to Christ as to a captain on a battle-field, a master in a workshop, expecting suffering and toil, and find Him instead to be the door to a beautiful home where they find comfort and wealth in abundance. V. FOR THOSE IN DANGER. David represents God as a strong tower into which he may run and be safe from the victorious and pursuing enemy or the pitiless storm. Christ is the door of refuge to souls in all kinds of peril. VI. FOR WANDERERS. There is a vagrant child who has proved the folly of his course. He hesitates about going back; but he goes and finds the door open, however long he may have been away. There is the child who has honourably wandered and is on his return. How the vision of the door haunts him! And that daughter who has wandered to the brink of hell, the door held open by a

mother's love invites her return. And what the open door of home is to the penitent Jesus is to the worst. VII. OF DEATH; but He is a gate of pearl. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ the door:*—I. A DOOR SUGGESTS ENTRANCE INTO AN ENCLOSURE—either a home or a sanctuary. The enclosure of which Christ is the Door is—1. The Church, to which He affords entrance by His atonement. 2. Heaven, of which He is the Door, because He is the Door of the Church; for both are in the same enclosure, the one being the vestibule of the other. "He that believeth . . . hath eternal life." II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DOOR: breadth and narrowness. One class of Scriptures disclose the Door as wide as the world in the light of the ample provision made for salvation. But when viewed in its attitude towards sin it is so narrow that the smallest sin cannot enter. The rich moralist found it too narrow with his single sin, but it was broad enough to admit the penitent "chief of sinners." III. THIS DOOR IS BOTH EASY AND DIFFICULT TO OPEN. There are doors so arranged that the pressure of a child's finger on a spring will cause them to swing wide open, when otherwise the strongest force could not move them. The Spring of this door will yield to the weakest touch of faith, but the Door will not move by the mightiest other means. See this illustrated in the case of the publican and Pharisee. IV. CHRIST IS THE ONLY DOOR. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." "Neither is there salvation in any other." True, John saw twelve gates. One door into the Church, many into heaven. Each gate is some beautiful pearl of Christ's grace—His love, wisdom, faithfulness, &c. But they are all one in Christ. V. THIS DOOR IS A SURE DEFENCE TO THOSE WHO HAVE TAKEN REFUGE WITHIN IT. No enemy shall be able to force an entrance. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (*M. W. Hamma, D.D.*) *Christ the Door:*—Our Lord sets Himself forth very condescendingly. The most sublime and poetical figures are none too glorious to describe Him; but He chooses homely ones, which the most prosaic minds can apprehend. 1. A door is a common object. Jesus would have us often think of Him. 2. A door makes a very simple emblem. Jesus would have the lowliest know Him, and use Him. 3. A door to a sheepfold is the poorest form of door. Jesus condescends to be anything, so that He may serve and save His people. I. THE DOOR. In this homely illustration we see—1. Necessity. Suppose there had been none, we could never have entered in to God, peace, truth, salvation, purity, or heaven. 2. Singularity. There is only one door; let us not weary ourselves to find another (Acts iv. 12). 3. Personality. Jesus is Himself the door; not ceremonies, doctrines, professions, achievements, but Himself. 4. Suitability. He is suited to be the communication between man and God, seeing He unites both in His own person, and thus lies open both earthward and heavenward (1 Tim. ii. 5). 5. Perpetuity. His "I am" is for all times and ages (Matt. xxviii. 20). We can still come to the Father by Him (John xiv. 6; Heb. vii. 25). II. THE USERS OF IT. 1. They are not mere observers, or knockers at the door, or sitters down before it, or guards marching to and fro in front of it. But they enter in by faith, love, experience, communion. 2. They are not certain persons who have special qualifications, such as those of race, rank, education, office, or wealth. Not lords and ladies are spoken of; but "any man." 3. They are persons who have the one qualification: they do "enter in." The person is "any man," but the essential distinction is entrance. This is intended to exclude —(1) Character previously acquired as a fitness for entrance. (2) Feeling either of grief or joy, as a preparation for admission. (3) Action, otherwise than that of entering in, as a term of reception. 4. A door may be marked private, and then few will enter. A door which is conspicuously marked as the door is evidently meant to be used. The remarkable advertisement of "I am the door," and the special promises appended to it, are the most liberal invitation imaginable. Come then, ye who long to enter in life! III. THE PRIVILEGES OF THESE USERS. They belong to all who enter; no exception is made. 1. Salvation. "He shall be saved." 2. Liberty. He "shall go in and out." 3. Access. "Shall go in": for pleading, hiding, fellowship, instruction, enjoyment. 4. Egress. "He shall go out": for service, progress, &c. 5. Nourishment. "And find pasture." Our spiritual food is found through Christ, in Christ, and around Christ. Conclusion: Let us enter. 1. A door is easy of access; we shall not have to climb over some lofty wall. 2 It is a door for sheep, who have no wisdom. 3. The door is Jesus; we need not fear to draw nigh to Him, for He is meek and lowly in heart. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The parable of the door:*—Two distinct allegories in this part of the chapter; they should be carefully distinguished. The parable of the Good Shepherd is sustained at greater length, and has found first place in the popular mind;

but this parable of the door has a beauty of its own. Two ideas are prominent. I. SAFETY. "He shall be saved." 1. The sinner pursued by grim memories of guilt that are like a pack of wolves, makes for this stout Door: as he passes in it closes upon all the fierce pursuers, and the hunted victim may breathe freely again. 2. The saint too needs shelter. (1) He must earn money, and mammon lurks near. (2) He must sustain himself, and selfishness is not far off. (3) He must have recreation, and the lust of pleasure lies in wait. (4) He must mix with men, and pride and fear alternately threaten to devour him. (5) He must play the citizen, and the spirit of party bitterness couches near. But he too can make for this shelter when chased by these spirits of evil, and once across this threshold may leave the rabble, howling but harmless, the wrong side of the door. II. LIBERTY. "He shall go in and out," &c. There is a passing out through Christ into the world. The Christian life is no life of isolation; we still remain under obligation to deal with mundane affairs. But it is possible to share Christ's view of life, to see all its duties in the light of His Cross, so that we pass in and out between the Church and the world unharmed. (*Walter Hawkins.*) *Christ the only Door:*—I. HOW TO ENTER THE CHURCH. 1. Negatively. We cannot get into it—(1) By baptism. Millions are baptized with water, but unless they come to Christ by true faith they are no better than baptized pagans. (2) By birthright. It is a great privilege to have Christian parents, but, "except a man be born again," &c. Your father and mother are not the door, but Christ only. (3) By profession. A professor may prove himself a hypocrite, but he cannot prove himself a Christian by mere profession. Men do not get rich by professing to be wealthy. They must hold their title deeds, and have cash in the strong box. (4) By admission to the visible Church. If a man leaves the door alone and climbs over the wall and gets into the outward Church without Christ, he is a thief, &c. If you have not Christ your Church certificates are waste paper. 2. Positively. By faith in Christ. (1) If you exercise this it makes it plain that you enter by Christ, the Door, because faith leads to obedience. "By their fruits ye shall know them." (2) If we have entered through that Door it does not matter what priest or pope may say. II. THE PRIVILEGES OF ENTERING BY THAT DOOR. 1. He shall be saved—as the manslayer from the avenger; as Noah and his family. 2. He shall go in—(1) To rest and peace, for there is no condemnation (Rom. viii. 1). (2) To secret knowledge. (3) To God, with holy boldness in prayer as the adopted heir of heaven. (4) To the highest attainment in spiritual things, for a man does not tarry just inside the threshold of his home. Do not stop where you are. Go further in to get more holiness, joy, &c. 3. He shall go out—(1) To his daily business. The way to do that calmly and justly is to go to it through Christ. Do you neglect your morning prayer. (2) To suffering. (3) To conflict with temptation. (4) To Christian service. It makes all the difference between success and failure whether we go on not out through "the Door." 4. He shall find pasture (Psa. xxiii.). (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Door always open:*—In olden times, cathedrals were regarded as places of sanctuary, where criminals and others might take refuge. Over the north porch of Durham Cathedral was a room where two door-keepers kept watch alternately to admit any who at any time, either by day or by night knocked at the gate, and claimed the protection of St. Cuthbert. Whoever comes to the door of our house of refuge, and at whatever time, finds ready admittance. (*Ibid.*) Of all means of protection, the least trustworthy are those which are trustworthy only at times. Ship's boats that cannot be lowered at the critical moment; fire-escapes that can be swept by the rushing flames; towers of refuge that are locked and barred when the need for refuge comes;—all these inspire a false confidence, and are the more untrustworthy that they seem so trustworthy. It was a wise provision of the Romans when they instituted the office of Tribune of the Plebs for the protection of the common people, that the doors of the Tribune should stand open night and day. And so they stood; and to these wide-open doors of refuge the oppressed plebeian could flee by day or by night, sure of always finding a refuge there. Such, too, is the Christian's privilege. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *Door-keepers dismissed:*—The work of the reformation was thus described by Stern, a German statesman: "Thank heaven, Dr. Luther has made the entrance into heaven somewhat shorter, by dismissing a crowd of door-keepers, chamberlains, and masters of ceremony." *Christ the only Door into the kingdom of God:*—The old city of Troy had but one gate. Go round and round and round the city, and you could find no other. If you wanted to get in, there was but one way, and no other. So to the strong and beautiful city of heaven there is but one gate and no other. Do you know what it is? Christ says, "I am the Door." (*J. L. Nye.*) **He shall be saved, and**

shall go in and out, and find pasture.—The fulness of Christian life is exhibited in its three elements—safety, liberty, support. Admission to the fold brings with it, first, security. But this security is not gained by isolation. The believer goes in and out without endangering his position (Numb. xxvii. 17; Deut. xxxi. 2); he exercises the sum of all his powers, claiming his share in the inheritance of the world, secure in his home. And while he does so he finds pasture. He is able to convert to Divinest uses all the fruits of the earth. But in all this he retains his life "in Christ," and he approaches all else "through Christ," who brings not only redemption, but the satisfaction of man's true wants (*cf.* chap. vii. 37). (*Bp. Westcott.*) *Salvation*:—I. read a story the other day of some Russians crossing wide plains studded over here and there with forests. The wolves were out, the horses were rushing forward madly, the travellers could hear the baying; and, though the horses tore along with all speed, yet the wolves were fast behind, and they only escaped, as we say, "by the skin of their teeth," managing just to get inside some hut that stood in the road, and to shut-to the door. Then they could hear the wolves leap on the roof; they could hear them dash against the sides of the hut; they could hear them gnawing at the door, and howling, and making all sorts of dismal noises; but the travellers were safe, because they had entered in by the door, and the door was shut. Now, when a man is in Christ, he can hear, as it were, the devils howling like wolves, all fierce and hungry for him; and his own sins, like wolves, are seeking to drag him down to destruction. But he has got in to Christ, and that is such a shelter that all the devils in the world, if they were to come at once, could not start a single beam of that eternal refuge: it must stand fast, though the earth and heaven should pass away. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *To go in and out* is an expression frequently used in Scripture to designate the free use of an abode into which one may enter and from which one may depart, without hindrance, which supposes that the individual so acting belongs to the house, and is at home there (Deut. xxvii. 6; xxxi. 2; Jer. xxxvii. 4; Acts i. 21). Jesus here uses the term "to go in" to denote the satisfaction of a desire for repose, the possession of a safe retreat; and "to go out" to indicate the satisfaction of the need of nourishment, the enjoyment of rich pasturage. The idea of pasture is further developed in ver. 10 by that of life, to which is added the idea of abundance, of superfluity. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) "*Go in*" means entering by faith, "go out" means dying in faith and the resultant life in glory. (*Augustine.*) *Christian liberty*:—The fold of Christ is not a prison. It does not shut men in forcibly. Those who belong in it can pass and repass at their pleasure, seeking pasture everywhere in the exercise of Christian liberty. There are no persons on earth so free to gather knowledge from all sources, and to hunt out the good from all directions, as Christian scientists. And no man can know so much about any good there is in all the outside religions of the world as the intelligent disciple of Jesus who is competent to recognize truth even when commingled with error, and who therefore has power to distinguish between truth and error. The man who has not yet been inside of the Christian fold is of all men less capable of comparing that fold with the religions of the world outside of it. There is a vast difference between him who keeps outside all the time, and him who goes in and goes out finding pasture. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *Christian pasturage*:—Many fields has He in this great pasture-land of life; and He has some of the well-loved sheep in them all. There are the fields of peace, much sought after, which, however, are apt to lose their charm and stay their benefits when too long tarried in. There are the fields of toil, where the nourishment comes by working more than by eating. There are the fields of danger, where all the senses need to be in exercise, and all the energy bent towards getting through. There are the fields of darkness, where the sheep crowd close to the shepherd in timid trustfulness. There are the fields of prospect, where at times refreshing sight may be had of the higher pasture-land up to which all the flock will be led one day amid celestial light and song. And again we say that every one of these fields is as a trysting-place, where the Divine lover of human souls can meet with such of them as for the time He may "call," and where He can give them, one by one, such tokens of His love and care as their needs for the time require. Nor will it be long until He leads them through the particular field, and into the gate of some new "time" or "season" which has meanwhile arrived. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The gifts to the flock*:—Jesus Christ presents Himself before the whole race of man, and declares Himself able to deal with the needs of every individual in the tremendous whole. "If any man"—no matter who, where, when. For all noble and happy life there are at

least three things needed: security, sustenance, and a field for the exercise of activity. To provide these is the end of all human society and government. Jesus Christ here says that He can give all these for everybody. The imagery of the sheep and the fold is still, of course, in His mind, and colours the form of the representation. But the substance is the declaration that, to any and every soul, no matter how ringed about with danger, no matter how hampered and hindered in work, no matter how barren of all supply earth may be, He will give these the primal requisites of life. "He shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." I. IN AND THROUGH CHRIST ANY MAN MAY BE SAVED. 1. The word "saved" here is rather used with reference to the imagery of the parable than in its full Christian sense, and means "safe," rather than "saved." At the same time, the two ideas pass into one another; and the declaration of my text is that because, step by step, conflict by conflict, in passing danger after danger, external and internal, Jesus Christ, through our union with Him, will keep us safe, at the last we shall reach everlasting salvation. You and I have to betake ourselves behind the defences of that strong love and mighty hand if ever we are to pass through life without fatal harm. For consider that, even in regard of outward danger, union with Jesus Christ defends and delivers us. Suppose two Manchester merchants, made bankrupt by the same commercial crisis; or two shipwrecked sailors lashed upon a raft; or two men sitting side by side in a railway carriage and smashed by the same collision. One is a Christian and the other is not. The same blow is altogether different in aspect and actual effect upon the two men. The one is crushed, or embittered, or driven to despair, or to drink, or something or other, to soothe the bitterness; the other bows himself with "It is the Lord! Let Him do what seemeth Him good." So the two disasters are utterly different, though in form they may be the same, and he that has entered into the fold by Jesus Christ is safe, not from outward disaster—that would be but a poor thing—but in it. 2. In our union with Jesus Christ, by simple faith in Him and loyal submission and obedience, we do receive an impenetrable defence against the true evils, and the only things worth calling dangers. For the only real evil is the peril that we shall lose our confidence and be untrue to our best selves, and depart from the living God. Nothing is evil except that which tempts, and succeeds in tempting, us away from Him. Real gift of power from Jesus Christ, the influx of His strength into our weakness of some portion of the spirit of life that was in Him into our deadness is promised, and the promise is abundantly fulfilled to all men who trust Him. Oh, brother, do not trust yourself out amongst the pitfalls and snares of life without Him. And so, kept safe from each danger and in each moment of temptation, the aggregate and sum of the several deliverances will amount to the everlasting salvation which shall be perfected in the heavens. 3. Remember the condition, "By Me if any man enter in." That is not a thing to be done once for all, but needs perpetual repetition. When we clasp anything in our hands, however tight the initial grasp, unless there is a continual effort of renewed tightening, the muscles become lax, and you have to renew the tension if you are to keep the grasp. So in our Christian life it is only the continual repetition of the act which our Master here calls "entering in by Him" that will bring to us this continual exemption from, and immunity in, the dangers that beset us. Keep Christ between you and the storm. Keep on the lee side of the Rock of Ages. Keep behind the breakwater, for there is a wild sea running outside; and your little boat, undecked and with a feeble hand at the helm, will soon be swamped. Keep within the fold, for wolves and lions lie in every bush. Live moment by moment in the realizing of Christ's presence, power, and grace. Only so shall we be safe. II. IN JESUS CHRIST ANY MAN MAY FIND A FIELD FOR UNRESTRICTED ACTIVITY. That metaphor of "going in and out" is partly explained to us by the image of the flock, which passes into the fold for peaceful repose, and out again, without danger, for exercise and food; and partly by its frequent use in the Old Testament, and in common conversation, as the designation of the two-sided activity of human life. The one side is the contemplative life of interior union with Jesus Christ by faith and love; the other the active life of practical obedience in the field of work which God provides for us. 1. "He shall go in." That comes first, though it interferes with the propriety of the metaphor, because the condition of this "going in" is the other "entering in by Me, the door." That is to say, that, given the union with Jesus Christ by faith, there must then, as the basis of all activity, follow very frequent and deep inward acts of contemplation, of faith, and aspiration, and desire. You must go into the depths of God through Christ. You must go into the depths of your own souls through Him.

It is through Christ that we draw near to the depths of Deity. It is through Him that we learn the length and breadth and height and depth of the largest and loftiest and noblest truths that can concern the Spirit. It is through Him that we become familiar with the inmost secrets of our own selves. And only they who habitually live this hidden and sunken life of solitary and secret communion will ever do much in the field of outward work. Remember the Lord said first, "He shall go in." And unless you do you will not be "saved." 2. But if there have been, and continue to be, this unrestricted exercise through Christ of that sweet and silent life of solitary communion with Him, then there will follow upon that an enlargement of opportunity, and power for outward service such as nothing but the emancipation by faith in Him can ever bring. Howsoever by external circumstances you and I may be hampered and hindered, however often we may feel that if something outside of us were different the development of our active powers would be far more satisfactory, and we could do a great deal more in Christ's cause, the true hindrance lies never without, but within; and is only to be overcome by that plunging into the depths of fellowship with Him. III. IN JESUS CHRIST ANY MAN MAY RECEIVE SUSTENANCE. "They shall find pasture." The imagery of the sheep and the fold is still, of course, present to the Master's mind, and shapes the form in which this great promise is set forth. I need only remind you, in illustration of it, of two facts, one, that in Jesus Christ Himself all the true needs of humanity are met and satisfied. He is "the bread of God that came down from heaven to give life to the world." Do I want an outward object for my intellect? I have it in Him. Does my heart feel with its tendrils, which have no eyes at the ends of them, after something round which it may twine, and not fear that the prop shall ever rot or be cut down or pulled up? Jesus Christ is the home of love in which the dove may fold its wings and be at rest. Do I want an absolute and authoritative command to be laid upon my will; someone "Whose looks enjoin, Whose lightest words are spells?" I find absolute authority, with no taint of tyranny, and no degradation to the subject, in that infinite will of His. Does my conscience need some strong detergent to be laid upon it which shall take out the stains that are most indurated, inveterate, and engrained? I find it only in the blood that cleanseth from all sin. Do my aspirations and desires seek for some solid and substantial and unquestionable and imperishable good to which, reaching out, they may be sure that they are not anchoring on cloudland? Christ is our hope. For all this complicated and craving commonwealth that I carry within my soul, there is but one satisfaction, even Jesus Christ Himself. Nothing else nourishes the whole man at once, but in Him are all the constituents that the human system requires for its nutriment and its growth in every part. So in and through Christ we find pasture. But beyond that, if we are knit to Him by simple and continual faith, love, and obedience, then what is else barrenness becomes full of nourishment, and the unsatisfying gifts of the world become rich and precious. They are nought when they are put first, they are much when they are put second. I remember when I was in Australia seeing some wretched cattle trying to find grass on a yellow pasture where there was nothing but here and there a brown stalk that crumbled to dust in their mouths as they tried to eat it. That is the world without Jesus Christ. And I saw the same pasture six weeks after, when the rains had come, and the grass was high, rich, juicy, satisfying. That is what the world may be to you if you will put it second, and seek first that your souls shall be fed on Jesus Christ. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The privileges of the sheep*:—Jesus names three privileges accruing to those who accept Him as Shepherd and Door, and by Him enter into the life of God. 1. First, they have safety. "They shall be saved." This is a great word, and implies all that God has to give to men. Especially, though, they shall be saved from sin and death, also they shall be saved from thieves and robbers, and from the wild beasts of sin, even from Satan himself, however he may try to get them. 2. Second, they have freedom. "They shall go in and out." The salvation which Jesus gives is not bondage but freedom. "He hath not given us the spirit of bondage, but the spirit of adoption." The Christian is not bound by rules and statutes as a slave is, but as a son he has the liberty of God's house. He comes and goes as a son comes and goes, being always guided and governed by parental love, and not by hard rule. 3. Third, they have a sufficiency of all things. "And find pasture." "All things are yours." "Having nothing, we yet possess all things." "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Jesus Christ." (*G. F. Pentecost.*) I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

—*The great contrast*:—We should not feel satisfied, however, to limit the import of the Saviour's words to the scribes and Pharisees merely. They were but the tools by which the great enemy carried on his work—the weapons wielded in unhallowed warfare by the prince of the power of the air. He was the hidden agent, the powerful adversary, the thief, whose unhallowed design was to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. The words before us are descriptive of the diverse modes of the tempter's operations. By the expression "to steal" we may understand those vague and covert schemes of the enemy which constitute that cunning craftiness whereby he lieth in wait to deceive. "To kill" implies a bolder game, a mailed and formidable combatant, an open declaration, a war, that sort of attack which he may be supposed to employ when he comes under the similitude of a roaring lion. "To destroy" signifies a labour, a plotting, a refinement of ingenuity and torture, the weaving of some subtle net in whose meshes to entangle and betray—that sort of attack which he may be supposed to employ when he comes under the similitude of an angel of light. Such is the constant purpose of the adversary, of the thief—his purpose, however interrupted; his purpose, however discouraged; and it is in direct and impressive contrast to this, and not in the comparatively contemptible operations of the tools of his power, that the Saviour brings out so forcibly the design of his own manifestation—"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." We may notice, in the exposition of this subject to you, the source, the worthiness, and the measure of this promised life. I. And in the first place, let us endeavour to comprehend the SOURCE OF THIS LIFE. "I am come that they might have life." There are prerogatives in the power of kings, you know, which are never delegated to inferior authority. The monarch has his regalia, which it were treason for any one else to wear. Life is the gift of God—always the gift of God. This is a part of the prerogative which He has never communicated—that act of His royalty which has never been usurped by another. Man, to be sure, has done his utmost to create. The sculptor has chiselled upon the shapeless marble the features of the human face, and proportion has been observed, and attitude has been successful, and a gazing multitude has been loud in admiration of the artist's skill; but though the eye reposed in beauty, no sparkle flashed from it; though the cheek was well rounded and symmetrical, it had no mantling blush; though the lips were true to nature, they could not speak the thrill of the soul. 1. Life, then, is always the gift of God. If we speak of natural life, for example, it is the gift of God. 2. If we speak of intellectual life, again, that also is the gift of God. 3. If we speak of spiritual life, again, that also is the gift of God. II. I have deemed these observations necessary in order to guard us against misapprehension or mistake. I come, in the second place, to notice, brethren, the WORTHINESS OF THIS PROMISED LIFE. God's gifts must be like Himself. Himself perfect, He has made everything perfect in its kind. 1. In the first place, then, the Spirit is revealed to us as the Enlightener, and we may gather, therefore, that this life is comprehensive of knowledge—"For this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent." 2. Then, secondly, the Spirit is revealed in us as the Sanctifier; and we may gather, therefore, that this life is comprehensive of holiness. "To be spiritually-minded is life." 3. Then, again, the Spirit is revealed to us as the Comforter; and we may gather, therefore, that this life is comprehensive of happiness—"for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life." God is love, and love is happiness. 4. Then, again, this Spirit is revealed to us as the Living Spirit. We may gather, therefore, that this life is comprehensive of immortality. You know, brethren, that death is not an original arrangement of the universe. It was an ordained penalty in case of transgression. Nothing that God ever made in the beginning shall be found wanting in the end; but death came in after, and it shall go out before. III. I have not time to dwell largely upon the MEASURE OF THE PROMISED LIFE—more abundantly. I will just give you one or two thoughts. "More abundantly." That implies comparison. More abundantly than something else. More abundantly than what? Well, first more abundantly than the life of Paradise—that is a wonderful thing to think about—the glorious life—the life in Paradise. Each leaf spoke there of the loveliness of nature; every sound breathed heavenly melody, and every breath was imbued with fragrance, and angels ministered in those sweet solitudes, and the voice of the Lord came down in delicious companionship at the close of the day. It was a glorious thing to live in Paradise, to be amongst the favoured ones of the Creator. Ah, but Christ is come

"that we may have life, and that we may have it more abundantly." "In Christ the sons of Adam boast More blessings than their fathers lost." More abundantly than what? More abundantly than under the Levitical dispensation. That was a noble life. It was a grand thing to think that they had the oracles Divine, that the Urim and Thummin always flashed on the breastplate of the high priest; that any man could at any time tell, by going to the oracles, whether he was in condemnation or in acceptance. And it was a glorious scene that on the day of atonement, when all the gathered multitudes of Israel went up to the Temple of Jerusalem, and the high priest came out in solemn garments, and confessed the sins of the people, and then went into the holy place, and sprinkled the blood on the mercy-seat, and then came out richly robed, and with uplifted hands pronounced the benediction on all that heard him, and when every man of that great multitude went to his home at night a justified and forgiven man. It was a glorious life that, but "that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." "He is come that we may have life, and that we may have it more abundantly" than that. More abundantly than what? Why, more abundantly than we could ever have imagined. And that, in some sort, is the most wonderful of all. We have various messengers at command. The eye beareth witness of wonders, but these transcend them by far; the ear hath the winds at its command—many a marvellous strain they waft on their wings—but the winds do not bear a story like this. Brethren, there is a phrase which we sometimes use—I don't know that I ever felt its peculiar significance so much as I feel it to-night, especially in connection with the subject I have feebly endeavoured to bring before you. It is this: "I stand between the living and the dead!" Literally it is true. I stand between the living and the dead. To which do you belong? Those are living who have come to Christ, and are resting upon Him. Those are dead who are yet in a state of nature, or who have fled for refuge to any refuge of lies. I stand between the living and the dead. The living and the dead! Some of you are living perhaps. Are you? You hardly know, you say. Your only evidence of life is that you are conscious of your deadness. Well, there is life there, and that is more than a dead man can say. Consciousness of deadness is itself a sign of life. Oh, I do rejoice that I can come to you to-night with the publication of life. I can stand upon the sepulchre and roll the stone away, and in the name of my Master exclaim: "He that believeth in Jesus, even though he were dead, yet shall he live. Whosoever liveth and believeth in Jesus shall never die." Don't kill yourselves. You will do it if you die. God will not kill you. He has never decreed the murder of any creature He has made. Ministers will not kill you; they would fain have you live. They sound warnings in your ears, that you may live. But lo! a terrible scene rises up before me. I fancy myself somewhere, it may be in the country parts of this beautiful island of ours. We will put the scene where I have sometimes seen it, at the corner of four green lanes. There is something there, although everything in the external aspect seems to smile—there is something there that makes the peasant whistle as he goes by, or pass it with bated breath, and the children don't choose that place to play in; everything about it seems haunted with strange and nameless horror; and if you ask about it, some peasant lowers his voice into a whisper, as he says, "It is the grave of a suicide." An unhonoured sod just thrown up, nameless and unknown, at the corner of four cross-roads, at midnight—the grave of one who put himself out of life, and beyond the rites of Christian burial—the grave of a suicide. Oh, brethren, it is a fearful thing, but I must pursue the analogy. If any of you, after repeated admonitions and warnings, should perish, you have struck the suicide's blow upon your own souls, and wherever your nameless grave may be, angels who delight to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, looking at the place where your ashes may repose, will have to say, "It is the grave of a suicide—of one who is self-murdered, and spiritually dead—of one who has driven the dagger of perdition into his own soul." Oh, don't do that; I beseech you don't do that. Live, live! That one word is the gospel, because Christ has promised life, and the Spirit is waiting to impart it. (*W. M. Punshon.*) *The gift of abundant life*:—Our Lord here delares the great end for which He came into the world, that we "might have life." He had already said this (John iii. 16; vi. 33; v. 40). But here He speaks with a still greater fulness of meaning: "that they might have it more abundantly"; promising some great endowment, some greater gift of God than man had ever before received. This is the great grace of the gospel, the abundant gift of life. I. The gift a spirit of life dwells in those who are united to Christ, in

a FULNESS more abundant than was ever revealed before. The life possessed by Adam was in the measure of his own infirmity; the life which is in Christ is in the fulness of a Divine manhood. Adam was united to God only by God's grace and power. Christ is God made man. The humanity of Adam was only human; in Christ the manhood is become Divine. The union of the Godhead with the manhood endowed it with a substantial grace whereby it was deified. And it was from the miraculous conception filled with the fulness of all graces. His very manhood became the fountain, a great deep of all grace. Therefore He said (John v. 21, 26). This was the prophecy of the Baptist (Matt. iii. 11). And it was His own promise (John vii. 37–39). And after He had entered into His glory, St. John bare witness that this promise had been fulfilled (John i. 14, 16); that is to say, the anointing which was upon Him has flowed down to us. The Spirit which descended upon our Head hath run down to the least member of His body, even "to the skirts of His clothing." When he ascended into Heaven, He "received gifts for men"; that is, the full dispensation of grace was committed unto the Second Adam. II. The gift of life is abundant also in its CONTINUANCE. By the regeneration of the Holy Ghost we are engrafted into the second Adam, very man, not frail and weak, but also very God, changeless and almighty. We are gathered under a Head which cannot fail; and are members of Him who hath revealed His own Divine name: "I am—the Life." We cannot die in our Head, because He *is* Life eternal; nor can we die in ourselves, except we cast out the Giver of life, who is in us. Our first head fell, and drew us with him into the grave; our second Head is in heaven, and "our life is hid with Him in God." Lessons: 1. We hereby know that in all our acts there is a Presence higher than our own natural and moral powers. We were united to Christ by the present of the Holy Spirit from our baptism. There has never been a moment from the first dawn of consciousness, from the first twilight of reason, and the first motions of the will, when the Spirit of life has not been present with us. He has created in us the first dispositions to truth and holiness; prevented us in all good intentions, restrained us in all evil; beset our whole spiritual nature, and encompassed us on all sides, guiding us into the will of God. 2. This Spirit works in us according to the revealed and fixed laws of our probation. His persuasions are by illuminations of truth and inspirations of holiness; and these are powers which act not by force, but like the lights and dews of heaven, by a piercing virtue, infusing new gifts of fruitfulness and power into the works of God. What we receive of the Divine Spirit is so given to us as to become our own, and as our own we use it with a perfect freedom of the will. 3. Lastly, we may learn that the union of this Divine Presence with us in our probation, issues in the last and crowning grace of this life, the gift of perseverance (Phil. i. 6; 1 Thess. v. 24). When did we ever set ourselves sincerely to any work according to the will of God, and fail for want of strength? It was not that strength failed the will, but that the will failed first. (*Archdeacon Manning.*) *Life more abundantly*:—God supplies us at birth with a certain amount of animal vitality, and with certain faculties tending to various kinds and degrees of good in the universe, and by means of these we are to draw our life from the treasury of the creation and from God. Our success during our stay on the earth is to be measured by the amount and kind of life we derive from the fountains that flow from the Infinite fulness. Life may be increased. Even in the physical department we may have it "more abundantly" by obeying the plain conditions. We are not fated to a short allowance or a fixed amount, but are endowed with the power of growing, and are tempted by a large, unmeasured possibility. Through exercise, and the proper choice and economy in food, we not only keep well, but we enlarge the stream of vitality. And the law by which a man purifies and refreshes the currents of his blood, makes the eye clean, the tendons taut, the nerves calm, the chest capacious, the step elastic, and knots the muscles by discipline to such sturdiness that, though once they were tired with a slight burden, now they will lift nearly half-a-ton, is a law that can be traced up into the mental and moral regions, and be seen to govern the spirit as well as the frame. 1. Life may be increased. Many try to increase it by intensity. There is a story of an Eastern monarch who had been a noble ruler, but who received a message from an oracle that he was to live only twelve years more. He instantly resolved that he would turn these to the most account, and double his life in spite of destiny. He fitted up his palace gorgeously. He denied himself no form of pleasure. His magnificent gardens were brilliantly lighted from sunset to sunrise, so that darkness was never experienced within the circuit of his estate; so that, whenever he was awake, the stream of pleasure was ever flowing, and even the sound of

revelry was never still. Thus he determined to outwit the oracle by living nearly twenty-four years in twelve. But at the end of six years he died. The oracle foreknew and made allowance for his cunning scheme. No doubt, on his death-bed, the monarch saw the vigour and despotism of the laws of life, with which it is vain for finite art and will to wrestle. The story is true in the spirit, though it may be fable in its details. What is gained in intensity is lost in time. You cannot "have life more abundantly" by making the soul crouch down into the body, and diffusing it through the fleshy envelope, so that it loses the acquaintance with its own higher realm in the added zest of mortal pleasure. There is the most tragic waste of faculty. The end of such effort is disgust, weariness, and, in the inmost being, the sense of emptiness, folly and unrest. 2. There is another kind of life that we may call *broad*. Life is increased in this way by putting out more faculties into communication with nature and society. In fact, it is by the unfolding of faculties that all additions to life are received. Each one of our powers is a receptacle for some element of the Divine good, but it is not like a goblet, and it does not receive as water is poured into a vase; its method is rather that of a seed. When put into proper relations with its objects it germinates and absorbs from the currents and forces outside of it, and transmutes them into its own quality of substance. It is inspiring to think how some natures live broadly enough to take in elements of growth from the farthest quarters of the visible universe. There are great naturalists living now that have received nutriment from the lowest discovered stratum of the earth and from the most distant patch of milky light in immensity. This is a method of receiving life "more abundantly," and in saying now that, according to the Christian wisdom, it is not the highest way, I am not going to criticize it but to commend it. I delight to think of men like Humboldt and Arago, Herschel and Agassiz, and to see in them that the riches of infinite truth are not wholly wasted on us; that God does not rain His wisdom through all our air and pack His treasures beneath our soil entirely for nothing, so far as the enlarging of the boundaries of human spirits is concerned. 3. Yet this life, though broad as we have thus interpreted it, may be superficial. The true abundance comes not from intensity, and not alone from the number of objects with which we are in communion, but from *depth*. A life is rich in the proportion that it is deep; and it is deep to the extent that the moral and spiritual sentiments are active and healthy. The spirit that has a sense of justice quick and large, and lives by it in relation to his fellows, and tries to organize more of it through himself in society, lives deeper than the man of intellect and infinitely, deeper than the man of pleasure. The affections are richer than the money-making and the truth-seeking capacities; and the richest affections are those which bind us consciously to the infinite. Of course, a thoroughly proportioned life will have both breadth and depth; but we must not fail to see that depth is the essential thing. That is connected with religion; that every mind may have. It is offered to you and me independently of our strength of mind or fulness of learning. Astronomy we may not have time to study, or ability to master; but God, who made all worlds, is as near to this one as to any, and as ready to fill our spirits as those that live in the most distant or brilliant star. And the religious life may be developed independently of all our learning. How much knowledge do you need to convince you that you ought to obey conscience? How wide acquaintance with literature to prove to you that you ought to bridle your selfishness, and trample a foul passion beneath your will? How great familiarity with libraries to assure you that a disposition of prayer and trust brings back a rich reward through inward harmony and a sense of peace? This is the deep life, and we may have it though we be hindered, though we have little time for the cultivation of mental powers, and the faculties that make life graceful. (*T. Starr King.*) *The mission of Christ*:—I. THE PERSONS. "I." "They." 1. God, who is more than all, and man, who is infinitely less than nothing. 2. The God of peace to His professed enemy. Nothing else in the world is God's enemy. Sin is enmity because—(1) It violates the majesty of God, inasmuch as in sin we seem to try conclusions whether God can see a sin, or be affected with it, or cares to punish it; as though we doubted whether God were present, pure or powerful. (2) It is surrender to the enemy of His kingdom, Satan, and that for small wages (Rom. vi. 21). And yet for all this the Lord of Hosts comes, and to an enemy so incapable of carrying out his enmity. Some men will continue kind when they find a thankful receiver, but God is kind to the unthankful. There may be found a man who will die for his friends, but God died for His foes. 3. God to all men; "they" hath no limitation. The merit of Christ is sufficient for all, and whether

this sufficiency grows out of the nature of the merit, the dignity of the person being considered, or out of the acceptation of the Father and the contrast between Him and the Son, we will not dispute. All agree that there is enough done for all. Would, then, God receive enough for all, and then exclude some of Himself? God forbid. Well said Augustine, "O good and mighty God, who art as loving to every man as to all mankind, and meanest as well to all mankind as to any man." Moses desired that God would show him His "ways," His dealings with men (Exod. xxxiii. 13); that which he calls His glory (ver. 18), how he glorifies Himself upon man. God promises (ver. 19) that He will show Him all His "goodness"; and then, in chap. xxxiv. 6, He shows him His way, goodness, glory; and here are thirteen attributes, and only one of them tastes of judgment—the rest are wholly mercy. Such a proposition has His mercy, that there is no cause in Him if all men be not partakers of it. II. THE ACTION. "I came." 1. He who is omnipresent in love to man, studied a new way of coming, of communicating Himself to man, and by assuming our nature in the blessed Virgin. That this Virgin should not only have a Son, but that this Son should be the Son of the Eternal God in such a coming of Him who was here before, as that if it had not arisen in His goodness no man would ever have thought of it. 2. He who came to the old world in promises, prophecies, and figures, is actually, really, and presentially come to us; of which difference that man will have the best sense who languishes under the heavy expectation of a reversion, or has felt the joy of actual possession. III. THE END. 1. That they might have life. Life is the character by which Christ denominates Himself (chap. xiv. 6; Acts iii. 14). God has included all that is good in the name of Life, and all that is ill in the name of Death (Deut. xxx. 15). The reward proposed to our faith is to live by it (Heb. ii. 4); and this fulness of happiness, life and the life of life, spiritual life and its exaltation into eternal life, is the end of Christ's coming. (1) That there might be life to be had. For chaos was not a deader lump before the Spirit of God moved upon it than mankind was before the influence of Christ's coming wrought upon it. But now that God has so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, all may have life. (2) But this life must be received. There is air enough to give breath to everything, but everything does not breathe. If a tree does not breathe, it is not because it wants air, but because it wants means to receive it. That man that is blind shall see no more sun in summer than in winter. 2. That they might have it more abundantly. God can do nothing penuriously. (1) The natural man more than any other creature. Animals, &c., *have* life; man *is* life (Gen. ii. 7), and will live after death. (2) The Jews more than the Gentiles. Christ came to the Jews in promises, types, sacrifices; and thus they had better means to preserve that life, to illustrate the image of God, to conform themselves to God, and make their immortality eternal happiness, than other nations. (3) Christians more than Jews. Christ has come to Christians really and in substance. (4) In the Christian Church Christ has given us means to be better to-day than yesterday, to-morrow than to-day. The grace which God offers us does not only fill, but enlarges our capacity for all that goes to make up life—holiness, assurance, happiness, heaven. (*J. Donne, D.D.*) *The mission of Christ*:—I. CHRIST IS THE GIVER OF LIFE. 1. Life in New Testament language has a special fulness of meaning. It is more than mere existence. There is a death in life, in which the great end of existence is ignored, to which life's true blessedness is impossible, and in which its higher powers are dormant or polluted. The true life is pure and free; it is the life of reason, conscience, will, and affections. It is not inherent in human nature, acquired by human means, possible to human strength, but is found only in Christ the Life-giver. 2. In this our Lord is not a subordinate agent, but the primal source of life. The gift to men is out of the fulness of His own eternal Being. In Him was life essentially, and of His fulness we receive life. 3. Life is His gift. (1) As it is possessed by men. (*a*) In all states of being. In its dawn of religious infancy; its meridian of manhood; its evening radiancy, when its sun is setting; it is given, sustained, and perfected by Christ. (*b*) In all the dispensations. In its paradisaical innocency; its patriarchal simplicity; its Mosaic complexity; its latter-day glory. (2) As He has made good man's lost title to its possession. He has redeemed man from sin and death, bestowed the quickening and sanctifying Spirit, and thus resolved the forfeited creative life. II. THE LIFE BESTOWED BY CHRIST HAS ITS MORE ABUNDANT MEASURES, as compared with—1. The life of the former dispensation. Life and light are closely related. The dimness of Judaism was necessarily connected with limited and imperfect life. 2. Present or

future measures of its possession. It is like a river whose channel broadens and deepens as it flows onward. In its progress sterility and death vanish: all other life lives anew. To its necessities and enlargement all other life becomes serviceable. 3. The primal gift. The life of redemption is more abundant than that of Creation, as it involves the more perfect manifestation of Him, in the knowledge of whom standeth eternal life. 4. Present or future Christian attainments. It is not a succession of labours, to end in the rest of heaven; it is growth in knowledge, purity, power, grace. In the freshness and beauty of new-born life, in the expansion and maturity of its full age, in its ripe and mellow eventide, it is still capable of increase; and when at length it escapes from earthly limitations, there will still remain the more abundant life of progress and blessedness. Conclusion: This life is in Christ, and is attained by faith. Let, therefore, faith rest on Him who is "able to do exceeding abundantly," &c. (*T. Stephenson.*) *Life in Christ:*— Christ represents Himself in contrast with a type of character which He calls "the thief." When He applies this to those who come before Him, He means not only in time, but apart from Him in design. Not Moses and the prophets, who were sent of God and spake of Him, but those unspiritual commentators on the law of former days, including the scribes and Pharisees of His own. And well do the modern forms of this teaching deserve the name. Nothing is more destructive. The contrast between Christ and the robbers is drawn out. They came to gather for their own benefit—"to steal." Christ came to give. They came without skill, handling the souls of men with rough barbarity—"to kill." Christ came to save. They came regarding men as instruments to be used for themselves or their party; and so, if need were, to "destroy," aye, even by fire and sword. Christ came to sacrifice Himself for man's good. In one word, His purpose was to give life. I. WHAT SORT OF LIFE DID CHRIST COME TO BRING? The proper life of man. There is a form of life which, in proportion to its possession, constitutes one truly, and in the full sense, a man. 1. That life must be co-ordinate with man's faculties; grow out of, and be measured by, its powers. This is true of all life. Look at the life of a bird; its whole structure is a beautiful machinery for living in the air. So with the fish; it is adapted for the water, and the mollusc for the rock. And the wealth and circuit of life develop in proportion to faculty. Life is full and rich where there are many and diverse abilities, and poor where there are few. 2. Then the life of man should be the grandest in the world, for no creature is so richly endowed. Life ought to pour in upon him from every side and through every avenue. The senses on the one hand, and the intellect and affections on the other, should teem with the materials of vivid and happy consciousness, and the sense of God and the Spiritual world should put the last touch of refinement on our pleasure and of gentleness on our love. But it is not so. Life is poor and mean, and, for the masses of men, sensual and degrading. The very capacities of our life are obscured. We have never felt it at its best, and do not know, therefore, what its best would be. Only one true man has lived. We may study life in Christ as in its realized ideal. II. CHRIST COMES TO ENRICH OUR LIFE, UNTIL IT IS RENEWED IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS OWN. 1. By setting it in its true course. He would take the river at its source, and turn it into its proper channel. Our face is turned the wrong way. The first step, therefore, is to bring this fatal blunder home to our minds, and create the consciousness of sin. Let a man once feel his need and repentance, conversion, turning to God for pardon and acceptance will follow. 2. By revealing the truths, on a right apprehension of which the tone of thought and activity depends. Life turns on the poles of thought. It is folly to say that it is of no consequence what a man believes. All history proves the contrary. A good life implies a true creed, and such a creed Christ comes to give. In His own Person He manifests God, so that we can know and love Him. The nature, responsibility, capacity, and destiny of the soul are for ever on His lips. So, too, of our duty, its principles, claims, spirit. The love of God, and the way of peace with Him; all this, and more, He teaches. How? Not in words only. He is the Word. He reveals God by being "the express image of His person"; man, by fulfilling the idea of perfect manhood; duty, by reducing it to a living embodiment. In Him only the ideal and the actual have met. And His teaching is as perfect in form as in essence. It is gathered into a life history. No method is so interesting, impressive, significant, suggestive. 3. By kindling an enthusiasm for goodness, and by revealing it as an object for pursuit. It is a great, but by no means easy, thing to know our duty. For more than two thousand years the problems of morals have been debated. But it is greater still to feel the full force of the reasons on which

it rests, and to feel the sublimity of goodness. For the life of goodness is an essential part of the life of man, as the word "virtue" indicates—the condition appropriate to *vir*, man. Now Christ quickens the love of goodness by winning our souls to Himself; and a great analyst of human nature has said that our very possibilities of virtue have been altered by the coming of Christ. We can love, hope, endure, dare more since His face has shone from the canvas of history. Catch inspiration from that grand life, and you will have life more abundantly. 4. By enlarging the circle of our benevolent regards. There is a strong element of selfishness in men, which tends to narrow our sympathies. "Every man for himself." And yet the best parts of life reach outside of ourselves. Children live in the love of those about them. There are our boyish friendships. Then comes the love of woman. By and by tiny feet patter on our household floor. Love multiplies and deepens as life goes on. We learn to care for our party, church, country, the world. Christ sanctifies all this, and makes it fruitful. The love of Christ can cure our selfishness, and we shall do some good in the world when we love men as Christ loved them, and not till then. 5. By becoming a spring of joy in our hearts. All true life is, or may be, joyous. "The water that I shall give him," &c. Paul lays it down as our duty to "rejoice evermore." (*J. F. Stevenson, D.D.*) *Life a gain*:—1. A strange question has come under discussion—"Is life worth living?"—strange, until we recollect that a prevalent philosophy has as its main theses that life is not worth living. It is not hard to trace the genesis of this. When one begins to doubt the goodness of God, one begins to doubt if life has much value. 2. This question is very audacious. We might perhaps question a future of life; but this points life itself with an interrogation, and, answered in the negative, involves the wish that both created and the Creation were blotted out. But to empty and then annihilate the universe is an audacity that sinks to the ridiculous. "Oh, that I had never been born!" said one. "But you *are* born, and you cannot help it," was the truly philosophical reply. A philosophy that flies in the face of the inevitable forfeits its name. 3. The proposition to get rid of this undesirable life need not awaken concern; the greater part will prefer to live it out to the end. And then it may be impossible to escape by so-called self-destruction. We may throw ourselves over the battlements of the life that now is, but who can say that we may not be seized by the mysterious force that sent us here and be thrust back into this world or into one no better. If extinction is desirable we must suppose a good God, for no other would permit it. But will He not rather deliver from the misery and preserve the life? 4. It is not amiss that the question has come up, for it has turned the thought of the age to the good as well as to the evil of life. That there are gains and losses there is no question—which, then, are in excess? I. Let us make A COMPARATIVE ESTIMATE OF THE LOSS AND GAIN OF LIFE AS WE PASS OUR ALLOTTED YEARS. We must start with the fact that but one kind of excellence seems possible at a time. We never see a person simultaneously at the height of personal beauty, energy and wisdom. One excellence follows another. But we must not infer that as one phase passes away that there is actual loss; there may be a succession characterized by an ascending grade, that life represents an unquenchable force, can never be less than it is, and thus be its own excuse for being. 1. We lose the perfection of physical life, its grace and exuberance—yet only to gain firmer hold of it. The child is guileless by nature, the man because he has learned to hate a lie. The child is joyous, it knows not why; the man's joy is the outcome of his nature reduced to harmony. 2. We lose the forceful, executive qualities. We no longer undertake arduous enterprises or heavy responsibilities; the needed energy is gone, but it may have been transmuted as motion is into light and heat. 3. In the mental qualities there is smaller loss. Fancy decays, but with the example of Milton and others before us we can hardly say imagination, but the judgment grows broader and the sense of truth keener and the taste more correct later on. 4. In moral qualities there is no loss at all. The order is significant, the physical changes utterly, the mental partially, the moral not at all if the life is normal. II. WHAT DO WE GAIN AS LIFE GOES ON? 1. This evident progress from the lower to the higher must be accounted a gain. It does not matter how this progress is made, whether by actual loss of inferior qualities supplanted by higher, or by a transformation of forces, though the latter is more in accordance with science which asserts that force is indestructible. None of us would choose to go back to any previous phase to stay. We may long for the innocence of youth, but who would take it with its ignorance; for its zest, but not at the expense of its immaturity; for the energy of mid-life, but not at the cost

of the repose and wisdom of age. 2. Though we lose energy, courage, and present hope we gain in patience, and on the whole suffer less. This is a gain over the untested strength and false measurements of earlier years. 3. We make another gain as thought grows calm and judgment rounded to its full strength. Knowledge becomes wisdom, passion and prejudice pass, and we gain in comprehensiveness, and so lose the spirit of partizanship. 4. There is great gain in later life in certain forms of love and sympathy. The passion and semi-selfishness of early love, and the restriction and prejudice of early sympathy pass away, but both become stronger, purer, calmer and more universal. The old are more merciful than the young; they judge more kindly and forgive more readily. Hence they are poor disciplinarians, but they are not called to that duty. 5. There is also in advanced life a mingling of the faculties. Thought has more faith in it and faith more thought; reason more feeling and feeling more reason; courage more prudence, and prudence more courage. An old man does not feel so much rapture before a landscape as one younger, but he sees it with more eyes. This co-operation of all the faculties is like the Divine mind in which every faculty interpenetrates every other, making God one and perfect, and is an intimation that he is getting ready for the company of God. Conclusion: 1. If life can start at the point of mere existence and thence grow up into likeness of God, it is worth living. And if life reaches so far, we may be sure it will go on. 2. This line of thought has only force in the degree in which life is normal. That it is not such is true, but there is provision in humanity against its own failures, for One is in it who can fill its cup to overflow. (*T. T. Munger.*) *More life*:—I. LIFE IN ITSELF. 1. This language implies that we are by nature destitute of life. The Scriptures draw a wide distinction between life in Christ and the morality and the immorality of the world. There are immense differences between those who "give themselves to work all uncleannesses," &c., and those who are respected for excellence of character, but no fundamental difference is recognized by God. True life is wanting in both, because both are "alienated from the life of God." It is not what virtue I may see in the face of man, but has he that "holiness without which no man can see the Lord." 2. We must not soften the truth that there is no life apart from Christ. One statue may be marked by rough outlines and coarse features, and another may be an Apollo Belvidere, but though one may bear more resemblance to a man, both are dead. 3. Between the feeblest Christian and the best specimen of the unrenewed man, if not to human eyes, to the eyes of God, there is all the difference between life and death. 4. Because there is no self-restorative power in man. Christ has come that we "might have life." II. THIS LIFE IN ITS FULNESS. 1. Progress is one essential quality in life. Where will you look to find life springing at once into full development? Not to the corn; not to the forest. The outer man is first a babe, weak and helpless. The inner man follows the same analogy. There are babes in Christ, &c. In some cases the new man may rise into sudden perfection; for who shall confine the power of God. But the law of God's general working is that the path of the just shall shine more and more, and go from strength to strength. 2. Christ lays emphasis on this point because we are prone to be content with a little life. How common for a man to rest satisfied with mere pardon: a blessing indeed beyond all price, but only the porch of the great temple of salvation. Many sit down here and sing a new song; but Christ comes and says I will show you greater things than these. I have come to give life more abundantly. Don't think less of your pardon but more of your sanctification. You were once like sick men in a hospital on fire—you needed rescue first, but healing also. Do not forget that you were pardoned in order to be purified. III. THE REASON FOR WHICH WE SHOULD SEEK THE MORE ABUNDANT LIFE. Feeble life is—1. A miserable thing—(1) To look at. There is but little to attract in a river which, through drought, flows but a thin and sluggish current; it pleases best when it fills the channel and sweeps in majestic volume through the valley. There is nothing to delight in a tree almost barren; we love to see it thick and bossy. It distresses us to see a man bent and worn with disease; but delightful to see one healthy and strong. And free, robust life is not less but more beautiful in the spiritual world. (2) To endure. You have known the pain of physical weakness, its agony which has seemed to turn every nerve into a string of fire; its weakness, when you have started at every noise; its sleeplessness. A little life is more painful than none at all. And a Christian whose spiritual life is languid is more miserable than a man dead in sin. His eyes are opened, but while a blind man feels no pain his eyes are so weak that the light distresses them. And what a disastrous effect has religion without cheerfulness—

particularly on children. 2. A dangerous thing. Epidemics find their way to those who are in a low condition of health. When a storm rushes on the deep it tries the stoutest vessel, but woe to the vessel that is slim and leaky. So when the spiritual life is weak it becomes an easy prey to all perils. If we are to be safe we must be well fortified within. 3. A useless thing. We are fit for nothing when our bodily strength is reduced. We have enough to do to support our own debility. But the more life we have the more strength we have to expand our work. And Christian life may be so feeble as to be of no service in the way of influence on the world. It is for the world's sake as well as our own that Christ desires us to have abundance of life. IV. IN WHAT MANNER THIS ABUNDANT LIFE IS TO BE SECURED. Like all life it is mysterious, but it is not magical in its growth. It requires exertion and will not take care of itself. We are to "*grow* in grace." 1. We must compare ourselves, individually, with the standard of holiness as given in the gospel rather than with that actually reached by the Church. The question with many is not what is possible, but what is a fair, average piety. 2. To have more life we must have more prayer. According to prayer, and therefore the prayer of faith, it will be done unto us. 3. We must dwell more beneath the Cross, the fountain of life, when we begin to live, that we may have our life increased. (*E. Mellor, D.D.*) *Life and more life*:—This was spoken in the character of the shepherd—the antithesis to thief. I. THE AIM OF CHRIST—the calling forth, strengthening, and development of the highest life of man. 1. This is necessary work. Mother, teacher, &c., are required for the previous stages of life's realization—animal, social, intellectual attainment. But it is still more essential that spiritual life should be created and sustained. Here we are conscious of helplessness, and just here success or failure affects our entire being and future. All the rest exist for this; and none as fit as Christ, and no method better than His for this task. 2. What hinders that spiritual life should not be spontaneous. A moral taint. Absence of perfect type. Christ came, therefore, not so much to deliver men from a future catastrophe as from existing moral death, and to render possible a grander humanity. 3. As Christ came for this, so His coming was itself the condition, the way of its realization. He lived free from sin and at home in this higher element of life. His example taught and inspired and His sacrifice supplied a basis for this life. Just to live as He did was much. The inventor who lays bare new uses of things, the explorer who opens up unknown lands, the artist who interprets the deep harmonies of nature, the philosopher who discovers new truth—each comes that we "might have life," intensifies its interest, extends its scope, and strengthens its hold on the world, but does not enrich the highest portion of our nature, which is conscious of righteousness, and translates it into action. The latter work is Christ's only, and is accomplished only by full union with Him who is "the Life." II. ITS VALUE AS AN EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY. 1. Generally a valid claim to trust and welcome. Yet not likely to be allowed: presenting no immediate earthly advantage; not utilitarian. 2. But appealing to the deeper consciousness of men. (1) As bringing forth the sense of this life in men. (2) As calling for faith, admiration, and sympathy. (3) As revealing the solemn meaning of existence, and the need of reconciliation with God. Conclusion: What do we gain? The mastery of our entire nature. "My *mind* to me a kingdom is"; nay, "I myself." The rest (body, &c.) not a mere scaffolding to be kicked away, but an organic system through which higher functions operate, and within which, ever fuller and fuller, life flows. (*A. L. Astor.*) *Life more abundant*:—I. CHRIST HAS COME THAT MEN MAY HAVE LIFE. 1. Prolonged natural life is due to Him. The barren tree would not stand so long but for His intercession. 2. Life in the sense of pardon, deliverance from the death penalty. 3. Life from the death of trespasses and sins, the life of the Spirit. 4. This spiritual life is the same which will be continued and perfected in heaven. 5. Of this Christ is the only source. It is not the result of working. How can the dead work for life? It is exclusively a gift of God. If we could have had it without Christ coming, why need He come? II. CHRIST HAS COME THAT THOSE TO WHOM HE HAS GIVEN LIFE MAY HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY. 1. Life is a matter of degrees. Some have life, but it flickers like a dying candle; others are full, like the fire upon the blacksmith's forge when the bellows are in full blast. Christ has come that we might have life in all its fulness. 2. Increase of life may be seen in several ways. (1) In healing. When a sick man recovers he has life more abundantly than in his illness; so when Christ restores sick Christians, strengthens their faith, brightens their hope, &c. (2) But a person may be in health, and yet you may desire for him more life. A child, *e.g.*, is in perfect health,

yet cannot run alone. As he grows, however, he has life more abundantly. So we grow in grace, from babes to young men, and then fathers. (3) Health and growth may coincide with a stinted measure of life, as in the case of a prisoner who tenants a living tomb. When he is set at liberty he knows, as we when the Son makes us free what it is to have more abundant life. (4) But a man may have liberty, &c., and yet be so poor as to be scarcely able to keep body and soul together. So there are some believers who exist rather than live, and have small conception of the rich thing Christ has stored up for them. (5) A man may enjoy all this, and yet need more life, because a despised castaway. The love and esteem of our fellows is essential to life. When under conviction a man finds himself to be less than nothing, he finds it a mighty addition to life when Jesus makes him, a slave, a son of God and heir of heaven. 3. The particulars in which more abundant life consists and should be sought. (1) More stamina. An embankment is to be cut. A number of men offer themselves for the work—these with sunken cheeks and hollow coughs. They will not do. Yonder is a band of stalwart fellows, with ruddy faces, broad shoulders, mighty limbs. They will do. The difference between the two is the presence or absence of stamina. And Christ has come that we may have spiritual stamina for arduous service. Alas! some Christians want medicine and nursing. Give them work, and they will grow weary. (2) Enlargement of the sphere of life. To some forms of human life the range is very narrow. Our streets swarm with men to whom "the music of the spheres" means the chink of sovereigns. The souls of such are like squirrels in cages; each day their wheel revolves; it is all the world they know. Christ has come to give a broader life. True, there are many men whose life traverses wide areas, who map out the stars, fathom the sea, &c.; but that, wide as it is, is bounded by time and space. But when Christ comes He makes the greatest intellect feel that it was "cabined, cribbed, confined," till Christ made it free. (3) The exercise of all our powers. All the powers of a man are in the child, but many of them are dormant, and will only be exercised as life is more abundant. Christ has come to give us a fuller life. Look at the apostles before and after Pentecost. Many professors seem to be more dead than alive. Life is in their hearts, but only partially in their heads, and has not touched their silent tongues, idle hands, frost-bitten pockets. (4) Increased energy. A man is most alive when in determined pursuit of a favourite purpose. Christ has supplied us with the most stimulating purpose—His constraining love. Abundance of life is painfully manifest in insane persons: the demoniac, *e.g.* Now, if possession by an evil spirit arouses men to an unusual degree of life, how much more shall possession by the Divine Spirit! (5) Overflow of enjoyment. When on a spring morning you see the lambs frisking and children playing, you say, "What life!" Just so when churches and individuals are revived, what joy there is! (6) Delicacy of feeling. There is a great deal of difference as to the amount of pain which persons suffer. People with a fine mental organization, having more life, suffer more than coarser people. When Christ brings His abundant life, those who enjoy it will be pained by a given sin a hundred times more than he was before. And so there will, on the other hand, be more pleasure. The name of Jesus is inexpressibly sweet to those who have abundant life. I mean by delicacy this—(*a*) There is a delicacy of hand which a man may acquire, and which renders him a worker of feats. So the educated hand of faith can not only grasp, but handle the Word of Life. (*b*) It shows itself in keenness of perception. An Indian will put his ear to the ground and say, "There is an enemy in the way," when you cannot hear a sound. Recall the incident at the siege of Lucknow. Jesus would have us quick of understanding, so that we may hear Him coming. (7) Supremacy. Some races have physical life, but not abundantly, and after awhile perish. Christians should have such abundant life that their circumstances should not be able to overcome them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The more abundant life:*—The emphasis rests on the last word, *i.e.*, "more"—a word spoken by our Lord only once, without explaining it; He left it for the interpretation of a future day, and to be pondered by His people for ever. In order not to be lost in its immensity we must view it in reference to the death from which the Good Shepherd saves His flock—the wasting and havoc brought on by sin. I. CHRIST ENCOUNTERS OUR DEATH AS HIMSELF THE SOURCE OF OUR IMMORTALITY, AND MAKES THAT IMMORTALITY MORE THAN MERE CONTINUANCE IN BEING. 1. The "Prince" or Original "of life" rescued mankind from extinction at the beginning. To whatever principle we ascribe the deathlessness of the human spirit, it cannot be separated from Him and His gift. If it rested on the Divine image, He preserved that

image; if upon the food of the tree, when that was interdicted He became the life and light of man. "The thief" would have been the means of blotting our name from the book of life, but in whatever sense the race died in Adam, in Christ it was kept alive. 2. We may interpret Christ's meaning to be that He came to bring that without which immortality is not in itself a blessing. Life Christians share with all men. Christ came to crown our undying nature with the true immortality of life in God for ever. That prerogative which has the possibility in it of everlasting blessedness has also in it the possibility of everlasting woe. II. CHRIST'S PEOPLE ARE SAVED FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF DEATH, AND THAT IN A MOST ABUNDANT SENSE. All who come to Him come under the benefit of a reprieve, which may be called a preliminary life; but this reprieve is in the believer perfected into a full discharge. God "abundantly pardons," and he enjoys "plenteous redemption." As he is one with Christ, he is not only released from punishment, but invested with the Saviour's righteousness. III. LIFE IN AND FROM CHRIST IS THE OPPOSITE OF SPIRITUAL DEATH OR THE SEPARATION OF THE SOUL FROM GOD. As it is the virtue of His blood that saves from the death of the law, so it is the virtue of His Spirit that restores the soul to God and God to the soul in a fellowship that is life indeed. 1. We must not be content with the beginnings and tendencies towards the life spiritual. We have not only a regenerated life; the Spirit abides in us as the indwelling source of renewing influence. This life is Christ's superadded to ours. It is richer and fuller than that forfeited by sin; more than we lost in Adam. We become partakers of a Divine nature. The incarnate Son is in us by a vital union, for which analogy must be sought in heaven alone. "As Thou, Father, art in Me," &c. 2. That Christ was the secret life of the sanctified in old time is as certain as that they were justified through His propitiation. But they "knew it not": we know the precious secret. Moreover, they had not, in the fulness of our evangelical privilege, the indwelling Christ. That was the mystery hid from them, but now revealed—"Christ in us the hope of glory." They had manna from God; but Moses gave them not that bread from heaven. High as were these prerogatives, the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the greatest of them. Much is still mysterious, but it is simple fact that the Christian has a fourth element added to his triple nature, and the form of that fourth is the Son of God. Seek that you may know what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance. IV. THE PRIVILEGE INVOLVES AN ABUNDANT VICTORY OF SPIRITUAL LIFE OVER ALL THAT IS ITS OPPOSITE. The contest is not yet ended. There is a remainder of death still in the nature which must be expelled by the energy of this heavenly principle. The Holy Ghost is given, not indeed without measure, but without other restriction than our finite capacity. The word of Christ dwells richly within the source of unfailing enlightenment, encouragement, sanctification, and strength; and the sacramental supper is the pledge and the means of our invigoration. All things minister to nourishment. Within the house of God the table is spread, when they eat and drink abundantly; and it is spread also in the wilderness without, in the presence of enemies. This mysterious sentence is to be interpreted by every man according to his faith. If our faith is limited, the abundance will be scanty; if large, the "more" will stretch with it, even to infinity. 1. It promises a measure of life that shall expel all death. The law of the Spirit of life tends ever to perfect soundness. The more abundant life is vigorous health in God, such as drives all disease before it. This life, as it strengthens, mortifies the body of sin with its members. It is the act of the Lord and Giver of Life alone to give the final death-blow; but before that moment comes, how blessed to know that sin grows weaker and the hard work of religion easier! Yet it is only when the contest is over that the true blessedness of life can be known. But not necessarily by leaving the body; for there is a perfect death to self and sin even here. 2. Here is the test of our religion. Our privilege marks our responsibility. (1) It most surely condemns us all. Who does not feel that this boundless word of promise finds out the poverty of his religion? How grievously have we "limited the Holy One"! (2) But here is precious encouragement. V. BUT THE FULL PERFECTION OF LIFE IS NOT, IN ITS FULLEST SENSE, THE PORTION OF MAN IN THIS WORLD. The "more" points to an eternal fruition. 1. The body is not yet made partaker. Life in the Spirit and death in the body go on simultaneously. But the pledge has been given that eternal life shall be the enjoyment of the believer in his whole humanity. "I am the resurrection," &c., follows hard on this saying. Then shall we know for the first time what life really means. No wonder the last cry of the Spirit and the Bride is, "Come, Lord Jesus!" In the hope of that superabounding consummation, let us encounter the

residuary penalty of death in the body with confidence and joy. 2. The "more" of eternal life shall have its literal meaning for ever. The gift will go on increasing with the increase of God. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *Abundant life*:—1. There are many organisms which manifest only a low degree of vitality. This discovers itself by defective sensation, limited powers of motion, less sensibility to pain, the comparative absence of intelligence. A sponge, a jellyfish, have life, but very far from abundance. 2. These words imply a similar variety in human life. Men differ in the amount of life they enjoy. Constitutional delicacy is the result of low physical vitality. We need to distinguish, no doubt, between feeble and undeveloped life. The limited intelligence of a savage or child may be due to want of culture. Among persons, however, who have enjoyed equal advantages the differences are very great. We speak of the slow understanding, cold heart, feeble will, and we mean that life is scanty. On the other hand are men of quick perception, keen feelings, ardour, &c., the symptoms of abundant life. 3. So there are lukewarm Christians and Christians all aflame; molluscous, torpid, and feeble Christians, as well as those who are full of faith, power, and good works. 4. Assuming these inequalities, we gather from these words that God is not satisfied with a lower degree of vitality when a higher can be attained, and that Christ has come to intensify human life. I. THIS HAS COME TRUE IN THE ORDINARY EXPERIENCES OF MEN. The effect of Christianity has not been to deaden men to the interests of this life, but to render life larger. True, its injudicious friends and shrewd opponents deny this. Of course the gospel delivers us from exorbitant and unreasonable concern about our present and petty affairs, of unreasonable longing for temporal good for its own sake. But this is far from saying that whatever goes to fill up this daily round has lost its meaning, and that Christian people have less power to stir them than others. Quite the contrary. The world is a graver, vaster thing since Christ died on it. In such a world there can be nothing insignificant. Homes have become more sacred, so near they seem to the gate of heaven. Business rises in importance when regarded as the means to glorify God and serve men. Social and political problems claim more, not less, attention because affecting the humanity for which Christ suffered, and which He calls us to seek and save. Christianity lets in upon life the light of a vaster day, brings out all its possibilities and responsibilities, makes every small thing grand and every dull person noble by linking them to the destinies of the race and to God. The Christian lives near to the sensorium of the universe in which every sensation is felt from the remotest ends—the brain and heart of Christ. Hence life must be a larger thing as it is lived in Christ. II. CHRIST MAKES LIFE MORE ABUNDANT BY CONFERRING A NEW SORT OF LIFE, one which has fuller pulses and a deeper and stronger vitality than unregenerate men can possess. They touch time and the world: we that are Christ's touch God and His eternity. The gospel sets men at once in direct contact with infinite forces, lays us along side supernatural operations, opens up God's mighty heart, creates the passion for holiness. Conversion adds a new department to man's being, gives him new thoughts, quickens new emotions, creates new ambitions. (*J. O. Dykes, D.D.*) *Abounding life*:—Christ came—I. TO IMPART THE BLESSEDNESS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE. Note—1. That a state of sin is moral death—a want of spiritual discernment, feeling, activity. When life from Christ comes the eyes are opened, the ears hear, &c. 2. The enjoyment of religion is comparative life. Death is stamped on all else. Honours die; wealth perishes; so do pleasures. Gourds wither; "nature decays, but grace must live." "I have," said a sickly Christian man, while beholding his natural face in a glass, "I have the image of death on the outer man, but I have the image of life on the inward one." 3. Life from Christ is the only true life. It is a state of favour with God—"In His favour is life." And it comprehends an existence for highest and noblest objects—a life for God and souls. II. TO COMMUNICATE SPIRITUAL LIFE IN SUPERABUNDANCE. This great truth applies —1. To each individual believer. In nature there are degrees of life. So in grace—one lives at a "dying rate," another lives happily, energetically, zealously: faith is lively, prayer fervent, labour great, hope strong. Let no one be content with bare spiritual existence; in Jesus there is a blessed fulness and freeness, and you may receive grace upon grace. 2. To the flock of Christ collectively. 3. To the blessedness of life eternal. It will exceed all present enjoyment. (*Congregational Pulpit.*) *Abounding life*:—If ever sunlit, sail-crowded sea, under blue heaven flecked with wind-chased white, filled your soul as with a new gift of life, think what sense of existence must be yours, if He whose thought has but fringed its garment with the outburst of such a show, take His abode with you, and while

thinking the gladness of a God inside your being, let you know and feel that He is carrying you as a Father in His bosom. (*G. Macdonald, LL.D.*) *Immortal life through Christ*:—Edwin, the Prince of Northumbria, gathered together his barons into a banqueting-hall to deliberate together as to the desirability of relinquishing the old idolatry and accepting the new religion urged on their acceptance by the missionaries of the Cross. One and another spoke; presently a hoary-headed warrior stood up and said, "Perhaps you recollect, O king, a thing which sometimes happens in winter days, when you are seated at table with your captains and your men-at-arms, while a good fire is burning, and your hall is comfortably warm, but it rains, snows, and blows outside. A little bird comes in and crosses the hall with a dash, entering by one door and going out by the other. The instant of this crossing is for it full of delight. It feels neither the rain nor the storm. But that instant is brief. The bird flies out in the twinkling of an eye, and from winter it passes into winter. Such appears to me the life of man upon the earth, and its duration for a moment, compared with the length of the time which precedes and that which follows it. This time is dark and uncomfortable for us. It tortures us by the impossibility of our knowing it. If, then, the new doctrine can teach us anything in any degree certain, it deserves that we should follow it." Well said, hoary-headed warrior! And the old chronicles add that the new religion was voted amid the acclamation of the assembly. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *Abundant grace in Christ*:—He came that grace might be abundant; and so it is. As the dews in the morning, in the warm summer, so are the actual graces of God that penetrate day by day the longing, thirsting soul. They are hidden; we cannot see them; but we know that they *are*, and if they are hidden they are only like Nature. There are spots in the world that are most beautiful—morning by morning, night by night—though you and I, in the toil of our life, may never gaze upon them. There are quiet valleys, long stretches of sea, open expanses of heaven, myriads of twinkling stars, dazzling splendours of worlds of ice—glories which, as they stretch away unseen, unpeopled, in God's vast creation, seem to be wasted; but the angels are gazing at them, and they are but a parable of grace. Grace is hidden, but grace is real. (*Knox Little.*) *God is an abundant giver*:—God is a Being who gives everything but punishment in over measure. The whole Divine character and administration, the whole conception of God as set forth in the Bible and in nature, is of a Being of munificence, of abundance, and superabundance. Enough is a measuring word—a sufficiency, and no more; economy, not profusion. God never deals in this way. With Him there is always a magnificent overplus. The remotest corner of the globe is full of wonder and beauty. The laziest bank in the world, away from towns, where no artists do congregate, upon which no farm laps, where no vines hang their cooling clusters, nor flowers spring, nor grass invites the browsing herd, is yet spotted and patched with moss of such exquisite beauty, that the painter who in all his life should produce one such thing would be a master in art and immortal in fame, and it has the hair of ten thousand reeds combed over its brow, and its shining sand and insect tribes might win the student's lifetime. God's least thought is more prolific than man's greatest abundance. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *A minister's work*:—There is a sense in which these words ought to be spoken by every true teacher. Taken in their lowest meaning, and yet in a very high and noble meaning, they express what should be the aim of every one who claims to have any truth to tell his fellow-men. His motive for telling it ought to be this, and this only, that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (*Dr. Magee.*) *How Christ gives life*:—How His life is made to be, at the same time, our own, is a mystery of grace, of which you have seen many types in the garden. You once grafted something on to a fruit-tree. The process, though delicate, was most simple. You only had to be careful that there should be clean, clear, close contact between the graft and the tree. The smallest shred or filament of wrapping round the graft would have prevented the life of the tree from flowing into it. The weak, bleeding graft was fastened on to the strong stem just as it was; then in due time it struck; then gradually the tiny slip grew into the flourishing bough, and lately, as you stood looking at that miracle of tender formation and soft bright flush, you almost thought it was conscious. It seemed to say, "I live; nevertheless not I, but the tree liveth in me, and the life I now live in the foliage, I live by faith in the shaft of the tree. I trust to the tree only: every moment I am clinging to it, and without it I can do nothing." (*C. Stanford, D.D.*)

Vers. 11–15. **I am the Good Shepherd.**—*Christ the Good Shepherd*:—Christ is "the Good Shepherd." He is this because—I. He OWNS the sheep. He is the Proprietor of the flock. They are His—1. By the gift of the Father. "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." 2. By creative ties. "His own"—sheep which are His even before they are called. 3. By purchase. "The Good Shepherd giveth" as a deposit, layeth down as a pledge, "His life for the sheep" (Heb. xiii. 20). The blood He shed was not in His own defence, but for the sake of those whom He came to rescue. II. He KNOWS His sheep. 1. By their faces. An ancient and convenient custom among shepherds is to put a mark upon their sheep, an ear-mark, as they call it; and by the mark they know them in years to come. Jesus Christ, too, puts a mark on His sheep, not on the ear, but on the forehead (Rev. xiv. 1). 2. By their names. He knows His followers, not as men and women only, but as Peter and Andrew, Mary and Martha. The saints have queer names in the Epistles. I cannot remember them, but Jesus does. He calls the stars by name too, but then the stars are very big things. The wonder is that He calls the tiny sheep by name, scattered as they are. "What's in a name?" A great deal, especially in a Christian name, given at the font, and accepted by Christ. 3. Their circumstances (Rev. ii. 13). The Good Shepherd knows where you live—the town, the street, the house (Acts ix. 11; x. 5, 6). 4. By a thorough apprehension of their character. In the fourth and fifth verses "know" signifies outside acquaintance—that Christ and man have come within the same circle. But in the fourteenth verse it means a clear discerning insight into the springs of life and the motives of action. III. He FEEDS His sheep (ver. 9). 1. "They go in" first to the fold. Rest after wandering. "He leadeth me beside the still waters" (services of God's House: perusal of the Bible). 2. They "go out" to graze. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures" (marg.: "in pastures of tender grass"). The Bible pasture is green pasture. Every truth as fresh as if it were spoken but yesterday. Not only is the grass green, but there is plenty of it (ver. 10). IV. He LEADS the sheep (ver. 3). 1. He leads the sheep. Exceedingly simple and helpless is a sheep gone astray. And when the Bible speaks of sinners it compares them to erring sheep (Isa. liii. 6). 2. He leads them gently (ver. 4). He is not behind them, scaring them with the lashes of the law, but in front of them, drawing them with the cords of His love, and adapting His steps to theirs. 3. He leads them safely along "the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." This is, to me, one of the most cogent reasons for believing in His Divinity, that He was able to stamp His feet so deeply on the rock of history, that their prints have not yet been erased. The weight of Godhead was in His steps, the emphasis of the Infinite in His tread. 4. Not only does He lead us through life, but He goes before us through death (Psa. xxiii. 4). Not a single sheep will be wanting, they shall all be safely folded by Divine love (ver. 16). (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *Christ the Good Shepherd*:—This is one of those Divine sayings in which there is so much of truth and love, that we seem able to do little more than to record it and ponder on it, to express it by symbols, and to draw from it a multitude of peaceful and heavenly thoughts. It was the symbol under which, in times of persecution, His presence was shadowed forth. It was sculptured on the walls of sepulchres and catacombs; it was painted in upper chambers and in oratories; it was traced upon their sacred books; it was graven on the vessels of the altar. The image of the Good Shepherd has expressed, as in a parable, all their deepest affections, fondest musings, most docile obedience, most devoted trust. It is a title in which all other titles meet, in the light of which they blend and lose themselves. Priest, Prophet, King, Saviour, and Guide, are all summed up in this more than royal, paternal, saving name. It recalls in one word all the mercies and lovingkindness of God to His people of old, when "the Shepherd of Israel" made His own people "to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock." It recites, as it were, all the prophecies and types of the Divine care which were then yet to be revealed to His elect: it revives the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel (Isa. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 12–27; xxxvii. 24; Isa. xlix. 9, 10). And, moreover, by this title He appropriates to Himself the fulfilment of His own most deep and touching parable of the lost sheep. There is no thought or emotion of pity, compassion, gentleness, patience, and love which is not here expressed. It is the peculiar consolation of the weak, or of them that are out of the way; of the lost and wandering; of the whole flock of God here scattered abroad "in the midst of this naughty world." And though it be an office taken on earth, and in the time of our infirmity, it is a name which He will never lay aside. Even in the heavenly glory it still is among

His titles. He is even there "the chief Shepherd," "that great Shepherd of the sheep"; and in the state of bliss shall still guide His flock: though more fully to express the unity of His nature with theirs, and His own spotless sacrifice in their behalf, He is called "the Lamb" (Rev. vii. 17). Let us then consider awhile the surpassing and peculiar goodness of the One True Shepherd. And this He has revealed to the world in His voluntary death. There was never any other but He who came down from heaven that He might lay down "His life for the sheep." This is the one perpetual token of His great love to all mankind—a token ever fresh, quickened with life, full of power to persuade the hearts of His people to Himself. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"; and therefore the death of the good Shepherd is the subject of all the Church's testimony. Again, His surpassing goodness is shown in the provision He has made of all things necessary for the salvation of His flock in this state of mortality and sin. For this He has provided, first, in the external foundation and visible perpetuity of His Church. He has secured it by the commission to baptize all nations, by the universal preaching of His apostles, by shedding abroad the Holy Ghost, by the revelation of all truth, by the universal tradition of the faith in all the world. And, secondly, His love and care are shown, not only in the external and visible provision which He thus made beforehand for the perpetual wants of His flock, but in the continual and internal providence wherewith He still watches over it. The whole history of His Church from the beginning—the ages of persecution, and "times of refreshing"; the great conflicts of faith with falsehood, and of the saints with the seed of the serpent; the whole career of His Church amid the kingdoms of the earth and changes of the world, are a perpetual revelation of His love and power. (*Archdeacon Manning.*) *Christ the Good Shepherd*:—He is the Good Shepherd in the sense of real or genuine. He is the Shepherd from the very centre of His being. Every instinct of His nature, every feeling of His heart, every thought of His brain, every touch of His hand are those of the true Shepherd, whose constant purpose is to guide and feed and save the flock, and for that purpose He counts no toil too severe, no suffering too intense, no sacrifice too costly. He has thoroughly identified Himself with the sheep, and whatever adds to their well-being He gladly does and bears. He is the Good Shepherd in contrast with the hireling, whose care is selfish and whose aim is wages. Jesus here gives us a distinction that applies in the most direct way to every phase of life. Interests of all kinds are intrusted with paid workers. Some of these are good shepherds, putting the very best of their lives into their toil; some are hirelings, faithful only so long as fidelity is easy, safe, and profitable. The railroad engineer who sees imminent danger and remains at his post, hoping to save precious lives entrusted to his care, is the good shepherd. The need to-day in the State, the bank, the factory, the store, the kitchen, is for good shepherds. The presence of hirelings brings disaster to every cause. The Good Shepherd guides His sheep by going before them. Those who follow where Jesus led are safe. He was at times in a very whirlwind of human beings who were wrought to the highest pitch by diverse passions, but His feet never made a mis-step, His face never turned in the wrong direction. His lips spoke the right word, His hands wrought the most helpful work always. Jesus said, "I know My sheep, and am known of Mine." "I lay down My life for the sheep." These were the proofs that He was the true Shepherd. He certainly knew what was in man. He saw the treachery working in the heart of Judas. He saw in Peter's self-trusting, impulsive nature the flame that soon burnt itself out to leave only the ashes of his boasted faith and devotion. But further than this, He saw the repentant Peter converted into the brave hero. He looked into the very soul of Zaccheus in the sycamore-tree and saw in him a stedfast purpose of righteousness. He knew that back of the cleanly appearance of the Pharisees there was moral leprosy. On the briefest acquaintance with Nathanael He spoke of him as one "in whom there was no guile." The young man who came to Him with eager inquiries for eternal life was before Him as an open book—a man with a kindly heart, but too weak to brave danger and privation and sacrifice. There was no martyr stuff in him. Sin blunts the faculties. The most exalted natures have the keenest insight. Jesus, the Perfect One, knew instantly the false and the true. (*Boston Homilies.*) *The Good Shepherd*:—These words are equivalent to—I. I am A Shepherd. I stand in a peculiar relation to a peculiar people, who are My sheep. II. I am a GOOD Shepherd. I possess the appropriate qualifications and perform the appropriate duties of the character I sustain. III. I am THE Shepherd—the one Shepherd—not like

him of ver. 2, one of the shepherds, but the great, chief, proprietor Shepherd, whose own the sheep are—the Shepherd of shepherds as well as of sheep. IV. I am THE GOOD Shepherd. I possess in the most perfect degree all the qualifications that are requisite for the discharge of the numerous, varied, and difficult duties of this most exalted office. V. I am THAT GOOD Shepherd, *i.e.*, the Divine Guardian foreshadowed in prophecy (Ezek. xxxiv. 11–24), and answering in every respect to the type. Christ is all this—1. As He secures for His peculiar people all the blessings they require. 2. As He secures these advantages to them at the greatest conceivable expense to Himself. 3. As there subsists the most endearing mutual acquaintance and intercourse between Him and His people. 4. As He cares for the happiness, so He secures the salvation of all. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *The Good Shepherd*:—The truth here is Christ's exceeding love and care for the Church. He would show that He sustained towards it a relationship beyond parallel. Not a king, however wise his rule; not a parent, however fond his care; not a friend, however great his service, for all these are kindnesses of beings of the same nature only. They suggest nothing of that condescension by which a Being of the highest order could embrace one reduced to the condition of fallen man. Hence Christ selected as the type of our lost race the most helpless of animals, and compares Himself to one of the kindest of guardians. Let us consider some of His pastoral offices in which His love is set forth. I. HE PROVIDES FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL WANTS. This would be the first thing looked for according to the predictions (Psa. xxiii.). 1. Pasture for the flock—enough for all; variety for each. 2. Wisdom to guide. 3. Watchfulness to tend. 4. Constraint to rule. 5. Diligence to seek out. 6. Power to restore. II. HE PRESERVES THEM FROM FOES AND DANGERS (ver. 12). It is our lot to be sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. If our soul escapes at all it is because the snare is broken by our Deliverer. That which enables the Good Shepherd to effect our deliverance is His profound and comprehensive knowledge (ver. 14). These perils are foreseen and provided for. How many tempted ones have derived comfort from the thought that when Satan has desired to have them, he has prayed, &c. Hence the encouragement, "Fear not little flock." "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." III. HE IS DILIGENT IN RECOVERING THOSE WHO STRAY (Ezek. xxxiv.; Isa. liii.). In relation to the whole human family Christ came to seek and save the lost. The whole history of the Church has been the gathering in of outcasts. He is found of them that sought Him not; and under backslidings after conversion, will He go after us again. He may leave us to eat the bitter fruits of our ways for a time, and make us contrast the misery of the wilderness with the blessedness of the fold. He, who of all the saints of God lived nearest to Him, and yet wandered furthest, said, "He restoreth my soul." IV. HE HAS SPECIAL CARE OF THE YOUNG, whether young in years or in grace (Isa. xl.). An untended lamb is the very type of helplessness and folly. The temptations are many which beset the flock in early life from the example of companions, worldly pleasures, buoyant spirits, &c.; but for these and every spiritual danger the Good Shepherd provides. Still, there are special dangers which account for this pastoral care. The very warmth and freshness of their religious feelings render them more liable to fall. Hence the first duty enjoined on restored Peter was "Feed My lambs." V. HE IS WITH THE FLOCK TO THE END. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," &c. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The Good Shepherd*:—I. THE PASTORAL CHARACTER CLAIMED BY CHRIST. 1. We shall learn nothing from the text unless we enter humbly and affectionately into its spirit. We must dismiss all Western ideas. Here the connection between shepherd and sheep is simply one of pecuniary interest; but beneath the burning skies and clear starry nights of Palestine there grows up between the man and the dumb creatures he protects, often at the peril of his life, a kind of friendship. For this is after all the true school in which love is taught; dangers and hardships mutually shared, alone in those vast solitudes the shepherd and the sheep feel a life in common. The vast interval between the man and the brute disappears, and the single point of union is felt strongly—the love of the protector, and the love of the grateful life. Those to whom Christ spoke felt all this and more. He appealed to associations which had been familiar from childhood, and unless we try, by realizing such scenes, to feel what they felt by association, these words will only be dry and lifeless. 2. To the name shepherd Christ adds the significant word "Good"—not in the sense of benevolent, but true born, genuine, just as wine of a noble quality is good compared with the cheaper sort; and a soldier who is one in heart and not by mere profession, or for pay. This expression distinguishes

the Good Shepherd from—(1) The robbers who may guard the sheep simply for their flesh and fleece: they have not a true shepherd's heart any more than a pirate has the true sailor's heart. There were many such marauders in Palestine. David protected Nabal's flock from them. Many such nominal shepherds had Israel in by-gone years: rulers whose rule had been but kingcraft: teachers whose instruction had been but priestcraft. Government, teachership are sublime pastoral callings; but when the work is even well done for the sake of party, or place, or honour, or consistency, it is the spirit of the robber. (2) The hirelings, who are tested by danger. A man is a hireling who does his duty for pay. He may do it in his way faithfully. The paid shepherd will not desert the sheep for a shower or a cold night. But he is not paid to risk his life against the lion or bear, and so the sheep are left to their fate. So a man may be a hired priest, or a paid demagogue, a great champion of rights paid by applause; and while popularity lasts he will be a reformer—deserting the people when danger comes. The cause of the sheep is not his. 3. Exactly the reverse is the Good Shepherd. The cause of man was His, and His only pay the cross. He might have escaped it all, and been an honoured leader by prudent time-service. But this would have been the desertion of God's cause and man's. II. THE PROOFS WHICH SUBSTANTIATE THE CLAIM. 1. I know My sheep as the Father knoweth Me, and not simply by omniscience. There is a certain mysterious tact of sympathy and antipathy by which we discover the like and unlike of ourselves in others' character. A man may hide his opinions, but not his character. There is a something in an impure heart which purity detects afar off. The truer we become, the more unerringly we know the ring of truth. Therefore Christ knows His sheep by the mystic power, always finest in the best natures, by which like detects what is like and unlike itself; and how unerringly did He read men—the enthusiastic populace, Nathanael, the rich ruler, Zacchæus, Judas, the Pharisees! It was as if His bosom was some mysterious mirror, on which all that came near Him left a sullied or unsullied surface, detecting themselves by every breath. This Divine power must be distinguished from that cunning sagacity which men call knowingness. The worldly-wise have maxims and rules; but the finer shades of character escape. Eternal judgment is nothing more than the carrying out of these words, "I know My sheep"; for their obverse is "I never knew you." 2. Christ's sheep know Him, not by some lengthened investigation, whether the shepherds dress be the identical dress, the crozier genuine —but instinctively. Truth is like light; visible in itself, not distinguished by the shadow it casts. 3. Pastoral fidelity, "I lay down My life." Here is the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice. Unitarians say He died as a martyr in attestation of His truths; but we cannot explain away the "for." This sacrificing love is paralleled by the love of the Father to the Son. Therefore that sacrifice is but a mirror of the heart of God. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The Good Shepherd*:—We have here—I. THE COMPLETE CHARACTER. There is more in Jesus than you can pack away in shepherd or any other emblem. But note—1. He sets Himself forth as a shepherd: not such as is employed in England to look after sheep a few months till they are slaughtered. The Eastern shepherd is—(1) The owner or his son. His wealth consists in sheep. He has seldom much of a house, or much land. Ask him "How much are you worth?" He answers, "So many sheep." We are Christ's wealth, "the riches of the glory of His inheritance" is in the saints. The Lord's portion is His people. For their sakes He gave not only Ethiopia and Seba, but Himself. (2) The Caretaker. Christ is never off duty. He has constant care for His people day and night. He knows and prescribes for their every complaint. (3) The Provider. There is not one in the flock who knows about the selecting of pasturage. For time and eternity, body and soul, Christ supplies all our need. (4) The Leader. (5) The Defender. 2. Christ completely fills this character. (1) He is the *Good* Shepherd—neither thief nor hireling. What He does is *con amore*. (2) He is *the* Good Shepherd. Of others we can only say *a* shepherd. All the rest are shadows: He is the substance. 3. Christ rejoices in this character. He repeats it so many times here that it almost reads like the refrain of a song. And if He is so pleased to be our Shepherd, we should be pleased to be His sheep, and avail ourselves of all the privileges wrapped up in the name. II. THE COMPLETE KNOWLEDGE. 1. Christ's knowledge of His own, "As the Father," &c. Do you know how much the Father knows the Son who is His glory, other self, yea, one with Him? Just so intimately does the Good Shepherd know His sheep. (1) Their number. (2) Their persons—age, character, hairs, constitution; and never mistakes one for another. (3) Trials. (4)

Sins. (5) This ought to be a great comfort, inasmuch as it is not cold, intellectual knowledge, but that of love. He knows you—(*a*) By acquaintance. (*b*) By communion. (*c*) Sympathy. "Though He were a Son yet learned He," &c. 2. Our knowledge of the Lord, "as I know the Father." This is—(1) By delight. (2) By union. (3) By love. III. THE COMPLETE SACRIFICE. These words are repeated in different forms four times (vers. 11, 15, 17, 18), and mean that—1. He was always doing so. All the life He had He was constantly laying out for the sheep. 2. It was actively performed. He did not die merely. 3. It was voluntary. 4. It was for the sheep. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Good Shepherd:*—I. HIS QUALIFICATIONS TO MEET THE NEED OF THE SHEEP. 1. His knowledge of all the wants of the sheep is perfect. 2. His wisdom to provide is infinite. 3. His power enables Him to carry out all His will. 4. His kindness endures through all their waywardness. 5. His faithfulness will never forsake them. 6. His undying interest forgets and omits nothing for their good. II. HIS ACTIVE WORK FOR THE SHEEP. 1. He rescues them from the great robber. 2. Brings them into His own fold. 3. Provides them with all the nourishment needed. 4. Gives them refreshing repose amid the cares and toils of life. 5. Guards them from all danger. 6. Guides them in all perplexity. 7. Heals all their diseases. 8. Reclaims them from all their wanderings. 9. Folds them at last in heaven. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The slain Shepherd:*—I. FORESAW THAT HE SHOULD DIE FOR THE SHEEP. The termination of the Saviour's life was not accidental nor unforeseen. Many were the intimations He gave of it, which disproves the notion that His death was the disappointment of His hopes. II. SPONTANEOUSLY UNDERTOOK TO DIE FOR THE SHEEP. He might have saved Himself; He made no attempt at escape; He prayed for no legion of angels to rescue Him; He told Pilate that there was a limitation of his power in regard to his apparently helpless captive; He committed His spirit into His Father's hands. III. DIED IN THE STEAD OF THE SHEEP. A shepherd while defending his sheep sometimes falls a victim to his faithfulness. So Christ died a vicarious death, the just for the unjust, which exempted the sinner from the doom deserved. Not that there was a commercial equivalent, as when a debt is paid; but a moral equivalent accepted by a righteous and gracious God. IV. DIED ON BEHALF OF THE SHEEP. It was not for His own but our advantage. By His sacrifice we are redeemed from the curse of the law and the power of sin, and have secured for us eternal life. Application: 1. Adore and bless the love which animated the Good Shepherd. 2. Live as those who have been bought with a price, and have returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. (*Family Churchman.*) *The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep:*—In this statement we notice the following characteristics of this sacrifice which the Good Shepherd makes for His sheep. 1. It was deliberate. "For this purpose He came into the world." 2. It was voluntary. "No man taketh My life. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." 3. It is vicarious. Not for them in defence, but for them vicariously. He died for them as a substitute, "bearing their own sins in His own body." 4. It was an accepted sacrifice. "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again" (chap. x. 17). (*G. F. Pentecost, D.D.*) *The Shepherd and the sheep:*—I. THE FLOCK. Were we to take a walk some spring morning among the Yorkshire hills or on the downs of Sussex or Bedfordshire, we should see thousands of sheep belonging to different flocks and masters. Christ has members of His flock not only in Sussex, &c., but in Africa, India, &c.; yes, all the world over. This flock—1. Is an exceedingly large one. If you were to go on counting for a whole year you could not count them all. The patriarchs had large flocks, so have many English farmers, but not altogether one so large. Some say all who are baptized, or take the Lord's Supper, or belong to this or that Church, are the Lord's sheep. But many of these are wicked, and so cannot be Christ's, while some where there are no churches and sacrament are Christ's because they love and obey Him. Ever since Abel died men have been gathered in, and thousands are joining the upper fold every day, and still millions are left behind. 2. While it is so large it is increasing very rapidly. Other flocks are to decrease. Every new convert is an addition, and what numbers are sometimes converted in a day (Acts ii.)! Missionaries tell us of whole tribes casting away their idols, &c. It ought to increase more than it does when we consider the agencies at work—Bibles, tracts, churches, schools, ministers, teachers, Christian fathers and mothers. 3. Christ's sheep are very much alike. (1) In their actions. Just as we can tell wolves from sheep, so we can tell who are Christ's and who are not. When we see a man roar like a lion, or greedy like a wolf, we know he is not of Christ's fold.

(2) In their colour. "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me." (3) In their disposition. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ," &c. (4) In the treatment they require. None can do without the Shepherd's care. 4. They bear His mark. What strange marks farmers sometimes put upon their sheep—circles, crosses, initials. Some of Christ's sheep have got His mark in greater boldness, but the porter can detect it however faint. If a king were to attempt to enter without it he would be turned away, while a prodigal with it would be welcomed. (1) This mark is not being an Episcopalian, Independent, &c. We may have the Church's mark and not Christ's. (2) It is likeness to Christ, and we cannot be like Him without being born again. Some try to imitate this mark and affix Morality, Liberality, Good resolution, Fasting, &c. 5. This is a loving flock. Members of the same family, school, place of worship, ought to be kind and gentle, but Christ's flock is the most loving in the world. By this the world knows Christ's disciples. II. THE SHEPHERD. 1. He is awake and watchful. A good many people are awake but not watchful. Sometimes lambs are worried by strange dogs when the shepherd was asleep, and sometimes stray into danger when he is awake but inattentive. But nothing escapes Christ's sleepless vigilance. "He that keepeth Israel," &c. 2. He is patient. A shepherd cannot have too much patience: much as he may have it will be sorely tried. In all trials Christ's patience never left Him; and were it to leave Him now how many would be expelled the fold! 3. He is strong. Look at what He has done in Nature. "All power is given unto Me." All ministers, teachers, and angels combined would be unable to provide for or protect His flock. Then His stock of provisions never diminishes, and every sheep is fed according to its need. 4. He goes after every sheep or lamb that goes astray. How strange that any should desert such a fold; stranger still that those who stray should refuse to return. (*J. Goodacre.*) *Christ the Good Shepherd*:—The shepherd who can always go to bed regularly at night, and who is able to say, "I do not have much trouble with my flock," is not the man to be envied. He coolly says, "a few lambs died last winter; we must expect that kind of thing. It is true that some sheep died of starvation; but if the meadows failed, I could not help that." That is the kind of shepherd who deserves to be eaten by the next wolf; but the man who is able to say with Jacob, "By night the frost devoured me, and by day the heat," is the true shepherd. He is most irregular as to his rest; the only thing regular about him is his labour and his disappointment, and yet faith makes him a happy man. When you grow very weak as a pastor, and your charge utterly overcomes you, do not repine at such weakness, for then you will be at your full strength; but when you are strong as a pastor, and say, "I think that to be a minister is an easy matter," you may depend upon it that you are weak. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Good Shepherd and His sheep*:—I. WHAT THE GOOD SHEPHERD DOES FOR HIS SHEEP? 1. He protects them. Sheep are exposed to many dangers, from which they are not able to protect themselves. When David was a shepherd, he tells us of a lion and a bear, that each came and stole away a lamb from his flock; and how he went after the wild beasts, and slew them, and saved his lambs. And this is just what Jesus, the Good Shepherd, does for His sheep. He protects them from Satan, their great enemy. And in the same way He protects them from all their enemies, and from every danger. A Christian mother who lived in the city of New York, in very humble circumstances, had only one child, a little boy about seven years old, whom she had taught to know and love the Saviour. One day, when this good mother was going quietly on with her work at home, she was startled by a loud knock at the door of her humble dwelling. On opening the door she received this alarming message: "Hurry away to the police-station; your little boy has been run over." She was terribly frightened, and, hastening as fast as she could to the station-house, on arriving there she found her little boy surrounded by strangers. The doctor had been sent for, but had not yet arrived. She was told that the wheels of a large carriage had gone over his foot, but, on examining it carefully, she was surprised to find no real injury about the foot. "Why, Willie darling, how was it possible for the wheel of the carriage to have gone over your foot, and not have crushed it?" The child looked tenderly up into his mother's face, and said—"Mamma, dear, I guess God must have put it in a hollow place." This shows what faith that little boy had in the protection which Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has promised to exercise over His sheep. He always has "a hollow place" to put them in when danger is near. 2. He provides for them. This is something which the sheep cannot do for themselves, and unless the shepherd does it for them they must perish. II. WHAT

THE GOOD SHEPHERD EXPECTS HIS SHEEP TO DO FOR HIM? 1. To hear His voice. "My sheep hear my voice," He says. 2. To follow Him. The sheep set us an example here, not only in hearing the shepherd, but in obeying him. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *The Shepherd and His sheep*:—(Children's sermon). I. THE FIGURE OF SHEEP SUITS US. We call them silly sheep. 1. They cannot guide their own way. As wild beasts can. 2. They cannot keep or defend themselves. Frightened at danger. 3. They quickly follow bad examples. Running after wilful one. 4. They are surrounded by unknown dangers. How much mother knows, and teacher knows, that we do not. II. THE FIGURE OF SHEPHERD SUITS CHRIST. A most blessed thing that we have some one to care for us. 1. Shepherd must be strong. To defend, carry, &c. 2. Shepherd must be wise. To guide to food and water. 3. Shepherd must be watchful. To see foes. 4. Shepherd must be loving and gentle. To tend in weakness. III. WHEN WE SPEAK OF JESUS, WE WANT TO CALL HIM THE GOOD SHEPHERD. Especially because He was willing to die in defending us, Jesus. The old and familiar tale of Eric, who threw Himself to the wolves to save his master. Or, case of shepherd who died fighting three robbers. IV. WHEN CHRIST SPEAKS OF US, HE WOULD LIKE TO CALL US GOOD SHEEP. What is it to be good, so that Christ can think us good? A great difference in sheep. The good sheep know the Shepherd's voice. They follow, they keep close, they obey. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) **He that is an hireling.**—*The hireling* is—I. MERCENARY. He tends the flock simply for wages as Jacob did (Gen. xxix. 15, 18), though not with the love that Jacob showed (Gen. xxxi. 38). An emblem of the Pharisees and Jewish rulers generally who served God in a purely legal spirit, and shepherded the flock with an eye to the merit they might acquire, or the recompense they should receive; of those who in Christ's day thrust themselves into the priest's office for a morsel of bread (1 Sam. ii. 36); of all who enter the ministry for filthy lucre's sake (Tit. i. 11). II. SELFISH. He pursues his calling with an eye to his own interest and comfort—a type of Ezekiel's shepherds (Ezek. xxxiv. 2–3), and of so-called Christian pastors who use their official position solely to secure worldly emolument, social preferment, or temporal renown (1 Tim. iii. 3, 8). III. NEGLIGENT. Chiefly occupied with thoughts of his own happiness, he not only leaves the sheep to cater for themselves (Ezek. xxxiv. 4; Zeck. xi. 16, 17), but fleeing at the first approach of danger, permits the helpless creatures to be ravaged and scattered. Once more a representative of the corrupt hierarchy that presided over Israel, and of such nominally Christian teachers who, neglecting the highest interests of their people, leave them to fall a prey to the principalities and powers of evil. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Self-sacrificing teachers*:—Paton records that at a time of great danger on Tanna he tried to prevail on one of the native teachers from Aneityum to remain at the mission house. The man insisted on returning to his post, and with this unanswerable defence of his conduct: "Missi, when I see them thirsting for my blood, I just see myself when the missionary first came to my island. I desired to murder him as they now desire to kill me. Had he stayed away for such danger, I would have remained a heathen; but he came, and continued coming to teach us, till by the grace of God I was changed to what I am. Now the same God that changed me can change these poor Tannese to love and serve Him. I can not stay away from them." On mission ground the term "pastor" is restored to its original meaning, "shepherd," with good reason. Hannington's message to the ruler who compassed his death was: "Tell the king that I die for Buganda. I have bought this road with my life." (*Monday Club Sermons.*) *The hireling*:—It is not the bare receiving hire which denominates a man a hireling, but the loving hire; his loving the hire more than the work; the working for the sake of the hire. He is an hireling who would not work were it not for the hire; to whom this is the great (if not only) motive of working. O God! if a man who works only for hire is such a wretch, a mere thief and a robber, what is he who continually takes the hire, and yet does not work at all? (*J. Wesley.*) **The Wolf.**—*Satan a wolf*:—1. His attacks are deadly. 2. His surprises are crafty. 3. His hatred of Christ is implacable. 4. His hunger to devour is insatiable. 5. He attacks under darkness. 6. He scatters the flock by tempting them to luxury, avarice, and sensuality. Filling their minds with pride, envy, anger, deceit. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) **I . . . know My sheep and am known of Mine.**—*The mutual knowledge of Christ and His people*:—I. CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE OF HIS PEOPLE. 1. The faithful and experienced Eastern shepherd knows every one of his sheep. So does Christ. He knows—1. Their persons; not only the numbers of His flock. We are as well known to Him as the stars (Isa. xl.), and as our children are to us. 2. Their condition and circumstances—but general and peculiar—our

sins that He may pardon them; our diseases that He may heal them; our wants that He may supply them; our fears that He may quiet them; our burdens that He may give us strength to bear them; our prayers that He may grant them, our graces that we may delight in them; our services that He may reward them. 2. We trace this knowledge to—(1) His great love. It is clear that the shepherd who loves his sheep best will know them best. (2) His intimacy. He dwells with them. (3) His omniscience. II. CHRIST'S PEOPLE'S KNOWLEDGE OF HIM is—1. Peculiar. Their fellow-men do not possess it or understand it. 2. Acquired. It is not natural to us. Nature does not teach it. The young sheep knows its mother by instinct, but not its shepherd. All real knowledge of Christ is the effect of a special manifestation of Him to the soul. 3. Experimental chiefly. Some knowledge we get of Him from faith in God's testimony concerning Him, but our chief spring is this: when we have hungered, He has fed us; when we have not known our way, He has guided us; where we have fallen into danger, He has extricated us. 4. Practical. The soul that possesses it becomes willing and obedient. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The true sheep*:—What is the knowledge by which Christ's true sheep are known? There are many kinds of knowledge, of which only one can be the true. There is a knowledge which even fallen angels have of Him (Luke iv. 33, 34, 41; Matt. viii. 29). This is a knowledge of the spiritual intelligence, which may be possessed in energetic wickedness, and with direct resistance of the will against the will of Christ. Again, there is also a knowledge which all the regenerate possess. The preaching of the Church, the reading of Holy Scriptures, the commemoration of fasts and festivals, the tradition of popular Christianity, and all the knowledge which from childhood we unconsciously imbibe, give us a general knowledge of the evangelical facts and of the history of our Lord. This cannot be the knowledge of which He here speaks. It must be something of a deeper kind, something more living and personal. It is plainly, therefore, such a knowledge as He has of us. It is that mutual consciousness of which we speak when we say that we know any person as our friend. We do not mean that we know him by name; for many strangers we know by name; many whom we have never seen, or further care to know: neither do we mean only that we know all about him, that is to say, who he is, and whence, of what lineage, or from what land, or what has been his history, his acts and words, and the like; for in this way we may be said to know many who do not know us, and with whom we have nothing to do. When we say we know any one as our friend, we mean that we know not only who he is, but what, or as we say, his character,—that he is true, affectionate, gentle, forgiving, liberal, patient, self-denying; and still more, that he has been, and is, all this to ourselves; that we have made trial of him, and have cause to know this character as a reality, of which we have, as it were, tasted, by often meeting with him, seeing him at all times, under all circumstances and in all changes, familiarly conversing with him, doing service to him, ourselves receiving from him in turn tokens of love and goodness. This is the knowledge of friendship and of love. It is something living and personal, arising out of the whole of our inward nature, and filling all our powers and affections. And such is the knowledge the true sheep have of the Good Shepherd. Let us, then, consider in what way we may attain this knowledge. 1. It must be by following Him. "My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me." By living such a life as He lived. Likeness to Him is the power of knowing Him. Nay, rather it is knowledge itself: there is no other. It is by likeness that we know, and by sympathy that we learn. 2. There are peculiar faculties of the heart which must be awakened, if we would know Him as He knows us. There can be no true obedience without the discipline of habitual devotion—in prayer, meditation, sacramental communion. 3. This true knowledge of Him is not a transitory state of feeling. Out of obedience and devotion arises an habitual faith, which makes Him, though unseen, yet perceptibly a part of all our life. (*Archdeacon Manning.*) *The understanding between shepherd and sheep*:—You will notice the difference between the Old and the New translation here. The new translation makes the meaning of our Saviour's words much clearer. He says, "I am the Good Shepherd; and there is an understanding between Me and My sheep, as there is an understanding between My Father and Me." For people to understand one another, there must be something in common. The Pharisees could not understand our Lord. They had nothing in common with Him. As He said to them, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world." No, they could not understand Him; any more than a man without an ear for music can understand music, or a dull prosy mind can understand poetry, or a person

who always acts from self-interested motives can understand another who has more thought for others than for himself. But Christ's disciples could understand Him: not perfectly, often very imperfectly; still they had that which made them capable of understanding Him to some extent, and of being trained to understand Him more fully in time; as one who loves music can enjoy and to some extent understand a great musician, one who is not altogether selfish can appreciate the nobility of self-sacrifice for the good of others. Some of Christ's disciples had made sacrifices for Him, though small compared with what He had made for them. There were those among His little flock who had left all they had on earth to follow Him, and this, and the faith which led them to it, had made them able to know and understand Him who had left all He had in heaven for their sake. (*J. E. Vernon, M.A.*) *The shepherd's mark*:—Edmund Andrews was a thoughtless, cruel boy. One day he was passing by Burlton's farm, and saw Wilkinson, the old shepherd, busy with his pitch-kettle and iron, marking the sheep with the letters "J. B.," for John Burlton. "So you are putting your master's mark upon the sheep, are you?" said he. "Yes, Master Edmund; but God, the Almighty Maker, has put His mark upon them before." "What do you mean?" asked Edmund. "I mean that our Heavenly Father, in His wisdom and goodness, has put marks upon the creatures He has made, and such marks as none but He could put upon them. He gave wings to the cockchafer, spots to the butterfly, feathers to the bird, a sparkling eye to the frog and toad, a swift foot to the dog, and a soft furry skin to the cat. These marks are His marks, and show that the creatures belong to Him; and woe be to those that abuse them!" "That's an odd thought," said Edmund, as he turned away. "It may be an odd thought," said the shepherd, "but odd things lead us to glorify God, and to act kindly to His creatures. The more we have, Master Edmund, the better." *How Christ knows His sheep*:—Suppose one of the sheep in a fold were to go to the shepherd, and say, "I think I'm your sheep, because you get six pounds of wool off me;" and another should say, "And I think I'm your sheep, because you get four pounds of wool from me;" and a third, "I hope I am your sheep, but I don't know, for you only get three pounds of wool from me; and sometimes it is but two." Finally, suppose one poor scraggy fellow comes who don't know whether he is a sheep or a goat, and makes his complaint; the shepherd would say, "I know who are the best sheep, and who are the worst. I wish you could all give me ten pounds of wool; but whether you give me ten pounds or one, you are all mine. I bought you, and paid for you, and you are all in my fold, and you every one belong to me." It is not how much a sheep brings his owner which proves him his. The proof that the sheep belongs to the shepherd is, that the shepherd bought him and takes care of him. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ's knowledge of His sheep*:—The most fearful attributes of the Godhead turn to the sweetest comfort of a believer. His justice, to the natural man so awful, requires Him to forgive those whom He has punished in our Substitute. His power so tremendous when turned against us is assuring in the same proportion, when it is for us. So with omniscience, a terror to the wrongdoer, but a comfort to the penitent believer. I. CHRIST KNOWS WHO ARE HIS SHEEP. Leave it then to Him to pronounce who are so. We seldom make a greater mistake then when we attempt to trespass on this province of Deity. "I know," almost as much as to say, "You do not." And there are times when it will be best not to form the judgment respecting ourselves. Leave it thus. "He knows whether I am His; and if not, that I wish to be, and therefore will make me. If I am, He will keep me." II. HE KNOWS THEM AS A WHOLE. As all one, gathered out of the same desert, washed in the same fountain, &c. In this collectiveness He expects concert of action, sympathy, unity among His people. We are accustomed to regard ourselves as separate individuals, families, churches. Hence our narrowness, selfishness. III. HE KNOWS THEM AS INDIVIDUALS. Each stands out known and loved as if He cared for none else. He knows—1. You, and not merely about you. 2. How long you have been in the fold, and expects accordingly. 3. Your natural temperament, what you can and cannot bear, how much exposure, liberty, &c. What kind of pasture you require. 4. Your future, and is always working up to it. IV. HE KNOWS HIMSELF IN THEM AND THEREFORE HIS FATHER'S MIND ABOUT THEM. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) **I lay down My life for the sheep.**—*Christ died to save men*:—At the time of the gold fever in California, a man went from England to the diggings. By and by he sent money for his wife and child to follow him. They arrived safely in New York, and there took a passage in one of the beautiful Pacific steamers. A few days after sailing, the terrible cry of "Fire! fire!" rang through

the ship. Everything that the captain and sailors could do was done, but it was of no use; the fire rapidly gained ground. As there was a powder magazine on board, the captain knew that the moment the flames reached it the vessel would be blown up; so he gave the word to lower the life boats. These were got out, but there was not room for all; so the strong pushed in and left the weak to their fate. As the last boat was moving off, a mother and her boy were on the deck and she pleaded to be taken. The sailors agreed to take one but not both. What did the mother do? Did she jump in herself? No! Kissing her boy and handing him over the side of the ship, she said "If you live to see your father, tell him I died to save you." That was great love, yet it is but a faint type of what Christ has done for us. (*J. L. Nye.*) *Damon and Pythias:*—Damon, being condemned to death by Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, obtained liberty to visit his wife and children, leaving his friend, Pythias, as a pledge for his return. At the appointed time Damon failed in appearing, and the tyrant had the curiosity to visit Pythias in prison. "What a fool you were," said he, "to rely on Damon's promise! How could you imagine that he would sacrifice his life for you or for any man?" "My lord," said Pythias, with a firm voice and noble aspect, "I would suffer a thousand deaths rather than my friend should fail in any article of honour. He cannot fail. I am as confident of his virtue as I am of my own existence. But I beseech the gods to preserve his life. Oppose him ye winds! Disappoint his eagerness, and suffer him not to arrive till my death has saved a life of much greater consequence than mine, necessary to his lovely wife, to his little innocents, to his friends, to his country! Oh! let me not die the cruelest of deaths in that of Damon!" Dionysius was confounded and awed with the magnanimity of these sentiments. He wished to speak: he hesitated, he looked down, and retired in silence. Pythias was brought forth, and with an air of satisfaction walked to the place of execution. He ascended the scaffold and addressed the people. "My prayers are heard; the gods are propitious; the winds have been contrary. Damon could not conquer impossibilities: he will be here to-morrow, and my blood shall ransom that of my friend." As he pronounced these words, a buzz arose; a distant voice was heard; the crowd caught the words, and "Stop, stop, executioner!" was repeated by every person. A man came at full speed. In the same instant he was off his horse, on the scaffold, and in the arms of Pythias. "You are safe!" he cried, "you are safe, my friend! The gods be praised, you are safe!" Pale and half speechless in the arms of Damon, Pythias replied in broken accents, "Fatal haste! cruel impatience! What envious powers have wrought impossibilities against your friend? But I will not be wholly disappointed. Since I cannot die to save you, I will die to accompany you!" Dionysius heard and beheld with astonishment. His eyes were opened, his heart was touched, and he could no longer resist the power of pity. He descended from his throne and ascended the scaffold. "Live, live, ye incomparable pair! Ye have demonstrated the existence of virtue, and consequently of a God who rewards it. Live happy, live revered; and as you have invited me by your example, form me by your precepts to participate worthily in a friendship so divine." **Other sheep I have which are not of this fold.**—*Outsiders:*—The grace of God is no man's little property, fenced off all for ourselves. It is not a king's park, at which we look through a barred gateway. It is a Father's orchard with bars to let down and gates to swing open. There are Christians who keep a severe guard over the Church, when God would have all come and take the richest and ripest of the fruit. Then, again, we have those who get up statistics and say so many Methodists, Presbyterians, &c., there, that is the number of Christians. Christ comes and says "No! you have not counted rightly, other sheep have I which are not of these folds." I. The heavenly Shepherd will find many of His sheep, among those who are NON-CHURCH GOERS. I do not think that the Church gains when you take sheep from one fold and puts them into another. It is the lost sheep on the mountains we want to bring back. II. The heavenly Shepherd will find many of His sheep among those who are now REJECTORS OF CHRISTIANITY. I do not know how you came to reject Christianity: but I want you, before you finally discard it, to give it a fair trial. You want what it alone can give—if it does not give that to you then you may reject it. But it will. Take not the word of a clergyman, who may be speaking professionally, but that of laymen who have never preached—Milton, Wilberforce, Newton, Boyle, Locke, Morse. III. The heavenly Shepherd will get many of His sheep among THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FLUNG OF EVIL HABIT. The way Christian people give up the prodigal is outrageous. They talk as though the grace of God were a chain of forty or fifty links, and, when they had been

run out, there was nothing to touch a man's iniquity. But there is only one class about whom we may be despondent: those who have been hearing the gospel for twenty, thirty, forty years, and who are gospel hardened. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Other sheep and one flock*:—I. OUR LORD HAD A PEOPLE UNDER THE WORST CIRCUMSTANCES. "This fold" was not the Jews, but His handful of disciples. 1. Doubtless these times are exceedingly dangerous, and some brethren never allow me to forget it, for they play well on the minor key. But I heard it thirty years ago, and the times have been bad ever since, and always will be. This is better, perhaps, than living in a fool's paradise; but certainly the days of Christ were terrible days in the point of—(1) Utter ungodliness. A few godly ones watched for the coming of Christ, but the great mass were altogether gone out of the way. (2) Will worship; the commandments of men were taught for the doctrines of God. (3) Fierce opposition, as seen in the treatment Christ received. Yet He had a chosen company, and however guilty our age may be in these points, there is an election of grace still. 2. This company was a fold. Afterwards they were to be called a flock; but as yet one glance was sufficient to embrace them all. (1) They were distinct from the world "Ye are not of the world," &c. (2) In that fold they were protected from ill-weathers, and from the wolf and the thief. (3) Even there were goats—"One of you is a devil." (4) They were being strengthened for future following of the Great Shepherd. 3. When Jesus had thus shut them in He would not allow them to be exclusive, but opens wide the door of the sheepfold and cries, "Other sheep I have." Thus He checks a common tendency to be forgetful of outsiders. Seeing that He has those who would be found by Him through His faithful people, let us rouse ourselves to the holy enterprise. 4. Never despair. The Lord is with us. We may be poor, but we are Christ's, and that makes us precious. There were three men who had to carry on a college when funds were running short. One complained that they had no helpers and could not hope to succeed. "Why," said another, "we are a thousand." "How is that?" "I am a cipher, and you and our brother; so we have three noughts to begin with. But Christ is ONE. Put Him down before the ciphers, and we have a thousand directly." II. OUR LORD HAS OTHER SHEEP NOT YET KNOWN TO US. "I have," not "shall have." The apostles never dreamed of His having sheep in Britain or Rome. Their most liberal notion was that the scattered seed of Abraham might be gathered. 1. Who are these sheep? (1) Christ's chosen—"Ye have not chosen Me," &c. (2) Those whom the Father had given Him. (3) Those for whom He laid down His life that they might be the redeemed of the Lord, "Ye are not your own," &c. (4) Those on whose behalf He had entered into suretyship engagements even as Jacob undertook the flock of Laban that he should lose none. 2. What was their state? People without a shepherd—lost, wandering, ready to be devoured by the wolf. Bad as the world is to-day it must have been far worse in the vile Roman world. 3. This thought gave Christ great encouragement when confronting their adversaries, and should be a great comfort to God's people now. "I have much people in this city." This is our authority for seeking the lost sheep in whoever's preserves they may be. III. OUR LORD MUST LEAD THOSE OTHER SHEEP, not "bring"; Christ must be at their head, and they must follow. 1. It is Christ who has to do this, even as He has done it hitherto, "also." As Jesus has done it for us He must do it for others. 2. He "must" do it. Subjects are usually bound by a "must"; this "must" binds the sovereign. Who can resist it? Clear out all enemies! 3. How He must do it? "They shall hear my voice." Christ is going to save people still by the gospel, and we must not look for other means. "Go ye into all the world." IV. OUR LORD GUARANTEES THE UNITY OF HIS CHURCH. "One flock." 1. We hear a great deal about the unity of the Church. We are to have the Roman, Greek, and Anglican all one. God has chosen people in each, but their union would be a dire mischief. 2. This has been carried out as a matter of fact. There never was but one Shepherd and never will be but one flock. All the visible Churches contain parts of it. 3. As a matter of experience this is carried out in believers. A spiritually minded man is at one with all spiritually minded men. Set a Calvinist and an Arminian at prayer: let the Spirit work on Baptist and Paedo-Baptist. What Protestant but loves Bernard? 4. The external Church is needful, but it is not the one and indivisible Church of Christ. 5. This Church is known by its obedience to Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *This fold and the other sheep*:—I. THIS FOLD: the seed of Israel. By His personal ministry our Lord founded the kingdom in Israel and some of the seed of Abraham were gathered in. II. OTHER SHEEP NOT OF THIS FOLD. Here the expansive love of Jesus breaks forth. He began at Jerusalem, but

the longings of His heart go forth to the end of the earth. III. I HAVE. Mark the all encompassing sovereignty of His love. They were His in the covenant from the beginning. At a time when they were neither born nor born again He counts them His. IV. THEM ALSO. There is no respect of persons. No poor slave will be left out because he is black; no servant pushed aside to make way for his master; no rich or powerful man is kept out at the cry of the envious mob. If any were kept back the Lord would say, "them also; gather up the fragments," &c. What a cheering word! It embraces the prodigal, the dying thief, Saul of Tarsus. V. I BRING. He sends none forward to make or find their own way. "In all their afflictions He is afflicted." They shall not traverse the valley of the shadow alone. None shall stand at the Judgment to make the best of his own case. "I am the Way." He brings them through the regeneration into the fold on earth. It often takes much bringing; but all power is given to the Captain of our salvation. The drunkard, miser, &c., are made willing in the day of His power. And that same bringing power shall rend the gates of death. VI. I MUST. He commands the winds and the sea and they obey; who then can command Him? His own yearning love. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *The missionary's warrant*:—We have a right to go anywhere to seek after our Master's sheep. If they are my Master's sheep who shall stop me over hill and dale inquiring, "Have you seen my Master's sheep." If any say, "You do intrude in this land," let the answer be, "We are after our Master's sheep which have strayed here." You have a search warrant from the King of king's, and, therefore, you have a right to enter and search after your Lord's stolen property. If men belonged to the devil we would not rob the enemy himself; but they do not belong to him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Them also I must bring.**—They must be brought—1. To realize the visions of ancient prophecy. 2. To accomplish the promise of the Father (Psa. ii. 8). 3. To secure the object, and to recompense the suffering and the toil of the Redeemer's mediatorial undertaking. 4. To answer the prayers, fulfil the expectations, and crown the prayers which He has animated and inspired. (*T. Raffles, LL.D.*) **One fold and one shepherd.**—I. CHRIST'S PROPERTY IN HIS SHEEP. 1. How acquired. (1) By donation. "Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me." "Ask of Me," &c. (2) By purchase, "Ye are bought with a price." (3) By the sanctification of the Spirit; after which He gives them back to the Father to be glorified. 2. There are but three possessions to which the word property really belongs. (1) The sinner's possession of his own sins. (2) The believer's possession of his own Saviour. (3) Christ's possession of His own people. 3. Possession is an endearing thing. If you possess a thing you love it; and that feeling is a faint copy of the mind of Christ. 4. Concerning this possession, Christ declares that He holds it not only over those He was then addressing, but over others separated from them—perhaps other worlds, certainly Gentiles, of whose admission Jews were jealous. 5. Note, then, that Christ said this of those who were then unconverted. Paul (Acts xviii.) was almost driven from Corinth by opposition, but was stopped by "I have much people in this city;" and yet, with the exception of two or three persons, all were locked in unbelief. But it was not so eighteen months after. What a joy to the Christian worker to be able to think that any man may be among Christ's "other sheep!" II. CHRIST'S ENGAGEMENT FOR HIS SHEEP. "Them also I must bring." 1. The imperative obligation. God permits Himself to be ruled by His own covenant. 2. This certified engagement is this: "They shall hear My voice." (1) When a soul just awakened hears "Thou art the man." (2) When the stricken conscience hears "Go in peace," &c. (3) When the soul, better knowing now Christ's accents, hears "It is I; be not afraid." (4) When the heart, better ordered, always hears and says, "Speak Lord," &c. (5) When the ear shall drink in "Come ye blessed," &c. 3. Your corresponding duty to this pledge is to hear—obey. This is happiness here and glory by and by. III. CHRIST'S INTENTION WITH HIS SHEEP. "One fold," &c. 1. This will be literally fulfilled in heaven. 2. It is spiritually fulfilled here in—(1) Unity of condition. (2) Unity of Spirit. (3) Unity of action. (4) Unity of headship—"One Shepherd." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Christ's collected flocks*:—I. WHAT THINGS ARE TO BE DONE FOR THE COMPLETION OF THIS END? I observe—1. The views of mankind concerning religious subjects are to be extensively changed. 2. A mighty change, also, must be wrought in the disposition of man. 3. The change will not be less in the conduct of men. II. IN WHAT MANNER ARE THESE THINGS TO BE DONE? I answer, they are to be accomplished not by miracles, but by means. III. BY WHOM ARE THESE THINGS TO BE DONE? Solitary efforts will here be fruitless; divided efforts will be equally fruitless; clashing efforts will

destroy each other. Learn—1. The work to which you are summoned is the work of God. 2. The present is the proper time for this glorious undertaking. 3. The necessity of this work irresistibly demands every practicable effort. "The whole world," says St. John, speaking of his own time, "lieth in wickedness" (1 John v. 19). Lieth—for such is the indication of the original—as a man slain lies weltering in his blood. 4. The day in which these blessings are to be ushered in has arrived. The day in which the mighty work will be seen in its full completion is at hand. We must labour, that those who come after us may enter into our labours. (*T. Dwight, D.D.*) *Unity the final purpose of God*:—An old Scottish Methodist, who had clung vehemently to one of two small sects on opposite sides of the street, said, when dying: "The street I am now travelling in has nae sides, and if power were now given me I would preach purity of life mair and purity of doctrine less. Since I was laid by here I have had whisperings of the still small voice telling me that the wranglings of faith will ne'er be heard in the kingdom I am nearing; and, as love cements all differences, I'll perhaps find the place roomier than I thought in times past." (*Dean Stanley.*) *United in anticipation of death*:—When seven men imprisoned in a Pennsylvania coal-mine were rescued after five days' imprisonment they were asked if they hoped to escape. "We prayed for it," was the reply; "we prayed together. Some were Protestants and some Catholics, but when death is as close as that you only think of God." *Unity defined*:—I distinguish the unity of comprehensiveness from the unity of mere singularity. The word one, as oneness, is an ambiguous word. There is a oneness belonging to the army as well as to every soldier in the army. The army is one, and that is the oneness of unity; the soldier is one, and that is the oneness of the unit. There is difference between the oneness of a body and the oneness of a member of that body. The body is many, and a unity of manifold comprehensiveness. An arm or a member of a body is one, but that is the unity of singularity. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) **Therefore doth My Father love Me.**—*The Father's love of Jesus*:—Observe what Christ says—I. OF LAYING DOWN HIS LIFE. 1. No mere man could have said this. Power over life is God's prerogative. To none but the Son has He "given to have life in Himself"; and power "to take it again" is manifestly not ours. But we must not separate this claim from His obedience. Christ knows no power but to do the Father's will. 2. Much of our metaphysics is here silenced. Is obedience free if we are not also free to disobey? The truest liberty is voluntary restraint. The freedom of obedience is learned as we love to obey. The fullest consciousness of power is that of power to do God's will. 3. Christ's assertion of power is intended to illustrate His obedience. "I lay down My life of Myself." He could have withdrawn Himself from the people, or by yielding to their prejudices have won them. He could have awed them, as He did the soldiers, by His majestic presence. He had power over men's consciences, as was seen in the case of the Pharisees who brought the woman taken in adultery, and in the case of Pilate. The concealed aid of heaven was at His bidding. But more than all this was the strength of His submission. He speaks of His power to show how full was His obedience. 4. We have here an awful revelation of the powerlessness of sin. The Jews were simply tolerated, ignorant of the power that restrained itself. So with all sinners. But Christ was thus patient that when they had done their worst He might be their Saviour. 5. The chief truth here is the fulness of Christ's obedience. The consciousness that we might escape would be to us a motive for disobedience. We are kept submissive by weakness. He speaks not of power to avoid the sacrifice but to make it. II. OF THE FATHER'S LOVE. 1. We see the reason of this partly in Christ's obedience. Here is the oneness of the Father and the Son; the Son rejoices to obey; the Father commits His whole counsel to the Son that He may accomplish it. 2. The commandment was that Christ should lay down His life for the sheep. The Father's love for the Son is not one in which all others are shut out. We read that God did not "rest" in Creation till He had made man in His own image. His love is so bountiful that it forms objects on which to lavish itself. Here we have something more surprising—the pity for lost man which is in the Father, and that pity finding response in the Son. Well was it said that "God is love." 3. Christ tells us why the Father loves Him. (1) That we may know the men who are dearest to God—not as with us the learned, wealthy, powerful, but the obedient and loving. (2) That we may understand Christ's life and death. Neither Jews nor disciples could understand the Man of Sorrows. Hence the double proclamation, "This is My beloved Son." How many a reason has been given why Christ must die! But how poor all reasons beside the simple one that He loved

us. (3) In order that we may know God. The object of our affection reveals ourselves. If the man of force be our hero, we show ourselves worshippers of power; if a good man, we prize goodness. Christ is dear to the Father because He loves us. What a witness to the love of God. III. OF THE ISSUE OF LAYING DOWN HIS LIFE. Christ is to reap the reward of His sacrifice, and we of the travail of His soul. 1. This alone renders His sacrifice lawful or possible, and distinguishes between sublimity of sacrifice, and scornful waste of self. The Father's commandment is not that the Son should perish. The life which is yielded up for the ends of love is restored in the triumph of love. 2. This illustrates the true character of trust in God—the assurance that He is righteous to vindicate fidelity and loving to reward it. 3. It is not love for men which is indifferent about sharing with them the joy of their restoration—this makes any sacrifice an affront. Christ anticipates the joy of leading many sons to glory. 4. Heaven would lose its value if Christ perished to secure it for us. We should feel that our salvation had been too dearly purchased, and the bitter sorrow that He was absent whose joy it would have been to meet His redeemed. 5. To labour in hope of reward is not always selfish. We need the triumph to vindicate the suffering. 6. We learn how to sustain ourselves in Christian struggle and endurance. "If we suffer with Him," &c. The sacrifice and resurrection of Christ is a rebuke to all despondency. (*A. Mackennal, D.D.*) *God loving His Son:*—The assertions of Christ as to His relation to God are very different from those of Old Testament saints. Not once did they call God Father—this Jesus always does; and the Father acquiesces. "This is My beloved Son." Here Christ seems to found His Father's love on something He is about to accomplish on earth. But a stranger having rescued a child from drowning and restored it to its parent might say, "Therefore doth the Father love me." And so some infer that Christ was related to God only in virtue of His obedience to death. Not so. God is love; but love cannot exist without an object, and this object must be co-existent with the eternal affection. So Christ is the eternal object of an eternal love, and the text only states an additional reason for that love. A king has a beloved son and a revolted province. The latter he could crush, but prefers to accept a voluntary mission of the former to win the rebels by privation, forbearance, and kindness. This succeeds. The king expresses his satisfaction, and the son says, "Therefore doth my father love me." The idea of the text is similar. What were the elements in Christ's death which drew forth the love of Christ? I. PERFECT SPONTANEITY IN THE OBEDIENCE HE RENDERED. Not that His sufferings or death were in themselves well pleasing to the merciful Father. All men die, and by Divine appointment; but God does not love them for this, else the wicked would be loved as well as the righteous. It was the Divine principle that prompted it—obedience. It was not snatched from Him, nor did He yield it in idle passivity; He laid it down of His active free will, and so revealed the Father's will, developed the plan of redemption, and is therefore the object of God's intensest love. II. FAITH. There would have been no merit in His death had He sacrificed Himself without assurance of resurrection. It might have been from despair. Nor could it have taken place without this assurance. The extinction of such a one could not be permitted in the government of a righteous God. Knowing that He was sinless, He must have known that death, the wages of sin, had no power over Him. Hence He never spoke of His death apart from His resurrection. The taking up was as much in the Divine plan as the laying down. He was confident of the successful issue, and God loved Him because of this. Conclusion: 1. If God finds a new reason for loving His Son in the moral qualities He displayed, He will love us if we strive to live as Christ lived. Wherever He sees men obedient and self-sacrificing He will love them. 2. We should do our duty in spite of consequences, or rather with regard to the remoter consequences. Lay down our lives that we may take them again. "Whosoever loseth his life for My sake shall find it." (*T. James, M.A.*) *The stimulating power of the consciousness of being loved:*—What heat is in nature that love is in the human realm. It tends to quicken and expand and beautify those on whom it lights; it assists men to be better and stronger and more gracious than they would otherwise be. Under its influence, souls are enabled to bud and blossom more freely; and let none of us be ashamed of needing it, and leaning on it for succour. (*S. A. Tipple.*) *The Son's work approved of the Father:*—I. THE GREAT WORK IN WHICH THE SON IS ENGAGED—the salvation of His sheep—1. From danger, the curse of the law, eternal death. 2. To obedience, holiness, blessedness, heaven. II. THE APPOINTMENT OF THE SON TO THIS GREAT WORK BY THE FATHER. "This commandment." This principle

holds a high place in the Bible. Christ was predicted as the "servant" and "sent" of God; gladly accepts this subordination; and His apostles teach the same doctrine. III. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE SON FOR HIS GREAT WORK. 1. To atone for guilt He must be and was free from guilt. 2. To save man He must be and was man, and yet more than man. As man He had a life to lay down; but He had no power as man to lay it down of Himself; this was Divine. 3. This Divine-human life had sufficient merit to expiate the sin of the world. 4. But redemption could not have been consummated without its resumption; and so He had "power to take it again." IV. THE SON'S ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS GREAT WORK. His offering has been effectual for the purpose for which it was presented. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." Millions are now through His expiation "the spirits of just men made perfect," and millions are preparing for that blessed state. V. THE COMPLACENCY MANIFESTED BY THE FATHER TO THE SON IN AND FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS GREAT WORK (Phil. ii. 9–11). (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *Christ comforting Himself*:—The people were listening with sneers and anger to Christ's asservations of the union between Himself and God, and contemplating a step which would expose their emptiness. When put out of the way, His presumptuous claims would be shattered. He read this thought, and answered it calmly, with the inward consciousness that that event would only culminate His voluntary self-sacrifice, and render Him the special object of the Father's love. Such is frequently the blindness and defeat of bad men. It is poor business trying to hurt a saint. You can never be certain that your hardest blows will not ensure him more abundant consolation. I. CHRIST COMFORTING HIMSELF—1. With the reflection that some one loves Him. We find Him constantly doing this. "I am not alone," &c.; pausing in the midst of hostility, &c., to get soothing and inspiration. He could not get on without it any more than we can. Let none of us weakly and selfishly long for this, nor stoically determine to be above it; but value it as an impulse for work. 2. With His felt possession of power. His adversaries regarded Him as their victim. He muses, "they are mistaken; instead of being dragged helplessly, I shall march in might to die." We need not shrink from the thought that Jesus found solace in the consciousness of His superiority to what He looked: that while He seemed weak, He was sublimely strong. It is both natural and legitimate, when we are being estimated falsely, to feel the excellence or the gift that is not perceived. We may need this in encountering disparagement, to preserve our self-possession and keep ourselves from fainting. There are others, however, who can never have this consolation. Their reputation is the best thing they have; they are meaner than the social estimate of them. II. THE GROUNDS OF THIS COMFORT. 1. The Father loved Christ because He lay down His life in order to take it again. The beauty of self-sacrifice lies not in the act, but in its animating purpose. There is no necessary virtue in denying yourself. Sacrifices are often made out of mere weakness, regard for the usages of society, self-indulgence, even to spite others, and in disregard of the right and the claims of other people. Christ laid down His life in order to take it again. This explanation is at first sight disappointing. What was there to charm the heart of God in surrender for the purpose of recovery? But this recovery was meant to be a great source and fountain of good, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. It is noble to sacrifice self with a view to acquiring more capacity for service. 2. The secret of Christ's power was not that He had a right to elect to die, which we have not, but that He felt Himself able to make the sacrifice required of Him. He did not need to be dragged or urged into it, but was able to make it freely. What happens there then is in the sense of the power to respond at once to the call of a difficult, trying duty. But He was certain not only that He could bear the Cross, but that He should reap to the full the anticipated fruit of it. What more blessed than this—the assurance of power to do what is wholly true, and an assurance of gaining the object? 3. What was the secret of it all? "This commandment," &c. What God calls one to, one will have strength to accomplish, and it will assuredly yield its due fruit. In other things you may break down or be disappointed—never in this. (*S. A. Tipple.*) **I lay down My life.**—*Victim and priest*:—Types, like shadows, are one-sided things. Hence in the shadowy worship of Judaism Christ was brokenly seen in a variety of disconnected images. The sacrificial lamb was a picture of Him who is the first of sufferers and the only sin-bearer; but the dumb brute, led in unresisting ignorance to the altar, not otherwise than it might have been to the shambles, was no picture of the perfect willingness with which He devoted His life to God. For the type of

that we must go to the white-robed priest. There was need for a double shadow. But in the one real sacrifice the two are one. Jesus is priest and victim. There are certain steps we must take in comprehending Christ's self-sacrificing will as expressed in the text. I. It was CONSTANT. The strength of one's will to suffer is tested by its deliberate formation and persistent endurance. 1. Our Saviour's resolution was no impulse born of excited feeling, liable to fail before calmer thought; nor a necessity for which He was gradually prepared, and at last shut up to through circumstances; but a habitual purpose, steadily kept in view from the first, till it grew almost to a passion. "How am I straitened," &c. 2. Many men are heroic only by impulse; give time, and the bravery yields to "prudence." Men have ignorantly taken the first step towards martyrdom; but, having taken it, have felt bound to go forward. But when the mind can form so terrible a purpose, and calmly hold it on for years, in the face of unromantic neglect and mockery, the purpose must have its roots deep. Such will was never in any except Christ. Precious life, which carried its own death in its bosom, like a bunch of sweet flowers, filling all its days with fragrance. II. It was ACTIVELY FREE. 1. While resignation was the habitual attitude of His soul, there was more than resignation. We under-estimate His priestly act, by thinking more of His willingness than of His will to suffer. "I lay down My life" means that, with ardent desire and fixed resolution, He is, at His own choice, giving away His own Spiritual Person, including that which is the most personal thing of all—His will. And this active exposure to penalty accompanied Him through every stage. His was both the right and strength at every stage to free His soul; but He chose to go on deeper into the darkness till all was over. This came out very plainly when Peter put before Him the alternative; when, His time being come, He set Himself to go to Jerusalem, when He said to Judas, "What thou doest," &c.; when, on His arrest, He spoke about the legion of angels; yes, and when the torment reached Him, "Let Him now come down from the cross." 2. Now, it is harder to will a disagreeable lot than to consent to bear it when it is laid upon us. Many a man has piety to submit to unavoidable evil, or even to rest in it as wise, who would yet be unequal to make it a choice. Most men, therefore, aim at nothing higher than passive acquiescence in suffering; but it is nobler to seal God's afflictive will with our own, and will not to have it otherwise. It is a further advance still to enter voluntarily into affliction for righteousness sake. Yet even the martyr's choice of death before sin is less absolute and free than that of Christ. III. It was CROSSED BY HINDRANCES FROM THE WEAKNESS OF THE FLESH, AND IT OVERCAME THEM. As you walk by the side of a deep, swift-running river, you know not how strong the current is till you reach the rapids, where its flow is broken. So on reading the smooth, constant story of Jesus' life, there is little to tell us with what power He was advancing to His agony. Near the end came one or two places where this was seen (chap. xii. 27–29). That was a short struggle. His will to die soon overcame the momentary perplexity, and the voice from heaven was needed not by Him, but for the bystanders. This, however, was only a foretaste of the greater strife in the garden—the weak flesh against the willing spirit; yet in the end it is divinely upborne to bear the unimaginable suffering for the world's guilt. In that hour He sacrificed Himself—laid down His life. With what relief do we read, "It is enough, the hour has come," &c. (*J. O. Dykes, D.D.*) **I have power to take it again.**—*Our Lord's resumption of life*:—I. WAS HIS OWN ACT. Nowhere is the majesty of our Lord's Divine Person more manifest than here. 1. He had power to lay His life down. Could we use His words? There is much in life we can control, but not our way of leaving it. (1) So far from laying it down, we yield it up. It is wrung from us by disease, violence, or accident. No men of this century have wielded more power than the two Napoleons; they little meant to die—the first at St. Helena, the third at Chislehurst. Bishop Wilberforce never entered a railway carriage without reflecting that he might never leave it alive. He was a fearless horseman, but he met his death when riding at a walking pace. (2) But cannot a man lay down his life at pleasure? And did not the Stoics commend it? As a matter of physical possibility, we can; but what about its morality? It is at once cowardice and murder. (3) A good man may find it his duty to accept death at the hands of others. Patriots and martyrs have had moral power to lay down their lives; but they could not control the circumstances which made death a duty. (4) Our Lord's act differs from that of the suicide in its moral elevation (ver. 11), and from that of the martyr in His command of the situation. As the Lord of Life, He speaks of His human life as His creature. 2. He had power to take it

again. (1) Here His majesty is more apparent, for He speaks of a control over His life which no mere man can possibly have. When soul and body are sundered, there is no force in the soul such as can reconstitute the body. In the Biblical cases of resurrection, the power came from without. (2) Here barbarism and civilization are on a level. Science has done wonders in bringing the various forces of nature under control; but no scientist cherishes the hope of undoing the work of death, or of keeping it indefinitely at bay. (3) When Christ claims to take His life again, He stands in relation to His life, which is only intelligible if we believe Him to be the Son of God. II. WAS HIS ACT AND THE FATHER'S CONJOINTLY? 1. He is repeatedly said to have been raised by the Father. This was Peter's language (Acts ii. 24; iii. 15; iv. 10; v. 30; x. 40), and Paul's (Acts xiii. 30–37; 1 Thess. i. 10; 2 Tim. ii. 8; Rom. iv. 24–25; vi. 4; viii. 11, &c., &c.). 2. On the other hand, our Lord speaks of it as an act distinctly His own (Mark x. 34; Luke xviii. 33; John ii. 19, and text). 3. There is no contradiction here. The resurrection does not cease to be Christ's act because it is the Father's. When God acts through mere men, He makes them His instruments; but the power which effected the resurrection is as old as the eternal generation of the Son (chap. v. 26). 4. There is a moment when imagination, under the conduct of faith, endeavours, but in vain, to realize when the human soul of our Lord, surrounded by myriads of angels, on His return from the ancient dead, came to the grave of Joseph and claimed the body that had hung upon the cross. III. SUGGESTS THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS. 1. What Christianity truly means. Not mere loyalty to the precepts of a dead teacher, or admiration of a striking character who lived eighteen hundred years ago. It is something more than literary taste or a department of moral archæology. It is devotion to a living Christ. If it were a false religion, literary men might endeavour to reconstruct the history of its earliest age. This is what has been done with the great teachers of antiquity, and with Christ. But there is this difference. What Socrates, &c., were is all that we can know of them now. They cannot help us or speak to us. But in the fulness of that power which He asserted at His resurrection, Christ still rules and holds communion with every believer. A living Christianity means a living Christ. 2. What is the foundation of our confidence in the future of Christianity? Based as it is on a Christ who raised Himself from the dead, it cannot pass away. (1) Mankind has lavished admiration on great teachers; but they have died and been forgotten. Their age proclaimed the dust of their writings gold; a succeeding age scarcely opens their folios. Why are we certain that this fate does not await Christ? Because men's loyalty rests not on His words mainly, but in His Person. Christ is Christianity. And why is it that, in thus clinging to His Person, Christian faith is so sure of the future? Because she has before her not a Christ who was conquered by death. (2) Had it been otherwise, Christianity might have perished more than once; by the wickedness of the Roman Court in the tenth century; by the hordes of Islam in the first flush of their conquests, or by the great Turkish sultans of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; by the accumulated weight of corruption which invited the Reformation; by the Babel which the Reformation produced; by the relation of the Church to corrupt governments: by the dishonest enterprises of unbelieving theologians. Men said the Church was killed under Decius and Diocletian, after the French Revolution. But each collapse is followed by a revival, because Christ willed to rise. 3. What is our hope for the departed? Because Christ lives, they live also; because He rose, they shall rise. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The mastery of life*:—These are the strongest words that human lips have uttered, I think; the strongest, because they give us a glimpse of what elsewhere we cannot find in man or his history—the complete mastery and control of life. Where is the man who comes to life as the workman comes to his clay or marble, and shapes out his idea precisely as he first has thought and designed it, and leaves it fulfilled without that obedient material having demanded any change in the work? How little of such mastery you and I have. Your very purpose in life, of which you speak so proudly, have you not got it by living? And when you had conceived it, when you had said "I will," "That is my purpose," did life flow liquidly and obediently into your mould, and stay there, and harden in it lastingly? Who has just the life he planned? And when you begin to see your purpose, or something like it, coming out of life, what control have you over it and its continuance? You have time to say, "Yes, that is the shape of my wish, of my plan," and you or it are hurried away. But even suppose that a man cares not whether his purpose be lasting, if for a moment he reaches the place at which he had aimed;

if he stands there where he had struggled through life to be; if he has made life carry him there—is he not master and victor? May he not say, as the soldier who dies in victory, "I die happy"? The hands that stiffen at that moment, are they not, after all, a conqueror's? Oh! but think if the mastery of life does not include something else. It is not only to carry one's own purpose for a moment; it is to do it in such a way as to show that you are not indebted to life's favour for it; that it is not a gift to you; that you will take it at your own time, as one who is completely, unanxiously master; that you will not be hurried by the thought, "*Now* life is offering me my prize; if not now, never"; but can quietly choose the time of acquisition when it is best, and then reach out the hand to take it. But stop again. Mastery of human life—is it not something vastly more than all of this? Is it not to be above counting it indispensable, to use it only as one help in the working out of the great purpose; to lay it down, and yet win the aim by other help; to lay it down as a workman puts down a tool and takes it again? But who of us is so boldly independent as that? Who can work out his human purpose without the help of human life? But I must go yet one great step farther in this description of what it is to be a master of human life. It is this: Suppose you were independent of this human life, yet you are not master of it if it can withdraw itself and you have no power to keep or resume it. If, after showing your ability to do without it, it were able to keep away from you, if you had no power to take it again, you would not be its master. That is the complete mastery of human life, not only to work out your purpose independently of it, but to really resume it, to take it again when it has been laid down. . . . I find, in the midst of all this history of man and his life—believing himself master, and yet never so in reality—one life which has no such feature, which could never have been troubled by the thought of fate. There is One among all human existences which bears all the marks of the mastership of life, which claims from all the title of Lord and Master. First of all, Christ comes to human life with His own purpose fully formed and self-originated. He brought a Divine purpose to earth. Then see how absolutely, without change, that purpose of Christ's is carried out. Not a feature is altered; not a circumstance is varied, nor any addition made. It is accomplished just according to the heavenly purpose. Life has no power to change it in the smallest particular. But this royal purpose, will not human life over-ride it, and outgrow it, and destroy it, or gather it into itself and its own purpose, like the little rift that your hand makes in the water of the strong river? Will it remain as it was planned? How those words, "the everlasting gospel," answer our question! What is there but the word of God, which endures for ever? Oh! what is there to-day in the world which remains unchanged but the salvation of Christ? But did life give to Him the fulfilment of His purpose, as it does to its favourites, granting the prize to Him in its own time as its favour? I do not know anything more quietly grand about Jesus' life than the way in which He chooses the very time when it all shall be done. "My time is not yet come;" "I lay down My life of Myself"; "I must work to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected," He says, conscious of controlling the time completely. But how His Mastership grows upon us! Still let me go on to show you how His great purpose is independent of human life. Life is not indispensable to it as to our purpose. He can fulfil His purpose in loss of life, and by loss of life. "I lay down My life of Myself. This commandment have I received of My Father." The Divine purpose is not lost, but won, by passing into death. "I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto Me." How little is human life necessary to His purpose, who died that we might live! How little dependent on this human existence is that love of God which came from heaven, which has heaven's life, which is greater than death, which survives the loss of earthly life! There is but one more addition. "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Here is the highest and last sign of the Master. Can you not see how the river of life flows from the throne of God and the Lamb, where Christ, the ascended God-man, sits, who has taken human life again? Christ would take us all into His great purpose. Follow your own human purposes alone, and then, indeed, life is your master. But become our Lord's follower, have a share in His purpose, have a real part and place in the salvation of Christ, and then you, too, have a superiority to life, a mastery of life. Then you, too, are living for an aim which life did not give you; an aim which life cannot modify or destroy; an aim which will be fulfilled in its own chosen time of heavenly happiness; an aim that can survive death and the loss of human life; an aim which, in a resurrection, will be able by its power to resume life as its obedient servant. (*Fred. Brooks.*)

Vers. 19–21. **There was a division . . . for these sayings.**—Here was—I. A BAD SPIRIT. 1. Schismatic. "There was a division." Sad that Christ and His doctrines should divide men into sects. One might have thought that as His life was so pure, loving, morally commanding, and His doctrine so congruous with reason and spiritual wants, that all men would have centred in Him. Schism in relation to Christ is bad—a calumny on the gospel and a curse to the race. 2. Blasphemous (ver. 20). There are two evils men commit on the question of moral causation. (1) Some ascribe bad deeds to God. The warrior after his bloody achievements returns thanks to God who commanded us not to kill, and declared that woes arise from the lusts of the wicked heart. The priest who presumes to stand between God and the people ascribes his crafty deeds to God. Islam and Mormon leaders impose on credulity a pretended heavenly authority. How much despotism, plunder, and oppression are enacted in God's name! (2) Some ascribe good deeds to Satan, as these jealous, cavilling, and malicious Jews. To trace this Divine act to God's arch foe was heinous sin; yet the principle of this is too common in every age. What is the conduct of those who assign the effects of Christianity to the ingenuity of imposters who designate the Bible a "cunningly-devised fable," and brand as hypocrites the most holy and useful men? 3. Intolerant. "Why hear ye Him?" This is the spirit of all bigots and persecutors. The same language is often used by one sect about a preacher of another sect. II. A SOUND ARGUMENT (ver. 21). A devil could not, and would not if he could, give eyes to the blind. This is the same principle as Christ's—"By their fruits ye shall know them." This is an infallible test. Judge, then, Christianity by its works. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ's words and deeds:*—"There arose a division again among the Jews" because of the words which Jesus had uttered. It is the old story. Jesus Christ has always divided human communities. He cannot be ignored. How can He be accounted for? He is the great enigma which calls forth many answers. In the preceding verses we have one of those hurried estimates of Christ given in the white heat of anger—"He hath a devil, and is mad." There are a class of men who never fail to come to very speedy and decided conclusions. They arrive at them by a short cut, and very often by astounding leaps. They have a keen sensitiveness to the presence of a devil a long time before he appears, and as a rule point in the direction from which he is least likely to come. The explanation that Jesus had a devil had became a commonplace, but had carried with it no conviction in being frequently repeated. There were keen-sighted men in the crowd who saw through it all—"Others said, These are not the words of Him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" There is true philosophy in these words uttered hurriedly by unknown speakers in that surging throng. Some of the world's best utterances are anonymously recorded. The truth suggested by our text is—That words and deeds are tests of character which men should not ignore. I. Our Lord's SPEECH as a test of His character—"These are not the sayings of one possessed with a devil." Some one possibly smiles incredulously and asks—"Who can judge a man by his speech?" Napoleon the Great held that speech was made to conceal thoughts and purposes. But did he succeed in confining speech within these ignoble limits? For a time and in certain cases he doubtless did. But what of those peevish and angry utterances of his at St. Helena? As we read the story we are forced to exclaim, "Oh, man, thy speech bewrayeth thee!" That great actor was no longer able to conceal himself, when he fretted and fumed and swore in helpless pevishness. Watch a man's utterances through and through, and he cannot hide himself from you. He may at times flatter himself that he has succeeded in the attempt, but his speech so wronged and misused at length plays traitor with him in return, and reveals what manner of man he is. Speech, graciously given by God to man alone on earth, as a means by which he shall be able to express truth, will not suffer itself evermore to be made the degraded instrument of diplomacy and deceit. It will at times involuntarily start and assert itself. In the records of the best lives we find words uttered in haste, unpremeditated, or under great provocation, which needed an apology, since they revealed the weaker and less noble side of character. When did Christ utter such words? In speech He was never "overtaken in a fault." His disciples often were, but He never. Again, see if there were immature words uttered at the outset of His ministry, which revealed the crudities of youth, or an imperfect estimate of that ministry to which He had committed His life. Was there ever anything said by Him which betrayed a wrong motive, or defective moral teaching? Have succeeding ages been able to find a flaw in His doctrine, or have they been able to add a single virtue to those which He

taught men? Have any words lived like His, or living, exerted such a sanctifying, healing and ennobling influence over human lives? Let us refer to one or two features of His incomparable utterances. What does he say about God? No teacher of men can be silent on this great theme. He tells men many tender, loving things concerning God—that He clothes the lily, feeds the sparrow, numbers the hairs of our head, and, finally, "that He so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Has any teaching concerning God given such light and joy to human heart as this? Verily, "These are not the sayings of one possessed with a devil!" Again, what has He to say about man? By the graveside of our dearest and best ones can any assurance compare with His—"I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in Me shall never die"? "Because I live ye shall live also"? "Whence hath this man these things?" "These are not the words of one possessed with a devil." We consider—II. Our Lord's DEEDS as tests of His character. "Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" It is the prerogative of the devil to close men's eyes, not to open them. It is not so much the miracle of giving sight as the beneficent nature of it that stamps it as undiabolic. What was the tendency of our Lord's deeds? Precisely the same as His teaching. Did He not always go about doing good? There is a harmony of goodness and of benevolence in His works from the beginning to the close. Above all, is there anything for power and tenderness to compare with His Cross? And here we come to the root of the whole matter. Theology, history, and moral philosophy can all apply their tests; but no test can compare with that of our own experience. Our experience may fail to appeal powerfully to others, but nothing is so convincing to ourselves. Among our Lord's disciples are the noblest men and women whom the world has ever known, and they attribute all their blessings to Him. (*David Davies.*)

Vers. 22, 23. **And it was at Jerusalem the feast of Dedication.**—*The origin and character of the feast of Dedication:*—Antiochus Epiphanes, on his return from the conquest of Egypt, having entered Jerusalem with very great slaughter, and having pillaged the city, proceeded to pollute the sanctuary, placing on the altar of God the abomination of desolation; offering swine's flesh; burning the books of the law; and putting to death those who ventured to keep that sacred volume in their possession. This was, no doubt, a time of great mourning to the godly in Judah; and with many prayers and tears would they sigh for deliverance. And as under the oppression of Pharaoh, so under that of Antiochus, the Lord looked upon the affliction of His people and sent them a deliverer. Judas was raised up, a warrior who is said to have taken for the motto of his standard, "Who is like unto Thee among the gods, O Jehovah!" the first letters of which words in Hebrew when put together made up the word Maccabi, whence it is supposed his surname of Maccabæus was derived. (*J. Fawcett, M.A.*) Three decisive victories in the first two years (B.C. 166, 167) of the campaign at Samaria, Bethoron and Emmaus, secured Judas' fame and success; and, finally, an encounter at Bethzur made him master of Jerusalem. They entered and found a scene of havoc. The corridors of the priest's chambers which encircled the Temple were torn down; the gates were in ashes, the altar disfigured, and the whole platform was overgrown as if with a mountain jungle or forest glade (1 Macc. iv. 38). It was a heart-rending spectacle. Their first impulse was to cast themselves headlong on the pavement, and blow the loud horns which accompanied all mournful, as well as all joyous, occasions. Then, whilst the Greek garrison still remained in the fortress, the warriors first began the elaborate process of cleansing the polluted place. The first object was to clear away every particle which had been touched by the unclean animals. On the 22nd of Marchesvan they removed the portable altar which had been erected. On the 3rd of Chisleu they removed the smaller altars from the court in front of the Temple and the various Pagan statues (2 Macc. x. 2, 3). With the utmost care they pulled down the great platform of the altar itself, from the dread lest its stones should have been polluted. But with the scrupulosity which marked the period, they considered that stones once consecrated could never be entirely desecrated, and accordingly hid them away in a corner of the Temple, there to remain till the Prophet (Macc. iv. 46)—the solver of riddles—should come and tell what was to be done with them. How many stones of spiritual or intellectual edifices excite a like perplexed fear, lest they have been so misused that they cannot be employed again—at least, till some prophet comes to tell us how and when! For the interior of the Temple

everything had to be refurnished afresh—vessels, candlesticks, incense, altar, tables, curtains. At last all was completed, and on the 25th of Chisleu, the same day that three years before the profanation had occurred, the Temple was rededicated. It was the very time predicted in the book of Daniel (vii. 25; ix. 24–27; xii. 6, 7). The three years and a half from the time of the first beginning of the sacrilege was over, and the rebound of the national sentiment was in proportion. The depth of winter (December) could not restrain the burst of joy. From the first dawn of that day for the whole following week songs of joy were sung with cymbals and harps. In the Psalms of Solomon (xi. 2, 3, 7) there are exalting strains which echo the words of the Evangelical prophet, and welcome the return unto Jerusalem. The smoke once more went up from the altar; the gates, and even the priestly chambers, were fumigated. The building itself was studded with golden crowns and shields, in imitation of the golden shields which in the first Temple had adorned the porch. What most lived in the recollection of the time was that the perpetual light blazed again. The golden candlestick was no longer to be had, its place was taken by an iron chandelier cased in wood; but this sufficed. It was a solemn moment when the sacred fire was again kindled on the new altar; and from it the flame communicated to the rest of the building. As in the modern ceremony of the "Sacred Fire" in the church of the Holy Sepulchre, so this incident was wrapped in mystery and legend. The simple historical account is that they procured the light by striking the fresh unpolluted stones against each other. But later representations, going back to the like events in Nehemiah's life, imagined some preternatural origin of the fire itself. It was further supposed that one unpolluted crevice was found which furnished the oil for the lighting of the Temple during the whole week; in remembrance of which every private house was illuminated, beginning, according to one usage, with eight candles, and decreasing as the week went on; according to the other, beginning with one and advancing to eight. Partly, no doubt, from these traditions, or (as Josephus thinks) from the returning joy of the nation, the festival in after days bore the name of the "Feast of Lights." This would receive a yet fuller significance in connection with another aspect of this great day. Though the latest it took rank at once with the earlier holy days. It won for itself a sanctity which neither the dedication of Solomon nor Zerubbabel had acquired. Both of these consecrations had been arranged to coincide with the Feast of Tabernacles. That season had already passed whilst the patriots were hiding in the mountains. Now, however, it was determined to make this new solemnity a repetition of that feast. It was called afterwards "The Tabernacle Feast of Winter"; and on this, its first occasion, there were blended with it the usual processions of that gay autumnal holiday, brandishing their woven branches of palm and other trees, whose evergreen foliage cheered the dull aspect of a Syrian December. And we can hardly doubt that they would, in accordance with the name "Feast of Lights," add to it that further characteristic of Tabernacles—the illumination of the precincts of the Temple by two great chandeliers placed in the court, by the light of which festive dances were kept up all through the night. There was an additional propriety in the transference of the national festival of the vintage to this new feast, because it coincided with the natural solemnity of welcoming the first light kindled in the new year. December 25th was at Tyre, as at Rome in after times, celebrated as the birthday of the Sun—the revival, the renewal, the Encænia of man and nature. (*Dean Stanley.*) *The lawfulness of national and ecclesiastical festivals*:—There was nothing in this institution against which the most correctly informed conscience could object, and it was enjoined by the lawful authorities; Jesus therefore would submit to an ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; and not only so, but He would willingly encourage this feast of dedication as a solemn acknowledgment of Divine mercies. On exactly the same footing stand several of the observances of our Church. The fifth of November, for instance, is observed as a memorial of a like deliverance from the machinations of those, who, after the example of Antiochus, would burn the Scriptures, and those who were found to possess them; and even our Christmas, and Lent, and Good Friday, and Easter, and Whitsuntide, rest on the same foundation. They were appointed by man, and are supported by the authority of the Church; a higher authority they do not claim: but who that feels as a Protestant and as a Christian, and regards the example of Christ, would refuse to comply with them? (*J. Fawcett, M.A.*) **It was winter.**—*Winter*:—Consider it in relation—I. To GOD. 1. As a display of Divine power (Job xxxviii. 22–30). God humbles the wildest elements of nature by His northern blast. It not only arrests the mountain stream, but congeals into

mountains of ice the polar seas; not only withers the flowers, but strips the forest; not only binds up the vegetable powers, but chains the solar heat. Who can stand before His cold? No one, but for the safeguards provided by the God of winter. And if such securities be so valuable, how invaluable the robe of righteousness for the naked and destitute soul! 2 As a display of Divine wisdom and goodness. Frosts purify the air, destroy noxious vermin, &c.; and if it occasion some disorders it prevents many others; and even these disorders by confining us at home, induce reflection. 3. As a display of Divine faithfulness. The fulfilment of the promise to Noah requires the annual preparation of the soil for fertility, and the preservation of seed from destruction. The first is secured by the action of frost, the latter by snow, which affords a warm garment, and cherishes infant growth. Then, touched by the sun, the vesture melts and saturates the pores of the soil with the dissolving nitre, thus replenishing the earth with the principles of vegetable life. Were there only snow the soil would be too damp; were there only frost the seed would perish. So God blends both together. II. To MANKIND AT LARGE. It reminds us—1. Of the condition of the poor. We must not excuse ourselves from benevolence because we have paid the Poor Rate. We are compelled by law to do that; but how dwelleth the love of God in him who, having this world's goods, does nothing but pay his legal dues. 2. Of the reverses of lot to which we are all liable. Often affairs that were once as promising as spring, bright as summer, and rich as autumn, are now desolate as winter. It is not necessary to forget prosperity in adversity. To so remember it as to beget impatience is foolish and sinful, but not if it deepens our convictions of the uncertainty of human affairs, and warns others against trusting in uncertain riches. And then, again, how often is adversity the season when we first began to think seriously. 3. Of the evening and end of life. As winter comes freezing the streams, and weakening the powers of vegetable life, so old age congeals the warm blood and impairs the mental faculties. And yet this is the season to which the soul's weightiest concerns are often left. Old age is not the time for business effort, much less, then, for spiritual. III. To THE SPIRITUAL WORLD. Winter should remind us—1. Of the entrance of sin into the world. For as winter deforms the face of nature, so sin brought a curse upon the earth. Sin quenched light, froze love, destroyed holiness. 2. Of the natural state of the heart in the sight of God. The heart and life of every man ought to be as spring: rich in buds of holiness; as summer, rich in the bloom of holiness; as autumn, rich in the ripe fruit of holiness. But, alas! it is not so. It is winter in every heart withheld from the Sun of Righteousness. And every year of neglect hardens the heart further against God. 3. Of the unhappy state of the backslider; its desolation and despair contrasted with its former fruitfulness and hope. 4. Of the great salvation. God has made the whiteness of winter's snow an emblem—(1) Of the purity of salvation, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (2) Of pardon and sanctification, "Come, now, let us reason together, &c." (*R. Philip, D.D.*) *Winter as an emblem*:—I. OF THE STATE OF THE UNCONVERTED. 1. In winter the light of heaven is obscured. Even in our temperate zone, our day is brief; but in the far north for months the orb of day never appears above the horizon. So the unconverted see not the Sun of Righteousness, nor the light He sheds on things important and interesting. They "sit in darkness and the shadow of death." 2. The deadness and barrenness of winter is figured in the unregenerate state. There is no foliage, corn, fruit, but what may be forced by artificial heat, and wanting in natural flavour. So in spiritual husbandry: the unconverted bear no fruit of approved quality "of the Spirit." 3. The cold of winter typifies the state of those who are strangers to the genial glow of pure and spiritual affection. Their tenderest feelings in religion are but a partial thaw produced by a transient sunshine which leaves no memorial behind except the pendant icicle and slippery surface, hardening the more for the momentary softening. 4. The winds and storms of winter are apt emblems of those ill-regulated and malignant passions which agitate with ceaseless tempest the souls that have no rest in God. II. OF THE STATE OF SPIRITUAL DECLENSION. When summer and autumn have gone a change is soon perceptible. Where the golden light, luxurious warmth, precious produce? Nothing remains but cold barrenness. Emblematic of those who started well but have fallen out. Sometimes this change is gradual, as the days gradually shorten; sometimes more rapid through the influence of temptation, as when winter is hastened on by a premature and unexpected storm. But to remain in that state is to die. III. OF A STATE OF DESERTION AND TEMPTATION. In winter nature

seems barren of charm, and so the soul when Christ has withdrawn. Such an act is usually the result of man's negligence; but sometimes it is for the trial of faith and patience. Thus it was with Job, our Lord, Paul, and all great saints. IV. OF A STATE OF AFFLICTION. In the case of the poor, winter is much more than an emblem, and that is the time to show our true religion, which is "to visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction." How many are exposed on the stormy sea or amid the drifted snow! Let us then be thankful for our security. But there are sorrows that create winter in the soul. Conclusion: Winter precedes spring in nature, and may do also for the unconverted, the backslider, the troubled, &c. (*H. Grey, D.D.*) *The moral uses of winter:*—We have one whole season that bears a look of unbenignity; but while many of God's doings do not represent His disposition, they exhibit His modes and ends of discipline. Turning our thoughts in this direction we shall find enough in winter to satisfy us of God's benignity. Some have thought that God would have shown His goodness more perfectly if He had omitted winter altogether. But would the advantages of a cylindrical world be greater than a spherical one in spite of its winter? In winter—I. WE SEE THAT GOD'S BENEFICENCE IS NOT ALWAYS CONCERNED IN THE PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL ENDS. He here takes us off into a field to show on how large a scale He builds and governs, and works for ends that are superior. Our God is not a summer God, but a winter God, caring visibly less for all mere comfort than for the grand prerogatives and rigours of principles. II. WE NOTE A MARKED CHANGE IN OUR BODILY AND MENTAL HABIT AND TEMPERAMENT. 1. Diseases are of a different type, and health itself a different experience. In summer the senses are more awake, and the body has free communication with nature through every pore. In winter these gates are closed; the vital force retreats to sustain the internal heat by extra exertion then. We fold our cloak instinctively about us, and ask to be separated from nature by impervious walls. 2. This change naturally effects the tone and temperament of the mind which is less given up to sensation and passion. In the perpetual summer of the tropics the soul's capacities are all but macerated; but where there is a good interspersing of winter habit, a more rugged and distinctly moral temperament is induced. (1) The contrast between summer and winter life in respect to reflection is remarkable. After the mind has received the summer into its storehouse then it wants winter to review its stores. Now the senses lose their objects, we listen to conscience and think of other worlds. Every prospect without is forbidding, the indoor fire more attractive, and if we ever think cogently we do now. (2) It is well understood that the mind never attains to strength without the habit of reflection. The same is necessary to a vigorous pronouncement of the moral man. Hence the intellectual and moral dearth of the tropics, Their moral nature wants the frigorific tension of a well-nurtured life and experience. Who would undertake to form a Scotch people as to a sense of principles in Jamaica? III. We are made MORE CONSCIOUS OF OUR MORAL WANTS. The prodigal came to himself in a time of short allowance; and when, as in winter, shall our want of God be awakened? Everything around is an image of the coldness of a cold heart. Cut off from the diversions of summer pleasures, then, if ever, a man will feel those wants which set all moral natures reaching after God. IV. We are MORE CAPABLE OF REALIZING INVISIBLE SCENERIES AND WORLDS. God is more vividly imagined in summer, and the tropical attractions of paradise, with its twelve manner of fruits, are intimated. But the time for realizing these invisible things is when a pall is thrown over their visible resemblances. When creation is bare we call upon our imaginations to paint and picture, and make it blessed above all seen facts. V. THE WILL BECOMES MORE ERECT AND DETERMINATE. Men in the tropics seem to have no will, and are commonly inefficient for decisive action. How many of them have become martyrs? And who is not languid and averse to resolution even in our northern summer? We speak of the bracing of winter, by which we mean that we have a nerve to do, determine, endure, *i.e.*, have a new instalment of will, and so of practical energy. VI. THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF LIFE ARE AFFECTED BENEFICIALLY. Winter is not commonly productive, but is rather a time of expenditure; and in this way it impels by the most stringent motive to habits of industry and providence. And these habits help to set one on forecasting the wants and necessities of the life beyond. And then, having this also provided, he will have it in his heart to borrow the larger lesson, and be no more churlish or barren of gratitude; but, seeing that God gives for expenditure, he will set his comforts in contrast with the desolations around, and thank God for the supplies of the year. VII. We see THE CONTRIBUTIONS IT MAKES TO HOME LIFE. Home is

an exclusively northern word. Tropical families living out of doors for the whole year are less regularly gathered into domestic proximity. It is only at the hearth when the winter fire is kindled that fatherhood, motherhood, and other tender relationships become bonds of unity. A whole half-year spent at the hearth—mornings there begun with prayer, long evenings enlivened by mutual society, books opening their treasures, and games their diversions—this condenses a home. Who can imagine a "Cottar's Saturday Night" in the tropics? VIII. WE HAVE BEEN TRACING PARTICULAR RESULTS OF CHARACTER OPERATED BY WINTER CLIMATES. LET US LOOK AT A FEW WINTER SCENES AND OCCASIONS THAT ARE WORKING RESULTS NOT LESS IMPORTANT. Note—1. The almost religious impression of winter storms. Tropical storms are so terrible as to leave no moral impression at all. But our winter storm gathers up its force more thoughtfully, as if moving only great instigations, and under this performance, by God's aerial orchestra, our soul is in vibration as never under any combination of act, instrument, or voice. 2. The moral value of winter as a time for charity. In the summer God pours out His bounty so freely that none scarcely miss their needed supply. In the winter He withholds that we may take His place. The conditions of hunger and cold authenticate themselves. If there is no fire the lack can be seen. The poor ragged child, saying by his piteous look, "Who can stand before His cold?" wants no certificate. 3. Winter funerals. These are a trial that awakens strange inward commotions. Our heart shudders, but while our feeling is protesting, the thought arises "Our departed is not in that hole. Let the snows fall heavy—WE thank Thee Father Lord of the warmer clime that our dead one lives with Thee." Practically, almost nothing will compel a faith in immortality more than to bury a friend in the winter. 4. Winter religious movements. It is remarkable, and a fair subject for congratulation, that the great Church days are in winter or early spring—Christmas and Easter, *e.g.* Whether Lent is fixed because at that time the mind is more congenially tempered for the higher meditation and severer exercises of religion some may question, but Lent in July would have much less chance of the intended benefit; and in churches not observing Lent, the time is distinguished by what are called revivals of religion. But in both cases winter becomes the harvest of religion. The tonic force of winter gives a possibility of thought and tension specially needed for earnest religious exercises. It is also an advantage that we love proximity in wiuter, and covet more easily the warmth of assemblies and high social impulse. 5. Winter seems the time to meditate all our most serious concerns of life anew. Doing this it will not much concern us if our flight should be in winter. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *The beauties of winter*:—When the sky is blue above, and the morning air fresh and bracing, and the frost has gemmed every twig and spray of bush and tree, and every weed and blade of grass by the roadside—aye, and every stone and dead leaf, and straw even, and nature's myriad brilliants glitter like diamonds in the sun; and the hard ground rings under your quick tread; and the boys shout on the slippery pond; and the skater hurries to the lake in the park; and the woodman's axe is heard in the copse; and in the barn the flail comes down with a will; and the carter's boy whistles beside the smoking team; and the brown leaves of the oak rustle; and the lark sings overhead—then winter is a brave old boy, and shall have a crown of shining holly with scarlet berries on the dark leaves of glossy green; and the log shall burn on the hearth, and the mistletoe hang in the hall, and the young shall be merry, and the old cheerful, and the thoughtful remember gladly who it is that hath made the winter. (*H. H. Dobney.*) *Temple views of winter*:—National humiliation and rejoicing may at times be proper, but if annually perpetuated they may become unmeaning. In addition to fasts and festivals of Divine appointment, the Jews had this and others. With how much more reverence men treat Church institutions than those sanctioned by God. Christianity is contrasted with Judaism in as much as it is not an outward religion, has no feasts, attaches no sanctity to days and years, but is inward. 2. At this feast Jesus walked in Soloman's porch, and men sought to stone Him for asserting His Oneness with the Father. Men may attach greater importance to the sanctuary than to the gospel. What was passing through His mind? The contrast between the outward beauty of the Temple and the real condition of the Church? Or the little moral influence it had in the world? For the world's winter was only the symbol of its spiritual state. 3. What does the season suggest to us in the sanctuary? The ritualism of nature is most expressive, and furnishes us with types of spiritual ideas. Christ uses nature's illustrations exclusively. I.

DEATH PRECEDES LIFE. Our year begins with winter, which prepares the way for all that follows. Winter is the type of death. It paralyzes old age, takes the colouring from childhood, and fills many a grave. 1. If mental life is to be developed how much have we to die to—early prejudices, mistaken opinions, confused conjectures. 2. If the spiritual life is to be developed, death must precede it. Old principles must be renounced, old habits abandoned. (1) There must be death to sin that there may be life to God. Crucifixion with Christ precedes Christ living in us. (2) There must be death to things seen if we would live to the things unseen. The world must be dead to us if we would seek the things above. (3) The body must die that it may live a new life. II. LIFE HAS ITS SUCCESSIVE DEVELOPMENTS. 1. Winter is necessary that one form of life may pass away to be succeeded by another. (1) It is not all spring. Earth's beautiful garments become worn and soiled, and must be laid aside, and in darkness and silence nature makes preparation for her new vesture. (2) It is not all activity and growth. There must be a time for the gathering up of energies. (3) It is not all fruitfulness; the fruits must be gathered in to answer the purposes of their growth, and the developments must begin anew. 2. The length of the year is adapted to the constitution of the world. If any change were to take place the wonderful mechanism would be disarranged and come to a stand, and so in the constitution of man. We get robustness not in summer but in winter, and grow more spiritually then. 3. These successive developments, though almost numberless in their forms, may be repetitions. Every year sees leaves, flowers, &c., like the last. But some forms may be succeeded by new manifestations of life, increase of beauty and fruitfulness. There is not a leaf that falls but has accomplished its purpose and makes way for its successor. And so some successive manifestations of spiritual life seem copies of each other. These are necessary to Christian character, but they would not go on did not winter intervene, and some are replaced by manifestations far surpassing those that have preceded them. III. LIFE CONTAINS THE GERM OF ALL FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. Winter does not destroy life. The first act of faith contains in it the germ of all the future sinless and sorrowless life. (*H. J. Bevis.*) **Jesus walked in the Temple in Solomon's porch.**—*Solomon's porch:*—The word "porch" rather means what we should call a verandah or colonnade. It was one of those long covered walks under a roof supported by columns, on one side at least, which the inhabitants of hot countries appear to find absolutely needful. Singularly enough, one sect of heathen philosophers at Athens was called "Stoics," from its meeting in a place called "Stoa," here rendered a porch; while another was called "Peripatetics," from its habit of "walking about" during its discussions, just as our Lord did in this verse. The cloisters of a cathedral or abbey, perhaps, are most like the building called a "porch" here. Josephus says this porch was one of the buildings which remained partly undestroyed from Solomon's Temple. Tacitus expressly mentions it as one of the defences of the Temple at the siege of Jerusalem. (*Bp. Ryle.*) This discourse of our Lord concerning His own Divine power as proved by His works was delivered in winter in Solomon's porch. And then the Jews rejected Him (ver. 39). But afterwards this porch was the place in which His apostles, having wrought mighty works in His name, boldly proclaimed His Messiahship and Divine power to the people, who gladly accepted the gospel (Acts iii. 11; v. 12). Both in nature and in grace it was then spring. Christ had ascended and the Comforter had come. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*) *The Lord in our assemblies:*—1. The presence of Jesus brings into prominence—(1) The place: "at Jerusalem, in the Temple." (2) The exact part of it: "Solomon's porch." (3) The time: "winter." (4) The proceedings: "feast of Dedication." 2. The main feature in all history, and in the event of every life, is the presence or absence of Jesus. I. WILL HE BE HERE? The place may be a very Jerusalem, our meeting-place may be a temple, it may be a high-day, but will He be with us? It may be cold and wintry; but what of that if He be here? Our own eager inquiry is about His presence, and we feel sure that He will come, for—1. We have invited Him, and He will not refuse His friends. 2. We are prepared for Him, and are waiting to welcome Him. 3. We have great need of Him, and He is full of compassion. 4. We have some of His brethren, and these bring Him in them; indeed, He is in them. 5. We have those here whom He is seeking—lost sheep. 6. He has promised to come (Matt. xviii. 20). 7. Some declare that they have already seen Him. Why should not others of us enjoy the same privilege? II. WILL HE STAY? He will—1. If we prize His company, and feel that we cannot live without

it. We must by earnest prayer constrain Him to abide with us (Luke xxiv. 29) 2. If we love His truth, and delight to make it known. 3. If we obey His will, and walk in sincerity and holiness. 4. If we are diligent in His service and worship. 5. If we are united in love to Him, to one another, and to poor sinners. 6. If we are humbly reverent and sit at His feet in lowly confession. The proud He will never favour. 7. If we are jealously watchful. III. WHAT WILL HE DO IF HE COMES? 1. He will walk among us and observe what we are doing, even as He noticed those who went to the Temple at Jerusalem. 2. He will grieve over the spiritual condition of many, even as He mourned over the ruin of Jerusalem. 3. He will wait to give audience to any who desire to speak with Him. 4. He will teach by His servant; and His Word, whether received or rejected, will be with great authority and power. 5. He will this day explain to us the Temple itself, by being Himself the Key to it. Think of Jesus, who is the Temple of God (Rev. xxi. 22), in the Temple, and then understand by the light of His presence—(1) The Temple (Heb. ix. 11; Rev. xv. 5). (2) The altar (Heb. xiii. 10; Rev. viii. 3). (3) The Sacrifice (Heb. ix. 28; 1 Cor. v. 7). (4) The shewbread (Heb. ix. 2). (5) The veil (Heb. x. 20). (6) The ark and mercy-seat (Heb. ix. 4, 5; Rev. x. 19). (7) The priest (Heb. x. 12). 6. He will to His own people reveal His love, as once the Lord's light shone above the mercy-seat. 7. He will take us where He always walks, but where there is no winter: to the New Jerusalem, to the temple, to a more beautiful building than Solomon's porch (Rev. xxi. 10, 11). (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 24–39. **Then came the Jews round about Him.**—*The scene and circumstances*:—Here in this bright colonnade, decked for the feast with glittering trophies, Jesus was walking up and down, quietly, and apparently without companions, sometimes, perhaps, gazing across the valley of Kidron at the whited sepulchres of the prophets whom generations of Jews had slain, and enjoying the mild winter sunlight, when, as though by a preconcerted movement, the Pharisaic party and their leaders suddenly surrounded and began to question Him. Perhaps the very spot where He was walking, recalling as it did the memories of their ancient glory—perhaps the memories of the glad feast which they were celebrating, as the anniversary of a splendid deliverance wrought by a handful of brave men, who had overthrown a colossal tyranny—inspired their ardent appeal. "How long," they impatiently inquired, "dost Thou hold our souls in painful suspense? If Thou really art the Messiah, tell us with confidence. Tell us *here*, in Solomon's porch, *now*, while the sight of these shields and golden crowns, and the melody of these citherns and cymbals, recall the glory of Judas the Asmonæan—wilt thou be a mightier Maccabæus, a more glorious Solomon? Shall these citrons and fair boughs and palms, which we carry in honour of this day's victory, be carried some day for Thee?" It was a strange, impetuous, impatient appeal, and is full of significance. It forms their own strong condemnation, for it shows distinctly that He had spoken words and done deeds which would have justified and substantiated such a claim had He chosen definitely to assert it. And if He had in so many words asserted it—in the sense which they required—it is probable that they would have instantly welcomed Him with tumultuous acclaim. The place where they were speaking recalled the most glorious scenes of their ancient monarchy; the occasion was rife with the heroic memories of one of their bravest and most successful warriors; the political conditions which surrounded them were exactly such as those from which the noble Asmonæan had delivered them. One spark of that ancient flame would have kindled their inflammable spirits into such a blaze of irresistible fanaticism as might for a time have swept away both the Romans and Herods. But the day for political deliverances was past; the day for a higher, deeper, wider deliverance had come. For the former they yearned; the latter they rejected. Passionate to claim in Jesus an exclusive temporal Messiah, they repelled Him with hatred as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. That He was the Messiah in a sense far loftier and more spiritual than they had ever dreamed His language had again and again implied: but a Messiah in the sense they required He was not, and would not be. And therefore He does not mislead them by saying, "I *am* your Messiah," but He refers them to His repeated teaching, which showed how clearly such had been His claim, and to the works which bore witness to that claim. Had they been sheep of His flock, they would have heard His voice, and then He would have given them eternal life. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *Christ's account of Himself*:—I. THE NATURE OF HIS

CREDENTIALS. 1. His sayings. He had often told them who He was (ver. 25). 2. His miracles. These had been signs that they should have understood (vers. 25, 38). 3. His acceptance by the pious. Jehovah's flock and His own sheep had recognized Him; an indirect testimony that He was no imposter (ver. 27). 4. His ability to save. He could and did bestow eternal life on those who believed and followed Him (ver. 28). II. THE DIGNITY OF HIS PERSON. 1. The Father's Commissioner (ver. 26). 2. The Father's Shepherd (ver. 29). 3. The Father's Son (ver. 36). 4. The Father's equal (vers. 30, 38). The Jews understood this (ver. 33). III. THE VINDICATION OF HIS PRETENSIONS. 1. The charge preferred against Him. Blasphemy, in making out Himself, a man, to be God (ver. 33). 2. The punishment proposed for Him. Stoning, the penalty prescribed by the law for such offenders. 3. The answer returned by Him. (1) Scriptural—drawn from their own holy writings. (2) Logical. If God's Word called civic rulers "gods," it could not be blasphemy for God's Son to call Himself "Son of God." (3) Final. They could not reply to it except by violence; and He withdrew Himself beyond the reach of such machinations. Learn—1. The sufficiency of the existing evidences for Christ and Christianity. 2. The irreconcilable antagonism between the unrenewed heart and Christ. 3. The ease with which objections and objectors to Christ can be answered. 4. The certainty that evil men can never achieve a final triumph over Christ. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Religious scepticism:*—I. IT DOES NOT LACK EVIDENCE (vers. 24, 25). 1. Christ's works were such as no mere man had ever performed or could ever accomplish—productions of Divine power, expressions of Divine benevolence. 2. If these in His day were sufficient evidence, how much more His moral works in Christendom since. For eighteen centuries they have been multiplying. To sceptics who say, How long are we to be held in doubt? we answer, If you are sincere in your inquiries, you need not be held in suspense a moment longer. II. IT LACKS SYMPATHY WITH TRUTH (vers. 26, 27). This, and not lack of evidence, is the cause of scepticism. The Jew's sympathy was with the formulæ and conventionalities of religion and not with the truth. The wish is evermore father of the thought. Men are atheists because they do not "like to retain" God in their thoughts—anti-Christians because they do not like Christ. He is too pure, too honest. Are men responsible for this lack of sympathy? As well ask, Are men responsible for being truthful, just, virtuous? Conscience is bound to answer in the affirmative. III. IT EXPOSES TO ENORMOUS LOSS (ver. 28). This implies—1. That they, the sceptics, would not have eternal life—goodness, freedom, perfection, joy—that the absence of which meant to "perish." 2. That they would not have eternal security. His sheep would be safe in His and the Father's hands from ruin and misery. But those who were not His sheep would be in a perilous condition. Conclusion: See here—1. How hypocritical is scepticism. They professed to be in search of truth, whereas they only wanted a pretext to destroy truth. 2. How irrational is scepticism. It refuses to accept the most overwhelming evidence in favour of truth—the mighty and ever multiplying works of Christ. 3. How immoral is scepticism. It springs from the state of the heart—destitution of sympathy with Christ. 4. How egregiously foolish is scepticism. It risks eternal life and security. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The works of the Christ:*—We are dealing with the truth of the Divinity of the Christ, as it has been proclaimed by Christendom ever since the day when He lived and died on this earth. We are endeavouring to test the weight of evidence in favour of such a tremendous claim. And in order to do this effectually we are summoning certain witnesses before us that they may bear their testimony for or against it. The works of a man, like his character and words, are very eloquent. They speak for or against him. The works of the Christ. This, then, is our witness to-day. They are the works of One the beauty of whose character and words is acknowledged by all men whose judgment is worth having. "They bear witness of Me," says the Christ. What do they say? Do they justify or condemn, do they speak for or against Him? I. And, first of all, we want to know WHAT THIS WITNESS IS. The works of the Christ are many and manifold. There are works of love, of sympathy, of mercy; there are works of wisdom, of power, of greatness; there are works of warning, of judgment, of condemnation. Which of these shall we summon as our witness to-day? No; our Lord Himself narrows the issue for us. He points to certain of His works and by them will be judged, "The works that I do in My Father's name." It is quite clear that He is speaking of His miracles. The miracles of the Christ! "Oh," some will say, "no one believes in miracles nowadays. If you have no other witness but this your case must surely fall to the ground. Miracles do not

happen!" Why is a miracle impossible? Hume denies the possibility of a miracle because "it is contrary to all experience." Mr. Mill, the greatest of modern logicians, shows that after all this statement is really worth nothing. He tells us that it only means that you cannot prove a miracle to a person who does not believe in a Being with supernatural powers. If by all experience he literally means "all" he is simply begging the question. No one ever supposed for a moment that miracles have been experienced by all. The philosopher Rousseau tells us that objections to miracles from their improbability cannot reasonably be urged by any man who seriously believes in a living God. But others urge, a miracle is impossible because it is a violation of the laws of nature. But is it? Let us ask what is meant by violating nature's laws. What is a miracle? It is a lower law suspended by a higher. And who shall say this cannot be? To say so were to contradict daily experience. For instance, we can, we do continually counteract the great law of gravitation by a higher law. A miracle is impossible. No, not to any man who believes in a God at all. And we are taking this for granted. Very few deny it. Yea more, we live in a world of miracles. "We cannot see," writes James Hinton, who was at once a man of science and a philosopher, and they do not always go together, "that we walk in the midst of miracles, and draw in mysteries with every breath." A miracle is impossible. Nay, the miracles of the Christ are not a discredited witness: they are not impossible or improbable. On the contrary, miracles are natural and reasonable, and under certain circumstances they are to be expected. But, you say, were not His character and His words enough? Nay, they might be for us, but not for them. In those early days many among men knew but little of His character, and heard only a few of His words. There was need of other credentials in those days, plainer and more striking, to support the claim which Jesus made. We need them not. The miracles of the Christ were like the bells of the Church, that ring before the service begins, and call men by their music to come and worship. But the bells cease when the congregation has assembled and the act of worship commenced. And so we say that it was to be expected that a supernatural revelation, brought by a supernatural Teacher, should, in the absence of all earthly power and greatness, be accompanied by supernatural signs, to attest the truth of the Messenger and of the message He delivered unto men. If, then, these miracles are neither impossible nor improbable, what can we learn about the nature of the witness they give? First, then, I would have you bear in mind that they, too, like the other witnesses we have called, are well-authenticated facts. They are facts which His disciples believed in, and who were so likely to know as they? They are facts, for even His enemies admitted their reality. The Jews did not deny them. Secondly, the miracles of Christ are to be expected. They were the natural accompaniments of His mission of love, the embodiments of His character and words, in harmony with all else that we are told of Him. "They were perfectly natural and ordinary in Him, they were His δυναμεῖς, His powers or faculties, His capacities, just as sight and speech are ours." Thirdly, the miracles of the Christ are unique. No other religion was ever founded upon miracles, as is Christianity. "Whence, then, hath this Man this wisdom and these mighty works?" Christendom answers, "He is the Son of the Living God." Yea, Jesus Himself tells us, "The works which the Father hath given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me that the Father hath sent Me." But as in the first days of Christianity, so still men refuse to believe this. They offer us other solutions instead. Renan, for instance, says He deluded His disciples. Others tell us that the Christ was enabled to do His miracles by His greater knowledge of the laws of science. But can we accept this solution? Or, again, we are told that these miracles are the outcome of the imagination of the disciples—that miracles were in the air, so to speak. Moreover, are we really entitled to take for granted, as do so many, that at the time the Gospels were written there was a predisposition in the minds of men to accept what was extraordinary? In his book on miracles Mr. Litton writes with considerable force, "No mistake is greater than to suppose that the period at which the Gospels appeared was favourable to imposture of this kind. It was an age of literature and philosophy, the diffusion of which was promoted by the union of the civilized world under one sceptre. In Palestine learning had especially taken the form of critical inquiries into the integrity and genuineness of ancient books." But there are others who accept the force of this reasoning, and say the miracles of the Christ are the creation of a later age. But, as has been well pointed out by the same writer, such a man must have been a forger surpassing all the world has ever known in cleverness. Once

more, it is said that the results attributed to miraculous power were in reality brought about by the forces of His personal qualities. His strength of will, His beauty of character, His personal attraction, influenced men, and worked upon them wonderful cures. But even if it were so with the miracles of which men and women were the subjects, how will this account for the stilling of the storm or the withering of the fig-tree. There is only one alternative. Jesus Himself tells us what it is, "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not." Shall we believe Him or shall we reject Him? (*C. J. Ridgeway, M.A.*) **My sheep hear My voice.** —*The order of thought*:—The reference to those who believe not (ver. 26) because they were not of His sheep, introduces the contrast between them and those who were, and the position of the true members of the flock is expanded in this pair of parallel clauses. One member of each pair refers to the act or state of the sheep; the other to the act or gift of the good Shepherd. The pairs proceed in a climax from the first response of the conscience which recognizes the Divine voice, to the eternal home which is in the Father's presence. 1. "My sheep hear My voice," . . . "*and I know them.*" 2. "And they follow Me," . . . "*and I give unto them eternal life.*" 3. "And they shall never perish." . . . "*Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.*" By reading successively the clauses printed in the ordinary type, we trace the progress of the human act and state; by reading in the same way those printed in italics, we trace the progress of the Divine gift; by reading each pair in the order of the text, we see how at each stage the gift is proportioned to the faculty which can receive it. (*Archdeacon Watkins.*) *The sheep and the shepherd*:—While far from flattering this emblem is very consolatory, for of all creatures none are so weak and helpless as sheep, and none are the subjects of such care. I. THE PROPRIETOR OF THE SHEEP. "My." They are Christ's—1. By choice. 2. By the Father's gift. We often value a gift for the donor's sake irrespective of its intrinsic worth. 3. He bought them. We value that for which we have to pay. 4. By capture. A man esteems that which he procures with risk of life and limb. When we were astray He sought, found, rescued us. 5. By the cheerful surrender of ourselves to Him. We would not belong to another if we might; not even to ourselves. All this is—(1) A great honour. To belong to a king carries distinction. (2) A guarantee of safety. (3) The stamp of sanctity. We are the Lord's separated flock. (4) The key to duty. II. THE MARKS OF THE SHEEP. 1. Their ear mark: "Hear My voice." (1) They hear spiritually. (2) They hear Christ in the ministry, Bible, providences, &c., and they distinguish His voice from that of strangers. (3) They hear obediently. 2. Their foot mark: "They follow Me"—not are driven. They follow Christ—(1) As the Captain of their salvation. (2) As their Teacher. (3) As their Example. (4) As their Commander and Prince. "Whatsoever He saith unto you do it." III. THE PRIVILEGE OF THE SHEEP. It does not look very large, but it is amazingly blessed. "I know them," the reverse of which is "I never knew you." He knows us—1. Personally. 2. Thoroughly. 3. Helpfully. (1) Our sins that He may forgive them. (2) Our diseases that He may heal them, &c. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Answering the call*:—In a beautiful English churchyard is a small grave remarkable for its simplicity. It is evidently the resting-place of a little lad who loved his Saviour. The inscription is as follows: "Freddy!" . . . "Yes, Father!" (*Ibid.*) *Christ knows us thoroughly*:—You have a watch, and it will not go, or it goes very irregularly, and you give it into the hands of one who knows nothing about watches, and he says, "I will clean it for you." He will do it more harm than good. But here is the person who made the watch. He says, "I put every wheel into its place; I made the whole of it from beginning to end." You feel the utmost confidence in entrusting that man with your watch. It often cheers my heart to think that since the Lord made me He can put me right. (*Ibid.*) *Christ's sheep*:—I. THE MARKS. 1. They know His voice. This is universal in the East. They hear it—(1) In conversion. (2) At the time of duty. (3) In affliction. (4) In the hour of death. 2. They follow Him—(1) That they may get pardon. (2) To obtain the living water. (3) To share His unspeakable love. (4) To commune with Him in prayer. (5) To learn from His example. II. THE BLESSINGS. 1. Christ knows them. The world does not; the Church may not; but Christ does, whatsoever their state or condition. 2. Christ gives them eternal life. This implies—(1) Daily pardon. (2) Spiritual life. 3. Christ keeps them safely. (1) They are in His land. (2) In His Father's land. (3) To all eternity. (*Pulpit Analyst.*) *The sheep of Christ*:—These are known—I. BY HEARING. The most important of all the senses, and of scriptural emblems, is the ear. (Isa. lv.)

"Faith cometh by hearing." The sheep hear—1. Christ's personal voice. He still speaks in the Scriptures. Many do not recognize that voice, as a stranger would not recognize your child's voice in a letter; but every syllable becomes audible to you. The word of battle is to the soldier not the voice of the trumpeter, but the call of his general. 2. The voice of truth. No voice but Christ's is, because nothing else is permanent. 3. The voice of grace and of love. 4. The voice of power over the world, the flesh and the devil. Hence it imparts courage to the Christian soldier to go on conquering and to conquer. II. By personal appearance, as we are able to distinguish our friends and children. Christ knows His sheep. 1. In whatever condition of life, rich or poor, healthy or unhealthy, in sorrow or in joy. 2. Whatever company they may keep. 3. Whithersoever they go. 4. Whatsoever they do. The knowledge in this aspect of it is admonitory and encouraging. III. By following. They follow Christ's example—1. In obedience to His earthly parents. 2. In conformity to all the righteousness of religion. 3. In nonconformity to the world. (*H. Cooke, D.D.*) **They follow Me.**—Christ's flock often addressed by the seductive voice of strangers. They are promised the treasures, honours, and pleasures of the world. They are told that there are other and smoother ways of reaching heaven. But there is none but this: following Christ. I. In holiness. "Be ye holy for I am holy." II. In love. "By this shall all men know," &c. III. In self-denial. "If any man will come after Me," &c. IV. In meekness. "Let this mind be in you," &c. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Believers must not go before Christ*:—With my brother I was once climbing the Cima di Jazi, one of the mountains in the chain of Monta Rosa. When nearly at the top, we entered a dense fog. Presently our guides faced right about and grounded their axes on the frozen snowed slope. My brother, seeing the slope still beyond, and not knowing it was merely the cornice overhanging a precipice of several thousand feet, rushed onward. I shall never forget their cry of agonized warning. He stood for a moment on the summit, and then, the snow yielding, he began to fall through; one of the guides, at great risk, had rushed after him, and seizing him by the coat, drew him down to a place of safety. So Christ is our guide amid the mists and the difficult place of light. It is not ours to go before Him. Where He leads we may go, when He stops, we should stop. It is at our peril if we go a step beyond. (*Newman Hall.*) *The test of piety*:—A little girl was once asked what it was to be a Christian, and she wisely answered, "It is to do just what Jesus would do if He was a little girl and lived at our house." **I give unto them eternal life.**—*Final perseverance*:—This doctrine has been found in this passage. But we must carefully distinguish between the certainty of God's promises and His infinite power on the one hand, and the weakness and variableness of man's will on the other. If man falls at any stage in his spiritual life, it is not from want of Divine grace, nor from the overwhelming power of adversaries, but from his neglect to use that which he may or may not use. We cannot be protected against ourselves in spite of ourselves. He who ceases to hear and to follow is thereby shown to be no true believer (1 John ii. 19). The difficulty in this case is only one form of the difficulty involved in the relation of an infinite to a finite being. The sense of the Divine protection is at any moment sufficient to inspire confidence, but not to render effort unnecessary (comp. chap. vi. 37, 39, 40, 44. St. Paul combines the two thoughts, Phil. ii. 12, &c.). (*Bp. Westcott.*) *The security of believers*:—I. In what sense they are secure. 1. From the condemnation of the law. 2. From the power of temptation. 3. From the dominion of Satan. 4. From everlasting death. II. The grounds of this security. 1. Negatively. Not their own—(1) Righteousness. (2) Prudence. (3) Strength. (4) Fidelity. Nor—(5) The efficacy of the means of grace. (6) The security of the asylum, *i.e.*, the Church, to which they have betaken themselves. 2. Positively. (1) The covenant of redemption. (2) The work of Christ. (3) The indwelling of the Spirit. (4) The fidelity of God. III. Inferences. 1. Not that we may live in sin and yet be saved, because the security of believers is a security from sin. This is the great distinction between the doctrine of perseverance and Antinomianism. As it is a contradiction to say that God saves the lost, so it is to say that He preserves those who indulge in sin. 2. Not that we may neglect the means of grace. For the security promised is as much security from negligence as from every other evil. 3. This truth is adapted—(1) To fill the heart with abounding gratitude and love to God. (2) To produce peace and a filial spirit. (3) To engender alacrity in the service of God and in working out our salvation. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Life eternal*:—I. The past history of the people of God. 1. They had lost eternal

life. Every one fell in Adam. 2. They could not have obtained life except by its being given. God never works an unnecessary miracle. If the soul could save itself God would let it do what it could. 3. Eternal life is not secured by merit. That which is given is unmerited. Man merits nothing but death; life is God's free gift. 4. Those who now have it would have perished but for Christ. Sin made all men heirs of wrath. 5. God's people have many enemies who would pluck them out of His hand. They were once in the hand of the enemy. II. THEIR PRESENT STATE. Notice here—1. A gift received—"life." Distinguish between existence and life. Existence may be a curse. This life is—(1) Spiritual; as distinguished from the existence of a stone, and from vegetable, animal, and intellectual life. (2) Mysterious. You who have mental life cannot explain to a horse what it is, neither can one explain spiritual life to those who have it not. (3) Divine. We are made partakers of the Divine nature. (4) Heavenly in its nature, origin and end. (5) Energetic. It is the spring of all activity. (6) Eternal. (7) Free. 2. Preservation secured. (1) "They" shall never perish. Some of their notions, comforts, and experiences may, but they never shall. (2) They shall never "perish." The life in them shall not be starved, beaten, or driven out. (3) "Never." 3. A position guaranteed—in Christ's land. A place of—(1) Honour. We are the jewel He wears on His finger. (2) Love. "I have graven thee on the palms of my hands." (3) Power. Christ's hand encloses all His people. (4) Property. "The saints are in my hand." (5) Protection. (6) Use. III. THEIR OUTLOOK INTO THE FUTURE. Eternal life comprehends all the future. Your spiritual existence will flourish when empires decay, when the heart of this world shall grow cold, when the pulse of the sea shall cease to beat, and the sun's bright eye grow dim with age. When, like a moment's foam which melts into the wave that bears it the whole universe shall have gone, it shall be well with you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The eternallife of Christ's flock*:—1. The shepherd owns the flock. 2. The shepherd tends his flock. 3. As the effect of the shepherd's training and watchful care the sheep learn to know him. 4. The flock follow the shepherd wherever he may lead them. I. THE SHEEP IN THEIR RELATION TO THE SHEPHERD IMAGE THE MEMBERS OF THE SPIRITUAL FOLD IN THEIR RELATION TO JESUS CHRIST, THE SHEPHERD AND BISHOP OF THEIR SOULS. 1. The Good Shepherd is the proprietor of His spiritual flock. The earthly image cannot be pressed beyond proper limits. The sheep on the Judæan hills were beasts, and their shepherd was a man. Between Christ and His sheep there is no such gulf. Though He is the Creator and they are creatures yet He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are of one nature. In that nature He has vanquished their enemies and has become their Proprietor as well as their Brother. 2. The ownership of the Good Shepherd in the sheep is ever the same. Time, circumstances, death cannot break it. II. THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVES HIS SHEEP ETERNAL LIFE. He has given His life for them; He also gives it to them. Errors to be guarded against—1. That eternal life means everlasting existence in heaven. It is this but it is more, even the union and communion of love between God and man originated and perfected by Jesus Christ. 2. That it is something future. On the contrary Christ says explicitly that the believer hath it. It is a present possession and a continuous power. III. THEREFORE THE SHEEP OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD shall never perish. 1. There are at least two enemies of the flock. (1) The flesh, the wolf within the fold, the traitor within the citadel. (2) The spirit of this world. 2. The combined attacks of these foes are vain. For Christ—(1) protects, (2) guides, (3) feeds His sheep. Hence "Goodness and mercy follow them all the days of their life." (*E. V. Gerhart D.D.*) *Eternal life*:—By what aids can we conceive of it. Some men say, describe a circle; let the sun be the centre, and let the line of circumference pass through the most distant planet. Let this be as one cycle of existence, and let such cycles be innumerable: this is everlasting life. Traverse the woods and forests of our planet during the season of leaf-fall, count the fallen leaves, and repeat this through endless years: this is everlasting life. Visit the deserts and sea-shores of our globe, number the sands, and let each grain represent a century: this is everlasting life. Separate the waters of this globe into drops, the waters of all pools and lakes, of all brooks and rivers, of all oceans and seas; let each drop represent a century: this is everlasting life. But these illustrations represent duration only, continued existence might be a curse. The life which Jesus promises is pure life and holy, peaceful life and happy, true life and godly; life in a garden more paradisaical than that of Eden; life in a country better far than Canaan; life in a city more sacred than Jerusalem, more magnificent than Nineveh, Athens, or Rome; life in a kingdom to which the kingdoms of this

world yield no comparison; and life in a home as peaceful and as pure as the heart of God. (*S. Martin.*) *The Almighty hand*:—I have read of a father and son who worked in a deep mine, and one day when they were together in a basket in which the miners were drawn up from the pit to the surface, the son overbalanced himself and fell out of the basket; his father seized hold of part of his clothing and thus prevented his sudden fall. But, alas! this was only for a short time. Crying loudly for help, the father held on to his son's clothing as long as he was able, and then his hand failing in its power to bear up so heavy a burden, relaxed its hold, and his son fell and perished. Only the hand of Jesus is all-sufficient and almighty, and it never fails. (*R. Brewin.*) *The safety of the saints*:—A swallow having built its nest upon the tent of Charles V., the emperor generously commanded that the tent should not be taken down when the camp removed, but should remain until the young birds were ready to fly. Was there such gentleness in the heart of a soldier towards a poor bird which was not of his making, and shall the Lord deal hardly with his creatures when they venture to put their trust in Him! Be assured He hath a great love to those trembling souls that fly for shelter to His royal courts. He that buildeth his nest upon a Divine promise shall find it abide and remain until he shall fly away to the land where promises are lost in fulfilments. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The safety of the saints*:—Plutarch, in relating Alexander's wars, says, that when he came to besiege a certain people who dwelt upon a rock, they jeered him, and asked him "whether his soldiers had wings or not; unless your soldiers can fly in the air we fear you not." Such is the safety of God's people; he can set them upon a rock, so high that no ladder can be found long enough to scale their habitations, nor any artillery or engine strong enough to batter them down, so that unless their adversaries have more than eagle's wings to soar higher than God Himself, they cannot do them the least annoyance; their place of defence is the munition of rocks, safe enough from all dangers. *The least saints shall not perish*:—They that work in gold or silver let fall many a bit to the ground, yet they do not intend to lose it so, but sweep the shop, and keep the very sweepings safe, so that which they cannot at present discover the refiner brings to light. Thus, the world is God's workshop, many a dear child of God suffers and falls to the ground by banishment, imprisonment, sorrow, sickness, &c., but they must not be lost thus, God will search the very sweepings, and gather them out of the very trash, and preserve them. What though they be slightly set by here in this world, and lie amongst the pots, no better accounted of than the rubbish and refuse of the earth? God will find a time to make them up amongst the rest of His jewels. *Believers need not fear that they shall perish*:—A man crossed the Mississippi on the ice, and fearing it was too thin, began to crawl on his hands and knees in great terror; but when he gained the opposite shore, all worn out, another man drove past him gaily, sitting upon a sledge loaded with pig-iron. That is just the way most Christians go up to the heavenly Canaan, trembling at every step lest the promises shall break under their feet, when really they are secure enough for us to hold our heads and sing with confidence as we march to the better land. *The safety of the saints*:—Not long before he died James Janeway blessed God for the assurance of His love, and said he could now as easily die as shut his eyes, adding, "Here I am longing to be silent in the dust and to enjoy Christ in glory. It is not worth while to weep for me. Then, remembering how busy the devil had been about him, he thanked God for rebuking him. (*Memoir of J. Janeway.*) *The safety of the saints*:—"I want to talk to you about heaven," said a dying parent to a member of his family, "we may not be spared to each other long." His beloved daughter exclaimed, "Surely you do not think there is any danger." He replied, calmly, "Danger, my darling! Oh, do not use that word. There can be no danger to the Christian whatever may happen. All is right! All is well! God is love! All is well! Everlastingly well! Everlastingly well! (*John Stevenson.*) **My Father which gave them Me.**—If He was given them, then—I. HE IS THEIR ABSOLUTE PROPRIETOR. This is undeniable. All souls are His. II. IT MUST BE IN HARMONY WITH THEIR OWN FREE CONSENT. Souls cannot be given away as material objects can. They are essentially free, and the great Father would not outrage the nature of His offspring. III. IT IS NOT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO INVOLVE THE RENUNCIATION OF HIS CLAIM UPON THEM. When we give a thing away, we cease to have any right to it. God will never relinquish His right to the existence, love, reverence and service of souls. Indeed in this passage Christ tells us that they are still in His Father's hand. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *God an impregnable Refuge*:—The French

were very proud of the stronghold of Metz, and over one of the principal entrances to it was this inscription, deeply cut in the stone, "This fortress has been nine times besieged, but has never been taken." But when the Prussian army swept over the borders of France and laid seige to this far-famed place of defence, it was not long before those who had taken shelter within its walls found that their hiding-place was not a safe one, and soon the flag of the victorious Germans floated above its walls, and the French soldiers within it fell into the hands of their enemies. God is a strong refuge, and will never give up those who trust in Him. (*R. Brewin.*) *The safety of believers:*—Backed by the Almighty! As the little constable in the Bay State said to the fellow who threatened him, "If you shake me you shake the whole State of Massachussetts." It is a great thing to be not a forlorn little wheel that must be turned by hand, but one geared into the machinery of God's eternal laws of moral order. **I and My Father are One.**—*The Divinity of Christ:*—That Christ in such assertions claimed absolute Divinity is evident from the conduct of the Jews. In scarcely any other case did they seek to lay violent hands upon Him. When He exposed their sins they restrained their rage and waited for their revenge. But at such assertions as these their pent-up wrath burst forth in indignation at His presumption, or in violent action. Now, if they had been misunderstood Jesus would have explained them away; but instead of that He accepts the interpretation of His words and proceeds to argue from it, and, further, it was for standing by this interpretation that He died. We have here a claim to—I. UNITY OF NATURE. The mysterious thing is that He who made this claim was a man with whom the Jews had been long familiar. He had been in being before His human nature was formed (chap. viii. 58; xvii. 5). He had come forth from the Father to assume that human nature, and now clad in it He was conscious of no change in His Divine nature. This unity—1. Implies absolute equality with the Father (Phil. ii. 6). There is not one perfection to be found in the First person of the Godhead that does not exist undimmed in splendour in the Second. We are to conceive of Christ as possessing all the Father's self-sufficiency, eternity, omnipotence, holiness, &c., "All that the Father hath is Mine." 2. Is claimed by Christ through His Sonship. It is as the Son He always regards Himself, even when speaking most strongly of His equality. It is not a separate independent equality, but equality through union; therefore One with the Father because Son of the Father—possessing the Father's nature by virtue of Sonship. This relation is never lost sight of, and all His claims to Divinity are founded upon it. This shows that He is Son not merely through His incarnation, but eternally. If Son in human nature only, He cannot be in any special sense Son of the Father, still less "only begotten." 3. Preserves the distinction between the Father and the Son. Unity is not identity. One in all that is essential to the Godhead, but two distinct persons. When the words were uttered the distinction was evident: the Father was in heaven on the throne of Majesty; the Son was on earth in the form of a Servant. 4. Does not contradict the assertion, "My Father is greater than I" (chap. xiv. 28), because just before He had claimed unity with the Father (chap. xiv. 10, 11). It is simply a recognition of the filial relation. The Father's glory is undenied; the Son's is from the Father (chap. v. 26). In this sense only can the Father be greater, and this is consistent with perfect union and equality. 5. Is confessedly mysterious. Let us not then seek to break irreverently through and gaze; but reverently and joyfully accept the truth that we have a Saviour so qualified to save. II. UNITY OF PURPOSE. Between such a Father and such a Son there can be no collision—unity of nature must embrace unity of will. We should not need to dwell upon this, but for the perversion of the doctrine of the atonement, which has been represented as implying an unwillingness of God to pardon, which had to be propitiated by the sacrifice of Christ. The New Testament nowhere teaches this God-dishonouring tenet (chap. iii. 16). The purpose to save is represented as originating with the Father, and voluntarily accepted by the Son. In the execution of that purpose Jesus repeatedly testifies that He came to do His Father's will. The Son died, not because the Father was unwilling, but unable to save them otherwise. III. UNITY OF ACTION. (ver. 37, &c.). This so follows from the former part of the subject, that there is no need to enlarge upon it. The Bible abounds with illustrations of it—in Creation, Providence, and redemption. Conclusion: Jesus makes this unity the type of that which should exist between His people and Himself, and amongst ourselves (chap. xvii. 20-23). (*W. S. Dewstoe*). *The Divinity of Christ:*—The oneness of our Lord with the Father is demonstrated by the following line of argument. I. DIVINE

NAMES ARE GIVEN TO HIM. 1. God. This term is used sometimes in a secondary sense of Moses (Exod. vii. 1), and magistrates, &c. (Exod. xxii. 28; Psa. lxxxii. 1, 6), because of some imperfect resemblance they bear to God in some one particular. But it is in no secondary or figurative sense that Christ bears this name (Matt. i. 23; John i. 1; xx. 28; Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. i. 8; 2 Pet. i. 1); and as if to shut out this sense He is called "the Mighty God," "God over all," "The true God, "The great God." 2. Jehovah, the incommunicable name, significant of eternal, independent, and immutable existence (Isa. vi. 5 *cf.* John xii. 41; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Joel ii. 32 *cf.* Rom. x. 13; Isa. xi. 3 *cf.* Matt. iii. 3; Isa. viii. 13, 14 *cf.* 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8; Zech. xii. 1, 10 *cf.* John xix. 37). II. DIVINE PERFECTIONS ARE ASCRIBED TO HIM. 1. Eternal existence (Isa. ix. 6; Micah v. 2; John i. 2; Isa. xliv. 6 *cf.* Rev. i. 11; ii. 8; xxii. 13). 2. Omnipresence (Matt. xviii. 20; xxviii. 20; John iii. 13). 3. Omniscieuce (John ii. 24, 25; xxi. 17; Col. iii. 3; Rev. ii. 23 *cf.* 1 Kings viii. 39). 4. Omnipotence (Isa. ix. 6; Rev. i. 8; Phil. iii. 21). 5. Immutability (Heb. i. 10–12; xiii. 8). 6. Every attribute of the Father (John xvi. 15; Col. ii. 9). III. DIVINE WORKS ARE PERFORMED BY HIM. 1. Creation (John i. 3–10; Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2–10). 2. Providential government (Matt. xxviii. 18; Luke x. 22; John iii. 35; xvii. 2; Acts x. 36; Rom. xiv. 9; Eph. i. 22; Col. i. 17; Heb. i. 3; Rev. xvii. 14). 3. The forgiveness of sins (Matt. ix. 2–7; Mark ii. 7–10; Col. iii. 13). 4. The final dissolution and renewal of all things (Heb. i. 12; Phil. iii. 21; Rev. xxi. 5). 5. The resurrection and universal judgment (John v. 22, 27–29; Phil. iii. 20, 21; Matt. xxv. 31, 32; Acts x. 42; xvii. 31; Rom. xvi. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 1). IV. DIVINE WORSHIP IS PAID TO HIM. 1. This worship is recognized as the distinguishing peculiarity of New Testament saints (Acts ix. 14, 21; 1 Cor. i. 2; Rom. x. 12, 13). 2. This worship has been actually paid by inspired men (Luke xxiv. 51, 52; Acts i. 24; vii. 59, 60; 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9; 1 Thess. iii. 11, 12; 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17; 1 Tim. i. 2; Rev. i. 5). 3. Angels have joined in this worship (Heb. i. 6; Rev. v. 11, 12). 4. Every creature in the universe will offer it (Phil. ii. 9–11; Rev. v. 13, 14). V. DIVINE EQUALITY IS CLAIMED BY HIM. (John xiv. 9; xvi. 15; x. 30) This claim we must acknowlege, or accept the terrible alternative that He was destitute of the human excellencies of humility and truthfulness. VI. HIS NAME IS CONJOINED WITH THAT OF THE FATHER. 1. In the promises He made (John xiv. 21–23). 2. In the embassy of the apostles (Titus 1; Gal. i. 1). 3. In the designation of the Churches addressed (1 Cor, i. 2; Eph. i. 1.; Phil. i. 1; 1 and 2 Thess. i. 1). 4. In benedictions besought (1 Tim. i. 2; 1 Thess. iii. 11; 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17; 1 Cor. xiii. 14). 5. In the worship of heaven (Rev. v. 13; vii. 10). To associate the Creator with a creature in such a way would for ever destroy the infinite distinction between God and man. (*B. Field*). *The oneness of Christ with the Father*:—What kind of unity is that which the context obliges us to see in this solemn statement? Is it such a unity as that which our Lord desired for His followers in His intercessory prayer; a unity of spiritual communion, of reciprocal love, of common participation in an imparted heaven-sent nature (chap. xvii. 11, 22, 23)? Is it a unity of design and co-operation, such as that which, in varying degrees, is shared by all true workers with God (1 Cor. iii. 8)? How would either of these lower unities sustain the full sense of the context, which represents the hand of the Son as one with the hand, *i.e.*, with the love and power of the Father, securing to the souls of men an effectual preservation from eternal ruin? A unity like this must be a *dynamic* unity, as distinct from any mere moral or intellectual union, such as might exist between a creature and its God. Deny this dynamic unity, and you destroy the internal connection of the passage; admit it, and you admit, by necessary implication, a unity of Essence. The power of the Son, which shields the redeemed from the foes of their salvation, is the very power of the Father; and this identity of power is itself the outflow and manifestation of a oneness of nature. Not that at this height of contemplation the person of the Son, so distinctly manifested just now in the work of guarding His redeemed, melts away into any mere aspect or relation of the Divine Being in His dealing with His creatures. As St. Augustine observes, the "unum" saves us from the charabdis of Arianism; the "sumus" is our safeguard from the Scylla of Sabellius. The Son within the incommunicable unity of God is still Himself; He is not the Father but the Son. Yet this personal subsistence is in the mystery of the Divine life strictly compatible with unity of essence; the Father and the Son are one Thing. (*Canon Liddon*). *Christ's two natures*:—The picture produced in the stereopticon is fuller, rounder, and more natural than the same picture seen without the use of that instrument. But to produce the stereo-

scopic picture there must be two pictures blended into one by the use of the stereopticon, and both the eyes of the observer are brought into requisition at the same time, looking each through a separate lens. Thus Christ is only seen in His true and proper light when the record of His human nature and the statement of His divine are blended. It is a flat unfinished Christ with either left out. But it is as seen in the Word, with the moral and mental powers of our being both engaged in the consideration, and thus only, that we get the full and true result. (*Pulpit Treasury.*) *Christ entitled to Divine honours:*—The Emperor Theodosius being seduced from the truth by Arian teachers, Bishop Amphilocus, at Rome, took the following eccentric means of convincing him of his error. Theodosius had raised his son, Arcadius, to the dignity of Cæsar. Together in royal state they received the homage of their subjects. Amphilochus, on one of these occasions presented himself and bowed his knee before the emperor, but took no notice of his son. Theodosius, offended, exclaimed: "Know you not that I have made my son the partner of my throne?" The bishop thereupon turned on Arcadius, put his hands upon his head, and invoked a blessing upon him, and then turned to go away. Naturally dissatisfied with patronage in place of homage, Theodosius asked in angry tones if that was all the respect the bishop paid to an occupant of the throne, but the latter replied: "Sire, you are angry with me for not paying your son equal honour with yourself; what must God think of you for encouraging those who insult His equal Son in every part of your empire?" *The unity of God to be believed:*—Out of the harbour of Goodwin Sands the pilot cannot make forth, they say, unless he so steer his ship that he bring two steeples so even in his sight that they appear one. So it is here. (*J. Trapp.*) *The unity of God:*—"Sitting lately," says one, "in a public room at Brighton, where an infidel was haranguing the company upon the absurdities of the Christian religion, I could not but be pleased to see how easily his reasoning pride was put to shame. He quoted those passages 'I and My Father are one'; 'I in them and thou in Me'; and that there are three persons in one God. Finding his auditors not disposed to applaud his blasphemy, he turned to one gentleman, and said with an oath, 'Do you believe such nonsense?' The gentleman replied, "Tell me how that candle burns?' 'Why,' answered he, 'the tallow, the cotton, and the atmospheric air produce the light.' 'Then they make one light, do they not?' 'Yes.' 'Will you tell me *how* they are one in the other, and yet but one light?' 'No, I cannot.' 'But you believe it?' He could not say he did not. The company instantly made the application, by smiling at his folly; upon which the conversation was changed." (*Anecdotes on New Testament Texts.*)

Vers. 31–38. **Then the Jews took up stones again.**—*Religious intolerance* persecutes a man on account of—I. HIS RELIGIOUS OPINIONS. The Jews took up stones merely because Christ had proclaimed a doctrine which was in conflict with their opinions, prejudices, interests and pride. This intolerance has been rampant in every age. It cannot now inflict physical suffering, but it employs means more subtle and powerful to wound the supposed heretic. Such conduct is—1. Most absurd. Such are the constitutional differences in minds and educational processes that it is almost impossible for two persons to have exactly the same view of the same subject. The inevitable diversity is interesting and useful; it stimulates discussion and promotes thought. Were all to think alike how monotonous would be the social life of the world! 2. Most arrogant. There is no greater audacity than for an individual or a Church to attempt to bring all men's opinions to one theological standard. Who were Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley that men should be bound to accept their opinions? "Jesus I know, and Paul, &c." Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." II. HOWEVER EXCELLENT HIS LIFE MAY BE (ver. 32.) Numerous were the works of Christ, and all to bless men both in body and soul. "He went about doing good." This was not denied, but tacitly admitted, and yet though they knew that He was their greatest Benefactor, and that His character was one of exemplary excellence, because His doctrine clashed with their opinions they stoned Him. Good men here in England are stoned for their opinions, not with flint or granite, but with slander and social influences. Bigots of all sects throw stones at men, not because they are not good, but because they are not of their sect (ver. 33). We stone thee because Thou art not one of us. III. HOWEVER STRONG THE ARGUMENTS IN THEIR FAVOUR (vers. 34–36). Christ seems to say that even in the assumption that He was no more than man there was no blasphemy. Their law called magistrates "gods" (Psa. lxxxii. 6). And if they

allowed that, what blasphemy was there in Him who "was sanctified by the Father," "One with the Father," and who, as they were bound to acknowledge, performed works which those whom their law called "gods" never had accomplished and never could? If your Scriptures call men gods "unto whom the Word of God came," surely there can be no blasphemy in Me representing Myself as God, who am the "Word of God" itself. The argument is *a minori ad majus*. In what respect? 1. From those blameworthy judges and their lofty title to Christ. 2. From those who derived their dignity from the Mosaic institution to Him whom God hath sanctified. 3. From those to whom the Word of God did but come, to Him who was the Word of God. But His argument went for nothing, although it was so clear and conclusive. Conclusion: What an accursed thing this religious intolerance is! Absurd, arrogant, cruel, regardless of moral excellence, dead to argument, alive only to what it deems heresy. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The courage of Christ*:—Holy boldness honours the gospel. In the olden times, when Oriental despots had things pretty much their own way, they expected all ambassadors from the West to lay their mouths in the dust if permitted to appear before his Celestial Brightness, the Brother of the Sun and the Cousin of the Moon. Certain money-loving traders agreed to all this, and ate dust as readily as reptiles; but, when England sent her ambassadors abroad, the daring islanders stood bolt-upright. They were told that they could not be indulged with a vision of the Brother of the Sun and Cousin of the Moon, without going down on their hands and knees. "Very well," said the Englishmen, "we will dispense with the luxury; but tell his Celestial Splendour, that it is very likely that his Serenity will hear our cannon at his palace gates before long, and that their booming is not quite so harmless as the cooing of his Sublimity's doves." When it was seen that ambassadors of the British Crown were no cringing petitioners, our empire rose in the respect of Oriental nations. It must be just so with the cross of Christ. Our cowardice has subjected the gospel to contempt. Jesus was humble, and His servants must not be proud; but Jesus was never mean or cowardly, nor must His servants be. There was no braver man than Christ upon earth. **The Scripture cannot be broken.**—*The integrity of Scripture*:—I. THE GRAND PRINCIPLE ASSERTED. It is impossible to shut our eyes to the fact that a teaching is gaining ground whose fundamental principle is opposed to this, and which affirms that the Scripture can be broken. It is of the first importance that we should distinctly understand the amount of authority which is due to the Bible. The Romanists say that tradition is of co-ordinate authority with the Bible; the Rationalists that only part of the Bible is authoritative, and what portions are to be received as such is determined by the "verifying faculty." When Christ endorses, as He does in the text, the Old Testament, these philosophers affirm that He was liable to mistake, and so overthrew His prophetic office and nullify His mission, which was to "bear witness to the Truth." But turn from theory to fact, and we find that Christ's affirmation is proved. 1. From the history of the Jews, who from their first settlement as a nation down to the present moment show in all their vicissitudes that the Scripture cannot be broken. 2. From the fate of heathen nations. Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, and Sidon, &c., verify the predictions to the very letter. 3. The life of our Lord, every detail of which from Bethlehem and Calvary was detailed beforehand, and occurred "that it might be fulfilled." II. THE BASIS ON WHICH THE PRINCIPLE RESTS. 1. That man's word may be broken. Why is it that friends and relatives in the slightest business transaction have a legal and written form? (1) Because man is changeable. That which he honestly and determinately promises to-day he may see reasons to change to-morrow, or he may change from simple fickleness. (2) Man is sometimes unfaithful, and deliberately false to his engagements. (3) Man is often unable to fulfil his promises and obligations, however willing he may be. 2. That for contrary reasons God's word cannot be broken. (1) God is unchangeable. "His counsel shall stand." (2) God is faithful. "God is not a man that He should lie." (3) God is able. These points are well illustrated in the promise to Abraham. III. APPLICATION. 1. For comfort. (1) To the Church. In every age God's people have been depressed by the taunt, "Where is the promise of His coming?" But God takes time to fulfil His word. Be patient, it cannot be broken. (2) To the individual believer. He has delivered in six troubles and He will deliver in seven. Past promises fulfilled are assurances that His word cannot be broken. 2. For warning. Though God's threatenings be long delayed for merciful reasons they will assuredly be fulfilled. (*Canon Miller.*) *Christ's reverence for Scripture*:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY SCRIP-

TURE? The Old Testament as accepted by the Jews of our Lord's Day. 1. This fixes the canon of Scripture for Christians and excludes the apocrypha. 2. This stamps the Old Testament with a Divine authority, against which it is infidelity and blasphemy to protest. II. HOW DID CHRIST DEAL WITH SCRIPTURE? 1. He was zealous in fulfilling it. In looking at Christ as our example this is to be observed. Scripture declares what Christ would be and do and suffer, and all this He was and did and suffered "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." It tells us too what we must be and do and suffer, and in order to these we must follow Christ, and in the earnest eager spirit in which He saw that no jot or tittle of the word concerning Him was broken. 2. He submitted to it. The only man capable of judging for Himself always submitted His judgment to the written Word. (1) As the servant of God He came to do God's will; but that will was not God's secret will, but His will as declared in the Bible. (2) He submitted to that will without question, and with the utmost joyfulness. III. THE USE CHRIST MADE OF SCRIPTURE. 1. As a weapon against His enemies. To the devil in the wilderness He said, "It is written," and to the Sadducees about the Resurrection (Matt. xxii). 2. As His authority. When He drove the money changers from the Temple, His only warrant for doing so was "It is written." On the same grounds He defended His disciples for plucking corn on the Sabbath. 3. As the court of final appeal in different questions (Matt. xix). 4. As His inspiration for suffering (Luke xviii.). 5. As a consolation in trials. (*J. W. Reeve, M.A.*)

If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not.—*The works of Jesus the works of God:*—The works of God must necessarily have relation to the attributes of God, and in their nature must partake of His. Will the works of Jesus sustain this test? If so, then His claim to be one with the Father is made out. Note, then, that the works of Jesus were—I. WORKS OF MERCY AND LOVE, and this without exception; the seeming exceptions when fully examined are seen not to be really so. Consistently and continuously He went about doing good. All succeeding time has acknowledged the influence of heavenly love which eighteen hundred years ago was manifested. Charity has ever taken her lessons from it. He was merciful as His Father was merciful; and His mercy on the diseased bore witness then, as His mercy on the sinful bears witness now, that He and the Father are one. II. WORKS OF WISDOM. His contemporaries confessed as much—"Whence hath this Man this wisdom, &c." His works were performed at the right time, in the right way, on the right persons. He made no mistake in His diagnosis, in His prescription, in His application of His remedies, nor in the result. The cleverest men fail in one or other of these circumstances. It is the same now with His administration of His providence, and the pardoned sinner and the comforted saint alike are constrained to say, "Thou hast done all things well." Of whom can this be said but of Him who, being "the wisdom of God," could say, "I and the Father are one." III. WORKS OF POWER. Divine love, as exhibited on earth, can, in a measure, be imitated, and Divine wisdom as taught on earth, can, in a measure, be communicated and received. But "power belongeth unto God." This power was demonstrated by Christ. He was no Divine instrument as were the miracle-working prophets. There is a Divine independence and originality about all His operations. "*I* say unto thee arise." And the power that made men walk in apostolic days was the power of Jesus of Nazareth, and the power which now heals the decrepitude of sinful man is His. Conclusion: This testimony to the mutual onebeing of Father and Son (ver. 38) is—1. Sufficient. 2. Hence our responsibility. Without this evidence men are guiltless, for they are not unbelieving, but ignorant. But with this evidence before Him, for a man to refuse to believe in Christ's Deity, and to decline to submit to His claims, is morally fatal. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Indisputable evidence* shows—I. WHAT MEN MIGHT LOOK FOR IN THE WORKS OF GOD. 1. Wisdom. 2. Mercy. 3. Love. 4. Power. II. THAT THE WORKS OF JESUS WERE MARKED BY THESE CHARACTERISTICS. 1. Water made into wine. 2. The miracles of healing. 3. The resurrection of Lazarus. 4. His own resurrection. III. THAT NOT TO SEE THESE FEATURES IN THE WORKS OF JESUS IS TO BE BLINDED BY PREJUDICE. As in the case of the Jews. IV. THAT TO REJECT THE DIVINITY OF HIM WHICH DID SUCH WORKS IS THE HEIGHT OF FOLLY. We judge of the nature of a creature by its works. When we see a bird's nest we know that it was not made by a horse; when we see an ant-hill we know that no lion threw it up; as we contemplate a building or read a book we have evidence of the work of man. But what creature can give sight to the blind, life to the dead? &c. *The works of Christ:*—The term "works," as applied to the miracles of our Lord, is eminently significant; as though the wonderful were only the natural form of working for Him who is dwelt in by all

the fulness of God; He must, out of the necessity of His higher being, bring forth these works greater than man's. They are the periphery of the circle whereof He is the centre. The great miracle is the Incarnation; all else, so to speak, follows naturally and of course. It is no wonder that He whose name is "Wonderful" does works of wonder; the only wonder would be if He did them not. The sun in the heavens is itself a wonder: but it is not a wonder that, being what it is, it rays forth its influences of light and heat. These miracles are the fruit after its kind which this tree brings forth; and may be called the "works" of Christ, with no further addition or explanation. (*Archbishop Trench*). *The evidential value of Christ's works*:—Consider the general expression respecting our Lord's Person which arises upon a survey of our Lord's miracles. To a thoughtful humanitarian they present, taken as a whole, an embarrassing difficulty. In the case of "the miracles of power," Schenkel observes: "These are not cures which could have been effected by the influence of a striking sanctity acting on a simple faith. They are prodigies such as Omnipotence alone could achieve. The laws of nature are simply suspended. Jesus does not here merely exhibit the power of moral and mental superiority over common men; He upsets and goes beyond the rules and bounds of the order of the universe." The writer proceeds to argue that such miracles must be expelled from any life of Christ which "criticism" will condescend to accept. But the question arises how much is to be expelled? Is the Resurrection, *e.g.*? If so, then there is nothing left to argue about, for Christianity itself is gone (1 Cor. xv. 14, 18). And if this conclusion be objected to, we must reply that our Lord's credit and honour were entirely staked upon this issue (Matt. xii. 39, 40.) But the Resurrection was attested by evidence which must out-weigh everything except an *à priori* conviction of the impossibility of miracles, since it was attested by two hundred and fifty persons (1 Cor. xv. 6). As to *à priori* objections, St. Paul would have argued, as most Theists, and even Rousseau have argued, that they cannot be urged by any man who believed seriously in a living God at all. But on the other hand, if the Resurrection be admitted, it is puerile to object to the other miracles. As compared with them, that occurrence has all the force of an *à fortiori* argument, and are fitly complemental incidents of a history in which the Resurrection has made it plain that we are dealing with One in whose case an ordinary experience of the limits and conditions of human power are altogether at fault. But if the miracles of Jesus be admitted in the block, as they must be by a "rational" believer in the Resurrection, then they point to the Catholic belief, as distinct from any lower conceptions respecting the Person of Christ. They differ from those of prophets and apostles, in that, instead of being answers to prayer granted by a Higher Power, they manifestly flow forth from the majestic life resident in the Worker. And instead of presenting so many "difficulties" which have to be surmounted or set aside, they are in entire harmony with that representation of our Saviour's personal glory which is embodied in the Creeds. St. John accordingly calls them Christ's "works," meaning that they were just such acts as might be expected from Him, being such as He was. They are like the kind deeds of the wealthy, or the good advice of the wise; they are like that debt of charity which is due from the possessors of great endowments to suffering humanity—Christ as Man owed this tribute of mercy which His Godhead had made it possible for Him to pay to those whom (such was His love) He was not ashamed to call His brethren. (*Canon Liddon*).

Vers. 39–42. **Therefore they sought again to take Him.**—I. MORAL INCORRIGIBILITY. What was the result of Christ's appeal to His works and to their law? Of His noble life and strong logic? Were their prejudices broken down and their opposition overcome? No! here it is (ver. 39). Their opposition was intensified, and their determination to stone Him strengthened. There are, undoubtedly, men who have reached the stage of moral incorrigibility. Their opinions are fossilized, their habits confirmed, and their characters stereotyped. Christ taught this when He said, "Give not that which is holy to dogs," &c., and when He wept over Jerusalem. Examples lie thickly around us. There are men so canine in temper, so swinish in materialism, that to argue with them would be waste of labour, and expose to insult and persecution. With these the day of grace is over, retribution has already got them into its iron grasp. Two evils befel these men to which all such characters are liable. 1. Disappointment. They made all arrangements to stone Him, and when their plans were complete they looked for Him; but He had gone. And sooner or later the incorrigible sinner will discover that all his

calculations are false. He will have all his plans thwarted and his hopes blasted. 2. The loss of Christ. Christ had withdrawn. He was not afraid of them, but His time was not yet come. When the hour struck He would voluntarily fall into their hands; but meanwhile they had lost Him. The greatest calamity for a man or a community is the withdrawal of Christ, which must happen sooner or later to the incorrigible, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." When He withdraws from the soul, it is as if the sun withdrew from its orbit, and all the planets rush into black, fathomless chaos. II. POSTHUMOUS USEFULNESS (vers. 40–42). The ministry of a man who had been for some time in his grave prepared the people to receive Christ. 1. It was remembered. The ministry of Jesus recalled that of John. The ministry of faithful preachers will never be forgotten by their hearers. 2. It was useful. (1) It served to set off the superiority of Christ's ministry. "John did no miracle." His work was purely moral. (2) It served to confirm the Messiahship of Christ, "All things that John spake of this Man were true." Consequently, "many believed," and "there He abode." How long we are not told. How delightful must have been that unconstrained, free and secure intercourse! Conclusion: Faithful ministers may take courage that their ministry will operate for good when they are in their graves. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **And went away beyond Jordan.**—*A model ministry*:—I. The ministry of John was LOCAL. 1. There are special trials and temptations about a fixed and restricted sphere of service. The local minister is apt to feel that his work is monotonous and disappointing—there is little variety in it, little stimulation. He often frets like an eagle in a sack, and sighs to spread his wings. 2. Yet there need be no disappointment or disgust with a ministry in narrow bounds. A large, varied field of action appeals to the imagination, but faithful service in an obscure corner tells far and wide, deep and long. How often have we heard writers regret with our poet that so many brilliant flowers are born to blush unseen, "and waste their sweetness on the desert air?" But this is exactly what they do not do. The scientist corrects the poet, for he tells us how the date-trees of the Nile, the magnolias of the Susquehanna, the rhododendrons of the Himalayas, the myrtles of Cashmere, the aromatic forests of the Spice Islands, the blooms of untraversed prairies and woods, all contribute to vitalize the common air of our daily life. So men whose life is pure and useful in one place are sweetening the air of the whole world. "The Word of God is not bound." Local brother, be comforted. The tree is fixed, it cannot move however it may tug at its roots, but the fragrance is borne away on every breeze; the lamp is fixed, swaying to and fro as if vexed by the narrow bondage of its chains, but its beams shine afar into the darkness; the fountain flows in a narrow, obscure basin, and the living, sparkling waters seem to fret against the stones, but the stream at last fills distant valleys with fruit and beauty. Be faithful, and it will be found some day that the fixed star has been as useful as the wandering star. II. The ministry of John was MODEST. 1. "Did no miracle." He came in the power of Elijah, without the mantle of Elijah. People were disappointed. So now, we are disappointed in men if they do not work miracles—if they are not brilliant, surprising, extraordinary in one way or another. 2. "All things that John spake of this Man were true." He was a faithful witness to Christ. The glory of John was here; he witnessed to his Master, his miracle was in his message. So with us now. When Winstanley built the first Eddystone lighthouse, he built it firmly as he thought; and then proceeded to add as many ornamentations as if the building had been designed for a summer-house; it is said to have been quite a picturesque object, like a Chinese pagoda, with open galleries and fantastic projections. Now, many people would have greatly admired such a lighthouse, they dearly love a pagoda; they would have pronounced it lovely, surprising, a thing to visit on summer seas for a pic-nic. But, after all, the value of a lighthouse is in the light that it sends forth in the night of storm and darkness; and when Winstanley's lighthouse perished, it was felt that a pagoda was not the best form for a light-beacon on the deep. Many people to-day are running after miracles in the religious world, miracles of preachers, miracles of ceremonies, miracles of architecture, music, and method; they are anxious to turn the Church of Christ into a pagoda; but our grand duty is not to amuse, or astonish, or delight, we are to hold forth the Word of Life that souls may be saved from shipwreck, and severe simplicity best befits the Church of Christ as it does the beacon of the seas. III. The ministry of John was EFFECTIVE. Not immediately successful, but indirectly and ultimately so. No true work for Christ fails. It may be done silently, softly, and seem of little effect, but in the wide view and the long view it will be seen to avail

much. In Southport the other day, I noticed a monument which has been erected there, in one of the public streets, to the founder of the town. The inscription sets forth that this gentleman came to the place when it was only a sandy waste; he saw the possibilities of the situation, and built the first house, which was known as his "Folly." But, despite the ridicule, the place grew into the elegant town that it is to-day, with its many mansions, museums, galleries, gardens, temples. Such is the history of many a flourishing cause in our Church to-day The genesis of it was feeble indeed; it grew up an obscure mission station nursed by a local ministry, but it has grown into power, a centre of life and blessing. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) *A season of retirement:*—I. OLD SCENES REVISITED (ver. 40). Bethany, beyond Jordan, the scene—1. Of His baptism by the Forerunner. 2. Of His consecration by the Father through the voice of the Dove. 3. Of His showing unto Israel as the Lamb of God. 4. Of his first acquisition of adherents in Andrew, John, Peter, James, Philip and Nathanael. II. ACCUSTOMED LABOURS PURSUED (ver. 41). 1. With disinterested zeal. Though Christ needed rest, He could not resist the silent invitation of the people who flocked towards Him. 2. With unwearied diligence. He neglected no opportunities of doing His Father's work. 3. With practical beneficence. He performed miracles. III. FRESH TESTIMONIES GAINED (ver. 41). 1. That He was greater than John the Baptist. He did signs which John did not. 2. That John's witness concerning Him had been true (chap. v. 33–35). IV. NEW DISCIPLES SECURED (ver. 42). 1. Numerous—"many." 2. Intelligent—actuated by conviction. 3. True. They believed on Him as the Messiah. Lessons—1. Grateful remembrance of past experiences. 2. Diligent employment of present opportunities. 3. Hopeful expectation of future vindication. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *A cheering incident at Bethabara*:—1. Because our Saviour's reasoning was unanswerable, "therefore the Jews sought again to take Him." When men cannot answer holy arguments with fair reasonings they can give hard answers with stones. He who hates the truth soon hates its advocate. 2. When our Lord found that there was nothing to be done He went away. He knew when to speak and when to refrain. Opposition in one quarter is sometimes an intimation to labour elsewhere. But though our Lord left the obstinate He never ceased to do good. Many despair under similar circumstances. But the flight of Christ from men in one place may cause the flight of souls to Him in another. Though Jesus withdrew from the stones which filled the hands of the angry Jews, He went to the place where John had said, "God is able with these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." I. IT IS VERY PLEASANT TO KNOW THE PLACE WHERE MEN BELIEVED. Not that this is essential. A man may live and yet not know where he was born, although we may be glad to know our birthplace. And so the main question is, *Are* you born again? Still it is a help to know the place, and some of us know it to a yard. What was there particular about this place? It was the place—1. Where Divine ordinances had been observed. Where the Lord is obeyed we may hope to see Him revealed. In keeping His commandments there is great reward, although the outward ordinance of itself cannot secure a blessing. 2. Where faithful preaching concerning Jesus had been heard. (1) John preached the gospel of repentance, and where that is the case men will come to believe in Jesus. The plough must lead the way, and then it is good sowing. (2) He testified that Jesus was "the Lamb of God," &c. No wonder that men believed when the savour of such a ministry lingered in men's minds! What an encouragement to the faithful preacher; though dead, he will yet speak. 3. Where God had borne witness to His Son. The Holy Ghost is wont to go where He has gone before; and where the Father has borne witness to Christ once we may expect Him to do so again. 4. Where the first disciple had been won. To visit the place of their own spiritual birth would cause a renewal of their vows, and act as an encouragement to persevere in winning others. Where solid stones have been quarried, there remains more material which may yet be brought forth. 5. In what place cannot Jesus triumph? He needs no temple: nay, in its porch He finds cavillers, but yonder by the willows of the Jordan He finds a people that believe on Him. So in all times and now. II. IT IS INSTRUCTIVE TO NOTE THE TIME WHEN MEN ARE LED TO FAITH. Some cannot, and it is not essential, yet it is blessed to those who can. 1. It was after a time of obstinate opposition. The Saviour could make nothing of the cavilling Jews; but no sooner does He cross the river than many believe on Him. Opposition is no sign of defeat. When the devil roars it is because his kingdom is being shaken. 2. It was a time of calm, unbroken quietude. Those who came were prepared to hear thoughtfully. Some persons may be converted by those who

strive and cry to make their voice heard in the streets, but solemn consideration is the healthiest for gospel preaching. 3. It was a time of great desire for hearing "many." You cannot catch fish where there are none; but when they come swarming up to the net we may hope to take some of them. When men are as eager to enter the house of prayer as to go to a theatre, we may hope that God means to bless them. 4. It was a time of which nothing else need be said, but that many believed. The happiest days are when many believe; this is the most honourable record for a Church. III. IT IS CHEERING TO OBSERVE THE FACT ITSELF. 1. It was a great refreshment to the Saviour's heart. "There He abode." He seemed at home there. When the polished citizens rejected Him, when the wise Jews would not hear Him, the plain rustics of Peræa stood listening with delight. This was to be an oasis of comfort before the burning desert of the passion. 2. It was the fruit of John's word. Good work never dies. 3. It was more directly the result of our Lord's own presence. They first saw what He did, and compared it with what John had testified, and then drew the conclusion that all that John said was true. 4. The faith produced was—(1) Decided. They did not promise to try to believe, to think about it, &c.; they believed on Him there. (2) Prompt. Christ had preached without result for years to some others; but to these He spoke only for a short time, and they believed on Him. (3) Solid. They could give a reason for it. (4) Widespread "many." We should look for numerous conversions since Christ gave His life a ransom for many. (5) What Christ lived and died for, what we preach for, what the Bible was written for, what churches are built for. IV. IT IS MOST IMPORTANT THAT WE SHOULD HAVE A SECOND EDITION OF IT. 1. Many are here. 2. Christ is here. 3. The witness borne here is more abundant than that borne at Bethabara. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

CHAPTER XI.

Introduction:—The narrative of the raising of Lazarus is unique in its completeness. The essential circumstances of the fact in regard to persons, manner, results, are given with perfect distinctness. Four scenes are to be distinguished. 1. The prelude to the miracle (vers. 1–16). 2. The scene at Bethany (vers. 17–32). 3. The miracle (vers. 33–44). 4. The immediate issues of the miracle (vers. 45–57). In studying the history several points must be kept in view. I. The sign itself is the last of a series, which has evidently been formed (chap. xx. 30, &c.) with a view to the complete and harmonious exhibition of the Lord's work. The seven miracles (chaps. ii. 1; iv. 46; v. 1; vi. 5, 15; ix. 1; xii.) form a significant whole. And in this respect it is of interest to notice that the first and last are wrought in the circle of family life, and among believers to the strengthening of faith (chaps. ii. 11; xi. 15); and both are declared to be manifestations of "glory" (chaps. ii. 11; xi. 4, 40). So the natural relations of men become the occasions of the revelation of higher truth. II. The circumstances of the miracle ought to be minutely compared with those of the corresponding miracles recorded by the Synoptists (Mark v. 22, &c., and parallels; Luke vii. 11, &c.). The omission of the raising of Lazarus by the Synoptists is no more remarkable in principle than the omission of these raisings by St. John. In each case the selection of facts was determined by the purpose of the record. The miracles at Jerusalem were not included in the cycle of apostolic preaching which formed the basis of the Synoptic Gospels. III. Numerous minute touches mark the fulness of personal knowledge, or the impression of an eye-witness: *e.g.*, the relation of the family to Jesus (ver. 5); the delay of two days (ver. 6); the exact position of Bethany (ver. 18); the presence of Jews (ver. 19); the secret message (ver. 28); the title of "the Master" (ver. 28); the pause of Jesus (ver. 30); the following of the Jews (ver. 31), and their weeping (ver. 33); the prostration of Mary (ver. 32); the successive phases of our Lord's emotion (vers. 33, 35, 38); the appearance of Lazarus (ver. 44). IV. Not less remarkable than this definiteness of detail are the silence, the omissions in the narrative; *e.g.*, as to the return of the messenger (ver. 4); the message to Mary (ver. 27, &c.); the welcome of the restored brother (ver. 44). Note, too, the unexpected turns of expression; *e.g.*, "unto Judæa" (ver. 7), vers. 11, &c., 37. V. That, however, which is most impressive in the narrative, as a history, is its dramatic vividness; and this in different

respects. There is a clear individuality in the persons. Thomas stands out characteristically from the apostles. Martha and Mary, alike in their convictions, are distinguished in the manner of showing them. Then, again, there is a living revelation of character in the course of the narrative. Martha reflects the influence of the Lord's words. The Jews are tried and separated. And above all the Lord is seen throughout, absolutely one in His supreme freedom, perfectly human and perfectly Divine, so that it is felt that there is no want of harmony between His tears and His life-giving command. VI. Apart from the antecedent assumption that a miracle is impossible, and that the record of a miracle must, therefore, be explained away, it is not easy to see any ground for questioning the literal exactness of the history. No explanation of the origin of the narrative, on the supposition that it is unhistorical, has even a show of plausibility. Those who deny the fact are sooner or later brought to maintain either that the scene was an imposture, or that the record is a fiction. Both of these hypotheses involve a moral miracle. VII. No overwhelming influence is assigned to the miracle by the Evangelist. It is a "sign," a revelation of Divine glory, to those who believe, or who have sympathy with the truth. But others, apparently, without questioning the reality of the fact, simply find in it a call to more energetic opposition. The work arrests attention; and then it becomes a touchstone of character. In this respect it completely answers to the functions assigned to miracles in the New Testament. (*Bp. Westcott.*) *The connection between the two incidents*:—I can conceive of no diviner introduction to the story of the raising of Lazarus than chap. x. 40–42. It prepares us to understand that what we are about to hear of is not one of those signs which Jesus rebuked His countrymen as sinful and adulterous for desiring; not one of those wonders which draw men away from the invisible to the visible—from an object of faith to an object of sight; but just the reverse of this—a witness that what John spake of Jesus was true—a witness that in Him was life, and that this life always had been, was there and always would be, the Life as well as the Light of men. With what care the story is related so that it shall have this impression—how all those incidents contribute to it which would have been passed over by a reporter of miracles, nay, which would have been rejected by Him as commonplace, and therefore as interfering with His object. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *The importance of the miracle*:—I have been assured that Spinoza would say to his friends: If he could have convinced himself of the resurrection of Lazarus he would have dashed to pieces his entire (Pantheistic) system, and embraced without repugnance the common faith of Christians. (*Boyle.*) *The miracle and the parable*:—There is a remarkable analogy between this great miracle and one of our Lord's parables—that of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 20–25)—the only one that deals with the mysterious subject of the "intermediate state" from which the spirit of Lazarus was called to revivify his body at his resurrection. That is the only parable in which any of the persons introduced is mentioned by name. And in the parable and the miracle the name is the same. And when our Lord delivered that parable, He put into the mouth of Abraham the words—"If they hear not . . . *though one rose from the dead*." He thus delivered a prophecy. Though one rose from the dead—though a Lazarus be sent unto them, they will not be persuaded. No. And the fact was, that when Lazarus was raised, they, who would not hear Moses, sought "to kill Lazarus" (chap. xii. 10), and did kill Him who had recalled him to life. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*) *Lazarus and the other raisings from the dead*:—The Bible mentions eight persons raised from death and two translated to heaven without dying. 1. Son of widow. 2. Son of Shunamite. 3. Dead man cast into Elisha's grave. 4. Young man of Nain. 5. Daughter of Jairus. 6. Lazarus. 7. Tabitha. 8. Eutychus. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The omission of the narrative by the other evangelists*:—The raising of Lazarus is not mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This has stumbled many persons. Yet the omission of the story is not hard to explain. Some have said that Matthew, Mark, and Luke purposely confine themselves to miracles done in Galilee. Some have said that when they wrote their Gospels Lazarus was yet alive, and the mention of his name would have endangered his safety. Some have said that it was thought better for the soul of Lazarus not to draw attention to him and surround him with an unhealthy celebrity till after he had left the world. In each and all of these reasons there is some weight. But the best and simplest explanation probably is, that each evangelist was inspired to record what God saw to be best and most suitable. No one, I suppose, imagines that the evangelists record a tenth part of our Lord's miracles, or that there were not other dead persons raised to life, of whom we know nothing at all. "The dead are

raised up" was our Lord's own message, at an early period of His ministry, to John the Baptist (Matt. xi. 5). "If the works that Jesus did should be written every one," says John, "the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John xxi. 25). Let it suffice us to believe that each Evangelist was inspired to record exactly those events which were most likely to be profitable for the Church in studying his Gospel. Our Lord's ministry and sayings at Jerusalem were specially assigned to John. What wonder then that he was appointed to record the mighty miracle which took place within two miles of Jerusalem, and proved incontrovertibly the guilt of the Jerusalem Jews in not receiving Jesus as the Messiah. (*Bp. Ryle.*)

Vers. 1–6. **Now a certain man was sick named Lazarus of Bethany.**—*Lazarus* :—The English reader would at first sight hardly recognize the New Testament "Lazarus" as identical with the Old Testament "Eleazar." The two words are, however, the same. In the dialect of the Jerusalem Talmud, words that begin with an *aleph* (in English, say, an unaspirated initial vowel, like *a* or *e*) often drop that initial. Eleazar (AL'AZR) thus becomes L'azar (L'AZR); and so the name occurs, in point of fact, more than once in the Talmud. When the word "Lazar," again, was taken into the mouth of any person speaking Greek, he naturally added to it the Greek termination *os* (Latin, *us*), and so by gradual stages the Old Testament "Eleazar" became the New Testament "Lazarus." (*S. S. Times.*) *Bethany* :—From the plain of Esdraelon southward to Hebron, and nearly parallel to the Mediterranean coast-line, there extends a range of mountainous table-land, in some points reaching an elevation of three thousand feet, and varying in breadth from twenty to twenty-five miles. Toward the south of the range, like a diadem on the head of the mountains, is the city of Jerusalem. East of the city, just across the deep and narrow valley of Jehosaphat, which forms the bed of the storm-brook Kedron, rises the Mount of Olives. It is the most pleasant of all the mountains that are round about Jerusalem; in pilgrim language "the Mount of Blessing;" and travellers are frequently surprised by the beauty which still haunts it. It consists of a ridge a full mile long, curving gently eastward in its northern part, and rising into three rounded summits, of which the central and highest is more than twenty-six hundred feet above the level of the Mediterranean, and more than a hundred above the highest part of the neighbouring city. In a well-wooded and terraced ravine, high up on the eastern slope of the mount, screened from the summit by an intervening ridge, nestled the sweet village of Bethany. It is reached from Jerusalem (from which it is distant two short miles) by a rough bridle-path, winding over bare rock and loose stones. Its name, "the place of dates," seems to hint that it stood originally in the midst of palm-trees. These trees, emblems of strength and victory, once so numerous that, in the coins of the Roman conquerors, "Judea Capta" appears as a woman weeping under a palm, have now disappeared from this neighbourhood as from Palestine generally. The modern hamlet (*El-'Azariyeh*, or the village of Lazarus, the old name not being locally known) is inhabited by twenty or thirty thriftless Arab families. Into the walls of many of the houses large hewn stones are built, some of them bevelled, which have evidently belonged to more ancient edifices. Though itself squalid and poverty-stricken, the village is very beautifully situated, looking out from a cloud of fruit-trees, chiefly fig, almond, olive, and pomegranate, and with abundant pasturage around. It is sheltered from the cold north and west, and produces the earliest ripe fruit in the district. On the whole, it may claim to be regarded as one of the sweetest spots in Palestine, though greatly changed in the course of long ages of misrule from what it must have been when the land nourished a free and noble people; and to one who loves quiet beauty and peacefulness combined with a certain mystery, it commands one of the most striking landscapes in the southern part of the country. The house of Martha, that of Simon the leper, and the tomb of Lazarus, are still pointed out to visitors. The last is a deep vault, hewn out of the solid rock, in the very edge of the village. Dr. Robinson (followed by many) rejects the tradition which names this as the tomb; while others, relying on the notices in the Jerusalem Itinerary (A.D. 333), and by Eusebius and Jerome, are disposed to accept it, affirming that the vault has every characteristic of an ancient Jewish tomb both in form and construction, and accounting for its being so close upon the present village by the tendency of Jewish towns to advance, in the course of ages, toward spots reputed sacred. Most beautiful is the way in which Bethany is here named. In celestial geography, which counts places according to the saints who inhabit and beautify them, it was known to Jesus,

it is known for ever as the town of Martha and Mary and Lazarus. "This man was born there." (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *The family at Bethany; or, natural varieties in religion*:—1. The facts of this chapter are a sufficient answer to the objection that there is no recommendation of friendship in the Bible. The Incarnate One Master and Model of man was a friend. Needing all the succours of our nature He sought and found those which friendship yields. Hence among His apostles there was an inner circle of three, and one of these especially "loved"; and among His general followers there was the family of Bethany. 2. It is delightful to think of Jesus there. It often happens that great men have some home where they may unbend, and where they need not be other than men, with the certainty of being loved. To Bethany Jesus betook Himself after the labours of the day, and there He felt at home. 3. Who would not like to have seen Him there? Home is the best sanctuary of the heart. It is an evil sign when it ceases to attract. We could have missed many scenes in Christ's life rather than this. 4. There were three dwellers in that house. I do not know that He would or could have found, apart from female society, what He wanted and craved. The greatest men have always a feminine element, and have always pleasure in female fellowship. The household which Jesus loved presents religious varieties—I. IN ACTUAL EXISTENCE. We meet with them also in Luke x. 38–42 and John xii. 1–13. 1. These passages bring before us three types of character. Martha and Mary answering to Peter and John. On each occasion Martha is in action; while Mary is hearkening, sitting still, or pouring out her affection in unselfish homage. Of Lazarus's works and acts we know nothing; but as Jesus loved him, we cannot imagine that there was nothing in him, or that what was in him was not good; and therefore conclude that it was of a kind which does not seek publicity. So we have here specimens of the three great departments of our nature—thought, feeling and action. They all loved Jesus after a natural manner, and Jesus loved them all and gave their characteristics immortal honour. 2. Men are naturally different in soul as in flesh. Had not man sinned we have no reason to suppose it would have been otherwise. There is endless variety in nature. There is difference in the Church. As man is not made alike, so he is not remade alike. This is true also of our minor parts and separate powers; not only of thoughts, but kinds of thinking, so of emotions and actions. Why not then in religion? In the case before us, in their quiet common life the presence of Jesus brings out their characteristic qualities, and so it does in their great woe and social feast. II. AS MANIFESTED IN CONNECTION WITH CHRIST. 1. The practical in Martha honours Jesus. It has been a question whether the world is more indebted to men of action or of thought. Both are best, and both are necessary. Strong coupling chains are as needful as good engines, and "the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee." Martha was the hand. Christ needed refreshment and she prepared it. I fancy her the bustling housewife, of robust health and good spirits, clear, but not deep in mind; warm-hearted, but not profound in feeling; ready to help, but judging help by coarser tests; honestly wishful for Mary's help, but not displeased to have it known that she was doing alone; a woman who had no idea of letting the "grass grow under her feet," and could express a bit of her mind. There are people of this sort in the Church: men of practical genius and active habits. I have known some never cool but when in hot water, and who never slept but as a top—on the spin. Like Martha, they "serve" and feed the body. They are the sappers and miners of the army, the Levites of the congregation. Let none usurp their office, and let them not themselves neglect it. But Martha warns them against two dangers—(1) Of putting external activity in the place of the heart and essence of religion. (2) Of depreciating and interfering with the fitting and, it may be, better sphere of others. "One thing is needful," which in the fuss and flurry of such spirits is liable to be forgotten, and which alone can make their labour of any value. 2. Mary represents the quiet, tender, sentimental disciples. Gentle, retiring, with a deep power of emotion, she preferred listening to labouring, privacy to publicity, worship to work, while yet her heart could well up on occasions in acts of unwonted love that would never have entered into Mary's brains. There are Marys still, and they are not always feminine; as the Marthas are also often masculine; persons in whom the heart is the head. They are not good at general action, and are more remarkable for the fervour than the efficiency of their labours. As a rule their conception of ends is too high, and their conception of means too low. They work by impulse, and then they do more than others or nothing. They contribute to the gracefulness of religion, which requires "whatsoever things are lovely." They add taste to its

talents. Marthas supply the business-like prose, Marys the poetry of religion. Marthas rear the needful things in the garden of the Lord. Marys cultivate its flowers. Marthas "serve" the meals of the household of faith, Marys bring the costly spikenard. But this temperament is pre-eminently the temperament of devotion. The prayers of some speed the toil of others, returning like the rain, and blessing other scenes than those from which they rose. The Marthas little think, when in the full swing of their engagements, how much of their security and success is due to the prayers of the Marys. 3. Lazarus is a type of the more reflective, recipient, passive class. Had he been a man of much speech or action something of his as well as something about him would have been preserved. He had a heart open to Christ's influence, pondered His discourse and deeds, and enjoyed a feast of wisdom and love while many were only being fed. There are such men still; they know more than they say, and feel more than they know. They are too sensitive for the rude friction of common life, and their retiring ways prevent their being appreciated or understood. They on whom Christ works may honour Him as well as those by whom He works. III. How CHRIST TREATED THESE VARIETIES. 1. He recognized and honoured them. He sat at Martha's table; He proclaimed His pleasure in Mary's offering; and on Lazarus He wrought His most wondrous work. Special qualities, even when in excess, He did not reject. He looked at the motive. Whatever may be our native characteristics, love to Jesus will make them acceptable, and without that they will be an offence. 2. He guards them. When Martha would intrude on Mary's sphere, He forbad her. And when the apostles censured Mary's offering He reproved them. And still He looks with no kindly eye on those who are impatient of their brethren's different excellences. There is a bigotry of character as well as of creed. On the other hand, there is a tendency in some to despond when conscious of the want of qualities which others exhibit. But you are called to be yourselves and to cultivate your own gifts. If you try to imitate others, you will spoil yourselves and caricature them. 3. He controls them. He gently chastened Martha's anxious mind though He approved of Mary's apparently wasteful offering; as much as to say—"If there be any extravagance let it be in honouring Me." Martha's activity was in danger of becoming worldliness; but Mary might go a great length in her affection without equal peril of losing her soul. The world reserves its praise for the devotees of Mammon, and the world is wrong. (*A. J. Morris.*) *Family disharmonies*:—What can be more irksome than to hear two sisters continually setting each other right upon trifling points, and differing from each other in opinion for no apparent reason but from a habit of contradiction? This family fault should be watched against; for it is an annoyance, though but a petty one, never to be able to open your lips without being harrassed by such contradictions as, "Oh no! that happened on Tuesday, not Wednesday;" or if you remark that the clouds look threatening, to be asked in a tone of surprise, "Do you think it looks like rain? I am sure there is no appearance of such a thing." Narrate an incident, every small item is corrected; hazard an opinion, it is wondered at or contradicted; assert a fact, it is doubted or questioned; till at length you keep silence in despair. (*G. S. Bowes, B.A.*) **He whom Thou lovest is sick.**—*Christ's love the comfort in sickness*:—A faithful, pious preacher was once lying dangerously ill, and the members of his church were praying earnestly at his bedside that the Lord would raise him up and preserve him to them; in doing so, among other things, they made mention of his tender watchfulness in feeding the lambs of the flock, making use of the expression, "Lord, Thou knowest how he loves Thee." At this the sick man turned to them and said, "Ah, children, do not pray thus! when Mary and Martha sent to Jesus, their message was not—Lord, he who loveth Thee, but—Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick! It is not my imperfect love to Him which comforts me, but His perfect love to me." (*R. Besser, D.D.*) *The sisters' message and the Lord's response*:—The message contained no request. To a loving friend it was quite enough to announce the fact. Friends are not verbose in their descriptions. True prayer does not consist in much speaking, or fine long sentences. When a man's child falls into a pit it is enough to tell the father the simple fact in the shortest manner possible. How useful it is to have praying sisters! As for our Lord's reply, there was something very mysterious about it. He might of course have said plainly, "Lazarus will die, and then I will raise him again." Yet there is a wonderful likeness between the style of His message and many an unfulfilled prophecy. He said enough to excite hope, and encourage faith and patience and prayer, but not enough to make Mary and Martha leave off pray-

ing and seeking God. And is not this exactly what we should feel about many an unfulfilled prediction of things to come? Men complain that prophecies are not so literally fulfilled as to exclude doubt and uncertainty. But they forget that God wisely permits a degree of uncertainty in order to keep on watching and praying. It is just what He did with Martha and Mary here. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The appeal and the answer*:—I. THE COURSE THE SISTERS TOOK. 1. We need not doubt that they used all the means in their power for their brother's restoration. But they looked to the Great Physician. This is one of the marks of a believer, that while he uses means he does not depend upon them. 2. They sent to Jesus. Their message was—(1) Short. This should encourage our applications in sudden emergencies when long prayer cannot be offered. This is frequently the case with the sick and their attendants. It is not the length, but the faith and sincerity of the prayer that makes it effectual. The most powerful prayers have been the shortest. "God be merciful to me a sinner." "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." "What wilt Thou have me to do?" (2) Confident. They did not ask Him to come, or to heal their brother. "All we ask is '*Behold*'—his languid eye, faltering breath, sufferings; we have confidence in Thy love and wisdom, and leave the matter in Thy hands. (3) Humble. They send no panegyric, nor mention any quality that might interest Christ. All they remind Him of is His love. This is the only ground on which we can build our faith and shape our prayers. II. THE GRACIOUS ANSWER. This was sent for present support until a complete answer could be given; and is so worded as to put their faith and patience to a severe test. The way by which Christ leads His people is that of simple confidence in Him. He directs them not to judge Him by the outward appearances of His providence at a dark and unfavourable moment; but by His sure word of promise (Isa. l. 10). This answer may be viewed as the Lord's general answer to His people—"for the glory of God." The sorrow of the world has a different tendency (Rev. xvi. 10, 11). How mysterious must it have seemed after this message that their brother should die; but the mystery was afterwards unravelled, and the affliction, instead of terminating in death, was the occasion of giving physical and spiritual life. (*J. Haldane Stewart, M.A.*) *The test of discipleship*:—To whom do we go first in the time of our extremity? What is our resource in the day of trouble? Can we say with David, "From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee when my heart is overwhelmed?" or do we betake ourselves to some other helper? The answer to these questions will determine whether we are the friends of Jesus or not. Travelling once upon a railroad car, I had among my fellow-passengers a little laughing child who romped about and was at home with everybody, and while she was frolicking around it might have been difficult to tell to whom she belonged, she seemed so much the property of every one; but when the engine gave a loud, long shriek, and we went rattling into a dark tunnel, the little one made one bound and ran to nestle in a lady's lap. I knew then who was her mother! So in the day of prosperity it may be occasionally difficult to say whether a man is a Christian or not; but when, in time of trouble, he makes straight for Christ, we know then most surely whose he is and whom he serves. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The appeal to Christ's affection*:—The man who was healed at the pool of Bethesda, the blind man who was sent to wash in the pool of Siloam, were merely suffering Jews; the bread at Capernaum was given to 5,000 men gathered indiscriminately; the nobleman at Capernaum seems to have heard for the first time of Jesus; the guests at the marriage feast may have been His neighbours, or even His kinsmen, but we are not told that they were. This message is the first which directly appeals to the private affection of the Son of Man, which calls Him to help as a friend because He is a Friend. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *The friendship of Jesus*:—I. THE REALITY OF CHRIST'S FRIENDSHIP. That Jesus should have passed His life in solitude was impossible; how could it be that His Spirit, wrapped up within itself, should be alien to all human impulses. This friendship grew as do others. There may have been some restraint at the first interview, but this soon melted into respectful familiarity, and then into reciprocal union. Christ must have endeared Himself to many, but it did not always mature into friendship. To love another as a sinner, as a Jew, a townsman, a relative, was altogether different from His affection for this family. They were His friends. We may not be able to tell all the reasons of this friendship, but we doubt not it was founded on mutual esteem and likemindedness. II. THE FRIENDSHIP OF JESUS IS NOT AFFECTED BY VARIETIES OF INDIVIDUAL TEMPERAMENT. Such varieties as existed in these people have existed in all ages. Divine grace does not produce uniformity

in human nature. It left in their own prominence the valour of David, the genius of Isaiah, the pathos of Jeremiah, the fervour of John, the reasoning powers of Paul. So there are some believers in whom intellect predominates, in others emotion; others ruminate on what God has done for their soul, and others look forward with the full assurance of hope. I feed on doctrine says one; I live in practice responds another. The nature of one excites him to battle as a missionary, that of another fits him to endure as a martyr. Every gift is useful in its place. III. THE FRIENDSHIP OF JESUS DOES NOT EXEMPT ITS POSSESSORS FROM AFFLICTION. Jesus might easily have ordered it otherwise, and even the appeal to His friendship did not move Him. His religion does not free us from, but often leads us to, suffering. Its object is to train the mind, and it takes advantage of suffering to aid it in the process of tuition. The stars appear as the gloom falls; so the promises assume new lustre and power to the spirit lying under the shadow of suffering. I may rejoice in the attachment of my friend, though I have never put it to a severe trial; but if I am suddenly brought to ruin, and he as promptly rescues me at great sacrifice, I may safely say that I never knew the value of his friendship. It is therefore in the period of suffering that the soul is brought into nearer contact with God, and finds His grace sufficient. In this case the event proved that God's ways are higher than man's, and are not to be judged of in human weakness. They might have questioned His friendship during those four mysterious days, but afterwards they saw, as they could not have seen otherwise, how He loved them. IV. While the friendship of Jesus does not exempt from affliction IT DEEPENS INTO SYMPATHY WITH THOSE WHO ENDURE IT. Even during His absence Christ's soul was in Bethany. Once and again did He refer to it, and at last said Lazarus is dead. His mind thus brooded over the scene, and now, though His life was in peril, He did not hesitate to go. As He met Martha He could speak in a firm tone of assurance, but when He saw Mary weeping bitterly He was deeply moved. And as He took the first step to the tomb His emotion could no longer be restrained. There was no stoicism in His constitution. Try not to be above the Saviour. V. THE FRIENDSHIP OF JESUS IS NOT INTERRUPTED BY DEATH. What breaks up all other ties has no such effect on it. Friends walk arm in arm till they come to the tomb, and then one of them resumes his solitary path. Our Lord said of him who died, "He sleepeth," recognizing the friendship as still existing. The objects of Christ's affection, when taken out of the world, are brought into closer union with Himself. So it was with Enoch: to-day he "walked with God" on earth, to-morrow he walked with Him in heaven. (*J. Eadie, D.D.*) *Beloved and yet afflicted*:—The disciple whom Jesus loved is not backward to record that Jesus loved Lazarus too; there are no jealousies among those who are chosen by the well beloved. It is a happy thing when a whole family lives in the love of Jesus. They were a favoured trio, and yet as the serpent came into paradise, so did sorrow enter their quiet household. I. A FACT. "He whom Thou lovest is sick." The sisters were somewhat astonished; "behold," we love him and would make him well directly. Thou canst heal him with a word, why then is our loved one sick? We need not be astonished, for the sick one—1. Is only a man. The love of Jesus does not separate us from the common necessities and infirmities of life. The covenant of grace is not a charter of exemption from consumption or rheumatism. 2. Is under a peculiar discipline. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." If Job, David, Hezekiah must each one smart, who are we that we should be amazed if ill? 3. Is thereby benefited. How far this was so with Lazarus we know not, but many a disciple would have been of small use but for affliction. Strong men are apt to be harsh, imperious, and unsympathetic, and hence need to be put into the furnace and melted down. There are fruits in God's garden as well as in man's which never ripen till bruised. 4. Is a means of good to others. Throughout these nineteen centuries all believers have been getting good out of Lazarus's sickness. The Church and the world may derive immense advantage through the sorrows of good men; the careless may be awakened, the doubting convinced, the ungodly converted, the mourner comforted through their testimony. II. A REPORT OF THAT FACT. The sisters sent and told Jesus. Let us keep up a constant correspondence with Him about everything. 1. It is a great relief. He is a confidant who can never betray, a friend who will never refuse. 2. He is sure to support us. If you ask Him, "Why am I sick?" He may be pleased to show you why, or He will make you willing to be patient without knowing why. 3. He may give healing. It would not be wise to live by a supposed faith and cast off the physician, any more than to discharge the butcher and the tailor and expect

to be fed and clothed by faith; but this would be far better than forgetting the Lord altogether, and trusting to man only. Some are afraid to go to God about their health; and yet surely if the hairs outside our head are all numbered it is not more of a condescension for Him to relieve throbs inside. III. AN UNEXPECTED RESULT. No doubt the sisters looked to see Lazarus recover; but they were not gratified. This teaches us that Jesus may be informed of our trouble, and yet act as if indifferent. We must not expect recovery in every case, for if so nobody would die who had anybody to pray for him. Let us not forget that another prayer may be crossing ours. "Father, I will that they also," &c. But Jesus raised him, and will raise us. Some want to live till the Lord comes, and so escape death; but so far from having any preference such would miss one point of fellowship in not dying and rising like their Lord. All things are yours, death included. IV. A QUESTION. Does Jesus in a special sense love you? Many sick ones have no evidence of it because they do not love Him. If Jesus loves you and you are sick, let your friends, nurses, &c., see how you glorify God in your sickness. If you do not know this love, you lack the brightest star that can cheer the night of darkness. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The sickness of Lazarus*:—I. A PRIVILEGE OF INCOMPARABLE VALUE—to be loved by Christ. To be loved by some is no advantage; their love is carnal, selfish, fickle. But Christ's love is—1. Tender—so tender that in all our afflictions He is afflicted. We are as dear to Him as Himself. 2. Constant. It is not founded on any mistakes as to our characters; as to what we have been, are, shall be. Men sometimes withdraw their love because they discover imperfections never anticipated. 3. All-sufficient. It has at command ample resources to supply all our wants, ample power to sustain, guard, and bless us, and that always. II. A TRIAL STRIKINGLY SUGGESTIVE. Why did Christ permit His beloved friend to be sick? 1. Not because it was agreeable to Him. The sufferings of those whom we love are always painful to us. "He doth not afflict willingly." 2. Not because He could not have prevented it. He who hushed the storm and raised the dead had power to keep off disease. 3. It was for some useful end. The afflictions of Lazarus were a blessing to himself and his sisters. It strengthened this faith and intensified their joy. III. A FAITH OF REMARKABLE POWER. So assured were they of the genuineness and strength of His love that they felt that the mere statement of Lazarus's sickness was enough. True love requires no persuasion. The appeals to benevolence that stream from the press and pulpit imply a sad lack of faith in the philanthropy of the land. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The uses of affliction*:—God often lays the sum of His amazing providences in very dismal afflictions, as the limner first puts on the dusky colours on which he intends to draw the portraiture of some illustrious beauty. (*S. Charnock.*) *Affliction, not destruction*:—I feel that repeated afflictions come, not as lightning on the scathed tree, blasting it yet more and more, but as the strokes of the sculptor on the marble block, forming it into the image of beauty and loveliness. Let but the Divine presence be felt, and no lot is hard. Let me but see His hand, and no event is unwelcome. (*Power of Illustration.*) *Affliction makes fruitful*:—Every vessel of mercy must be scoured in order to brightness. And however trees in the wilderness may grow without cultivation, trees in the garden must be pruned to be made fruitful; and cornfields must be broken up, when barren heaths are left untouched. (*J. Arrowsmith.*) *The benefit of severe affliction*:—When Mr. Cecil was walking in the Botanical Gardens of Oxford, his attention was arrested by a fine pomegranate tree, cut almost through the stem near the root. On asking the gardener the reason of this, "Sir," said he, "this tree used to shoot so strong that it bore nothing but leaves; I was therefore obliged to cut it in this manner; and when it was almost cut through, then it began to bear plenty of fruit." The reply afforded this inquisitive student a general practical lesson, which was of considerable use to him in after life, when severely exercised by personal and domestic afflictions. Alas! in many cases, it is not enough that the useless branches of the tree be lopped off, but the stock itself must be cut—and cut nearly through—before it can become extensively fruitful. And sometimes the finer the tree, and the more luxuriant its growth, the deeper must be the incision. ((*J. A. James.*) *God's love to His own people in afflicting them*:—An invalid of twenty years, whose sufferings were extreme, was one night thinking of the reason of this long-continued affliction. Suddenly the room filled with light, and a beautiful form bent over her, saying, "Daughter of sorrow, art thou impatient?" "No; but I am full of pain and disease, and I see no end; nor can I see why I must suffer thus. I know that I am a sinner; but I hoped that Christ's sufferings, and not mine, would save me. Oh!

why does God deal thus with me?" "Come with me, daughter, and I will show thee." "But I cannot walk." "True, true! There, gently, gently!" He tenderly took her up in his arms, and carried her over land and water, till he set her down in a far-off city, and in the midst of a large workshop. The room was full of windows, and the workmen seemed to be near the light, and each with his own tools; and all seemed to be so intent upon their work, that they neither noticed the new-comers, nor spoke to one another. They seemed to have small, brown pebbles, which they were grinding and shaping and polishing. Her guide pointed her to one who seemed to be most earnestly at work. He had a half-polished pebble, which was now seen to be a diamond, in a pair of strong iron pincers. He seemed to grasp the little thing as if he would crush it, and to hold it on to the rough stone without mercy. The stone whirled, and the dust flew, and the jewel grew smaller and lighter. Ever and anon he would stop, hold it up to the light, and examine it carefully. "Workmen," said the sufferer, "will you please to tell me why you bear on, and grind the jewel so hard?" "I want to grind off every flaw and crack in it." "But don't you waste it?" "Yes; but what is left is worth so much the more. The fact is, this diamond, if it will bear the wheel long enough, is to occupy a very important place in the crown we are making up for our king. We take much more pains with such. We have to grind and polish them a great while; but, when they are done, they are very beautiful. The king was here yesterday, and was much pleased with our work, but wanted this jewel, in particular, should be ground and polished a great deal. So you see how hard I hold it down on this stone. And, see! there is not a crack nor a flaw in it! What a beauty it will be!" Gently the guide lifted up the poor sufferer, and again laid her down on her own bed of pain. "Daughter of sorrow, dost thou understand the vision?" "Oh, yes! but may I ask you one question?" "Certainly." "Were you sent to me to show me all this?" "Assuredly." "Oh! may I take to myself the consolation that I am a diamond, and am now in the hands of the strong man, who is polishing it for the crown of the Great King?" "Daughter of sorrow, thou mayest have that consolation; and every pang of suffering shall be like a flash of lightning in a dark night, revealing eternity to thee; and hereafter thou shalt 'run without weariness, and walk without faintness,' and sing with those who have 'come out of great tribulation.'" (*Dr. Todd.*) *Trouble in the family*:—Note—I. A HAPPY FAMILY. It consisted of a brother and his two sisters. They were happy because Jesus loved them. The essence of real happiness is not riches or any temporal distinction, but an interest in Christ's favour. His love is no empty sentiment. Whom Jesus loves He blesses. How rare are *families* whom Jesus loves! Individual believers are numerous, but "households" of faith are rare. Why? Is it because there is so little of family worship? II. A GRIEVOUS TRIAL WHICH BEFEL THEM. This is no new thing. The children of God have never been promised a smooth life of it (Acts xiv. 22; Rev. iii. 19; Heb. xii. 7, 8). The afflictions of believers are quite another thing from God's ordinary visitations. God visits them in mercy not in judgment, for the best purposes (Rom. v. 3–5). Better is it to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. xi. 25, 26; Job. v. 17, 18). III. THE REMARKABLE CONDUCT OF OUR LORD WHEN HE WAS TOLD OF IT. There was nothing strange in a friend of Christ's falling sick (1 Pet. iv. 12), but Christ's conduct was very strange. Doubtless they expected Him as soon as the distance would admit of it. How we hasten at such a summons, and the consciousness of being able to do something quickens our steps. Yet Jesus, who had all power as well as all love, tarried. How trying this delay to the afflicted sisters—how heart-breaking when all was over that Jesus was not there. But stranger still Christ delayed out of love. No love is so high as that which prefers the real interests of its object before his present comfort, which aims at permanent good rather than momentary satisfaction. We often seek to gratify another's feelings rather than to promote his good. But Christ is not a parent who gives His children everything they cry for, but everything that is best for them. He withholds a lesser mercy that He may impart a greater. Instead of raising Lazarus from a bed of sickness He raised him from the grave. Conclusion: The great lesson here is the duty of waiting patiently for the Lord in regard to answers to prayer—blessings—success. (*A. Roberts, M.A.*) *Affliction*:—I. THE SOURCE OF AFFLICTIONS. Not spontaneous (Job. v. 6, 7). God appoints (Psa. lxvi. 10, 11; Amos iii. 6). God regulates their degree (Isa. ix. 1; Jer. xlvi. 28). God determines their duration (Gen. xv. 13, 14; Isa. x. 25). Not willingly sent (Lam. iii. 33; Ezek. xxxiii. 11). Consequent on sin (Gen. iii. 16–19). II. AFFLICTIONS OF THE SAINTS. Saints must expect them

(John xvi. 33; Acts xiv. 22). Tempered with mercy (Psa. lxxviii. 38, 39; cvi. 43–46). Comparatively light (Rom. viii. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 17). Are but temporary (Psa. xxx. 5; 1 Pet. i. 6; v. 10). Are joyfully endured (Rom. v. 3–5; Jas. v. 11). Are shared with Christ (Rom. viii. 17; 1 Pet. iv. 13, 14). Express God's care (Heb. xii. 6, 7; Rev. iii. 19). God with afflicted saints (Psa. xlvi. 1, 5; Isa. xliii. 2). God preserves them (Psa. xxxiv. 19, 20; Rom. viii. 37). Christ with them (Matt. xxviii. 20; John xiv. 18). Christ delivers them (2 Tim. iv. 17; Heb. ii. 18). They secure a crown (Jas. i. 12; Rev. ii. 10). III. AFFLICTIONS OF THE WICKED. Sent as judgments (Job. xxi. 17; Jer. xxx. 15). Sent for impenitence (Prov. i. 30, 31; Amos iv. 6–12). Are multiplied (Deut. xxxi. 17; Psa. xxxii. 10). Come suddenly (Psa. lxxiii. 19; Prov. vi. 15; xxix. 1). Sometimes humble them (1 Kings xxi. 27). Sometimes harden them (Exod. ix. 34, 35; Neh. ix. 28, 29). Consummated in the judgment (Matt. xxv. 41; Luke xiii. 27, 28). (*S. S. Times.*) *The uses of sickness:*— 1. The message was not needed, nor was it immediately regarded. With the sisters nothing was more serious than their brother's sickness, and the little chamber was the centre of the world. The Saviour took other views of the matter. The sickness and death of Lazarus were not ends in themselves, but means to a far higher end. It was more important that they should learn patience than that Lazarus should not be sick; that they should be taught a quiet and strong faith than that He should not die; that God and Christ should be glorified. 2. The uses of an illness is not a common topic. Men may live and die without considering it. This lack of consideration is due to the fact that sickness is unwelcome; and to ask what is the use of it is like asking what is the use of a hindrance, indeed, of uselessness. This, however, is a disheartening conclusion; for think of the vast amount of sickness there is. There is not a house to which the struggle does not come sooner or later. It ought to, and must be incredible to any man who believes in a heavenly Father that so much of human emotion should flow away without benefit. It does not require inspiration to teach us that there must be some light in these dark facts. Shakespeare says, "Sweet are the uses of adversity, which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in its head"; and "There is a soul of good in things evil, if men would but observingly distil it out." The uses of sickness are—I. To INQUIRE AS TO ITS SOURCE. This is the first duty with respect to any derangement of machinery whether mechanical or vital. 1. It would be a serious mistake to trace it all to the Divine hand. This may save thought, but at the cost of reason and reverence. Many afflictions bear no Divine mark. (1) Some arise through indolence. The forces of life have not been kept in active flow—they have rested and rusted. There has been leisure for getting into moods and moodiness, and so the nerves become shaken and shattered. (2) Some arise through overwork whether bodily or mental. Here there are difficulties which each must settle for himself—how long he can put forth power with safety; how he can pull in when he loves his work; but still retribution stands darkly behind the overworker, and will strike some day. (3) The same result may be produced by the care which gnaws the fine strings of the soul first, and then the nerves of the body. II. To LEARN THAT WE ARE NO EXCEPTION TO THE FRAILTY OF THE RACE. "Men think all men mortal but themselves." Long continued health has its snares. It engenders a spirit of boasting which forgets God and sympathy with others. Humanity is like a mighty tree, always flourishing and always in decay. Never for two moments together has it the same leaves upon it; always there are some bursting their sheath, or in their tender green, or in their full glory, or slipping from their hold. All come down at length leaving behind as rich a foliage. Thus each leaf learns its frailty in turn. And so it is with man who "at his best estate is altogether vanity." He begins to receive strange hints of difference between what he is and what he was. The eyes will give intimation that they are not as clear as they were, and would be all the better for artificial help. As we walk hills seem more formidable than they were, limbs loose their nimbleness, and lungs and heart the freedom of their play. And the chariot of sickness seems to wheel a man nearer to the presence of death; and to familiarize him with the fact that for him as for others, there is no discharge in this warfare. Not to learn this is to leave the sick chamber with one of its most serious instructions unheeded. III. To TEACH US THAT WE ARE NOT INDISPENSABLE TO THE LIFE AND WORK OF THE WORLD. This, like our best lessons, is humiliating because true. It seems impossible at times to conceive of the world without some men being in it; they have been here so long, hold such office, and render such service. So many seem absolutely needful—the father, pastor, statesman, monarch. When sickness comes and

one is withdrawn, it is a salutary admonition to him and to the world that the world goes on, and will go on, when he is no more. IV. To HELP US TO REVISE OUR VIEWS OF LIFE. No one can live wisely without times of pause and quiet thought; and yet men are often too busy to think. They live either without plan, or their plan is narrow and poor, and it will never be altered to the grand dimensions it ought to assume, unless they are laid aside and compelled to think. 1. There is the sensualist with whom life has been a race after pleasure. Is there no room for him to revise his plan of life when appetite palls, and the sweetest drinks have lost their flavour? 2. May not the worldling ask, "What shall it profit a man," &c. (*E. Mellor, D.D.*) *The benefits of sickness*:—By it God designs—I. To DISCOVER TO US OUR TRUE CHARACTER—whether Christians or worldlings. Christ is like the crucible which tries the gold. II. To MAKE US KNOW GOD. 1. His authority and our dependence on Him. Christ tells us how easily He could crush us, and how all our safety depends on His power. 2. His faithfulness supporting His children and proving that His grace is sufficient for them. 3. His goodness in standing by us, giving us the consolations of His gospel, and letting down into our souls an anticipated heaven. III. To GIVE US TO FEEL THE PRECIOUSNESS OF JESUS. Even in health the Saviour is the chief among ten thousand, &c., but His value is especially felt when sickness has brought us to look into the eternal world. IV. To ENABLE US TO ESTIMATE THE INFINITE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION. Then the most obdurate is constrained to feel the difference between the righteous and the wicked. The believer then feels more than he ever did, his unspeakable obligations to God for having forgiven his sins and sealed by His Spirit. V. To SHOW US THE VANITIES OF THE WORLD. On the bed of sickness, honours, pleasures, riches, the pursuit of which occupies the lives of so many men, to the forgetfulness of their soul, heaven, God, lose their lustre and appear but phantoms. VI. To BENEFIT OUR NEIGHBOUR AND GLORIFY GOD. Thousands of examples might be adduced of persons who received their first impressions from the conduct of Christians in dangerous illnesses. (*H. Kollock, D.D.*) *Sickness a little death*:—Every sickness is a little death. I will be content to die oft, that I may die once well. (*Bishop Hall.*) *The benefit of sorrow*:—It is said that gardeners sometimes, when they would bring a rose to richer flowering, deprive it for a season of light and moisture. Silent and dark it stands, dropping one fading leaf after another, and seeming to go down patiently to death. But when every leaf is dropped, and the plant stands stripped to the uttermost, a new life is even then working in the buds, from which shall spring a tender foliage and a brighter wealth of flowers. So, often, in celestial gardening, every leaf of earthly joy must drop before a new and divine bloom visits the soul. (*Beecher Stowe.*) *Trial a small matter in comparison with the benefit it confers*:—In the ancient times a box on the ear given by a master to a slave meant liberty; little would the freedman care how hard was the blow. By a stroke from the sword the warrior was knighted by his monarch; small matter was it to the new made knight if the royal hand was heavy. When the Lord intends to lift His servants into a higher stage of spiritual life, He frequently sends them a severe trial. Be it so, who among us would wish to be deprived of the trials if they are the necessary attendants of spiritual advancement? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Trial and progress*:—One of the swiftest Transatlantic voyages made last summer by the *Etruria* was because she had a stormy wind abaft, chasing her from New York to Liverpool. But to those going in opposite direction the storm was a buffeting and a hindrance. It is a bad thing to have a storm ahead pushing us back; but if we are God's children and aiming toward heaven, the storms of life will only chase us the sooner into the harbour. I am so glad to believe that the monsoons, and typhoons, and mistrals, and sirroccos of land and sea are not unchained maniacs let loose upon the earth, but under Divine supervision. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *Afflictions prevent worse dangers*:—Two painters were employed to fresco the walls of a magnificent cathedral. Both stood on a rude scaffolding constructed for the purpose, some distance from the floor. One, so intent upon his work, forgetting where he was, stepped back slowly, surveying critically the work of his pencil, until he had neared the edge of the plank on which he stood. At this moment his companion, just perceiving his danger, seized a wet brush, flung it against the wall, spattering the picture with unsightly blotches of colouring. The painter flew forward, and turned upon his friend with fierce upbraidings, till made aware of the danger he had escaped; then, with tears of gratitute, he blessed the hand that saved him. Just so, sometimes we get so absorbed with the pictures of the world, unconscious of our peril, when God in mercy dashes out the beautiful images, and draws us, at the

time we are complaining of His dealings, into His outstretched arms of love. *Afflictions purifying:*—I remember, some years ago, when I was at Shields, I went into a glass-house; and, standing very attentive, I saw several masses of burning glass of various forms. The workman took a piece of glass and put it into one furnace, then he put it into a second, and then into a third. I said to him, "Why do you put it through so many fires?" He answered, "Oh, sir, the first was not hot enough, nor the second; therefore we put it into a third, and that will make it transparent." (*G. Whitefield.*) *Afflictions make us long for home:*—We had traversed the great Aletsch Glacier, and were very hungry when we reached the mountain tarn half-way between the Bel Alp and the hotel at the foot of the Æggischorn; there a peasant undertook to descend the mountain and bring us bread and milk. It was a very Marah to us when he brought us back milk too sour for us to drink, and bread black as a coal, too hard to bite, and sour as the curds. What then? Why, we longed the more eagerly to reach the hotel towards which we were travelling. Thus our disappointments on the road to heaven whet our appetites for the better country, and quicken the pace of our pilgrimage to the celestial city. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place.**—*Christ's special friends:*—The saints are all round about His throne, because He is alike near unto them for solace and tuition. Howbeit, as man, living among men, He was affected to some more than some, as to these three, and the beloved disciple. Plato commendeth his country at Athens, chiefly for this, that they were beloved of the gods. (*J. Trapp.*) *The everlasting Friend:*—"Doctor, what shall I do?" asked a patient of her medical adviser: "my friends are all out of town." "You may have one Friend," was the answer, "who is never out of the way, but ever near, and ever true. Jesus is the best friend for earth or heaven." Pres. Edwards, when he came to die,—his last words, after bidding his relations good-bye, were, "Now, where is Jesus, my never-failing Friend?" *Love of friendship:*—The English word "loved" is ambiguous; it may apply to all kinds of love—the love of friendship, for instance, or the love of man and woman. There is not the same ambiguity in Greek. The word used here is one (*agapaō*) which conveys delicately the meaning that the love of Jesus for Martha and her sister was not the love of man for woman, but the love of friend for friend. The ambiguity of the English word makes this explanation necessary. (*S. S. Times.*) *The delays of Jesus:*—We know the value of time to a sick man (we say) when the disease is growing and the vital energies are failing. "Too late," the physician tells you: "if you had called me just two days ago, I might have done something; but now the case is past my skill." But Jesus (and His heart was love itself) "abode two days still in the same place where He was." The abiding on this occasion reminds us of that which took place when He was on the way to the house of Jairus, whose little daughter lay a-dying. Human love, impatient of delay, would have urged Him to make haste; yet He tarries, during the last precious moments, over the case of the woman who had touched the hem of His garment and been healed of her issue of blood. It is a most noticeable feature of all His works that they were done without hurry; with the calmness of one who stays on God; with the calmness of conscious omnipotence that can afford to wait; with the calmness of strong-hearted love that will not forego its mighty purpose of blessing by taking premature action. In this case the delay was in His plan of lovingkindness, and essential, as we shall see by and by, to its full development. It was not merely that He knew what He would do, how He would "take off their sackcloth, and gird them with gladness;" but the delay, strange and painful as it was, and inexplicable to the sisters, formed part of the preparation He was making to give them a blessing according to His own heart, who cares more for our being rooted in God than for our present happiness. He was letting them cry out of the depths, that they might afterward cry, "Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption." (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *The delays of love:*—John is always particular about his use of "therefore," and points out many a subtle and beautiful connection of cause and effect by it. But none of them is more significant as to the ways of Providence than this. How these sisters must have looked down the rocky road during those four weary days! How strange to the disciples that He made no sign of movement! Perhaps John's care in pointing out that His love was the reason for His quiescence may reflect a remembrance of his doubts during this period. I. CHRIST'S DELAYS ARE THE DELAYS OF LOVE. We have all had experience of desires for the removal of sorrows, or for the fulfilment

of wishes which we believed to be in accordance with His will, and no answer has come. It is part of the method of Providence that hope in these respects should be deferred. And instead of stumbling at the mystery, would it not be wiser to lay hold of this "therefore," and by it get a glimpse into the very heart of the Divine motives? 1. If we could get that conviction into our hearts, how quietly we should go about our work! How encouraging that the only reason which actuates God in the choice of times is our good. 2. Sorrow is prolonged for the same reason that it is sent. Time is often an element in its working its right effect. If the weight is lifted the elastic substance beneath springs up again. As soon as the wind passes over the cornfield the bowing ears raise themselves. You have to steep foul things in water for a good while before the stains are cleansed. Therefore, the same love which sends must protract the discipline. 3. The grand object and highest blessing is that our wills should be bent until they coincide with God's, and that takes time. The shipwright knows that to mould a bit of timber into the right form is but the work of a day. A will may be broken at a blow, but it will take a while to bend it. God's love in Jesus can give us nothing better than the opportunity of saying, "Not my will, but Thine be done." II. THIS DELAYED HELP COMES AT THE RIGHT TIME. Heaven's clock is different from ours. In one day there are twelve hours; in God's a thousand years. What seems long to us is to Him "a little while." The longest protraction of the fulfilment of a desire will seem but as a winking of an eye when we estimate duration as He estimates it. The ephemeral insect has a still minuter scale than ours, but we should not think of regulating our measure of long and short by it. God works leisurely because He has eternity to work in. But His answer is always punctual though delayed. Peter is in prison. The Church keeps praying for him day after day. No answer. The last night comes, and as the veil of darkness is thinning, the angel came. Mark the leisureliness of the whole subsequent procedure. God never comes too soon or too late. Take again the case of Sennacherib's army. III. THE BEST HELP IS NOT DELAYED. The preceding principle applies only to the less important half of our prayers, and Christ's answers. In regard to spiritual blessings the law is not "He abode still two days," but "Before they call I will answer." The only reason why people do not get the blessings of the Christian life lies in themselves. "Ye have not because ye ask not, or ask amiss, or having asked you go away not looking to see whether the blessing is coming or not." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The apparent neglect of self-denying love.* John is the only evangelist who speaks of the friendship between Christ and this family, who gives us in fact the picture of Christ in social life, Christ unbending, Christ in the intimacy, the freedom of tender, personal affection, Christ as a friend; just as He only gives the social miracle at Cana. The apostle of love, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," he only gives us this aspect of Christ's nature and history. How natural and beautiful! Note—I. THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING. Evil in connection with love in one who could remove it. Whatever may be said to lessen this mystery the facts are so. There was no doubt about the malady of the man, none about the mercifulness of the Master. And so we say still. Christianity is not responsible for the difficulty, for as Sir W. Hamilton observes, "No difficulty emerges in theology which had not previously emerged in philosophy." Looked at alone the facts are not consistent but opposed. A God of love and a world of woe regarded as bare facts are a moral contradiction; and no wonder if through the veil of tears we cannot always see His goodness. Pain is evil in itself, and suggests evil. The consciousness of sin interprets it as the token of the Father's frown; and the Bible teaches that suffering came by sin; but it also says, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," and makes suffering the necessary evidence of love and the choicest instrument of profit. II. THE RESOURCE OF SORROW. 1. They sent to tell Jesus. It was natural even if they thought only of telling Him. True love will always tell what befalls it from natural dictate, because it likes to tell it, and because reciprocal affection has a right to know it. When John was killed "the disciples went and told Jesus," and so should we, whenever our hearts are full, even if nothing come of it. Our words are modes of receiving as well as communicating. God hears best our prayers when we can hear them too; we pray best for ourselves aloud. 2. They merely informed Jesus. They must have meant and expected more. Both sisters exclaimed, "Lord, if Thou hadst," &c. Was it not then to prevent his dying that Christ was told. But they did not know He knew. We do. Our prayers are not to inform God; He wants to know *our prayers*—the expression of our feelings, not the instructions of our wisdom. 3. They did not ask the boon they expected. Was it modesty or faith? We cannot tell;

but the more we approach to this mode of prayer the better, at least, as to things of a temporal kind. The more we leave them to God, and remember that we are to "ask according to His will," and that only spiritual blessings, are blessings always, the better. Many a parent has prayed the life of a child, whom afterwards he had wished had found an infant's tomb. Many a merchant has craved the success of a venture, whose success has been the beginning of soul-destroying prosperity. But there is no danger or excess when we ask for salvation and holiness. 4. Note the way in which they said what they did say. They do not mention themselves, nor Lazarus's love for Jesus, but Jesus' love to him. They might have put it as the afflicted mother did—"Have mercy upon *me*," or, "Him we love is sick," or, "He who loveth Thee." They thought Christ's love was the best argument, and as there was no need to mention his name, verily it was. We always prevail with God when we make Him our plea, "for Thy name's sake." III. THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE. Why did He not hasten to Bethany. Even if He did not chose to prevent Lazarus dying, He might have soothed him and his sisters. He did not go because He wished him to die, and intimates (ver. 15) that if He were at Bethany He could not let him die. He delayed because He meant to raise him. Herein is a picture of Providence. 1. The transformation of evil into good. 2. The material made instrument of the spiritual. 3. Fellowship. One sickening and dying for the health, joy, and higher life of many. Conclusion: We have talked of Christ's love and man's sorrow. Here only can the two be found together. There are two states before us, one, in which there will be sorrow without love, and another in which there will be love without sorrow. Suffering without Christ—this is hell. Love with no trouble or death—the love of Christ ever present, filling the heart with joy unspeakable—that is heaven. (*A. J. Morris.*)

Vers. 9, 10. **Are there not twelve hours in the day?**—What does this sentence mean here, following vers. 7, 8? Why was it introduced? I do not know that we who are living easy and comfortable lives can quite solve that question. But many a patriot and confessor who has been concealing himself from the anger of those whom he wished to bless has learned its meaning and felt its support. If he had tried to rush forth into danger, merely in obedience to some instinct or passion of his own, he was walking in the night and was sure to stumble. If he heard a voice in his conscience bidding him go and do some work for God—go and aid some suffering friend—he would be walking in a track of light; it signified not what enemies might be awaiting him, what stones might be cast at him, he could move on fearlessly and safely. The sun was in the heavens—the stones would miss till his hour was come. If it was come, the sooner they struck the better. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *Twelve hours in the day*:—I. THE PREDESTINATION OF LIFE. God has marked out beforehand the length of the life. This was true of the life of Christ. He was in daylight till the twelfth hour. He could not die. His time was not yet come. It is true of us. God knows exactly the length of our "day," and therefore of our "hour." The day shall run its course, whether the season be winter or summer, whether the hour be thirty minutes or sixty. This is a call to confidence. Be not afraid to go at the summons of duty, in spite of snare, terror, accident or infection. The day will have its twelve hours. II. THE COMPLETENESS OF LIFE. We speak of a child or young man's life as prematurely closed. Isaiah speaks of the longevity of the time when a child shall die hundred years old. Certainly there have been children whose little life has been well completed—their innocence and death testifying powerfully for Christ. Their day has had its twelve hours, though the constituent hour was less than a year. We must cast away the common measurement of time. Christ's life was a short one, and how large a part was spent in preparation? No time is less wasted than that given to preparation. Christ's three years of speech had in them the whole virtue, for the world, of two eternities. Christ's thirty years of listening were not the prelude only, but the condition of the three. Each life, the shortest not least, is complete. Man's work depends not on his longevity. Many a young man sleeping in the churchyard sends forth the fragrance of a perpetual sanctity. Use well your time, longer or shorter, and the hours shall be twelve, and the component hour shall have its constituent moments sure. III. THE UNITY OF LIFE. We would fain divorce hour from hour, and never recognize their bearing upon each other and the day. And it is true that repentance severs one part of the day from another, and make old age—and therefore eternity—diverse from the boyhood. It is also true that a Christian does well to take his years, months, days, one by one and to live each as if it were the

only one. Nevertheless, we cannot disguise the unity of this being. We may wish we had not done that wicked thing, fallen into that evil habit, but it is there: we cannot cut off the entail. God sees the day as one: and when He writes an epitaph He does so in one of two lines. "He did that which was good." "He did that which was evil"—the identification is complete, the character one. IV. THE DISTRIBUTION OF LIFE. God sees it in its unity. He bids us see it in its manifoldness; in its variety of opportunity and capability of good. Where is the moment which might not contribute something? Economize. Give up some fragment to God. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The twelve hours of the day; or, lifetime and life's duty in their indissoluble unity*:—I. THE CERTAINTY OF LIFE WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF DUTY. II. THE SACREDNESS OF DUTY WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF LIFE. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Life the golden opportunity*:—I. THE WISDOM OF KNOWING OUR OPPORTUNITY. This chiefly depends on—1. Our walking. 2. Our working while it is light. II. THE DANGER OF NEGLECTING IT—1. For vain amusements. 2. In the eager pursuit of trifles. (*R. Cecil, M.A.*) *God takes care of His workers*:—The Rev. T. Charles had a remarkable escape in one of his journeys to Liverpool. His saddle-bag was by mistake put into a different boat from that in which he intended to go. This made it necessary for him to change his boat, even after he had taken his seat in it. The boat in which he meant to go went to the bottom, and all in it were drowned. Thus did God in a wonderful way preserve His servant—"immortal till his work was done." God had a great work for this His servant, and He supported and preserved him till it was completed. *The providential care of life*:—When I was stationed in Swansea, in the year 1836, I was appointed delegate to the district meeting held at St. Ives, Cornwall. One Captain Gribble offered me a passage in his vessel. I accepted the offer, and said, "When are you going out?" He replied, "We have got our cargo, and shall go to-morrow if the wind is fair." I went to the dock on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday; the wind was still against him. He then advised me to take the packet to Bristol, as he said it was quite uncertain when he should be able to go to sea. I took the packet on the Thursday morning. We had a very rough passage; through mercy we arrived safe in Bristol next morning. I arrived at Hayle between one and two o'clock on Sunday morning. I then walked to St. Ives, a distance of five miles. I went to Mr. Driffield's. When he saw me he said, "Is Joseph yet alive?" I answered, "Yes." He further said, "We were informed you were coming with a sailing vessel, and it appears she is lost, for some of the wreck is come on shore. We have gone through the stationing and left you without a station." I was given to understand that on the morning I left for Bristol the vessel went out. The wind was fair, but after being a few hours at sea all went to the bottom, captain and crew. What a providence it appears that the vessel could not go out until I was gone! (*J. Hibbs.*) *The contemplated journey*:—I. OPPOSED BY THE DISCIPLES AS—1. Dangerous (ver. 8). 2. Unnecessary (vers. 12, 13). Hence—3. Imprudent, if not also—4. Wrong. II. JUSTIFIED BY JESUS. As—1. Imperative, being undertaken at the call of His Father. 2. Safe, since He could not stumble in the path of duty. 3. Merciful, inasmuch as He went to comfort the sisters and raise Lazarus. 4. Profitable, even for those who were so strongly against it. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Light and loyality*:—The disciples were amazed when Jesus proposed to go to Bethany, and remonstrated with Him. Christ takes this opportunity of explaining the great principle on which He worked. "I walk in God's light which shines upon My path during the time He has fixed for My ministry. Wherever that light shines, I go, regardless of everything but it. Do you the same, My disciples. Your path of duty will be clear. Without that light you will be as men walking in the dark and meeting disaster." We are thus led up to the question of the simplicity of duty. Somehow duty has come to be to many a complicated matter. That it presents problems every one of us knows, but does the problem lie in the duty or in us? Do we not complicate the problem by adding factors of our own. The oculist says that there is a blind spot in every eye: possibly when we think duty obscure we have brought the duty into line with the blind spot. As a matter of precept, duty being a thing of universal obligation must be simple. To make it a matter of subtle casuistry or painful research would limit it. And men stumble none the less because of this simplicity. Christ does not put the blame of stumbling on the law or on the complication of duty. It is not the geological structure of the stone that makes men stumble, but darkness or blindness. And so morally. Our Lord asserts elsewhere that "the lamp of the body is the eye: When thine eye is single thy whole body is full of light," &c. When a man sees two trees when there is only one, or prismatic colours in a house that is

white, we do not blame the tree &c., but the man's vision. A sound moral vision recognizes duty under every shape. Hence the truth of our text is that the recognition of duty, and the practical solution of its problems, lie in the principle of loyalty to Christ. A Divinely enlightened conscience and an obedient will, not only push, but lead. See this illustrated here. Going to Bethany involved a question of duty for Christ. To one who had no thought but to do the Father's will, the case was simple. But the disciples, in their natural timidity, put another element into the question, which complicated it—personal safety. If Jesus entertained the suggestion, He would have been diverted from the plain duty. A new question would have been raised which God had not raised. God's commission said nothing about danger—only "Go." If He meant to do right the decision presented no difficulty; if He meant to save Himself, He would have walked in darkness. Is not singleness of purpose an element of all heroism? Was there ever a great general whose thought was divided between victory and personal safety? The men who have moved society have seen nothing but the end to be won. When a physician enters on his profession, he does so with the knowledge that he must ignore contagion. That makes his duty very simple—to relieve disease wherever he finds it. The moment he begins to think about exposure to fever, &c., his usefulness is over. Luther at Worms had a terrible danger to face, but a very easy question to solve; but his inability to do anything but the one right thing ("I can do no otherwise") carried the Reformation, and this singleness is the very essence of Christianity. Its first law is, treat self, as though it were not "Follow Me." It is not always easy to follow Christ; but the way at least is plain. A greater difficulty arises when the question becomes one of compromising between Christ and self. The only way in which self can be adjusted to the Cross is by being nailed to it. Duty is a fixed fact. It does not adjust itself to us. There is a nebulous mass in the depths of space. The problem before the astronomer may be difficult to work out, but its nature is simple. He is to resolve that mist into its component stars. If he is bent on bringing the facts discovered by his telescope into harmony with some theory of his own, he complicates his task at once: or let the glass be cracked or the mirror dirty, and his observation only results in guess work. But, with an unprejudiced mind and a good telescope, his eye penetrates the veil and brings back tidings which enrich the records of science. So when men look at duty with loyal and obedient hearts, its lines come out sharply. Let self put a film over the spirit, duty remains unchanged, but the man sees only a mist. When the engineer decided that his railroad had to go through Mont Cenis, he had a difficult task but a simple one; and in addressing himself wholly to that solution of his problem, he at once got rid of a thousand questions as to other routes, &c. No one ever had so clear a perception of the hardness of His mission as Christ. And yet the closest study reveals not a shadow of hesitation. He goes to the Cross saying, "The Scripture must be fulfilled." He comes back from the dead with, "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer." His motto was, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, &c." He admitted no question of stoning or crucifying, and hence it is that His life while it is the most tremendous tragedy in history is the most purely simple. Suppose duty costs popularity, &c., Christ does not promise that the man who walks in the light shall have an easy walk. He promises that he shall not stumble: but Christ did not stumble because He was crucified, nor Stephen because stoned, nor Paul because beheaded. The stumbling would have been in Christ accepting Satan's offer, in Stephen's keeping silence, in Paul making terms with Nero or the Jewish leader. Popularity, &c., won by evasion of duty are not gains. Better that Christ should have gone than that the world should have lost the lesson of the Resurrection. Better all that agony than that the world should have missed a Saviour. But this steadfast light giving principle is not a mere matter of human resolve. Christ is in the soul as an inspiration and not merely before the eye as an example. And remember that though Christ in setting you on that well-lighted track of duty does not allow you to take account of the hardness, He takes account of it. You cannot live a life so hard that Christ has not lived a harder. His word is "Follow Me." Do that and you cannot go wrong. (*M. R. Vincent, D.D.*) **If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not.**—*Oriental streets* are not as safe as Occidental streets, nor are Oriental roads as safe as Occidental roads. Setting aside all other differences, both streets and roads are in a chronic state of disrepair. The streets are narrow, and not too clean; the roads are often composed of nothing more than loose stones lying upon each other as chance sets them. The consequence is that it is a work of strategy to thread one's way through Oriental streets, avoiding at the

same time the filth of the street and the crowding of burdened donkeys or camels, and a work of art to ride or walk over an Oriental road without coming occasionally to the ground, or having one's flesh torn by the thorns on either side. This is during the day; but at night the difficulty is increased a hundred-fold; thus it is that "if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth." Jesus felt that He was walking in the day, because He saw the danger, and knew how to avoid it. (*S. S. Times.*) *The walk of duty*:—It is a walk—I. of LIGHT. "Walk in the day." The man who, from proper motives and with a single eye, pursues his mission in life, moves in open day. No dark cloud shadows his path, no haze hangs over him, he knows what he is about. His course lies clearly before him, and he sees the goal—II. Of SAFETY. "Stumbleth not." He who moves within the bounds of duty makes no false steps, for the will of God enlightens him. But he who walks outside the limits of his vocation will err in what he does, since, not the will of God, but his own pleasure is his guide. III. THAT MUST BE PURSUED. Though Christ was warned of the probable consequences He felt that He had to go. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 11–13. **Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.**—*Sweet sleep*:—I. We have A SWEET RELATIONSHIP DECLARED. 1. "Our friend." Behold here wondrous condescension. Our Lord does not turn to His disciples and say "Your friend sleepeth," but places Himself side by side with them in their affection and says "Our friend." It seems to me to teach so sweetly the blessed fact that Jesus is one with His people. It is equal to saying, "Do you love Him? so do I." Let us meditate upon the friendship Christ has to His children, and in doing so I would notice—1. It is a real one. There is too much of superficial friendship abroad; plenty of the lip, but little of the heart. This is an age of shams; and among them, most hideous of the lot, is that of miscalled friendship. In the love of a saint to his Saviour there is a blessed reality. Whoever else he may not love with all his heart, his Saviour he must. 2. In this friendship there are no secrets kept on either side. The old saying runs "whisperers separate chief friends," but in close friendships nothing is hidden, so whispers have nothing to reveal. When Jesus says to any one, "My friend," He declares a friendship that ignores all secret keeping, for "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." If there be a secret sin in the heart, if a fall in the life, O bear me witness, saints of God, that there is no peace for us until, like the woman of old, we have "told Him all." Heavy burdens roll off the soul, and sweet ease flows into it by telling Jesus everything. 3. Jesus shows His friendship by helping in time of need. 4. Moreover, if a person says to me, "my friend," I naturally expect he will show his friendship by calling in to see me; and sweet are the love visits that Jesus pays His friends. That disciple knows but little of the sweets of the religion of Jesus who knows but seldom what it is to hear his Lord's knock, and who but seldom sups with his beloved in closest fellowship. 5. Jesus is never ashamed of His friends. When once He has said "My friend," He never retracts the sentence. There are many butterfly friends fluttering round us all, to be seen in the summer of prosperity, but conspicuous by their absence in the winter of adversity. 6. That the friendship of Jesus lasts for ever. The sweeter the friendship the more terrible the blow that severs it. But severed it must be at last. II. A SOLEMN FACT SUGGESTED. Christ's friends die. 1. The friendship of Christ does not exempt from death. This dread reaper spares none. Death asks not whether the shock of corn is ripe for glory, or is as yet green, and unprepared for the sickle. He asks not whether his victim is a child of God or one of the world's devotees. 2. Christ permits His friends to die in order to make manifest how completely He has conquered death. Suppose that, instead of tasting death, all Christ's friends were, like Enoch, translated into glory; might not death boast and say, "Aha! they dare not meet me in the field! Their Lord is afraid to put His conquest to the test." 3. Another reason why the friends of Jesus die is that they may be brought into conformity with their Lord. It may seem strange to some of your ears; but I believe there are many here who would rather prefer to die than otherwise, in order that in everything they might be conformed to their Master. III. WE HAVE IN THIS TEXT A VERY CHEERING DESCRIPTION. "Our friend sleepeth." Not our friend is dead. 1. In sleep there is a rest from pain. There is rest from pain in death. 2. In sleep there is a rest from care. 3. Sleeping implies waking. (*A. G. Brown.*) *The friendship of Christ*:—I. JESUS IS THE FRIEND OF HIS PEOPLE. Human friendship is the choicest of earthly privileges. How much more the friendship of Christ! (chap. xvi. 14, 15). Note the

qualities of a true friend. 1. Amiableness, or having those properties which are calculated to attract the heart. We may be grateful to those we cannot esteem, and admire those we cannot love; but to make a friend there must be something lovely. This exists in Christ in the highest degree. 2. Power of wisdom to guide, of strength to support and defend; of riches to help. These all exist in their fulness in Christ. 3. Faithfulness to keep our secrets and to fulfil His promises. 4. Tenderness. Friendship is like a foreign plant which requires delicate treatment. It shrinks from whatever is rough and unfeeling, and cannot confide in rudeness. 5. Unchangeableness. Christ is not a summer friend, who, like the butterfly, flutters round us while the sun is shining, but retires when the sun has gone. He is "a friend born for adversity." He is "the same to-day," &c. II. THE SERVICES WHICH CHRIST DISCHARGES FOR HIS FRIENDS. 1. He sympathizes with them, as one of them sharing their sorrows. 2. He is their abiding companion. 3. He has paid their debts, ransomed their persons, reconciled them to God at the expense of His own life. 4. He has purchased for them an inheritance incorruptible, &c. 5. He has fitted up mansions as the eternal residences of the bodies and souls of His people. III. TO THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST DEATH HAS CHANGED ITS NATURE. They cannot die, they only sleep. The emblem expresses—1. "The composure of soul which the Lord gives to His people in the hour of death." "Mark the perfect man," &c. 2. The temporary cessation of the powers of the body to recruit it for fresh service on the resurrection morn (Isa. xxvi. 19). (*J. H Stewart, M.A.*) *The awakening Christ*:—Jesus awakes men out of the sleep of—I. IGNORANCE, to give them intellectual life. His teaching—1. Awakes the power to think. 2. Strengthens the thinking powers. 3. Affords food for thought. II. MORAL INSENSIBILITY, to give them spiritual life. 1. Men are dead in sin. 2. Christ's call awakes the soul, and Christ's power gives it life. 3. Christ supports, develops, and perfects this new life. III. INDIFFERENCE, to give them a life of usefulness. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *The Christian in life and in death*:—I. IN LIFE. 1. The friend of Jesus. Expressing ideas of—(1) Acquaintance. (2) Endearment. 2. The friend of Jesus' friends. Adding thoughts of—(1) Social intercourse. (2) Loving brotherhood. II. IN DEATH. Asleep. 1. Withdrawn from the ordinary activities of life, as the mind is during the hours of slumber. 2. Possessed of a real, though different existence, as the mind never ceases to be active during the hours of repose. 3. Certain to awake refreshed after the period of rest has terminated, as mind and body do when night is passed. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Death as sleep*:—Estius well remarks, "Sleeping, in the sense of dying, is only applied to men, because of the hope of the resurrection. We read no such thing of brutes." The use of the figure is so common in Scripture, that it is almost needless to give references (see Deut. xxxi. 16; Daniel xii. 2; Matt. xxvii. 52; Acts vii. 60; xiii. 36; 1 Cor. vii. 39; xi. 30; xv. 6–18; 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14). But it is a striking fact that the figure is frequently used by great heathen writers, showing clearly that the traditions of a life after death existed even among the heathen. Homer, Sophocles, Virgil, Catullus, supply instances. However, the Christian believer is the only one who can truly regard death as sleep—that is, as a healthy, refreshing thing, which can do him no harm. Many among ourselves, perhaps, are not aware that the figure of speech exists among us in full force in the word "cemetery," applied to burial ground. That word is drawn from the very Greek verb which our Lord uses here. It is literally a "sleeping-place." (*Bishop Ryle.*) *Death has the advantage of sleep*:—For sleep is only the parenthesis, while death is the period of our cares and trials. (*M. Henry.*) *A beautiful death*:—All Wales, when I was there, was filled with the story of the dying experiences of Frances Ridley Havergal. She got her feet wet standing on the ground preaching temperance and the gospel to a group of boys and men, went home with a chill, and congestion set in, and they told her she was very dangerously ill. "I thought so," she said, "but it is really too good to be true that I am going. Doctor, do you really think I am going?" "Yes." "To-day?" "Probably." She said: "Beautiful, splendid to be so near the gate of heaven!" Then, after a spasm of pain, she nestled down in the pillows and said, "There, now; it is all over—blessed rest." Then she tried to sing, and she struck one glad note, high note of praise to Christ, but could sing only one word, "He," and then all was still. She finished it in heaven. (*T. de Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *Sleep and death*:—The angel of sleep and the angel of death reclined at eventide on a hill overlooking the abodes of men. As night came on, one rose from his mossy couch and scattered some seeds of slumber. The zephyrs bore them away to human dwellings, and pre-

sently the sick man forgot his pain, the mourner his sorrow, the poor his cares. "Oh, what joy," exclaimed the angel of sleep, "thus to do good unseen!" The other looked at him in sadness, and a tear gathered in his dark eye as he said: "Alas, that I can have no thanks! Earth calls me its enemy and destroyer." "Nay, my brother," answered sleep, "in the morning men praise me as their friend, and will not the good in the resurrection morn praise and bless thee also as a benefactor? Are we not brothers and messengers of one Father?"

Vers. 14, 15. **Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there.**—I. THE SAVIOUR IS ALWAYS ALIVE TO THE WELFARE OF HIS PEOPLE—"for your sakes." Here is love beyond compare. Is He abased? "For our sakes He became poor." Does He suffer? "He bears our sorrows, and for us He dies." Does He go away? "It is expedient for us." Does He appear in heaven? Still it is for us. Other people are the subjects of His providence; but His people are the end of it. II. THERE IS NOTHING HE IS SO CONCERNED TO PROMOTE AS THEIR FAITH—"that ye may believe." From this learn—1. That faith is no easy matter. Where is the Christian that has not often cried, "Help Thou mine unbelief." The difficulty of believing may be seen by the means here employed to promote it, and from the persons for whom He wishes it—those who had been with Him and seen His miracles. 2. That faith admits of increase. The disciples believed, or they would not have followed Him, but they did not believe enough. Faith at one time is like a mustard-seed, at another like a mustard-tree. The blade may do very well in March, but we expect the full corn in August. 3. The importance of faith. Some persons are afraid to say much about faith, as if it were prejudicial to morality, whereas it is the tree which bears all the fruits of holiness. Everything in the Christian life has to do with faith. God is glorified by faith, we are filled with joy and peace, sanctified, purified, by faith; we stand, walk, live, and have access to God by faith, and that this may not fail Christ prays. Hence its importance here. III. HE CAN ACCOMPLISH THE PURPOSES OF HIS LOVE BY WAYS PECULIAR TO HIMSELF. They would have said He ought to have been there. The sisters expected this. But His absence was to show that His ways were superior to theirs. The case of Joseph, Job, and the Three Children seemed very hard, but what advantage the world has derived from them! When, therefore, your views and His do not seem to harmonize, remember that He acts sovereignly, not arbitrarily; but "He gives no account of His matters." Suspend your opinions. Never set His sun by your dial, but the reverse. You can see His heart if you cannot see His hand. Where? At Calvary. "He that spared not His own Son," &c. Alphonsus, of Castile, thought that if the Maker of the world had applied to him he could have given Him good advice. But do you not think the same about the God of Providence? "Blind unbelief is sure to err." If you see not now you will see hereafter. Ought you to judge of a building while all the materials are scattered about, especially if you had never seen the plan? Judge nothing before the time. The saints above shout, "He hath done all things well." IV. THE SUFFERINGS OF SOME ARE DESIGNED FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS. Sometimes persons are afflicted by way of—1. Correction. "If His children forsake My law," &c. 2. Prevention. Paul was buffeted not because he was proud, but "lest he should be exalted." 3. Probation. Hence afflictions are called trials. 4. Usefulness to themselves and others. Ezekiel was forbidden to weep when the desire of his eyes was taken from him; not on his own account, but that he might be a "sign." So Lazarus dies and the sisters weep for the disciples' sake. V. THE SAVIOUR IS NEVER TOO LATE IN HIS MOVEMENTS OR TOO CONFIDENT IN HIS RESOURCES. We often begin what we are not able to finish. Then there are different degrees of weakness and strength amongst us, but God has all power, "Nevertheless, let us go to *Him*," not them. Why? It is too late, he is dead. "It may be too late for you, but not for Me." Your extremity is My opportunity. I love not only to do what is needful for My people, but to surprise them; to do above all they can ask or think. It were much to have comforted the sisters, how much more to raise the brother! Let us learn to confide in Him—1. With regard to ourselves. Sinner, your case is desperate as to all relief from men or angels, yet that is no reason why you should despair. He is nigh. 2. With regard to others. Our work is hard, but we can do all things if the Raiser of Lazarus strengthens us. (*W. Jay.*) *The dark enigma of death*:—The man Jesus loved lay there on his bed dying. Now, I emphasize that, because there used to be a great deal of thinking about

God's relation to those that love Him and whom He loves—a great deal of teaching in the Christian Church that counted itself most orthodox, and which was, indeed, deadly heresy, coarse, materialistic, despicable, misunderstanding the ideal grandeur of the Bible promises. Some of you know the sort of thing that used to prevail—the idea that God's saints should be exceptionally favoured, the sun would shine on their plot of corn, and it would not shine on the plot of corn of the bad man; their ships would not sink at sea, their children would not catch infectious diseases, God would pamper them, exempt them from bearing their part in the world's great battle, with hardness and toil of labour, with struggle and attainment and achievement. It came of a very despicable conception of what a father can do for a child, as if the best thing for a father to do for his son was to pet and indulge him, and save him all bodily struggle and all difficulties, instead of giving him a life of discipline. As if a general in the army would, because of his faltering heart, refuse to let his son take the post of danger, as if he would not rather wish for that son—ay, with a great pang in his own soul—that he should be the bravest, the most daring, the one most exposed to the deadliest hazard. Ah, we have got to recognize that we whom God loves may be sick and dying, and yet God does love us. Lazarus was loved by Jesus, yet he whom Jesus loved was sick and dying. Ah, and there is a still more poisonous difficulty in that materialistic, that worldly way of looking at God's love; that horrible, revolting misjudgment that Christ condemned, crushed with indignation when it confronted Him. "The men on whom the tower of Siloam fell must have been sinners worse than us on whom it did not fall." Never, never! The great government of the world is not made up of patches and strokes of anger and outbursts of weak indulgence. The world is God's great workshop, God's great battlefield. These have their places. Here a storm of bullets fall, and brave and good men as well as cowards fall before it. You mistake if you try to forestall God's judgments, God's verdict on the last great day of reckoning. Still we have got the fact that Christ does not interpose to prevent death, that Christ does not hinder those dearest to Him from bearing their share of life's sicknesses and sufferings, that God Himself suffers death to go on, apparently wielding an undisputed sway over human existence. Is not that true of our world to-day? The best of you Christians, when death comes to your own homes, do you manage to sing the songs of triumph right away? Well, you are very wonderful saints if you do. If you do not, perhaps you say, "If God is in this world, how comes that dark enigma of death?" And others of you grip hold of your faith, but yet your heart cries out against it. You believe that God is good, but has He been quite good to you? Like Martha, you feel as if you had some doubt; you feel bound in your prayers; you say, "O God, I do not mean to reproach Thee;" weak, sinful, if you will, yet the sign of a true follower of the Christ. And then the enemies of Christ, the worldlings all about in this earth of ours, as they look upon death's ravages, they are saying: "If there were a God, if there were a Father, if there were a great heart that could love, why does not He show it?" Now, I said to you that at first it looks as if nothing but evil came of God's delay to interpose against death; but when you look a little deeper, I think you begin to discover an infinitely greater good and benefit come out of that evil. I must very briefly, very rapidly, trace to you in the story, and you can parallel it in the life of yourselves, that discipline of goodness there is in God's refraining from checking sickness and death. Christ said the end of it is first of all death, but that is not the termination. Through death this sickness, this struggle of doubt and faith, should end in the glory of God. That tremendous miracle compelled the rulers of Jerusalem to resolve on and carry out His death. That miracle of Lazarus's resurrection gave to the faith of the disciples and of Christ's followers a strength of clinging attachment that carried them through the eclipse of their belief when they saw Him die on Calvary. Now, what would you say? Was it cruel of Christ to allow His friend Lazarus, His dear friends Mary and Martha, to go through that period of suspense, of anxiety, of sickness, of death, and of the grave, that they might do one of the great deeds in bringing in the world's Redeemer? "Ah," you say, "you have still got to show God's goodness and kindness to me individually. My death may be for God's glory, it may be for the good of others; but how about me and those who mourn?" Well, now, look at it. You must get to the end of the story before you venture to judge the measure, the worth of God's goodness. After all, was that period of sickness and death unmitigated gloom, and horror, and agony? Oh, I put it to you, men and women, who have passed through it, watching by the death of dear father or mother that loved the Lord

and loved you, and whom you loved—dark, and sore, and painful enough at the time; but oh, if I called you to speak out, would you not say it was one of the most sacred periods of your life—the unspeakable tenderness, the sweet, clinging love, the untiring service, the grateful responses, the sacredness that came into life? Ay, and when the tie was snapped, the new tenderness that you gave to the friends that are left, the new pledge binding you to heaven, and to hope for it, and long for it—death is not all an evil to our eyes. Death cannot ultimately be an evil, since it is universal—the consummation, climax, crown, of every human life. It is going home to one's Father. Yes, but you want the guarantee that death is not the end, and that day it was right and lawful for Christ to give it to anticipate the last great day, when in one unbroken army, radiant and resplendent, shining like jewels in a crown, He shall bring from the dark grave all that loved Him, fought for Him, and were loyal to Him on the road, and went down into the dark waters singly one by one, in circumstances of ignomony often, and yet dying with Christ within them, the Resurrection and the Life. Ah, that great grand vindication of God and interpretation of this world's enigma was made clear that day when Christ called Lazarus back and gave him alive to his sisters in the sight of His doubting disciples, in the sight of those sneering enemies. (*W. G. Elmslie, D.D.*) *Lazarus dead and Jesus glad:*—What strange paradox is here. There was room in Christ's heart for both emotions. The grief belonged to the Brother born for our adversity; the gladness to the omniscient God who sees the end from the beginning. Note—I. THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST WITH HIS PEOPLE. Somewhat analogous to the sympathy of the several organs of a living frame. Such is the vital union that every wound inflicted on the members pierces with pain the Head. He "knew the sorrows" of Israel in Egypt, and now He felt the grief which was rending the household at Bethany. By a message, Jesus and His disciples had learned that Lazarus was sick; but the Head, being in closer communion with the member, had secret and better intelligence. The dying throb of Lazarus beat also in the heart of Jesus. "Lo, I am with you alway," in the dark days of pain as in the bright days of joy. II. CHRIST HEARS THE CRY OF HIS PEOPLE AND SENDS THEM HELP. They were right in saying, "If Thou hadst been here." He cannot endure to hear the prayer of His people and permanently to deny their request. Hence He could not remain in visible presence with His followers. It became expedient for Him to go away, permitting multitudes of His friends to sicken and die preparatory to a glorious resurrection. III. ALIKE CHRIST'S ACTIONS AND EMOTIONS CONTEMPLATE THE PROFIT OF HIS PEOPLE. If He remained distant while Lazarus was battling with death it was for your sakes. If He rejoiced in the immediate issue of that unequal conflict, it was for your sakes. All things are for your sakes. In this case it was that they might believe. The death of Lazarus afforded opportunity for the display of omnipotence, thereby to confirm the disciples' faith. But other benefits followed. The discipline the bereaved family endured was a means of purging away their dross. Application: The lesson bears on—1. The ordinary affairs of life. You try to obtain a lawful object in a lawful way, but your plans miscarry. This, however, does not prove that Christ lacks the will or power to help. Had He been in visible presence He would have put forth His power, but He is glad for your sake He was not. From the height of His throne He sees that the world on your side at this point would not be profitable for you. 2. Bereavements. If Christ were standing weeping by the bed your child would not die, but for your sake He is not there. A mother who had lost all her children but the youngest said, "Every bereavement has knit me closer to Christ, and every child I have in heaven is another cord to hold me up":—(*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *A mystery! Saints sorrowing and Jesus glad.* Jesus was glad that the trial had come. I. FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF THE FAITH OF THE APOSTLES. 1. The trial itself would do this. Faith untried may be true faith, but it is sure to be little faith. It never prospers so much as when all things are against it. No flowers wear so lovely a blue as those which grow at the feet of the frozen glacier; no water so sweet as that which springs amid the desert sand. (1) Tried faith brings experience, and experience makes religion more real. You never know your weakness nor God's strength till you have been in the deep waters. (2) Trial removes many of the impediments of faith. Carnal security is the worst foe to confidence in God, and blessed is the axe that removes it. The balloon never rises until the cords are cut. (3) Affliction helps faith when it exposes the weakness of the creature. This trial would show the apostles not to depend on the bounty of any one man, for though Lazarus entertained them, Lazarus had died.

We are in danger of making idols of our mercies. (4) Trial drives faith to God. When the world's wells are full of sweet but poisonous water we pitch our tents at the well's mouth; but when earth's water becomes bitter we turn away sick and faint and cry for the water of life. (5) Trial has a hardening effect on faith. As the Spartan boys were prepared for fighting by the sharp discipline of their boyish days, so are God's servants trained for war by the affliction which He sends upon them. We must be thrown into the water to learn to swim. If you want to ruin your child, let him never know a hardship. 2. The deliverance of Lazarus would do this. (1) At the worst Christ can work; in the very worst He is not brought to a nonplus. The physician, Herod, Cæsar, and all their power can do nothing here; and Death sits smiling as he says, "I have Lazarus." Yet Christ wins the day. (2) Divine sympathy became most manifest—"Jesus wept." (3) Divine power was put forth—"Lazarus, come forth." All this was the best education the disciples could have for their future ministry. When in prison they would remember how Lazarus was brought out. When preaching to dead sinners they would remember the power of the word which brought Lazarus to life. II. FOR THE GOOD OF THE FAMILY. The sisters had faith, but it was not very strong, for they doubted both Christ's love and His power. Because He specially loved these people: 1. He sent them a special trial. The lapidary will not spend much time on an ordinary stone, but a diamond of the first water he will cut and cut again. So the gardener will a choice tree. 2. Special trial was attended with a special visit. Perhaps Christ would not have come to Bethany had not Lazarus died. If you are in trouble Christ will go out of His way to see you. 3. The special visit was attended with special fellowship. Jesus wept with those who wept. You may be well and strong, and have but little fellowship with Christ, but He shall make all your bed in your sickness. 4. And soon you shall have special deliverance. III. FOR GIVING FAITH TO OTHERS. Afflictions often lead men to faith in Christ because—1. They give space for thought. 2. They prevent sin. A lad had resolved against advice to climb a mountain. A mist soon surrounded him, and compelled him to return. His father was glad because, had he gone a little further, he would have perished. 3. They compel them to stand face to face with stern realities. How often has God's Spirit wrought in illnesses that have seemed hopeless. 4. They are sometimes followed by great deliverances. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Five paradoxes*:—I. IN THE LIFE OF AN INTELLIGENT BELIEVER GLADNESS SOMETIMES GROWS OUT OF GRIEF. Jesus wept at the death of Lazarus, for it was a personal bereavement, but He was glad because it was a fine opportunity for glorifying God. This is the lowest form of Christian experience. Our light affliction works out an eternal weight of glory. This, understood as a means of exalting God, will enable the believer to glory in tribulations. II. ONE'S ADVANTAGE IS SOMETIMES HID UNDERNEATH ANOTHER'S TRIALS. It was a suprising thing to announce that He had not intended to prevent Lazarus's death; but it was still more surprising that it was for their sakes. What had they to do with it? Now, while all believers are independent of each other, and each stands or falls to his own master, yet the trials of one are often intended to benefit another. The law of vicarious suffering holds the race. A parent suffers for a child, a child for a parent. Joseph was sold into Egypt that Israel might go into Palestine. Peter's imprisonment may have been needed to discipline Rhoda's faith, and Paul's confinement may have been ordered for the jailor's conversion. Let us be resigned, then, when we suffer for others, and attentive when others suffer for us. III. INCREASE OF A CHRISTIAN'S SORROW SOMETIMES ALLEVIATES IT. In the opinion of the disciples the sickness of Lazarus was a disaster, but the most unfortunate circumstance was the absence of Jesus. But a strange comfort now entered their hearts. They were worse off than they supposed, but they were better off, too. Up to this disclosure the event was a hard calamity of domestic life, and Jesus' absence a melancholy accident. But now they perceived that Divine knowledge embraced this also, Divine wisdom was dealing with it, and Divine mercy was going to turn it to fine advantage. A great sorrow with a purpose in it is easier to bear than a smaller one which seems to have no aim now and no benefit hereafter. IV. IN THE TRUE BELIEVER'S EXPERIENCE DOUBT IS SOMETIMES EMPLOYED TO DEEPEN TRUST. The one simple intention of this bereavement was to increase the faith of those who felt it. This was accomplished by permitting them to imagine for a while that they were forgotten of God. Just as a mother hides herself from a child who has grown careless of her presence that the child may run impulsively into her embrace and love her all the more, so God says, "In a little wrath I hid My face," &c. The way to render faith confident is to make large demands upon it by onsets

of trying doubt. V. ABSOLUTE HOPELESSNESS AND HELPLESSNESS ARE THE CONDITIONS OF HOPE AND HELP. The turning point of the story is in the "nevertheless let us go," and He goes to work His most stupendous miracle to remedy what His delay had permitted. By this time the sisters had given up all hope; but Hope was on the way. So one after another of our props must drop away, till at last we are shut up to God. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Death knocking away our props:*—"See, father!" said a lad who was walking with his father, "they are knocking away the props from under the bridge. What are they doing that for? Won't the bridge fall?" "They are knocking them away," said the father, "that the timbers may rest more firmly upon the stone piers, which are now finished." God only takes away our earthly props that we may rest more firmly upon Him. *The uses of bereavement:*—When engineers would bridge a stream, they often carry over at first but a single cord; with that, next they stretch a wire across; then strand is added to strand, until a foundation is laid for planks; and now the bold engineer finds safe footway, and walks from side to side. So God takes from us some golden-threaded pleasure, and stretches it hence into heaven; then He takes a child, and then a friend: thus He bridges death, and teaches the thoughts of the most timid to find their way hither and thither between the shores. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Build beyond the reach of death:*—Build your nest upon no tree here, for ye see God hath sold the forest to Death; and every tree whereupon we would rest is ready to be cut down, to the end that we might flee and mount up, and build upon the Rock, and dwell in the holes of the Rock. (*S. Rutherford.*) *Relief under bereavement:*—1. There are reliefs arising from our constitution. There is a self-healing principle in nature. Break a branch from a tree, &c., wound the body, cut the flesh, or break a limb, and you see the self-healing power exude and work. It is so in the soul. Thought succeeds thought like the waves of the ocean, and each tends to wear out the impression its predecessor had made. 2. There are incidental reliefs. New events, new engagements, new relationships, tend to heal the wound. 3. There are Christian reliefs, the assurance of after life, the hope of a future reunion, &c. Such are the reliefs. These, like the flowers and shrubs of a lovely garden, spring up around our hearts and cover the grave of our sorrows and trials with the shadow of their foliage. Yes; though we have our trials, we have still our blessings.

Ver. 16. **Then said Thomas which is called Didymus.**—*Thomas:*—A very few verses contain the sum of all we know about Thomas. They tell us nothing of his history. His travels, sufferings, missionary toils, death; tradition speaks of these One account says he preached the gospel in Persia, and was buried in Odessa. Another that he went to India and suffered martyrdom there. We need not imitate Thomas himself too closely by receiving all such accounts with incredulity. It would seem all but certain that he went eastwards, and that he laboured, and suffered, and died for Christ, thus meeting the fate he was prepared for when he said to his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go that we may die with Him." Probably he was by birth a Galilean, although this is by no means certain, as some accounts give him a foreign birthplace. The name Thomas is connected, especially by St. John, with the other name he bore, either synonym or surname of it, "Didymus." He had a brother or sister (sister says one account, called Lysia), the same age as himself. Therefore he was called "the twin." This is the origin of the name. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The spiritual significance of Thomas' name:*—Is there any mystery here? Did St. John intend us to see any coming out in the name-bearer of the qualities which the name expressed? Many have thought he did, and the analogy of similar notices in this gospel (chap. i. 42; ix. 7) would lead to this conclusion. It is very possible that Thomas may have received this as a new name from his Lord, even as Simon and the sons of Zebedee, certainly, and Levi very probably, received in like manner names from Him. It was a name which told him all he had to fear, and all he had to hope. In him the twins, unbelief and faith, were contending for the mastery, as Esau and Jacob, the old man and the new, wrestled once in Rebecca's womb. He was, as indeed all are by nature, the double, or twin-minded man. It was for him to see that in and through the regeneration he obtained strength to keep the better and cast away the worse half of his being. He here utters words which belong to one of the great conflicts of his life—words in which the old and the new, unbelief and faith, are both speaking, partly one and partly the other; and St. John fitly bids us note that in this there was the outcoming of all which his name embodied so well. There was faith, since he counted

it better to die with his Lord than to live forsaking Him—unbelief, since he conceived it possible that so long as his Lord had a work to accomplish, He, or any under His shield, could be overtaken by death. Thomas was evidently of a melancholy, desponding character: most true to his Master, yet ever inclined to look at things on their darkest side, finding it most hard to raise himself to the loftier elevations of faith—to believe other and more than he saw, or to anticipate more favourable issues than those which the merely human probabilities of an event portended. Men of all temperaments and characters were to be found in that circle of disciples, that so there might be the representatives and helpers of all who hereafter, through struggles of one kind or another, should at last attain to the full assurance of faith. Very beautifully Chrysostom says of this disciple, that he who would hardly venture to go *with* Jesus as far as the neighbouring Bethany, afterwards *without* Him travelled to the furthest India, daring all the perils of remote and hostile nations. (*Archbishop Trench.*) *Thomas' doubt and faith*:—I. HIS DOUBT—1. As to the victory of life. 2. As to the way to heaven (chap. xiv.). 3. As to the certainty of the Resurrection (chap. xx.). II. HIS FAITH. 1. Prepared by his ardent love to Jesus and the brethren (chap. xi.). 2. Introduced by his longing desire for a higher disclosure (chap. xiv.). 3. Decided by his joy at the manifestation of the Risen One (chap. xx.). (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) **Let us also go that we may die with Him.**—1. Let us with Jesus go. 2. Let us with Jesus suffer. 3. Let us with Jesus die. 4. Let us with Jesus live. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Thomas desponding*:—I. HE IS AN EARNEST MAN. We might almost conclude this from the fact that he is one of the twelve. Some of them are ignorant, some quiet and simple, some strong and passionate, but all are earnest. Take all the verses that relate to Thomas, they bring before us very different mental states—deep depression, rejoicing, confidence; but they all pre-suppose a spiritual concernedness about himself, his duty, and his Lord. He is sometimes called "unbelieving Thomas," but he is better than worldly Demas, or a vacillating Peter. What hope can there be for a creature like man, intellectual, spiritual, responsible if he will not think. You can do nothing with a man who is not earnest—but you may do much with an earnest man, though a doubter. II. THIS EARNESTNESS HAS A TINGE OF MELANCHOLY AND IS CONNECTED WITH A DESPONDING DISPOSITION. As a certain vein runs through a geological formation, so a certain disposition runs through a human mind. You cannot expel it. It must be recognized and dealt with. Here Thomas threw himself on to the dark conclusion that all was over, and that nothing now was left to them but to die. This shows how truly he and all had lived for the kingdom and the Master. They all desponded in a while when the death came. It is characteristic of Thomas that he took the alarm sooner than the rest. One in a company will first say, "It is getting colder." One in a family will be the first to see the death shadow, although it may turn out not to be that. So some among God's children are nearer despondency than the rest, more quick to see the world going wrong, more keen to private troubles. III. WITH WHAT DETERMINATION AND NOBLENESS THOMAS RESOLVES TO DIE WITH CHRIST, SINCE IN HIS OPINION NO BETTER MAY BE. Here is a melancholy man who yet can make the grand resolve that when his dearest visions and hopes are quenched in darkness, though what he cannot but regard as a mistaken judgment of the Master, yet resolves to follow that Master wherever He may choose to go. That purpose was the salvation of Thomas, and not less than that in principle will be the salvation of us. Thomas did not die with the Master. They all forsook Him for a little while. We shall not live up to the height of our best resolutions. But if our purpose be wisely and resolutely formed, and in dependence on Divine help, then we shall not renounce it; and it will be—IV. THE CONSOLATION AND THE CURE OF OUR DESPONDENCY. You cannot conceive of one abiding in it long whose life is ribbed by a great purpose reaching unto death—whose heart is moved and lifted by a great affection, as sun and moon lift the tide. With Him, come storm or calm! With Him, come life or death! Then the world will be brighter, and we shall go through it more bravely to our home in the world beyond. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *Let us go with Jesus*:—We cannot tell whether this sentiment sprang from love, from dejection, or from conviction that such a resolve would lead Christ out of love for them to abandon His purpose. Leaving this discussion, let *us* go with Jesus. I. THAT IN HIM WE MAY DIE UNTO SIN. In what frame of mind did Jesus enter on that course which led Him to Golgotha? If He knew so well, why did He go? Had He not perfect freedom to follow His disciples' advice, and power to lay His foes at His feet? Why not then use it?

Because He only desires to do the will of His Father. Now the hour arrives for Him to be obedient unto death. What urges Him thereto? The desire for reward or glory? No: love to His Father and sinful men. Thank God He went; and thank God we may still in spirit go up to Jerusalem. What for? To admire His heroism? Others have been as brave. To pity His agonies? Others have suffered more. "Weep not for Me, but for yourselves," &c., and for the sin which cost Me so much. The resolution to go with Jesus implies more than reading the story of His passion, singing hymns or praying to Him, or repenting. It means union with Christ in the purpose of His death—the destruction of sin. II. THAT FOR HIM WE MAY WIN SOULS. Ought we not to feel the sacred duty of gratitude to return His love, and resolve to go with Him, feeling unconcerned about our own death? He went for the purpose of raising Lazarus; let us go that the dead may become alive. Have we no loved friend who sleeps? May the love of Christ constrain us to awaken him. III. THAT THROUGH HIM WE MAY INHERIT LIFE. If we die in Him unto sin, and for Him win souls, then our whole life shall be a walking in His footsteps to the Jerusalem above. (*M. Coward.*) *Devotion to the leader*:—General Grant had the faculty, in a large degree, of attaching very closely to himself all about him. His personal staff without exception, passionately reverenced him. Any one of them would have gladly risked his life for his chief. In the last year of the civil war they organized a system at City Point by which one sat up on guard of him every night to watch against the plots of the enemy; for there had been devices of dynamitic character, and attempts not only to capture, but to assassinate, prominent national officers. (*H. O. Mackey.*)

Vers. 17–27. **When Jesus came.**—*Christ's help is sure, if delayed*:—He usually reserves His hand for a dead lift. When our faith begins to flag, and hang the wing when our strength is gone, and we have given up all for lost, "Now will I arise," saith the Lord, "now will I be exalted, now will I lift up Myself" (Isa. xxxiii. 10). (*J. Trapp.*) *The journey*:—Leaving His retreat beyond Jordan, Jesus calmly makes His way to the village of Bethany. We shall find it shown in the issue that, as regards the manifestation of the glory of God, the leading of the disciples into higher faith, and the discipline and blessing of the sisters, the Lord's arrival is neither too early nor too late; but that it is as when separate trains move along separate lines of railway, "timed" to meet by a certain hour, at a certain junction, there to be combined. The distance to Bethany was a long day's journey. Whether He made the journey in a single day we have no means of knowing. The earliest part of it would lie along some fertile glen of Gilead, and would be pursued amid "morning songs" from every side. Crossing the Jordan at a neighbouring ford, the next part of the journey would lie in the rich plain of Jericho, beautiful as a great pleasure ground, with bosks and groves of aromatic shrubs. Then He would pursue the wild dreary road that goes up from Jericho to Jerusalem, lying through a desolate rocky district, often winding along the edge of cliffs and frightful precipices, one of the wildest and gloomiest roads in the land. As He approaches Bethany, the dust of travel whitening His sandals, and as weary, it may be, as when He came to Jacob's well at noon, He is told that Lazarus has already been four days in the grave. (*J. Culross.*) **Many of the Jews had come . . . to console them.**—*Oriental consolers*:—According to the ancient Jewish ritual, those who came to condole with the mourners had to return with them from the grave to the house, there to station themselves in a circle around the mourners, repeating prayers, and offering consolation. The rule was that this circle of consolers should consist of not less than ten persons; but it usually consisted of many more. In token of grief, the couches upon which the mourners and the consolers sat were lowered so as to come nearer to the ground, or else all sat upon the ground. The consolers remained with the mourners during the days of mourning; but there was a certain defence from this publicity in the fact that the consoler had no right to speak until the mourner spoke; and the mourner had the privilege further of indicating, by nodding, that he was now comforted and that the consolers need not continue to sit around him any longer. (*S. S. Times.*) *The interview with Martha*:—I. MARTHA'S REGRETFUL LAMENTATION; or faith struggling with imperfect knowledge (ver. 21). The language neither of reproach nor complaint, but—1. Of deep sorrow that Christ had not been present, at least, before the end came. 2. Of sincere faith, since she believed that had He been present, He would have healed him, or entreated God on his behalf. 3. Of imperfect knowledge—(1) Allied to superstition in thinking Christ's presence needful

(*cf.* chap. iv. 47). (2) Akin to over confidence in asserting that Lazarus would have lived had Christ not been absent. II. MARTHA'S CONFIDENT PERSUASION; or faith rising into ardent hope (ver. 22). 1. Faith's firm assurance. That Christ's access to the Father on behalf of men is—(1) Immediate, at any moment. (2) Direct, by simply asking. (3) Unlimited, "all things." (4) Efficacious, certain to prevail. 2. Faith's joyous expectation. That nothing will prove too great—(1) For Christ's love to devise, or—(2) Christ's power to execute on behalf of His people (Eph. iii. 20-21)—hence that a resurrection is neither impossible nor absurd. III. MARTHA'S DESPONDING ADMISSION; or faith relapsing into doubt (ver. 24). 1. Her disappointment. She had expected Christ to speak about an immediate restoration of her dead brother, whereas He only seemed to hint at a far away resurrection (ver. 23). 2. Her concession. She acknowledges, notwithstanding, such a resurrection, and consequently Lazarus's continued existence. IV. MARTHA'S SUBLIME CONFESSION; or faith soaring into lofty adoration (ver. 27). That which lifted her beyond the atmosphere of doubt was Christ's exposition of the doctrine (vers. 25, 26), in which were set forth—1. That the resurrection was not an event to be thought of as distinct from the life, but as a manifestation of the life. 2. That the resurrection and the life, as thus explained, have their primal source in Himself, in whom is life (chap. i. 4), and from whom all true life in the soul proceeds. 3. That the resurrection, and the life from which it springs, are secured to men by their union to Him through faith. 4. That in the experience of the believer there is—(1) A resurrection of the soul from sin. (2) A living in the Spirit. (3) A transformation of death so that the believer may be said to "never die." (4) A complete abolition of death by the resurrection of the body. Lessons—1. Christ's presence with the soul is the certain destruction of death. 2. Christ's intercession for His people is better understood now than it was then (Heb. vii. 25). 3. The resurrection, as explained by Christ, a perennial source of comfort for the bereaved and dying. 4. The only just verdict that can be pronounced on Jesus is that of "Son of God." (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Jesus and Martha*:—I. THE SOCIAL SADNESS OF DEATH. The death of Lazarus had spread a dark shadow over the hearts of not a few. Besides the sisters the neighbours were affected (ver. 19). The God of Love has implanted in human hearts a mighty tie of sympathy, and the groan of one will vibrate on the heart chords of many. The more love a man has in him the larger the amount of vicarious suffering that he will endure in this world of grief. Hence He who had more love in Him than all the race besides became a "man of sorrows" to carry ours. To suffer for others by sympatby is not only natural, but Christly. We are commanded to "bear one another's burdens." II. THE EXTRAORDINARY CLAIM OF CHRIST (vers. 25, 26). These words, which flow so naturally from Christ, would have been blasphemy from any other. They imply—1. That death is a great evil—not as a mere dissolution of soul and body, which is natural, but as the consequence of sin, and so having a dreadful moral significance and terror—a "sting," giving it virus and agony. There are—(1) Its physical sufferings. Had there been no sin there would have been no pain. (2) Its grievous disappointments. But for sin man would have had no broken purposes. (3) Its social disruptions. (4) Its moral forebodings. Without these death might be hailed as a blessing—these make it a curse. 2. That from this evil Christ is the great Deliverer. (1) Christ is life—original, absolute, "I am He that liveth," &c. (2) He is resuscitating life—not only creating the new, but raising the old. Understanding death as the curse of sin, Christ is the Resurrection in that—(*a*) He delivers men from sin. (*b*) He has abolished death. 3. That from this evil He delivers on the condition of trust in Him, not in doctrines about Him, &c. III. THE NOBLE CONFESSION OF FAITH (ver. 27). (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Martha and Jesus*:—I. MARTHA IS A TYPE OF ANXIOUS BELIEVERS. They believe truly, but not with such confidence as to lay aside their care. 1. She set a practical bound to the Saviour's words: "Of course there will be a resurrection, and Lazarus will rise with the rest." We limit the words of the Holy One. Of course they mean so much, but we cannot allow that they mean more. 2. She laid the words of Jesus on the shelf, as things so trite and sure that they were of small practical importance. When you believe a truth, but neglect it, it is the same as not believing. Some never question a doctrine, that is not their temptation; they accept the gospel as true, but never expect to see its promises carried out. 3. She set the promise in the remote distance. This is a common folly. Telescopes are meant to bring objects near to the eye, but some look through the mental telescope at the wrong end. Do not refuse the present blessing and say, "My Lord delayeth His

coming." 4. She made the promise unreal and impersonal, mixing Lazarus with the rest of the dead. We take the promises and say, "That is true to all God's people." If so, it is true to us; but we miss *that* point. There is such a thing as speaking of the promises in a magnificent style, and yet being in deep spiritual poverty: as if a man should boast of the wealth of England while he has not a penny. If you are a child of God, all things are yours and you may help yourself. II. How JESUS DEALT WITH MARTHA. 1. He did not grow angry with her and say, "I am ashamed of you that you should have such low thoughts of Me." She thought that she was honouring Jesus by her acknowledgment of His special power with God. And in similar cases it ill becomes a servant to lose patience where the Master shows so much. 2. With gentle spirit Jesus proceeds to teach her more of the things concerning Himself. This is the true way to cure despondency. "I am," not "I can get the Resurrection." God's people want to know more of Jesus. Some of them know more than enough of themselves, and they will break their hearts if they go on reading much longer in that black letter book. Poor Martha was looking up into the sky for life, or down into the deeps for resurrection, when the Resurrection and the Life was by. Learn—1. To construe the promises in their largest sense. 2. To look to the Promiser, and not to the difficulties which surround the accomplishment of the promise. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Martha went. . . . but Mary sat still.**—*Martha meeting Christ:*—Martha's "met" is a perfect tense; Mary's "sat" is an imperfect. It is impossible not to see the characteristic temperament of each sister coming out here, and doubtless it is written for our learning. Martha—active, stirring, busy, demonstrative—cannot wait, but runs impulsively to meet Jesus. Mary—quiet, gentle, pensive, meditative, contemplative, meek—sits passively at home. Yet I venture to think that of the two sisters, Martha here appears to most advantage. There is such a thing as being so crushed and stunned by our affliction that we do not adorn our profession under it. Is there not something of this in Mary's conduct throughout this chapter? There is a time to stir, as well as to sit still; and here, by not stirring, Mary certainly missed hearing our Lord's glorious declaration about Himself. I would not be mistaken in saying this. Both these holy women were true disciples; yet if Mary showed more grace on a former occasion than Martha, I think Martha here showed more than Mary. Let us never forget that there are differences of temperament among believers, and let us make due allowance for others if they are not quite like ourselves. There are believers who are quiet, passive, silent, and meditative; and believers who are active, stirring, and demonstrative. The well-ordered Church must find room, place, and work for all. We need Marys as well as Marthas, and Marthas as well as Marys. (*Bp. Ryle.*) **Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.**—*If.* "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." How natural it all is! "If Thou hadst been here." Prone is the human heart to utter just such words as these. "Much virtue in an if," says the poet. But there is also much torture in it. Had this been done or that, had such and such precautions been taken, had the doctor been sent for a little sooner, had certain remedies been tried which were learned of too late, had we not moved into that house, the result might have been different. So we go over the whole miserable catalogue of peradventures and possibilities with much bitterness of spirit. That is the tendency and the temptation. But it should never be done. That "if" has no business in our bosom. It is a stinging serpent that should be ruthlessly cast out. There is no if. Nothing ever simply happens so. Chance is the god of atheism, and will minister no comfort in the time of trouble. Banish him. The Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and all things come of Him. Our ignorance is as much a part of the Divine plan as our knowledge. He does not mean us to know all things. (*Boston Homilies.*) *The imperfection of spiritual qualities:*—God made the first marriage—of the body and soul in creation, and man the first divorce—of the body and soul through sin. God allows no such second marriages as are implied in the transmigration of souls into other bodies. And because God has made this band of marriage indissoluble but by death, as far as man is immortal, his divorce is only separation. Body and soul shall come together again at the Resurrection. To establish the assurance of this God raised Lazarus and others here. Note from the text—I. THAT THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS WORLD PERFECT. 1. In the best things. (1) Knowledge. What thing do we know perfectly? One philosopher thinks he has dived at the bottom when he says he knows nothing but this, that he knows nothing; and yet another thinks he has expressed more knowledge by saying that

he knows not so much as that. (2) Faith. This imperfection is seen in the apostle's prayer for an increase of faith (Luke xvii. 5); in Christ's upbraidings (Matt. vi. 30; viii. 26); in Paul's congratulations and prayer for the Thessalonians (1 Thess. i. 2; iii. 10; 2 Thess. i. 3); in the expressions "rich in faith," "abound in faith," "measure of faith." Deceive not yourselves, then, that if you have faith you need no more. (3) That our hope is not perfect we see from James iv. 3. We cannot hope constantly because we do not pray aright; and to make a prayer a right prayer there must go so many circumstances as that the best man may suspect his best prayer. Whereas, ordinarily, a fly, the opening of a door, a memory of yesterday, a fear of to-morrow, a noise in the ear, a fancy in the brain, destroy prayer. (4) There is nothing perfect in our charity. There is no work so good as that we can look to God for thanks for it; none but has so much ill mingled with it that we need not bespeak God's mercy. 2. How this weakness appears in the action in the text. Lest we should attribute it only to weak persons, note that Martha as well as Mary comes also in the same voice of infirmity (ver. 32). Look upon—(1) Their faith. We cannot say as much as they did to any college of physicians; but the weakness of their faith lies in this, that they said so much and no more to Christ; and regard even that power to be derived from God and not inherent (ver. 22). Again, they relied so much upon His corporal presence. It was this that Christ diverted Mary from after His resurrection (chap. xx. 16). "Touch Me not—send thy thoughts whither I am going." Peter had another holy distemper upon this personal presence, "Depart from Me" (Luke v. 8). The sisters longed for Him, and Peter to be delivered from Him, both out of weakness and error, as do they who attribute too much or too little to Christ's presence in ordinances. To imprison Christ in *opere operato*, to conclude that where that action is done Christ must necessarily be is to err weakly with these sisters; but to banish Christ from those holy actions is to err with Peter. (2) So in their hope and their manner of expressing it. For they did not go; they sent—unlike Nicodemus, who came in person for his sick soul, and the centurion for his sick servant, and Jairus and the woman with the issue. That is not enough; we must bring Christ and our necessities nearer together. Then they made no request, but left an intimation to work on Christ; but I must not wrap up my necessities in general terms, but descend to particulars. As God is an accessible God He is open to receive thy smallest petitions, and as He is an inexhaustible God He cannot be pressed too much. Pray personally, rely not upon dead or living saints, and pray frequently and earnestly. (3) In their charity even towards their dead brother. To lament a dead friend is natural; but inordinate lamentation implies a worse state in him that is gone; and if we believe him in heaven to wish him here is uncharitable. 3. Yet for all these imperfections Christ doth not refuse or chide, but cherishes their piety. There is no form of building stronger than an arch, and yet an arch has declinations which even a flat roof has not. So our devotions do not the less bear up upright in the sight of God, because they have some declinations towards natural affections. All these infirmities of theirs multiply this consolation, that though God look upon the inscription, He looks upon the metal too; though He look that His image should be preserved in us, He looks in what earthen vessels this image is put by His own hand. II. As in spiritual things there is nothing perfect, so IN TEMPORAL THERE IS NOTHING PERMANENT. 1. The earth itself is in motion. 2. Consider the greatest bodies upon it—monarchies which one would think destiny might stare at and not shake; and the smallest bodies, the hairs of our head, which one would think destiny would hardly observe; and yet destiny or, to speak as a Christian, God, is no more troubled to make a monarchy ruinous than a hair grey; nay, nothing needs be done, the one will ruin and the other turn grey of itself. 3. In the elements there is no acquiescence, but a transmutation into one another; air condensed becomes water, and air rarefied becomes fire. 4. It is so in the conditions of men: a merchant condensed, packed up in a great estate, becomes a lord; and a merchant rarefied by a riotous son evaporates into nothing. And if there were anything permanent in the world, yet we gain nothing, because we cannot stay with it. 5. The world is a great volume, and man its index. Even man's body is an illustration of all nature. Even in its highest estates, as the temple of the Holy Ghost, it must perish. Conclusion: But as in spiritual things there is no perfectness, and yet God accepts our religious services, so, notwithstanding that all temporal things, God's noblest piece included, decays, yet God affords this body a resurrection. The Gentiles describe the sad state of death as one everlasting night; but to a Christian it is the day of death and the day of resurrection.

And looking at this we may invert the text and say, "Because Thou wast here our brother is not dead." For Christ is with the Christian in life, death, and the resurrection. (*J. Donne, D.D.*) *Salvation, not from suffering, but by it*:—I. THE LOWEST VIEW OF LIFE looks out upon it only as a hostelry, where every guest is to seize on so many of the good things exposed as the laws allow. This selfish hunt will take different directions according to the ruling appetite. But the characteristic mark on it all is that it disowns God. This system not only fails to provide for the chief internal necessity—viz., a religion; it fails to meet the external fact of suffering. That is a test of all philosophies and theories of life. It is useless to leave it out of the calculation; it forces its way back into every lot. Life does not become a problem till we taste of its bitterness. Whenever pain, bereavement, &c., come, that comfort-seeking, epicurean plan of living collapses, and the least that the man can then do is to fly to Zeno's porch and borrow some crumbs of frigid dignity that fall from the stoics table. II. ASCEND A STEP HIGHER. Here we find God to be acknowledged, but more through fear than devout submission. Providence had returned to the world from which unbelief had rejected Him; but the confession, "Thy will be done," is not so full as to include the giving up of the dearest idols, and there is the suspicion that here and there some sparrow or more precious thing may fall without the Father's notice. This state is met by suffering, the touchstone; how does it behave itself? Well, but not best. Soberly but not serenely. Some selfish preferences linger to mar the beauty of resignation—to keep back part of the souls trust, and so disturb the perfect peace of believing. There is the beginning of faith—too much to be thrown away, not enough to live by. This is precisely where Martha stands. There is a mixture of the strength and weakness of faith, perhaps of faith and superstition. She believed in the power and love of Jesus—that was her true faith—but she believed that it must operate in prolonging her brother's life, and was limited to His physical presence. That was the falsity and weakness of her faith. Jesus corrects it with, "Whosoever [anywhere] believeth on Me shall never die." III. Out of that state into A HIGHER ONE STILL Christ wishes to lift her and us. Where a holy soul will be felt to be of more value than any freedom from pain; when sympathy with Christ is valued more than having a human friend at our side. Saved by suffering, not from it, is the law of life revealed in Christ. Character depends on inward strength, but this strength has two conditions: it is increased only by being put forth, and tested only by resistance. So the spiritual character must enter into conflict, and stand in comparison with something formidable enough to be a standard of its power. 1. The ordinary conditions of a prosperous fortune furnishes no such standard. The favoured moral constitutions which ripen into sainthood under perpetual comfort are rare exceptions. Suffering in some form must put faith to the proof and purify it; what form God, who knows best, must determine. The sisters must see Lazarus die, Matthew must forsake all to follow the Master. How many of us take up Martha's plaint instead of, "Lord in these chastenings of friendly love Thou hast heen here—Thy will be done." And Christ shows three times over that the design here was that the disciples, the sisters, and the people, might believe. 2. In another class of moral experiences the principle has a direct application—in those who long more earnestly for rest than faithful submission. They have heard that there is joy in believing, and so believe for the sake of the joy, and this, though a nobler thirst than that of the senses, is tainted with selfishness and wanting in faith. Then, again, the mercenary tendency to offer to God your good works as a price for purchasing self-complacency needs to be watched. It defeats its own end. Faith never comes that way: it comes swiftest when you seek it as an end least. Seek purity, harmony with God, and peace in God's good time will come. Stillness is our needed sacrifice. Baffled and broken the soul must often be ere its immortal strength comes. Not from but by this suffering we shall be saved. 3. We may embrace all those instances in which we doubt whether some care was not omitted whereby the fatal blow might have been warded off When shall we learn that God takes the past into His secure keeping, and that even out of sorrows that we might have prevented, a spiritual benefit may be now drawn greater than their prevention. Vain cry, "Lord, if Thou hadst," &c. But to receive and bless Him in whatever robes of darkness, when He comes. Conclusion: 1. Suffering is disciplinary. 2. If our desires reach only after exemption from it, they are but half faithless. 3. The true conquest and peace of faith, as well as the solution of the mystery of sorrow, lie in our willingness to suffer, so far as it may bring us to the society of our Lord. (*Bp. Huntington.*) *The power of God to prevent*

death:—I. GOD IS ABLE TO PREVENT ANY PERSON DYING SO SOON AS HE DOES DIE. He preserved the lives of men much longer in former ages: but He could have prevented Methuselah dying at 969 had He pleased. He is able to preserve men from sickness, the common cause of death—and He does so often for seventy, eighty, or ninety years. And if men become sick He can raise them as He did Hezekiah. So with accidents, another cause of death. II. GOD NEVER DOES PREVENT MEN DYING AS SOON AS THEY DO DIE. He might have prevented Lazarus dying, yet He did not. And this holds in all cases; and no power can move Him when He chooses that any shall die. This we see in David's prayer for his little infant, in those of pious parents for theirs, and in those of the Church for good and useful men. III. WHY GOD DOES NOT PREVENT PERSONS DYING AS SOON AS THEY DO DIE. Because—1. He knows that their appointed time to die is come. "Is there not an appointed time," &c. 2. He sees it best for them to die then. He knows what will be the consequence of living, and takes them away from the evil to come. 3. He knows that it will be the best for the survivors. Many have done more good by dying than they would by living. How often has the death of a child resulted in the conversion of the parents! This was the reason of the death of Lazarus. 4. He has a supreme regard for His own glory. He displays a wisdom, goodness and sovereignty which surpasses that of all His intelligent creatures. Improvement. If God can preserve human life or cut it short as He pleases, then—1. It is proper to pray for the sick as long as the least spark of life remains. Neither young nor old ought to give up the hope of living; and God has wrought wonders in answer to prayer. 2. We ought never to pray for the preservation of life unconditionally. We ought to rejoice that we are in God's hands, who knows best. So Christ prayed conditionally in view of His tremendous sufferings—"Not My will." 3. All ought to carry about with them a sense that they are dying creatures. They know not what a day or an hour may bring forth. "Lord make me to know mine end." 4. Death commonly comes unexpected. We are ready to remember that God can preserve our lives as long as He pleases, but forget that He has an appointed time, and that time always comes suddenly. 5. None can enjoy life without becoming truly religious. Then whatever comes we shall be ready for the joy of our Lord. 6. Mourners have always reason to exercise unreserved submission to his bereaving hand. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *Restoration better than prevention*:—I. MARTHA SAW NOT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE DEATH AND BLESSEDNESS OF CHRIST'S SERVANTS. She had largely in her thought the Jewish idea of death as the disturber of fellowship. Truer to have said, "Thou hast been here and my brother has lived." Christ's influence goes to make men feel that they are citizens of heaven. The whole meaning of our life is in the future; death is the portal to that perfection. 1. We feel in our hearts that there is an inseparable connection between faith and knowledge. The relation is not complete here. We must die to know the right co-ordination of the two. 2. Aspiration and perfection are not equal here. In eternity demand and satisfaction are one. 3. How sundered are love and happiness here, where love and sorrow are fellows. In heaven measureless love will yield limitless gladness. 4. Power and opportunity are frequently divided. In heaven power and environment will be matched. We must die to realize the true correlation of our being with the spiritual universe. III. SHE DID NOT SEE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CHRIST'S DELAY AND THE GOOD OF ALL CONCERNED. Jesus was absent not that Lazarus might die, but that he might die in faith without sight. Christ might have checked the disease in Peræa, but His delay furthered the purposes of His love. 1. To educate their trust. 2. To prepare them for the actual work about to be wrought. 3. To reveal His glory more fully. 4. To make the deepest impression on the unbelieving. III. SHE DID NOT SEE AS WE DO NOW THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THEIR SUFFERING AND THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS. John shows us how the miracle was a distinct link in the chain of events that led to the death of Jesus. 1. They suffered because Christ was to suffer. As some on-rushing star sets up purturbations in other worlds that come within the range of its influence, so this great process of God in sacrifice draws into its vortex the lives of men. 2. They suffered because Christ must suffer, "Ought not Christ to suffer these things?" Ought not His disciples to share in the community of His sorrows? This is the explanation of pain and conflict. To see the relation between our pain and Christ's Cross is to be qualified to meet and conquer it. The fellowship of such suffering carries in its heart even now the sharing of His glory. (*J. Matthews.*) *Contingent events and providence*:—I. THERE IS A CLOSE ANALOGY BETWEEN THE FEELING HERE EXPRESSED AND THAT EXPERIENCED BY MOST BEREAVED PERSONS. How few afflictions which are

not made doubly afflictive by an *if*. If our friend had done this instead of that—if we had only foreseen. These thoughts make perfect resignation impossible. They come in between us and God, and bewilder in a maze of second causes which no man can thread or find repose in. II. IF THERE IS ROOM FOR THESE REFLECTIONS IN ANY, THERE IS ROOM FOR THEM IN EVERY CASE. Take any instance of death, except by constitutional decay, and you can always fix upon some circumstance which seemed the turning point. Only let danger be foreseen, and, humanly speaking, in nine cases out of ten deaths would be prevented. If a man knew he was going to catch a fever or meet with an accident, how he would avoid the dangerous localities. Calamities flow immediately from the shortness of human foresight. Could ocean storms be calculated or shifting currents mapped, there would be no shipwrecks. Here Divine Providence over-rules and moves in ways higher than ours. To say, therefore, "Had it been thus my brother or child had not died is, to complain of the ordinance of Divine Wisdom by which man is kept ignorant of the future. III. THIS PRINCIPLE APPLIES EQUALLY TO THE HAPPY PORTIONS OF OUR LIFE. Recovery, preservation, prosperity, depend equally on contingencies, which, when we look back, we see might have been otherwise. A choice which has led to the most fortunate issues was determined, not by foresight of the end, but by the most casual circumstances. Thus there is room for the *if* in our joys which we cannot number. IV. THE NECESSARY LIMITS OF HUMAN FORESIGHT INDICATE THE POINT ON WHICH WE CHIEFLY NEED TO PRACTICE CHRISTIAN SUBMISSION. Our ignorance is part of the Divine plan, and is essential to happiness. You murmur that you could not see a particular calamity so as to have prevented it: but then you would have to see all. This would make you a secondary providence in your own circle, and impose a weight of care which Omnipotence alone could sustain for a single day. V. THE CONDITION OF MORTAL LIFE IS SUMMED UP IN TWO WORDS—MAN'S DUTY AND GOD'S PROVIDENCE. In the hour of bereavement the question as to our faithfulness in the relation suspended will and ought to come up. When you can answer it to your satisfaction you have no ground for uneasiness. You did what you could. You had not Divine foresight: do not then torment yourself, because you were not in God's stead. Do your duty, and in the majority of instances it will lead to the outward results you desire. Obey nature's laws, and health will be the rule, disease the exception. But with all your care there is another system: that of Divine Providence, which has no law but eternal love. The decree has gone forth—"Ye shall have tribulation," and we need the discipline as pilgrims to detach us from the attractions by the way-side, and to fix our affections on things above. When God sees that we need this, vain are our anxieties and precautions. All that remains is to say, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemest to Him good." (*A. P. Peabody, D.D.*) *The consolations of Christ adapted to the state and character of His people* (text and ver. 32):—I. HOW MUCH SAMENESS THERE IS IN GRIEF. It is remarkable that two persons so different in turn of mind and feeling should both utter the same words. It shows how the heart when deeply moved is the same in all. The sisters were united in their affection to Lazarus and in their reliance on Jesus. Together they watched, sent for Christ, waited anxiously for His coming, fell into the dreary sadness which follows the first violence of grief, then greet Jesus as He comes too late in the same way. It is the voice of nature mingling its vain regrets with the resignation of simple faith. 1. There is the feeling that it *might* have been otherwise. We know not what detained Thee, perhaps we did not send, or the messenger did not reach Thee in time. Oh that the sickness had happened when Thou was in Jerusalem! Is it not thus that the heart speaks under every trying dispensation? If some measure had been adopted, or such an accident not happened, my brother had not died. However natural, is this not the very folly of unbelief conceiving Christ as limited by events which He Himself ordains? Nay, He might have answered, I might have been there; and though not I might have kept him alive, or being there might have let him die. Whatever comes is not accident, but His will. Be still and know that He is God. 2. That it *should* have been otherwise. We sent a special message, why linger and not make haste to help us—an instinctive complaint in a season of bereavement. It is hard to believe that God ordains it and does no wrong. You can give many reasons. How serviceable that valuable life might have been to God and man. But remember God has many purposes with which you are unacquainted. Wait patiently and you will see that it was for His glory. It may be that He had need of His services elsewhere. 3. That it was sincere, if melancholy, satisfaction in meeting with Jesus at last. He had not come at the time, in the way, for the purpose they

expected, and too late for their purpose, but still He had come for good, and they gratefully receive Him. Happy if you so meet the Saviour's advances. Like Rachel, you may refuse to be comforted, and like Jonah, when your gourd withers, you may be angry, and turn away when Christ comes. Beware of such moods. It is enough if He is with you to fill the aching void in your affections, and be to you instead of what you have lost—better than a thousand brothers. II. How MUCH VARIETY THERE IS IN GRIEF. The sisters differed in their sorrow as they did generally. Both regarded Christ with confidence and affection, but Martha showed it by active and Mary by quiet devotion. So now, when Martha received intimation of Christ's approach, she rose in haste impatient to meet Him; but Mary remained in the house absorbed in her grief; and when she went forth they said, "she goeth to the grave," &c., as though she, unlike Martha, could do nothing else. 1. Thus in different circumstances the same temper may be an advantage or a snare. Mary was never so occupied with an emotion of one subject as not to be ready for the call to another. This was a disadvantage when she was so hurried with this and that household care as to have no time to wait on the word of life: but it was an advantage now that she could shake off her depression and hasten to meet Christ. The same profound feeling, however, which made Mary an attentive listener made her the most helpless sufferer until Jesus sent specially to rouse her (ver. 28). 2. In the meeting the difference is equally characteristic. Martha is calm and collected enough to enter into argument, and at length is sufficiently self-possessed to make a formal declaration of her faith. Not so Mary—her heart is too full for many words, she cannot command the passion of her soul. She can but cast herself down weeping, and say (ver. 32). III. How MUCH COMPASS THERE IS IN THE CONSOLATION OF CHRIST, ADAPTED TO GRIEF OF EVERY MOULD AND MOOD. 1. Martha's distress admitted of discussion and discourse. Jesus spoke to her and led her to speak to Him, and though she understands Him not fully she is relieved by having laid on her Divine Friend the burden of her soul, and with her lightened heart she declares her entire acquiescence in Him (ver. 27). 2. Mary is differently affected and His sympathy is shown in a different way. He is much more profoundly moved. He does not reply in words, for her own were so few. Grief has choked her, and His own responsive sigh is more comforting than any promise. Jesus wept. Blessed mourner with whose tears thy Saviour mingles His own. With Martha Jesus reasoned: with Mary Jesus wept. 3. How confidently every Christian mourner can come to Him. He will give you the very cordial you need. He is a patient hearer if you have anything to say, and He will speak as you are able to hear it, and if you cannot collect your thoughts, and your heart is hot within you—remember that with these groanings which cannot be uttered the Spirit maketh intercession for you. (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*) **Whatsoever thou wilt ask of God.**—*The Master advocate:*—This is our comfort, that Christ is all in all with the Father, and may have what He will of Him. What need we of any other "master of requests" than Christ. If David will hear Joab for Absalom, and Herod Blastus for the Tyrians, what may not we hope? (*J. Trapp.*) *Death defeated by prayer:*—At a certain time Luther received an express, stating that his bosom friend and co-worker in the reformation, Philip Melancthon, was lying at the point of death; upon which information he immediately set out upon the journey of some hundred and fifty miles, to visit him, and upon his arrival, he actually found all the distinctive features of death; such as the glazed eye, the cold clammy sweat, and insensible lethargy, upon him. Upon witnessing these sure indications of a speedy dissolution, as he mournfully bent over him, he exclaimed with great emotion, "Oh, how awful is the change wrought upon the visage of my dear brother!" On hearing this voice, to the astonishment of all present, Melancthon opened his eyes, and looking up into Luther's face, remarked, "Oh, Luther, is this you? Why don't you let me depart in peace?" Upon which Luther replied, "Oh no, Philip, we cannot spare you yet." Luther then turned away from the bed, and fell upon his knees, with his face towards the window, and began to wrestle with God in prayer, and to plead with great fervency, for more than an hour, the many proofs recorded in Scripture of His being a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God; and also how much he stood in need of the services of Melancthon, in furthering that cause, in which the honour and glory of God's great name, and the eternal welfare of unnumbered millions of immortal souls, were so deeply interested; and that God should not deny him this one request, to restore him the aid of his well-tried brother Melancthon. He then rose up from prayer, and went to the bedside again, and took Melancthon by the hand. Upon which Melancthon again remarked, "Oh,

dear Luther, why don't you let me depart in peace?" To which Luther again answered, "No, no, Philip, we cannot possibly spare you from the field of labour yet." Luther then requested the nurse to go and make him a dish of soup, according to his instructions. Which being prepared, was brought to Luther, who requested his friend Melancthon to eat of it. Melancthon again asked him, "Oh, Luther, why will you not let me go home, and be at rest?" To which Luther replied as before, "Philip, we cannot spare you yet." Melancthon then exhibited a disinclination to partake of the nourishment prepared for him. Upon which Luther remarked, "Philip, eat, or I will excommunicate you." Melancthon then partook of the food prepared, and immediately grew better, and was speedily restored to his wonted health and strength again, and laboured for years afterwards with his coadjutors in the blessed cause of the reformation. Upon Luther's arrival at home, he narrated to his beloved wife Catherine the above circumstances, and added, "God gave me my brother Melancthon back in direct answer to prayer;" and added further, with patriarchal simplicity, "God on a former occasion gave me, also, you back, Kata, in answer to my prayer." **Thy brother shall rise again.**—*Earthly relationship not destroyed by death*:—There was that in the tie of blood which death was powerless to alter. Many an aching heart would find comfort, if it were assured of this. Have we lost them for ever as ours, those loved ones—lost all the claim upon their special answering love, which those old earthly names, "brother," "sister," and the like, gave us? Is the Communion of Saints one monotonous dead level of spiritual relationship? Or are the ties of earth—whether ties of blood, or ties of friendship, or ties of love—not abolished, but transfigured, in that mysterious world beyond death? On the warrant of these words of Jesus I dare to believe that they will be glorified, not destroyed; that that, which more than anything else makes earth bright and worth having, will be at least one of the lesser luminaries of heaven. Nay, even if we had no such words of Jesus as these, I could never bring myself to believe that God would so mock us, as to give us these relationships and bid us be faithful to them, only to tear our hearts in pieces with grief—grief which must necessarily be intense in proportion to our fidelity to them—when the cruel hour of death arrives to dissolve them. It is sad enough that they should be even suspended, through "ignorance of a common tongue"—their destruction would be intolerable to us. As the seed is transformed into the plant—as the natural body is transfigured into the spiritual body—so will the earthly relationship be glorified into its heavenly counterpart. (*D. J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Funeral sermon*:—Let us survey—I. THE LIFE OF THE DEPARTED. Note—1. His affection as a relative. 2. His attachment as a friend. 3. His grace as a Christian. 4. His fidelity as a minister. II. THE DEATH OF THE DEPARTED. It was—1. Unexpected. 2. Tranquil. 3. Gainful to Him. He has—(1) Full vision of Christ—of those around the throne. (2) Full image. (3) Full enjoyment. 4. Loss to you—as relative, friend, Christian, minister. III. HIS RESURRECTION. 1. To an immortal life. 2. In a superior state. 3. For the noblest purposes. This resurrection is—(1) Possible. (2) Reasonable. (3) Certain. (4) Desirable—(*a*) To see his bereaved kindred. (*b*) To meet his sorrowing friends. (*c*) To present his beloved people. (*d*) To enjoy his incarnate God. (*J. Judson.*) *The identity of the earthly and the heavenly life*:—"Thy brother"—the very being that had died—the same in feeling, mind, sentiment. This is the Christian idea of immortality. The next life is an unbroken continuation of this as regards—I. OUR PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE. Why should this be closed by the opening of the soul's prison gates? So far from this it hardly admits of doubt that the direction which the mind has assumed in the obscurity and distractions of the world will determine its favourite course when for darkness there shall be light, and for hindrances helps, in the case of, *e.g.*, the philosopher, the scientist, the historian. II. OUR ÆSTHETIC NATURE. No attribute of the Creator is more richly manifested than His love of beauty. For all refined tastes He has furnished nutriment with the same bounty as that with which He has provided for our lower needs. We trace God none the less in the beauty that flows from human hands. Man, in the pride of his art, and at the zenith of his power is the copyist of the Creator; and if I can be glad and worshipful in the presence of the copies, how much more in the better life shall I be sensible of their archetypes. And when St. John lays all nature under contribution, and piles splendour upon splendour to shadow forth the glories of the new Jerusalem, I know the very power of painting those gorgeous forms is an authentic prophecy of more of beauty in heaven than heart has conceived. III. OUR CAPACITY FOR FRIENDSHIP. This capacity far

transcends its earthly uses, and our power of enjoying it here. The most tender home love only intensifies and enlarges the power of loving. With this proclivity to form attachments we are saddened, not only by the death-thinned ranks of our friends, but by the multitude of the living who win our dear regard and then seldom come within our reach—friends of our travels, *e.g.*, and friends in distant cities. Why are we made capable of loves so strong, and yet so evanescent? To lay up treasures for the heavenly life, providing friends that shall be ours for ever. There will be in heaven time enough and room enough for all. (*A. P. Peabody, D.D.*) **I know he shall rise again in the resurrection.**—*Grace imagined less* :—The grace was so great that Martha does what we all often do—imagines it less: as when you slip a sovereign into a boy's hand on his birthday, and he imagines it a shilling, having no thought of a gift so great. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *A near benefit not understood* :—This passage of the history may remind us of somewhat similar in the conversation with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well. Neither does Martha here, nor that woman, understand the nearness of the benefit. In each case, half-despondingly, they put it off. Yet to the one, speaking only of a distant future, and saying, "I know that Messias cometh: when He is come He will tell us all things;" the Lord suddenly rejoins, "I that speak unto thee am He." And so here to the other, who can think of nothing nearer, nothing better, than the remote general resurrection, the Lord likewise rejoins, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Each has but the vague, inoperative idea of the final good: He speaks to each of an even present blessing. (*G. J. Browne, M.A.*) *Our treatment of the promises* :—We do with the promises often as a poor old couple did with a precious document, which might have cheered their old age had they used it according to its real value. A gentleman stepping into a poor woman's house saw framed and glazed upon the wall a French note for a thousand francs. He said to the old folks, "How came you by this?" They informed him that a poor French soldier had been taken in by them and nursed until he died, and he had given them that little picture when he was dying as a memorial of him. They thought it such a pretty souvenir that they had framed it, and there it was adorning the cottage wall. They were greatly surprised when they were told that it was worth a sum which would be quite a little fortune for them if they would but turn it into money. Are we not equally unpractical with far more precious things? Have you not certain of the words of your great Lord framed and glazed in your hearts, and do you not say to yourselves, "They are so sweet and precious"? and yet you have never turned them into actual blessing—never used them in the hour of need. You have done as Martha did when she took the words, "Thy brother shall rise again," and put round about them this handsome frame, "in the resurrection at the last day." Oh that we had grace to turn God's bullion of gospel into current coin, and use them as our present spending money. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **I am the Resurrection and the Life.**—*The Resurrection* :—All the titles of our Lord are names of power. They express His nature, perfection, or prerogatives; what they declare He is. They are shadows of a Divine substance. He who is Very Life raised Himself from the dead: "I am the Resurrection." On the first day of the week His glorious soul returned to His pure flesh, and His manhood, whole and perfect, through the power of His Godhead, arose of His own will. He came back the very same, and yet the same no more. The dishonour of His holy passion had passed away, but its tokens still were there. And as in body, so in soul. Death had no more dominion over Him, yet He was full of sympathy, learned by dying. All the depths of His human experience were in Him still. "He learned obedience by the things which he suffered;" and the ineffable mystery of His three and thirty years of sorrow rose with Him from the grave. Wherefore this Divine name, as it reveals the power of His own resurrection, so it is the pledge of ours. It is a pledge to us of many joys; but chiefly of three Divine gifts. 1. The first is a perfect newness of body and soul. This very body shall be deathless and glorious as the body of His glory when He arose from the dead. And so, too, of the soul. It shall be still more glorious, even as the spirit is above the flesh. The more we know of ourselves, the more incredible, if I may so speak of a very blessedness, this promise seems. To be without sin, what else is heaven? And can it ever be that we who brought sin with our life-blood into the world—who have fallen and soiled ourselves through and through with wilful evil—that we shall be one day clean as the light, and white as the driven snow? Yet this is His pledge to us. 2. Another gift pledged to us is the perfect restoration of all His brethren in His kingdom (chap. xvii. 24; xiv. 2, 3). We shall be "with Him." We shall behold Him as He is; He will behold us as we are: He

in the perfect sameness of His person; we in ours. What, then, means this unbelieving Christian world, when it asks, Shall we then recognize each other? Will not they all know Him as He them, and all know each other as He knows each? The law of perfect recognition is inseparable from the law of perfect identity. Our individual consciousness must be eternal. We should not be what we are to ourselves, if we were not so to others. The kingdom of God in glory is the perfection of His kingdom in grace, in which every several soul here tried, chastened, and purified, shall be there blessed, crowned and sainted—the same in person, changed only to perfection. And more than this. The perfect restitution which shall be in the kingdom of the resurrection will bring back, not only perfect mutual recognition, but the restoration of all pure and consecrated bonds. 3. This title pledges to us an immortal kingdom. The Resurrection has given back to us an inheritance in the paradise of God, where there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, of which the first creation, even in its perfection, was only an imperfect shadow. In that true paradise there shall be no seasons nor vicissitudes, no sweat of the face nor hard toil for bread. An everlasting noontide shall be there; an endless spring in the newness of unfading joy, a perpetual autumn in the ripeness of its gifts. There shall be "the tree of life bearing twelve manner of fruits"; all joy and all delight for every capacity of man; reward for every toil, and health for every wound, after the manifold trial of every soul, in the Israel of God. (*Archdeacon Manning.*) *Life everlasting:*—After the resurrection comes life everlasting. "I am the Life." 1. This life and the life to come are not two, but one and the same. Death is not the ending of one, and resurrection the beginning of another, but through all there runs one imperishable life. A river which plunges into the earth, is buried for awhile, and then bursts forth more mightily and in a fuller tide, is not two, but one continuous stream. The light of to-day and the light of to-morrow are not two, but one living splendour. Night is but a veil between the light and us. So with life and death. The life of the soul is immortal, an image of God's own eternity. It lives on in sleep; it lives on through death; it lives even more abundantly, and with fuller and mightier energy. 2. Another great law here revealed is, that as we die, so we shall rise; as there is no new beginning of our life, so there is no new beginning of our character. We shall all carry with us into the eternal world the very self which we have here stamped and moulded, or distorted and branded—the renewed image of God, or the image of the evil one. Our life from first to last teaches us this lesson; it is one continuous whole, gathering up itself through all its course, and perpetuating its earliest features in its latest self: the child is in the boy, the boy is in the man; the man is himself for ever. 3. The resurrection will make each one perfect in his own several characters. Nay, even at death it shall be unfolded into a new measure of fulness. Our character is our will; for what we *will*, we *are*. Our will contains our whole intention; it sums up our spiritual nature; it contains what we call the tendency of our character: for the will gives the bias to the right or to the left; as we will, so we incline. Now this tendency, both for good and evil, is here imperfect; but it will be there fulfilled. Here it is hindered; the wicked are restrained by truth and grace, by laws and punishments, by fear and shame, by interest and the world; the good are hindered by sin and temptation, by their own infirmities and faults. But there all restraints shall be taken away, and all aids shall be supplied. It is both an awful and consoling thought. What sinners are now in measure, they shall then be in its fulness. So likewise with the faithful: what they have striven to be, they shall be made. God's grace shall perfect what they had here desired. Lessons—1. How dangerous is the least sin we do! Every act confirms some old tendency, or develops a new one. 2. How precious is every means of grace. (*Ibid.*) *The Resurrection and the Life:*—I. THE CHARACTER. "I am the Resurrection," &c. Christ is this. 1. As it is by Him that the doctrines of the resurrection and eternal life are revealed. None had a knowledge of the Resurrection, and there were only confused notions of immortality before Christ came. He taught these truths with the greatest clearness, and illustrated and proved them by raising others, and mostly by His own resurrection. This act of His was to extend His influence over the world and to the end of time. 2. As He has the power by which they are bestowed. Martha admitted the general fact; but Christ goes on to affirm that by His own power He could raise her dead brother when and how He pleased, when Martha came to the conclusion that He was the Messiah. In this assertion we see the supreme dignity of Christ. "As the Father raiseth up," &c. The miracles at Nain of Jarius' daughter, and here at the last day, prove Christ to be the Master of

Eternity, King of kings, and Lord of lords. II. THE PROMISE. 1. The characters to whom it is comprehensively directed. "He that believeth," &c. (1) The necessity of faith. It is the turning-point in your immortality. Those who do not believe have no title to this and the other promises which make eternal life to depend upon faith. (2) What have we to believe? Christ, in all the essential points of His character—Divinity, atonement, &c. 2. The particular application of the promise to the circumstances of those to whom it is addressed. (1) "Though he were dead." He who has believed, but is now in the grave, shall be restored to life. "I, who am the Resurrection," &c., will not allow him to remain in that narrow house for ever. Death itself shall die. We mourn not as those who are without hope. (2) "Whosoever liveth." He first goes and gives hope to the dead, and then He says of the living believer, "he shall never die." What is death? The consequence of sin? The sins of the believer are pardoned. The effect of a curse? The curse from the believer is removed. The stroke is not in vengeance, but in love. III. THE APPEAL. "Believest thou this?" Christ is desirous of bringing the whole to bear on personal experience. What is your answer? If we do believe this—1. We shall not mourn improperly for those who have gone, but have comfort concerning our departed friends. 2. It will be our principal security in the event of our own departure. 3. It will give the hope of a happy reunion on the day of final restoration. 4. The rejection of this testimony will be a cause of condemnation and eternal despair. (*J. Parsons.*) *Christ the Resurrection and the Life*:—1. Christ's greatest utterance on death was spoken on the first occasion on which its dark question had come closely to His own soul. Elsewhere He had gone to meet it; here it had come to meet Him in that inner circle of friendship, and had gained complete possession. 2. The two mighty questions—What is death? Can it rend the friendships of life?—confronted the Redeemer; and the miracle was His answer. It showed that there was in Him a life which death had no power to destroy, and that death had not sundered Lazarus from Jesus or his sisters. It had made the ties of affection stronger than before, and had not quenched one faculty of his being. I. OUR LIFE IN CHRIST IS A BATTLE; THROUGH DEATH IT RISES INTO A VICTORY. We carry within us our perpetual foe, and a thousand outward forces tend to quench the love of Christ within. This struggle is with death, for sin is death. The act of dying is but the outward and visible sign of this constant struggle. But in this last scene the apparent victim is conqueror; the life-long fight is finished, and the victory won. The life Christ gives demands a resurrection for its completion, and a resurrection in Christ makes death the fulness of life in victory. II. OUR LIFE IN CHRIST IS A HOPE; BY DEATH IT RISES INTO ITS CONSUMMATION. The Christian's hope is to see Christ, and be with Him, and like Him. From the earliest dawn of the new life that desire is kindled; and it deepens until it colours every aspiration, and finds its whole heaven in "absent from the body," &c. To the first disciples the storms that swept over the lake had often been things of terror; but after Christ has calmed them every storm would seem holy with the memory of His presence. The desert hath oft seemed a strange, unfriendly region; but after Christ had fed the multitudes there, it would be sacred with the memory of the Saviour's pity. Mount Tabor had long looked stern, but the memory of Christ's unveiled glory there transformed it into a temple. And so it has ever been. The felt presence of Jesus has transfigured earth's gloomiest places, poured a light into prisons, diffused peace through the cruel tortures of the rack, filled the martyr's soul with the dawn of paradise. Where Christ is is heaven. But this hope demands a resurrection. Here our visions are transient and partial; and until the veil of the body be rent, we shall not see Jesus as He is. III. OUR LIFE IN CHRIST IS A SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP: BY DEATH IT BECOMES PERFECT AND ETERNAL. No man can be constrained by the love of Christ without feeling that henceforth he is bound by new and holy ties to "the whole family in heaven and earth." It was just the depth and power of that fellowship which, in the first disciples, startled the world as a new thing. The world might crush the men, but it could not touch the fellowship; it might try to break up their union with fire and sword, but, as apostle and martyr passed away, the brethren who remained said only that they had gone to the earlier home, and were now waiting in the Father's house the reunion. And in these days the fellowship of spiritual life is as real and powerful, and demands a resurrection. Death seems the great divider. No friendship here is perfect, no sympathy complete, no love ever reaches the fulness of which it dreams. The constant longing for complete communion is the soul's great outcry for the resurrection day. And here

again Christ, who is the life of our fellowship, gives us the pledge of its rising. In restoring Lazarus to his home, He showed that the ties that bind a brother to a sister are, when spiritual, among the things which shall rise again. In His words of farewell, He promises a Father's house where we shall meet again; and in the forty days He showed that our communion shall rise from death, having lost nothing but its infirmity, and clothed in a beauty and a blessedness which we must die to know. The hands for whose "vanished touch" we wept in agony shall be clasped again; the voices that grew still shall be heard again, only purified from the notes of sorrow and resonant with the praises of the Lamb. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *Christ the Resurrection and the Life*:—The "Resurrection" of the body; the "Life" of the soul. I. CHRIST AS PROPHET, BY HIS TEACHING AND MIRACLES, HAS REVEALED RESURRECTION AND LIFE. Many have stood beside an open grave and felt obliged to ask the question, Shall we ever see our friend again? Nature can give no satisfying answer, and reason can only form conjectures and suggest probabilities. But amid the silence of nature and the helplessness of reason, a voice has spoken and a light was shone from heaven, for Christ has "brought life and immortality to light." The great fact He clearly revealed in words—"The hour is coming," &c.—and in His works of raising. No one ever died in the presence of the Prince of Life, and no dead body ever remained dead when He approached it. II. CHRIST AS PRIEST HAS REDEEMED HIS PEOPLE FROM SIN AND PURCHASED FOR THEM ETERNAL LIFE. The only cause of death is sin. That has exposed us to Divine wrath, and brought upon us the sentence of death. "The wages of sin is death;" and those wages must be paid. But Christ has paid them by the shedding of His precious blood. The strength of sin is the law, and the law has been completely satisfied by the sacrifice of Calvary. In proof that His satisfaction was perfect, Christ rose. God sent His angel to roll away the stone, and set our Surety free. Believing in Christ, our sins are taken from us and reckoned to His account. And if sin be taken away, all is taken away that can make death terrible. Death now comes to a believer, not as an executioner of the broken law, but as the messenger of heavenly peace. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me," &c. III. CHRIST AS KING GIVES HIS PEOPLE THE VICTORY OVER DEATH, AND BRINGS THEM AT LAST INTO THE ACTUAL POSSESSION OF ETERNAL LIFE. His own victory over the grave is a proof and pledge of ours. As our representative, He encountered the king of terrors in his own dark domain; and though He continued under the power of death for a time, yet He saw no corruption, and came forth a Conqueror. In this victory we are destined to share by living union to Him; and therefore, in our coming conflict, we can say, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory," &c. And the reason of it is, not only because He died and rose, but also because He is alive for evermore; and not only alive, but invested with all power in heaven and earth. "He must reign," &c.; and therefore "death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed," like the rest. (*John Thomson, D.D.*) *Christ the Resurrection and the Life*:—I. THE RESURRECTION. Note—1. The authority with which these words are spoken. "I am," not "I will be," the instrument at some future time, but the thing itself. Surely no creature could speak thus. He speaks just as a king would speak to whom it never occurred that any one should doubt of his royalty, or that he needed to vaunt of his power. The words assume a supreme and essential power over life and death. His was the original gift of life; His the right to dissolve its organisation, and to confer it again; and, therefore, He only could be the opener of the world of graves. This is the exclusive prerogative of Godhead. Man's power is mighty, but it stops short of this. He can from a fossil bone construct a massive elephant, and, with Promethian ambition, he can shape its features faultlessly, and by clock-work or galvanism simulate life; but he cannot breathe the living fire. "Am I God," said the frightened king, "to kill and to make alive?" The resurrection is a marvel and a mystery till we bring in the thought of God. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that *God*," &c. 2. But not only do the words affirm Christ's divinity, but that through Him only resurrection came to man. (1) Resurrection implies death, and death was not among the original arrangements of the universe. It came in after the "very good" had been pronounced. There must needs be, therefore, some provision to counteract its effects, and to restore the forfeited heritage of immortality to man. This has been secured by the vicarious atonement of Jesus. He bore the penalty on the cross, and, through death, destroyed Him who had the power of death. Christ is the Resurrection, therefore its Source and Spring, Author and Finisher. When He emerged from the tomb, He brought life and immortality with Him.

The pearls of the deep sea, awaiting the plunge of the diver, the treasures before lying in the dark mine, were by Him seized and brought up to the light of day. (2) But we must not limit the import of our term, and exclude the idea of a spiritual resurrection—not only a raised body, but a soul bursting from the tomb of its corruption, and blooming into newness of life. It is remarkable that, although all men inherit immortality, the future of the wicked is never dignified with the name of life. Everlasting contempt and destruction are the terms which Scripture uses. "They shall not see life." A sinner breathes in physical, thinks in intellectual, feels in emotional, but is destitute of spiritual life. But the Christian becomes, by faith in Christ, "dead unto sin, but alive unto God"—"passes from death into life." II. THE LIFE. Christ is "the true God and Eternal Life," and His culminating promise is "even eternal life." What is this? 1. Conscious life. In all ages men have bewildered themselves by speculations as to the mode of their future existence. Some have taken refuge in dark materialism; others have held to transmigration of souls. Their inability to conceive of the spirit existing apart from the body was at the root of it all; and modern theorizers, perplexed by the same, have endeavoured to get out of it by teaching that the soul shall sleep till the body shall rise. But I am not disposed to give grim death an advantage over the Diviner part of man. If for ages He can paralyse the soul, then Christ has gained only a partial triumph. When Paul had "a desire to depart," &c., was it "for better" that his mighty mind should cease its thinking, his heart be still, and his energies be powerless for a long cycle of years? Far better a protracted existence on earth. He knew full well that the moment he was released he would be in conscious enjoyment of Christ. The paradise of believers is like the heaven it adjoins, undeluged with a wave of woe. The dungeon of the impenitent is like the hell which it approximates, unvisited with one ray of hope. There is no human soul from the days of Adam that is not alive to-day. 2. Social life. Heaven is not a solitude; it is a peopled city, in which there are no strangers, no homeless, no poor. "It is not good for man to be alone" means something deeper than the family tie: it is an essential want which the Creator in His highest wisdom has impressed on the noblest of His works. The idea of sociality is comprehensive of the idea of the fulness of life. That is not life where the hermit drags out a solitary existence. All kinds of life tend to companionship, from the buzzing insect cloud up to man. Not only, therefore, did Christ pray that those who had been given Him should be with Him, but they are to come to "the general assembly of the firstborn," &c. Take comfort, then, your dear ones are only lost to present sight. (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*) *Christ the Resurrection and the Life*:—1. The terms are not synonymous. When Christ says "I am the Life," He claims an attribute of God. None but God is "the Life," and can impart it. "I am the Resurrection" implies that He can keep life when given, and restore it after it is lost. These powers measure the difference between the finite and the infinite. Of the myriad of insects that flutter in the sunshine, or that the microscope reveals in a drop of water, where is the man that with all his art can create so much as one? Much more hopeless to work in the atmosphere of the grave. 2. Note that Christ does not say "I produce," or "I confer." The text is a member of a magnificent series of "I am's," and the quality claimed is not anything that can be separated from Christ; it is not what He has, but what He is. The sun does not need to go anywhere for light, nor the ocean for water. "As the Father hath life in Himself," &c. I. Christ as THE RESURRECTION, or the restorer of lost life of every kind, not merely of the body. 1. Of the life forfeited by transgression. "The wages of sin is death." (1) It is a dismal thing to know this. It is as if a person, feeling breathless at times, were on describing his symptoms to be told by a physician that he was suffering from heart disease. (2) It is more terrible to know that it ought to be so, that he deserves it. Can anything be more bitter than when through meanness a man deserves the social reproach he gets? Yes; the consciousness of loathsomeness in the sight of God. (3) But the "gift of God is eternal life," &c. United to Christ by faith we get the blessing as He bore the curse. You may say that such deliverance is only partial, that it is a worse thing to deserve death than to suffer it. A substitute may deliver us from death, but not from the disgrace of having deserved it. Granted; but God will never remind the pardoned sinner of his sin, and it will not diminish the cordiality of his reception in heaven. He will be covered with Christ's righteousness. 2. Of a life of purity, order, and holy beauty. Can it be necessary to prove that such a resurrection is needed? May we not find in a little child something to condemn us?

And the first effect of our receiving Christ is to become as little children, having their purity without their weakness, their simplicity without their ignorance, their trust without their forgetfulness. Or have you not been shamed in reading the life of some saintly man or woman. We cannot of ourselves soar to these heights; but Jesus, the fountain of goodness, has come to restore this life too. But why confine ourselves to human excellence? To know what it is to live study the life of Jesus. "Fairer than the children of men." This life may be ours. "I live, yet not I," &c. "When Christ who is our life," &c. 3. Of holy fellowship with God. We have left our Father's house and lost all liking for it. But there can be no happiness for us in the "far off" country. This life is not to be regained by thinking reverently of God, or poring over other men's love to Him in hope of getting into the same current. In welcoming Christ, and in that only, can I say, "O Lord, Thou art my God." II. Christ as THE LIFE. It is His office to continue what He restores, "Whosoever liveth," &c. 1. If Jesus simply gave you life, and then left you to sink or swim, there can be no doubt what the issue would be. "The life that we now live in the flesh" must be "by the faith of the Son of God." 2. He will watch and guard your faith, as He did Simon's, that it fail not. 3. Beyond the grave the gift assumes a new character of glory, worthy of Him from whom it comes. The soul is made perfect in holiness, and the body will be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. It is no longer a struggling but a steady life, like that of a plant which has at last found its proper soil and congenial atmosphere. When you think of eternal life think of—(1) The home of the soul and body. (2) The intellect ever advancing in clearness and mastery. (3) The emotions now in perfect order, growing perpetually in strength and sensibility. (4) A love for ever deepening its roots and enlarging its compass. (5) The best fellowships yielding for ever new harvests of enjoyment. Think of all this. And you have but the dimmest shadow of what "eye hath not seen," &c. III. IF ALL THIS BE TRUE, IS IT NOT STRANGE THAT CHRIST IS NOT MORE WIDELY WELCOMED? What do men prize so much as life? "All that a man hath," &c. But for what life? For his animal life—the mere link between body and soul? What a strange thing that the higher you go in the scale of life the less do men care for it! And when you reach the highest life the indifference becomes aversion. "Ye will not come unto Me," &c. (*W. G. Blaikie, D.D.*) *Christ, both Resurrection and Life:*—There is a glorious harmony in the words "Resurrection and Life." Either of them alone would be insufficient, combined they are divinely satisfying. If Christ had said only, "I am the Resurrection," without promising to bestow a new spiritual life, He would have told us merely of misery. To rise again into the life we have now, with its struggle, and care, and failure—to repeat it age after age—what were this but perpetual conflict and everlasting unrest? Or if He had said merely, "I am the Life," without saying "I am the Resurrection," we should still be of all men most miserable. For if He had given us new spiritual life in the love of God, without raising us after death, we should have been haunted with grand hopes and infinite aspirations that were destined never to be fulfilled. Christ combines the two, and therefore He tells us, There is in me a life which, by dying, rises to its perfection; and therefore death is no more death, but resurrection to the fulness of life. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *The mystery of the resurrection:*—How shall the dead arise is no question of my faith; to believe only possibilities is not faith but mere philosophy. Many things are true in divinity which are neither inducible by reason or confirmable by sense, and many things in philosophy confirmable by sense yet not inducible by reason. (*Sir T. Browne.*) *Natural analogies of the resurrection:*—In New Sharon, in the state of Michigan, a child of great promise sickened and died. The little one, all beautiful, robed for the grave, was laid in its coffin, and in its little hand was placed a bouquet of flowers—the central flower of which was an unopened bud of the "Rose of Sharon." On the morning for burial the coffin lid was removed for the sorrowing weepers to take their farewell look at the peaceful dead; when, lo! that bud had become a full-blown rose, while grasped in the dead child's hand. That beautiful flower seemed to say, Weep not for the spirit that is gone, in heaven it now appears, and is "for ever with the Lord. (*J. Wilson.*) *Christ lives:*—One of the women encountered the vanquished army returning to Medina. "Where is my father?" asked she of the soldiers. "He is slain," was the reply. "And my husband?" "Slain also." "And my son?" "Slain, with them," said they. "But Mahomet?" "He is here alive," replied the warriors. "Very well," said she, apostrophising the prophet; "since thou livest still, all our misfortunes are as nothing." (*Lamartine.*) *The philosophy of Christian hope:*—I.

THE BASIS OF THIS HOPE. How shall man be quite sure of a life beyond this? 1. By the resurrection of Christ. Christian hope differs from all other in that it rests neither upon any instinct of the heart, any inference from reason, or any promise sent from heaven, but upon a person. One is set before us who, born into the world, and living our chequered human life, has achieved victory over death. It is conceivable that this is not sufficient to assure us of our resurrection. We might argue that it is an exceptional distinction merited by a perfect character. And if Christ were only man the argument would have force. But His incarnation gives its proper significance to His resurrection. He is not a unit of the race singled out for favour, but one who, as equal with the Father, has power and right to take up the manhood into God. He took our nature, and therefore in all He does and is our nature has a share, that He might redeem, purify, exalt it. He did not merely reverse the sentence of death by an arbitrary annulling of it, but by the actual victory of life over death in the same nature which had become subject unto death. He thus became "a quickening Spirit." 2. By the communication of the life of Christ to all who believe in Him. (1) Jesus is the Resurrection because He is the Life, and He imparts that life to us. "Because I live," &c. There is a sense in which the resurrection is begun here, because the germ of it is found in every renewed nature. A power has been put forth on man which must issue in His glorification. The resurrection, though sometimes described as a gift, is also to be regarded as the necessary development of the work of grace (chap. v. 26; vi. 57). Of the twofold life of the Spirit here and the body hereafter, Christ is the source (chap. x. 17), and by communion with Him only is it sustained (chap. vi. 51–54). That which is spiritual is in its very nature eternal. Death is but as the episode of a sleep. So essential is the connection between the life eternal and the resurrection that there are only two places in the New Testament in which the resurrection of the wicked is mentioned (chap. v. 29; Acts xxiv. 15). (2) Sometimes the same truth is associated with the indwelling in our hearts of a Divine Person (Col. i. 27; Rom. viii. 11). The resurrection follows from such inhabitation; those bodies, in which He has vouchsafed to make His tabernacle, are not destined to be left in corruption. If Christ sent the Holy Ghost to make our bodies His temple, then that Divine Visitant sheds His sanctifying influences upon the whole man. Every member of the body, eye, ear, hand, foot, all have been consecrated to God's service. One part of our nature is not left to curse and barrenness whilst the dew of heaven falls richly on the other. II. SUCH A HOPE, CONSISTENT IN ITSELF AND SATISFYING THE DEEPEST NEEDS OF OUR NATURE, ESSENTIALLY DIFFERS FROM AND TRANSCENDS ALL PRE-CHRISTIAN HOPE. 1. What was the hope of the wisest pagan philosophers? At most a bare hope of continuance after death. But Christ gives us now the life that cannot die in the body that the body may be consecrated to God. Our souls and bodies are His, filled and pervaded with His life, and can never, therefore, perish. 2. What was the hope of the Jew? Kindling with ecstasy it rose above time and death, and laid its hand upon God with the conviction that He who was the Life of His children would be their portion for ever. But the Jew had still the horror of death unvanquished, of the grave from which none had ever returned. The Christain is partaker of the Life of God which in human flesh overcame death, and therefore has the sure pledge that he will overcome. III. THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION COMMENDS ITSELF AS IN HARMONY WITH THE FACTS OF OUR NATURE. All experience shows how close is the union between soul and body. So far as observation extends, the material organism is destroyed by death, and yet as by an imperious necessity it enters into all our conceptions of another life: we would not be "unclothed but clothed upon." Does not all thought become action only through the instrumentality of the body? and does not the body express the beauty or ugliness of the unseen dweller within? How often, even after the soul has fled, there remains on the cold features of the corpse the living impress of that soul, as if it disputed the empire of death? It is almost as if the body were waiting for the return of its tenant? IV. THE SPECULATIVE DIFFICULTIES WHICH BESET THE DOCTRINE. "How are the dead raised up," &c. The particles of which the body is composed may be scattered, and enter into the formation of plants, animals, men. How can each particle be disentangled and brought together again? We put no limits on the power of God. But such a process is as unnecessary as improbable. The same body may be raised though no single particle of the present body be found in it. What is necessary to the identity of the body? Not the identity of its material particles. These are in a state of perpetual flux. The body of our childhood is not the body of our youth, &c., and yet it is the same body in patriarch

and infant. The only thing that we need to be assured is that the principle of identity, which governs the formation of the body in this life, shall govern it at the Resurrection. What, then, is this thing that remains ever the same, which never perishes in all the changes of the material organism? It escapes all our investigations; we only see its manifestations; but that it is a reality all observation goes to show: and if, through all the changes of the body during this life, this principle continues in force, why may it not survive the shock of death? Why may not the same body, which was sown a natural body, be raised a spiritual body? There is everything in the analogies of nature to confirm it. (*Dean Perrowne.*) **Though He were dead.**—View the text—I. AS A STREAM OF COMFORT TO MARTHA AND OTHER BEREAVED PERSONS. 1. The presence of Jesus means life and resurrection. But what comfort is Christ's spiritual presence to us? He will not raise our loved ones? I answer that Jesus is able at this moment to do so. But do you wish it? Yes. Now, consider. Surely you are not so cruel as to wish the glorified back to care and pain. Lazarus could return and fill his place again, but not one in ten thousand could do so. I had rather that Christ should keep the keys of death than I. It would be too dreadful a privilege to be empowered to rob heaven of the perfect merely to give pleasure to the imperfect. Jesus would raise them now if He knew it to be right. 2. When Jesus comes the dead shall live, and living believers shall not die, we shall all be changed. 3. Even now Christ's dead are alive. They appear to die, but they are not in the grave, but with the Lord. "God is not the God of the dead," &c. 4. Even now His living do not die. There is a difference between the death of the godly and the ungodly. To the latter it comes as a penal infliction, to the former a summons to his Father's palace. Death is ours, and follows life in the list of our possessions as an equal favour. II. AS A GREAT DEEP OF COMFORT FOR ALL BELIEVERS. 1. Christ is the Life of His people. We are dead by nature, but regeneration is the result of contact with Christ; "We are begotten again unto living hope by His resurrection." He is not only the Resurrection to begin with, but the Life to go on with. Anything beyond the circle of Christ is death. 2. Faith is the only channel by which we can draw from Jesus our life. "He that believeth in Me," not he that loves, serves or imitates Me. You want to conduct the electric fluid, and so you have to find a metal which will not create any action of its own: if it did so it would disturb the current. Now, faith is an empty handed receiver and communicator; it is nothing apart from that on which it relies, and therefore it is suitable to be a conductor for grace. 3. To the reception of Christ by faith there is no limit—"Whosoever," however wrong, weak, unfeeling, hopeless. 4. The believer shall never die. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ's treatment of death*:—1. It is only from great inspired natures that we get such contradictory words as these. In one breath Christ says that if a man dies and believes in Him, he shall live; and in the next breath He says that whosoever lives and believes in Him shall not die. Yet every docile reader feels that it contains a truth too subtle to be grasped with words. When the strata of rocks are twisted and upturned, the miner looks for gold, deeming that in the convulsions that so disposed them, a vein of precious metal may have been thrown up from the lower deep. 2. In order to get at their meaning, we must keep in mind that Christ was drawing comfort for these afflicted friends, not from the old sources, but Himself. Martha has expressed her faith in the common doctrine, but Christ passes over it as though it had little power to console. It is a far off event and hardly touches the present fact of death. So little power had it that Martha did not think of it till led to it by Christ's question. God's love may wait patient through ages, because ages are nothing to Him, but human love is impatient, because it is under finite conditions. Our children, that we could hardly bear out of our sight, die, and it is small comfort that ages hence they and we shall live again; and so, instead of dwelling on that, we cling to the form and mementos spared by death, and keep alive the past instead of making alive the present. Christ strove to give more substantial comfort. I. His first purpose WAS TO GET THEIR MINDS AWAY FROM DEATH. There is but one natural fact to which Christ showed antipathy. He set the whole weight of His thought and speech against what was known as death. There is a fine significance in His indisposition to use the word. He said that the daughter of Jairus was asleep, and said the same about Lazarus till the dulness of the disciples forced Him to use the ordinary word. The early believers, fully taught by the resurrection of Christ, caught at once the remembered hints, and said that Stephen "fell asleep." So St. Paul many times over, and St. Peter, and the Christians in the Catacombs. If Christ had done nothing more than give this word, He would have been the

greatest of benefactors. To that which seems the worst thing He has given the best name, and the name is true. Amongst the profoundest words of Shakespeare are those in which he speaks of sleep as "great Nature's second course." In a profounder sense the sleep of death ushers in the "second course" of nature, even the life that shall never know death nor sleep. II. His next purpose is TO GET THEM TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF WITH THE RESURRECTION. Martha has spoken of a general resurrection—not necessarily a spiritual fact—a mere matter of destiny. Christ draws it near, vitalizes it, puts it into the category of faith, and connects it with Himself. Faith in Him works away from death towards life. To believe in a person is to be like him. Christ is Life, and could not be holden of death; faith in Him works towards the same freedom. The assimilating power of faith is a recognized principle. We meet men in whose faces we see imprinted avarice, lust, or conceit. They have so long thought and felt under the power of those qualities that they are made over into their image. The Hindu who worships Brahma, sleeping in the stars in immovable calm, gets to wear a fixed impression. So Christ brings men to believe in Him in order to become like Him, and if like Him, then one with Him, sharers of His nature and destiny, and if one with Him then His life is theirs. And yet the fact and process of death remain. Yes, man needs for his supreme development to undergo the supreme experience, which is death. But in Christ this is to die to some purpose, to lay down life to take it again. It is of unspeakable moment that the whole matter of Christian believing and living is summed up as *life*—existence in the perfect fulfilment and enjoyment of all relations. We transport the matter into some future world; Christ puts it into the hour that now is. And so life is the single theme of Christ. We can so conceive one as so one with Christ as to have little sense of yesterday and to-morrow, to care little for one world above another, to heed death as little as sleep, because filled with the life of God. It is towards this high state that Christ conducts us, sowing in our hearts day by day the seed of eternal life—truth, and love, and purity. III. THE SUBJECT LEAVES US WITH TWO LEADING IMPRESSIONS. 1. Comfort in view of the change called death. Christ does not strive to annihilate Martha's grief, but to infuse it with another spirit. As Jesus wept, so we would not have love shed one tear less; but there are tears too bitter for human eyes—tears of despair; and there are tears which reflect heaven's light and promise as they fall—tears of hope. Christ takes away from death its sting by taking away the sin of which it is the shadow. Aside from this we may approach death as sleep, a grateful ordinance of nature, not dreading it, not longing for it, but accepting it as God's good way—a step in life. 2. A new sense of the value of faith in Christ. It is no small thing to be delivered from false views of death. Consider the hopeless views of the heathen, and the vague hope of the Jews. There is no certainty till we come to Christ, and no deliverance from fear except through faith in Him. (*T. T. Munger.*) *The consolation of the text:*—It makes the "lych-gate" through which the dead enter the churchyard as the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, "a glorious arch of hope and triumph." (*J. Culross, D.D.*) A soldier who was wounded at Inkerman managed to crawl away from the place where he fell, and ultimately reached his tent. When he was found he was on his face. Beneath him was the sacred volume, and on its open page his hand rested. When his hand was lifted it was found to be glued by his life's blood to the book. The letters of the page were printed on his hand and read, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," &c. It was with this verse still inscribed on his hand that he was laid in a soldier's grave. (*New Handbook of Illustrations.*) **Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.**—This saying points to mysteries which have occupied the thoughts of Eastern and also of Western philosophers, as the famous verses of Euripides show: "Who knoweth if to live be truly death, and death be reckoned life by those below?" and indicates a higher form of "corporate" life, such as St. Paul expresses by the phrase, "in Christ" (Gal. ii. 20; Col. iii. 4). Part of the thought is expressed in a saying in the Talmud, "What has man to do that he may live? Let him die. What has man to do that he may die? Let him live." The last words of Edward the Confessor offer a closer parallel. "Weep not, I shall not die but live; and as I leave the land of the dying I trust to see the blessings of the Lord in the land of the living." (*Bp. Westcott.*) *Death avoided:*—If we truly believe in Christ—I. THE HEALTHY ACTIVITY OF OUR SPIRITUAL POWERS WILL NEVER CEASE. Life is worthless without activity, and activity without health is misery. By faith in Christ the perceptive, reflective, imaginative, recollective, anticipative faculties will

work harmoniously for ever. II. NOTHING VALUABLE IN OUR SPIRITUAL ACQUISITIONS WILL EVER BE LOST. Life without ideas, emotions, memories, habits, is a blank, and with these, if they are not of a virtuous character, it is despicable and wretched. But when they are holy life is blessed. Faith in Christ secures their permanence and perfection. "Our works follow us." We cannot labour in vain in the Lord. III. ALL THE SOURCES OF TRUE PLEASURE WILL CONTINUE FOR EVER: intellectual—study, &c.; social—friendship, usefulness, &c.; religious—communion with God, worship. Faith in Christ, then, not in propositions concerning Him, but in Him as the loving Son of God and Saviour, is a condition of happy immortality. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **Believeth thou this?**—*Believing*:—The earnest and compassionate look cast upon Martha is the look cast upon us as we are asked this question. Who in his reflective moods does not acknowledge the importance whether the answer is yes or no? Who does not want to be established in solid convictions. But there is a difficulty at the very entrance of the subject. What is it to believe? and how? But this is no real difficulty to practical men. To believe in a proposition is to be persuaded of its truth. It admits of degrees. It may shine like the sun in clear assurance, or be overcast with the wet atmosphere of thought; but still it is the light we are appointed to walk by. We are every day believing what we cannot prove. Our text lays no injunction, but simply asks a question: "Believest *thou?*" We ought to know whether we do or not. I. WE HAVE FAITH IN SOME OF ITS LOWER DEGREES AT LEAST, and every degree is precious. We believe in something of the truth revealed in the Bible, too inadequately perhaps, and with reason to cry out, "Help Thou my unbelief"; or else we are utter sceptics. Which is it? II. EVERY DEGREE TOWARDS THE HIGHEST AND FULLEST ASSURANCE IS PRECIOUS. This is certainly true so far as the comfort and peace of the mind are concerned, and what can be more important? 1. That it should be nourished with Divine truths. 2. Confirmed with spiritual assurances. 3. Near healing words of heavenly compassion. 4. Be protected against the agitations of doubt and dread. III. IT IS SURPRISING, THEREFORE, THAT IT SHOULD BE SAID THAT IT IS OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE WHAT A MAN BELIEVES PROVIDED HE CONDUCTS HIMSELF WELL. A principal point is overlooked, the need of the soul to be cheered and kept in the harmony of its own thoughts. One may be a very dutiful man, and yet a very restless and despairing one. IV. ONE'S BELIEF MUST HAVE SOME INFLUENCE ON CONDUCT. His convictions must be a part of the basis of his character, if not of the very character itself. Human beliefs are of grave moment, and determine the behaviour, and faith in Christ from the first has been the means of changing sinful hearts. But I must look at the need of the troubled mind and heart to find satisfaction and rest. Who can allow himself to be indifferent or unassured when the highest realities are to be treasured up in reverent acknowledgment or else slighted and mistrusted. V. TAKE THE DIRECT QUESTION OF OUR LORD. "Believest thou that whosoever hath a living faith in Me shall never die?" AND MARTHA'S RESPONSE, "I believe that Thou art He who should come into the world." She stopped there. With a like consciousness of ignorance and weakness we may place ourselves at the feet of the great Teacher. 1. There is a Father, wiser than you can comprehend, better than you deserve, just, merciful, forgiving—believest thou this? 2. There is a heavenly providence—the Father's care—believest thou this? 3. There is a better abode for the soul—the Father's house. 4. There is sure retribution. Finally: If we should be urged with questions too difficult let us prepare ourselves in Martha's spirit. I believe in every doctrine and promise, so far as it is made plain to me, of the Saviour that was sent into the world. (*N. L. Frotheringham.*) *The believer catechized*:—When believers are sorrowful they may be sure that a consolation is provided exactly adapted to their cases. For every lock God has made He has provided a key. I doubt not that for every disease there is a remedy in God's laboratory if we could but find it, and if we Christians are borne down by excessive sorrow it arises from a defect in our faith. This defect sometimes arises from—1. Slender knowledge. There is a promise that meets your case, and you know nothing of its efficacy because you have never read or understood it. 2. Want of appreciation of the person of Christ. This was the case with Martha. If Jesus were better known our burdens would be lightened. Submit then to a heart-searching inquiry. Believest thou—I. THIS PARTICULAR DOCTRINE? You have faith in the Scriptures in general. Now the point is to take each separate doctrine, and look over it in detail, and then say with heart and conscience, "I believe this." Martha had already expressed her

faith in certain great truths—in the Saviour's power to heal the sick, in the efficacy of His prayer, and in the certainty of the resurrection—but all these were very general, and Christ set before her a specific fact, and said, "Believest thou this?" Let us do the same with the election of grace, justification by faith, union with Christ, &c. This inquiry well managed and pressed home will enlarge the range and strengthen the grasp of faith and enrich the soul. II. THIS DISTINCT DOCTRINE? There is great cloudiness about the faith of many, arising largely from its second-hand character. We believe not because we have personally grasped a truth, but because somebody else believes it. Instead of the hazy notion of the resurrection which Martha held in common with others, Christ challenged her faith on a crisp, definite teaching about Himself. Christian doctrines, the atonement, *e.g.*, are robbed of half their delight if indistinctly stated. Read Isa. liii., and then say to yourself, "Believest thou this?" III. THIS DIFFICULT TRUTH. Certain truths are hard to grasp. There are points about them which stagger faith till faith rises to her true character. What Christ preached to Martha seemed contrary to experience. But when we become Christians and once accept an incarnate God, no difficulty need trouble us. Everything is simple in the presence of that profound mystery. Believing then in the Incarnation, what difficulty should there be in believing "when thou passest through the fire," &c.? IV. THIS TRUTH AS IT STANDS CONNECTED WITH CHRIST. Martha believed there would be a resurrection, but Jesus says, "I am," &c. It is one thing to believe a doctrine, and another to believe it as embodied in the person of Christ. There the comfort lies. Martha was called upon to believe in Christ's personal power, His present power, and the union of His people with Him. V. THIS TRUTH WHICH IS APPLICABLE TO THYSELF NOW. This was where Martha fell short. We sometimes receive great truths, but are staggered by lesser truths, because the great truth has no present practical bearing, whereas the lesser one has. You believe that Christ's blood can wash away all sin, do you believe that it cleanses yours? You believe that all things work together for good, do you believe that your present affliction does? VI. THIS PRACTICAL TRUTH. Martha said she believed it, but ver. 39 did not prove it. Coleridge says: "Truths, of all others, the most awful and mysterious, and at the same time of universal interest, are too often considered as so true that they lose all the power of truth, and lie bedridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors." Why are people "better than their creed"? For the same reason that others are worse than their creed, because their creed is asleep. There is a house on fire—you believe it, but you don't stir until you know it is your own. We believe that God hears prayer, but nothing surprises us more than when He answers it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith, not understanding, brings us the blessing*:—He saith not, "Understandest thou this?" "For the mysteries of religion," saith Rupertus, "are much better understood by believing than believed by understanding." (*J. Trapp.*) **I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.**—*Martha's creed*:—I. The GUIDE of her faith, the WORD of Christ. II. The GROUND of her faith, the AUTHORITY of Christ. III. The MATTER of her faith, that Jesus was—1. The Christ. 2. The Son of God. 3. The One who should come. (*M. Henry.*) All that can be believed and known of Jesus is included in this threefold statement, which looks towards three possible sides: to the history of salvation, to the fellowship of salvation, and to the need and hope of salvation. We might say that the first names the theme of St. Matthew's Gospel, the third the theme of St. Luke's, and the second the theme of St. John's. And that which in the higher combination of the scattered points is the theme of the fourth Gospel, is in direct generality and unity the theme also of the second. (*C. E. Luthardt, D.D.*)

Vers. 28–30. **The Master is come and calleth for thee.**—*The Master*:—I. THE PROPRIETY OF THIS TITLE AS APPLIED TO OUR LORD. 1. He has a peculiar fitness for the office. He is the Master, *i.e.*, the Teacher. Put the two together. A master-teacher must have—(1) A masterly mind. All minds are not cast in the same mould. Some are princely by their very formation though they may belong to ploughboys. Such men as Napoleon, Cromwell, Washington, *must* rise to be masters among men. You cannot have a master-teacher with a little soul. He may insinuate himself into the chair, but every one will see that he is out of place. Many painters there are, but there have been few Raphaels or Michael Angelos; many philosophers, but a Socrates and an Aristotle will not be found

every day, for great minds are rare. The Master of all the teachers must needs be a colossal spirit, and such Mary saw Christ to be. In Him we have Divinity with its omniscience and infallibility, and at the same time a full orbed manhood intensely manly and sweetly womanly. There is a grandeur about His whole human nature, so that He stands out above all other men, like some mighty Alpine peak which overtops the minor hills and casts its shadows all adown the vales. (2) A master knowledge; and it is best if that be acquired by experience rather than by instruction. Such was the case with Jesus. He came to teach us the science of life, and He experienced life in all its phases. (3) A masterly way of teaching. It is not every man of vast mind and knowledge who can teach. Some talk a jargon no one can understand. Jesus taught plainly and also lovingly. The way in which He taught was as sweet as His truth itself. Every one in His school felt at home. Moreover, He gave a measure of the Holy Spirit so that truths were taught to the heart as well as the ear. And that same Spirit now takes the things of Christ, and writes them on the fleshy tablets of the heart. And then Christ embodied His instruction in Himself—was at once Teacher and Lesson. (4) A master influence. His pupils not only saw, but felt; not only knew, but loved; not only prized the lesson, but worshipped the Teacher. What a Teacher this, whose very presence checked and ultimately cast out sin, gave new life and brought it to perfection! 2. He is by office the sole Master of the Church. (1) He, and not Luther, Calvin, Wesley, has the right to determine what doctrines shall be believed. (2) He, and not councils, synods, the State, &c., has the right to determine what ordinances shall be observed. II. THE PECULIAR RECOGNITION WHICH MARY GAVE TO CHRIST AS MASTER. 1. She became His pupil. She sat reverently at His feet. Let us take every word of Jesus, and read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. 2. She was a disciple of nobody else, and ours must not be a divided allegiance. 3. She was a willing scholar. She *chose* the good part. No one sent her to Jesus. He drew her and she loved to be there. Children at school always learn well if they want to—not if driven. 4. She perseveringly stuck to Him. Her choice was not taken from her, and she did not give it up. 5. She went humbly to Him, feeling it the highest honour to be sitting in the lowest place. They learn most of Christ who think least of themselves. III. THE SPECIAL SWEETNESS OF THE NAME TO US. 1. To teachers. (1) Their message is not their own, but His, which relieves them of responsibility, and makes them indifferent to criticism. (2) When the work does not seem to prosper, what a comfort to be able to go to Jesus! This applies to all—business men, housewives, church officers, &c. 2. To sufferers. A gardener preserved with great care a choice rose. One morning it was gone. He, scolding his fellow-servants, and felt very grieved till one said, "I saw the master take it." "Oh, then," said he, "I am content." Have you lost a dear one? It was He who took it. Would you wish to keep what the Master wants? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Master calling:*—I. THE TITLE GIVEN TO CHRIST. "The Master," suggesting—1. His authority. 2. His prophetic office. II. HIS APPEARANCE—"is come." 1. In the Incarnation. 2. In the means of grace. 3. In special providences. 4. At His saints' death-beds. 5. At the Judgment. III. THE APPEAL—"and calleth for thee." 1. In the Word read or preached. 2. In the example of others. 3. By the power of His Spirit. This is—(1) A personal call. (2) An important call. (3) A gracious call (Prov. i. 24). (*Preacher's Portfolio.*) *The call of the Master:*—I. THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST, "The Master." Martha recognized Christ as her Teacher and Lord. This relation He bears still. All authority is given Him in heaven and earth. 1. He is the true Ruler of the world. There are many forms of government, but all are knowingly or ignorantly, willingly or unwillingly the subjects of Christ. He rules them at His pleasure. 2. He is the Ruler of His Church. His people are not their own, but His purchased possession, and He will not delegate His authority to another. (1) Secular governments have usurped this authority, and have endeavoured to rule Christ's people according to their ideas. Such have rightful authority in the world, but not in the Church. No Christian should resist it in the right sphere, but render unto Cæsar, &c. But as soon as it intrudes into the spiritual sphere it is to be opposed, and God is to be obeyed rather than man. (2) Priests have usurped this authority. The Man of Rome has declared himself to be Christ's vicegerent, and Protestant popes have made similar claims. It is true that Christ's ministers have authority in the Church (Heb. xiii. 17), but it is in perfect subordination to Christ. II. THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST. He came to Bethany palpably; He comes here spiritually,

"Wherever two or three," &c. You would feel excited if told that Queen Victoria were here, but a greater than Victoria has come—1. To inspect. Christ sees everything—our conduct in the world and in Church. 2. To listen to the sincere, the half-hearted, the hypocritical. 3. To bless. He has pardon for the sinful, teaching for the ignorant, strength for the weak, &c. III. THE CALL OF CHRIST. 1. To the careless sinner. 2. To the anxious inquirer. 3. The Christian, halting, idling, sad, &c. Let all respond. (*J. Morgan.*) *Christ's call to the personal heart*:—The line of thought will unfold itself through three principal steps, each including a doctrine, an encouragement, and a duty. The call is—I. COMPREHENSIVE. 1. In the two sisters we see two sharply contrasted types of natural character. (1) One is made for practical action. The anxious housekeeper whose concern is that the rooms shall be hospitably ready, and the table furnished for the Divine guest—fit representative of the efficient workers, without whom the regularities of life and the decencies of Christian worship would go to destruction. (2) The other dwells in a world of silent communion. Religion always has its spring in the heart; and her heart life is chief. Christ blesses her in that character as He does Martha in hers. 2. Out of this marked difference we infer the comprehensiveness of the gospel, which, like the charity it puts first among the graces, suits itself "without partiality" to every sort and grade of human constitution. 3. Forgetfulness of this grand truth exposes us to the danger of an arrogant and conceited judgment of those who manifest their faith in a way different from our own. II. SYMPATHETIC. The call is in sympathy with our individual constitutions. A common hindrance, to the young especially, is the feeling that religion is something restricted to one particular line and shape. But the Master calls not that He may make you a follower just like some other and all unlike yourself, but just such a self-forgetful Christian as He intended you to be when He made you what you are. You read the biography of some eminent Christian and say, "I can never be a Christian like that, and it is useless for me to try." Turn from the disheartening comparison to Christ. Though you find Him higher than all, there is never anything discouraging. His sinlessness is so blended with gentleness, His majesty with His understanding of your wants and sympathy with your struggles, that you feel safe under His hand. Notice especially His tenderness towards the two women's imperfect faith. He never breaks the bruised reed, &c. III. PERSONAL. He knows our whole personal history from the cradle. Most of us can understand the conviction of the woman of Samaria. At first sight where there is no trust this awful insight might affright us: but the longer we ponder it, the more we shall see its blessedness. There is one FRIEND who understands us, and it is safe to trust ourselves to Him, sins and all. The reason why our religion has so little power over us is that we keep Christ so far away, and regard His work as for the world in general, and not for us in particular. But the text is the appeal of the personal Christ to a person now as then. (*Bp. Huntington.*) *The visit and the invitation*:—I. THE MESSAGE. 1. The appellation given to our Lord. The rulers despised Jesus, but these women were not ashamed nor afraid to acknowledge Him as Master. Happy the families that acknowledge Him as such. 2. The message relating to Him: "is come." He came to the grave of Lazarus; He comes to the graves of those dead in trespasses and sins. II. THE PERSONS TO WHOM IT IS ADDRESSED. 1. Those who have hitherto kept at a distance from Christ without ever seeking Him. (1) Some have not only neglected Him, but provoked Him by open sin. (2) Others please themselves with the idea of their comparative innocence, and satisfy themselves with a cold, negative, heartless religion. 2. Those who have sought Christ, but never found Him. 3. Those who, after having been admitted to union with Him, are deprived of His sensible presence. III. THE SEASONS WHEN IT MORE PARTICULARLY COMES. 1. The time of affliction. 2. When the means of grace are fully enjoyed. 3. When the Spirit of God strives. 4. When opportunities for religious usefulness occur. Conclusion: 1. How much to be admired is Christ's condescension in His love. 2. How great are your obligations to hearken to His call. 3. How obligatory to communicate the message to others. (*H. Grey, D.D.*) *Christ's message*:—I. THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO HIS FRIENDS. 1. Its benignity. 2. Authority. 3. Personalty. 4. Suitability. II. THE BEST WAY TO CONVEY CHRIST'S MESSAGES. 1. Unostentatiously. 2. Prudently. 3. Plainly. 4. Promptly. III. THE TREATMENT OF CHRIST'S MESSAGES BY HIS FRIENDS. 1. Mary listened to it. 2. Was influenced by it. 3. Obeyed it at once. (*Stems and Twigs.*) *The gospel message to every man*:—We have it—I. CLEARLY STATED. 1. The Master is come. Come from heaven, to this earth, for every man.

Of all the facts of history none is better attested, more important, or more glorious than this. 2. The Master calls individuals—(1) In the operations of nature, in the events of history, in the working of conscience, in the ministry of His servants. (2) To heal thy diseases, to break thy chains, to enlighten thy judgment, to cleanse thy conscience, to purify thy heart, and to save thy soul. II. RIGHTLY DELIVERED. Martha delivered her message. 1. Undoubtingly (ver. 27). "And when she had so said" she proceeds, filled with the spirit of her mission, to Mary. He who delivers the message without being assured of its truth, is no genuine preacher. That Christ has come and calls for men, must be among his most settled convictions. 2. Judiciously. He "secretly" suggests prudence in regard to —(1) Times; (2) Circumstances; (3) Moods. III. PROPERLY RECEIVED. Mary received it as every hearer of the gospel should. 1. Promptly (ver. 29). She did not wait to consult her companion. The delay of a moment after the voice has come is wrong and perilous. 2. Resolutely (ver. 30). On an occasion so full of excitement, it required no little nerve to proceed to where Jesus was in sublime solitude. The Gospel call requires determination of soul: there are so many opposing forces and unfavourable considerations. 3. Fearlessly (ver. 31). Well she knew that her going forth would be contrary to the wish of the Jews; but, defiant of their prejudices, she obeys the command. Thus it must be with those who would comply with the invitations of the gospel. 4. Devoutly (ver. 32). "At His feet," where every hearer should be. Conclusion: Here is—1. A fact in which humanity should rejoice. "The Master is come." What fools those are who go not to meet Him! 2. An example that preachers should imitate—Martha's. 3. The conduct gospel hearers should follow. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) It is said of Sister Dora that, no matter at what hour the hospital door bell rang, she used to rise instantly to admit the patient saying, "The Master is come and calleth for thee." **As soon as she heard that she arose quickly, and came unto Him.**—*The believer goes to the Master:*—I. IN PROSPERITY hastens to Him for grace to bear it. II. IN ADVERSITY for grace to improve it. III. IN TEMPTATION for grace to overcome it. IV. IN A FRIENDLESS WORLD for sympathy. (*M. Henry.*)

Ver. 32. **When Mary was come she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died** (see ver. 21).—*Christ's delay to interpose against death:*—1. Mary fell at His feet; formerly she was willing to sit at them. The soul is never, as amid such desolation, constrained to cling to "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." 2. There is continued confidence —it is still "Lord," notwithstanding what had happened—seen in the conviction that an earlier arrival would have brought deliverance, and leading to a hope of help even in this extremity. 3. Mary uses the same words as Martha (ver. 21). Perhaps they had often said so. But Mary did not finish her appeal as Martha did (ver. 22); not that her faith was less strong: it was finished in her own heart. Tears break in and check utterance (ver. 33). 4. Yet with this faith there is wonder at Christ's absence, which almost verges on reproach. Why so late? We shall look at the question in the light the narrative gives. I. THE STRANGENESS OF CHRIST'S DELAY TO INTERPOSE AGAINST DEATH. 1. Turn to the circumstances around us, as Martha and Mary may have done. Consider—(1) What death is to the sufferer. No happy translation. The end of all earthly sufferings but more dreaded than all. Man's heart recoils from its accompaniments. When we see a friend moving forward to his doom, what means do we not exhaust to save him? Yet Christ suffered Lazarus to die. And how many have been struck down since of the most lovely and loving; and yet death has no power without Christ's permission. (2) What a bereavement death is to the survivors! In a Christian it is not the dead who are to be mourned, but those whom they leave. What ages of agony are lived while the wavering balance is watched! And then the anguish of the parting, and the slow groping which follows to realize it! The childless mother, &c., have wrestled over the dying and moaned over the dead and none seemed to listen. (3) What a ground of reproach death has furnished to the enemies of Christ. There was no lack of unbelieving Jews in Bethany to take advantage of Christ's absence. Something like the feeling of the Psalmist must have been theirs, "My tears have been my meat. . . . while they said unto me, where is thy God," and so now over closed graves we hear the reproach, "Where is the promise of His coming?" &c., and the Christian heart wearies for some interposition to vindicate its claim. "Arise, O God," &c. 2. Turn from our circumstances to Christ as these sisters did. We believe—(1) That Christ is fully aware of our need. When a friend

fails us through ignorance, we do not blame him. As soon as the sisters apprehended danger they sent to Jesus. Without this we know that Christ understands all our need. He can draw nearer than the nearest, and His foot does not step forward to the rescue. Is it not strange—(2) That Christ has full power to interpose (vers. 22, 42). He has not only omnipotence, but the moral right and power, having paid the ransom price. The keys of death hang at His girdle, and that He should not use them occasions strange thoughts. (3) That it is the desire of Christ to interpose (vers. 5, 33). But if He felt so deeply why did He not come sooner? And if He meant not to interpose why should He weep? (Jer. xiv. 8). Our very confidence in Christ becomes the occasion of bewildering doubts. "Lord . . . . help Thou our unbelief." II. THE REASON FOR CHRIST'S DELAY WHICH MAY BE FOUND IN THIS HISTORY. Other reasons there are to be found in the Bible, and probably outside. But here we see that Christ delays—1. That His friends when dying may have confidence in Him, and have an opportunity for showing it. We have no account of Lazarus's death, but the period has its peculiar use in every spiritual history. (1) The great end of Christ's dealing with any soul is to convince it that *in* Him it has an all-sufficient life, and that *with* Him it can pass safely through every emergency. But this course of teaching would want its crown if it did not end in death. He invites the soul, and constrains it to put all its confidence into that last act of surrender knowing Him whom it believes, and feeling that underneath are the everlasting arms. (2) Death is the last touch of that purifying fire which Christ employs to melt the fallen nature, free it from its dross, and fuse it into His likeness. 2. That the sorrowing friends may learn entire reliance on Him. It is a subject for study how Christ leads on these sisters from a dead brother to the Resurrection and the Life, and teaches them through their loss to gain what they could never lose any more. Christ separates our friends from us for a while that we may learn to find our all in Himself. 3. That in the midst of death the union of sympathy between Christ and His friends is perfected. Jesus had given them many tokens of His love while Lazarus lived, but none with that touching tenderness which came forth at his grave. The fellowship of suffering brings hearts and lives together more than all the fellowship of joy. When Jesus wept the mourners knew He was one with them. Gethsemane shows us the agony of Christ's soul for man's sin—the grave at Bethany His agony of heart at man's suffering. 4. That God makes this a world of spiritual probation. By His delay Christ tried the character of all who knew the case, and Christ's delays now are the touchstone of spiritual life. You who would have Him never suffer the tears of His people to fall would lead men to seek Him, not for the love they bore Him, but for outward benefits. But God defers the time for interposition in order that He may sift their characters and prepare them for the day of judgment. 5. That He brings in thereby a grander and final issue. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *Trials should be borne cheerfully*:—In the days of King Solomon there lived among the Jews a wise man named Lokman. His master once gave him a very bitter kind of melon, called the coloquintida; he ate without making wry faces or speaking a word. "How was it possible for you to swallow so nauseous a fruit?" asked the master. Lokman answered: "I have received so many sweets from you that it is not wonderful I should have swallowed the only bitter fruit you ever gave me." The master was so much charmed with this reply that he gave Lokman his liberty. The beautiful answer teaches us a lesson. We must take the gifts from our heavenly Father with a smiling face; but when He sees best for our good to send us something we do not like, our countenance falls, and even if we do not speak, our sullen discontent is apparent to all. *Fretful impatience under bereavement*:—The Duchess of Beaufort, on the death of the Duke, shut herself up in a room hung with black, and refused all comfort. A Quaker, who found her thus disconsolate, in the deepest mourning, ejaculated, "What! hast thou not forgiven God Almighty yet?" The rebuke had such an effect that she immediately rose and went about her usual and necessary business. (*Madame D'Arblay.*) *Resignation taught by the sorrows of others*:—"Peace, Mary, peace," said a godly woman, who had lost all her family, to a godless neighbour who was rebelling against the Providence that had taken one child of many; "Peace, Mary; while I have six pairs of empty shoes to look on, you have but one." (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*)

Ver. 33. **When Jesus therefore saw her weeping.**—*Christ concealing His glory*:—In this history our Saviour appears under two very different aspects. As the sun, on some days, sometimes shines out in full strength, and sometimes is clouded over,

and yet is still the same fountain of light, so it is with our Sun of Righteousness, on the day of the resurrection of Lazarus. He shines in full splendour when He exerts His power over the grave, and breaks asunder the bonds of death: but He hides all that majesty when He appears under a great commotion of mind, which vents itself in sighs and tears. (*J. Jortin, D.D.*) *The effects of bereavement:*—After sore bereavement, Sir Walter Scott says, "I was broken-hearted for two years: and though handsomely pieced again, the crack will remain to my dying day." *Tears:*—Tears are the inheritance of our eyes; either our sufferings call for them or our sins; and nothing can wholly dry them up but the dust of the grave. (*Bp. Hopkins.*) **He groaned in spirit.**—*Groaned:*—The word occurs also in ver. 38; Matt. ix. 30; Mark i. 43; xiv. 5. The original meaning is "to snort, as of horses." Passing to the moral sense, it expresses disturbance of mind—vehement agitation. This may express itself in sharp admonition, in words of anger against a person, or in a physical shudder, answering to the intensity of the emotion. In each of the earlier Gospels the word is accompanied by an object upon which the feeling is directed. In the present context it does not go beyond the subject of the feeling. Here it is "in the spirit" (*cf.* chap. xii. 21), and in ver. 38 it is "in Himself." Both mean the same thing; and point to the inner moral depth of His righteous indignation. Taken in connection with what follows some such rendering is required as "He was indignant in the spirit and caused Himself to shudder." (*Archdeacon Watkins.*) *Natural emotions:*—At what and with whom was Jesus indignant? The notion of some Greek expositors that it was with Himself—that we have here the indications of an inward struggle to repress, as something weak and unworthy, that human pity, which found presently its utterance in tears—cannot be accepted for an instant. Christianity demands the regulation of the natural affections, but it does not, like stoicism, demand their suppression; so far from this it bids us "weep with them that weep" and "seek not altogether to dry the stream of sorrow, but to bound it and keep it within its banks." Some suppose Him indignant in spirit at the hostile dispositions of the Jews and the unbelief with which this signal work of His would be received. Others, that His indignation was excited by the unbelief of Martha and Mary and the others, which they manifested in their weeping, testifying that they did not believe that He would raise their dead. But He Himself wept presently, and there was nothing in these natural tears of theirs to rouse a feeling of displeasure. Rather was it the indignation which the Lord of Life felt at all that sin had wrought. He beheld death in all its dread significance, as the wages of sin; the woes of a whole world, of which this was a little sample, rose up before His eyes: all its mourners and all its graves were present to Him. For that He was about to wipe away the tears of those present and turn for a little while their sorrow into joy, did not truly alter the case. Lazarus rose again, but only to taste a second time the bitterness of death; these mourners He might comfort, but only for a season; these tears he might staunch, only again hereafter to flow; and how many had flowed and must flow with no such Comforter to wipe them even for a season away. As He contemplated all this, a mighty indignation at the author of all this anguish possessed His heart. And now he will no longer delay, but will do at once battle with death and with Him that hath the power of death; and spoiling though but in part the goods of the strong man armed, will give proof that a stronger is here. (*Abp. Trench.*) **He was troubled**, rather "troubled Himself," for a certain Divine decorum tempers all we read of Him, and He is not represented to us as possessing a nature to be played upon by passive emotions. Why? We cannot fully tell. Perhaps, we may conceive the case of a physician coming into a room, where friends and children are sobbing over one whom they supposed to be doomed, himself weeping in sympathy though sure that he can heal. But at least this shows us that we have a real Christ. It was never invented. The imaginary Christ would have walked majestically up the slope of the Mount of Olives, and, standing with a halo of the sunset around his brow, have bidden the dead to rise. The real Christ was a dusty and wayworn man, who wept over the grave, and lifted up His eyes. The reality teaches us that the dead are not raised by a stoic philosopher, with an eye of ice and a heart of marble, but by One who is very Man with the tender weakness that is more beautiful than all our strength. His is more majestic as well as more moving. But could St. John have invented it? (*Bp. Alexander.*)

Ver. 35. **Jesus wept.**—The word is different from that used to express weeping

in ver. 33; but this latter is used of our Lord in Luke xix. 41. The present word means not the cry of lamentation, nor the wail of excessive grief, but the calm shedding of tears. Men have wondered to find in the gospel, which opens with the express declaration of the Divinity of our Lord, and at a moment when that Divinity was about to receive its fullest manifestation, these words, which point them still to human weakness. But the central thought of St. John's Gospel is "The Word made flesh," and He is for us the Resurrection and the Life, because He has been manifested to us, not as an abstraction which the intellect could receive, but as a Person, living a human life and knowing its sorrows, whom the heart can grasp and love. A "God in tears" has provoked the smile of the stoic and the scorn of the unbeliever; but Christianity is not a gospel of self-sufficiency, and its message is not merely to the human intellect. It is salvation for the whole man and for every man; and the sorrowing heart of humanity has never seen more clearly the Divinity of the Son of Man than when it has seen His glory shining through human tears. (*Archdeacon Watkins.*) *Christ's tears* (Text, and Luke xix. 41; Heb. v. 7):—It is a commonplace to speak of tears; would that it were a common practice to shed them. Whoever divided the New Testament into verses seems to have stopped in amazement at the text, making an entire verse of two words. There is not a shorter verse in the Bible nor a larger text. Christ wept thrice. The tears of the text are as a spring belonging to one household; the tears over Jerusalem are as a river, belonging to a whole country; the tears on the cross (Heb. v. 7) are as a sea belonging to all the world; and though, literally, these fall no more into our text than the spring, yet because the spring flows into the river and the river into the sea, and that wheresoever we find that Jesus wept we find our text, we shall look upon those heavenly eyes through this glass of His own tears in all these three lines. Christ's tears were—I. HUMANE, as here. This being His greatest miracle, and declaring His Divinity, He would declare that He was man too. 1. They were not distrustful inordinate tears. Christ might go further than any other man, both because He had no original sin within to drive Him, and no inordinate love without to draw Him when His affections were moved. Christ goes as far as a passionate deprecation in the passion, but all these passions were sanctified in the root by full submission to God's pleasure. And here Christ's affections were vehemently stirred (ver. 33); but as in a clean glass if water be troubled it may conceive a little light froth, yet it contracts no foulness, the affections of Christ were moved but so as to contract no inordinateness. But then every Christian is not a Christ, and He who would fast forty days as Christ did might starve. 2. But Christ came nearer to excess than to senselessness. Inordinateness may make men like beasts, but absence of affection makes them like stones. St. Peter tells us that men will become lovers of themselves, which is bad enough, but he casts another sin lower—to be without natural affections. The Jews argued that saw Christ weep, "Behold how He loved him." Without outward declarations who can conclude inward love? Who then needs to be ashamed of weeping? As they proceeded from natural affection, Christ's were tears of imitation. And when God shall come to that last act in the glorifying of man—wiping all tears from his eyes—what shall He have to do with that eye that never wept? 3. Christ wept out of a natural tenderness in general; now out of a particular occasion—Lazarus was dead. A good man is not the worse for dying, because he is established in a better world: but yet when he is gone out of this he is none of us, is no longer a man. It is not the soul, but the union of the soul that makes the man. A man has a natural loathness to lose his friend though God take him. Lazarus's sisters believed his soul to be in a good estate, and that his body would be raised, yet they wept. Here in this world we lack those who are gone: we know they shall never come to us, and we shall not know them again till we join them. 4. Christ wept though He knew Lazarus was to be restored. He would do a great miracle for him as He was a mighty God; but He would weep for him as He was a good-natured man. It is no very charitable disposition if I give all at my death to others, and keep all my life to myself. I may mean to feast a man at Christmas, and that man may starve before in Lent. Jesus would not give this family whom He loved occasion of suspicion that He neglected them; and therefore though He came not presently to His great work, He left them not comfortless by the way. II. PROPHETICAL—over Jerusalem. His former tears had the spirit of prophecy in them, for He foresaw how little the Jews would make of the miracle. His prophetical tears were humane too, they rise from good affections to that people. 1. He wept in the midst of the acclama-

tions of the people. In the best times there is ever just occasion of fear of worse, and so of tears. Every man is but a sponge. Whether God lay His left hand of adversity or His right hand of prosperity the sponge shall weep. Jesus wept when all went well with Him to show the slipperiness of worldly happiness. 2. He wept in denouncing judgments to show with how ill a will He inflicted them, and that the Jews had drawn them on themselves (Isa. xvi. 9). If they were only from His absolute decree, without any respect to their sins, could He be displeased with His own act? Would God ask that question, "Why will ye die?" &c., if He lay open to the answer, "Because Thou hast killed us"? 3. He wept when He came near the city: not till then. If we will not come near the miseries of our brethren we will never weep over them. It was when Christ Himself, not when His disciples, who could do Jerusalem no good, took knowledge of it. It was not when those judgments drew near; yet Christ did not ease Himself on account of their remoteness, but lamented future calamities. III. PONTIFICAL—accompanying His sacrifice. These were expressed by that inestimable weight, the sins of all the world. And if Christ looking on Peter made him weep, shall not His looking on us here with such tears make us weep. 1. I am far from concluding all to be impenitent who do not actually shed tears. There are constitutions that do not afford them. And yet the worst epithet that the best poet could fix on Pluto himself was "a person that could not weep." But to weep for other things and not for sin, this is a sponge dried into a pumice stone. Though there be good tears and bad tears, yet all have this degree of good in them that they argue a tender heart; and the Holy Ghost loves to work in wax not in marble. God made a firmament which He called heaven after it had divided the waters: after we have distinguished our tears worldly from heavenly then is there a firmament established in us, and a heaven opened to us. 2. I might stand long upon the manifold benefits of godly tears, but I contract all into this, which is all—godly sorrow is joy. (*J. Donne, D.D.*) *Christ's tears*:—In our recoil from Socinianism we are apt to go too far to the other extreme. This accounts for our surprise at reading that Jesus wept. We are not surprised that Jeremiah wept, or that Paul or Peter wept. Why be surprised to hear that Jesus wept, except that we do not acknowledge His manhood? On three occasions Jesus wept. To each of these I wish to call your attention. I. TEARS OF SYMPATHY. Three thoughts are suggested. 1. It is not sinful to weep under afflictions. 2. The mourner may always count on the sympathy of Jesus. Jesus thought not of these sisters alone. There sounded in His ears the dirge of the ocean of human misery. The weeping of Mary and Martha was but the holding of the shell to His ears. That tear of love is a legacy to every Christian. 3. When our friends are mourning we should weep with them. The truest tenderness is that which distils in tears. When the heart feels most keenly, the tongue refuses to do its bidding, but the tear expresses all. The tear is never misunderstood. II. TEARS OF COMPASSION (Luke xix. 41). He was about to enter Jerusalem over Mount of Olives. Before His vision, instead of the fair scene, He saw the legions of Rome, &c. "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem," &c. It was baffled affection. 1. Observe the privileges which were granted the Jews and neglected. Who shall say what glory had been Jerusalem's had she heard the prophets and Jesus? All hearers of the Word have privileges and visitations. 2. Observe the sorrow of Jesus for the lost. He saw that the chance to save was past for ever. He abandoned the effort in tears. III. TEARS OF PERSONAL SUFFERING (Heb. v. 7). The tears Paul speaks of very probably referred to Gethsemane. 1. Think not because you suffer that you are not chosen. As Christ was made perfect in His work, through His suffering, so are we thus to be led. 2. Nor are we to think that we are not Christians because we feel weak. Tears are liquid emotion pressed from the heart. It is not murmuring in you to feel the sting of suffering. Yet the undercurrent must always be, "Thy will be done." Patience is not apathy. Rest sure of this, the prayer cable is not broken. The Gethsemane angel has gone on many a strengthening mission since that day in Gethsemane. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The tears of Christ*:—I. HE WEPT FROM VERY SYMPATHY WITH THE GRIEF OF OTHERS. It is of the nature of compassion to "rejoice with those," &c. It is so with men, and God tells us that He is compassionate. We do not well know what this means, for how can God rejoice or grieve? He is hid from us; but it is the very sight of sympathy that comforts the sufferer. When Christ took flesh, then, He showed us the Godhead in a new manifestation. Let us not say that His tears here are man's love overcome by natural feeling. It is the love of God, condescending to appear as we are capable of receiving it, in the form of human nature. II. HE WEPT AT THE VICTORY

OF DEATH. Here was the Creator seeing the issue of His own handiwork. Would He not revert to the hour of Creation when He saw that all was very good, and contrast man as He was made, innocent and immortal, and man as the devil had made him, full of the poison of sin and the breath of the grave? Why was it allowed? He would not say. What He has done for all believers, revealing His atoning death, but not explaining it, this He did for the sisters also, proceeding to the grave in silence, to raise their brother while they complained that he had been allowed to die. III. HE WEPT AT HIS OWN IMPENDING DOOM. Joseph could bring joy to his brethren at no sacrifice of his own. The disciples would have dissuaded Christ from going into Judæa lest the Jews should kill Him. The apprehension was fulfilled. The fame of the miracle was the immediate course of His seizure. He saw the whole prospect—Lazarus raised, the supper, joy on all sides, many honouring Him, the triumphal entry, the Greeks earnest to see Him, the Pharisees plotting, Judas betraying, His friends deserting, the cross receiving. He felt that He was descending into the grave which Lazarus had left. (*Cardinal Newman.*) *The tears of Jesus*:—I. CAUSES OF CHRIST'S SORROW. 1. The possession of a soul. When we speak of the Deity joined to humanity we do not mean to a body, but to manhood, body and soul. With a body only Jesus might have wept for hunger, but not for sorrow. That is the property not of Deity or body, but of soul. The humanity of Christ was perfect. 2. The spectacle of human sorrow. (1) Death of a friend (ver 36). Mysterious! Jesus knew that He could raise him. This is partly intelligible. Conceptions strongly presented produce effects like reality, *e.g.*, we wake dreaming, our eyes suffused with tears—know it is a dream, yet tears flow on. Conception of a parent's death. Solemn impression produced by the mock funeral of Charles V. The sadness of Jesus for His friend is repeated in us all. Somehow we twine our hearts round those we love as if for ever. Death and they are not thought of in connection. He die! (2) Sorrow of His two friends. Their characters were diverse: two links bound them together: love to Lazarus, attachment to the Redeemer. Now one link was gone. His loss was not an isolated fact. The family was broken up; the sun of the system gone; the keystone of the arch removed, and the stones lose their cohesion. For the two minds held together only at points of contact. They could not understand one another's different modes of feeling: Martha complains of Mary. Lazarus gave them a common tie. That removed the points of repulsion would daily become more sharp. Over the breaking up of a family Jesus wept. And this is what makes death sad. II. CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S SORROW: Spirit in which Jesus saw this death. 1. Calmly. "Lazarus sleepeth" in the world of repose where all is placid. Struggling men have tried to forget this restless world, and slumber like a babe, tired at heart. Lazarus to his Divine friend's imagination lies calm. The long day's work is done, the hands are folded. Friends are gathered to praise, enemies to slander, but make no impression on his ear. Conscious he is, but not of earthly noise. But "he sleeps well." 2. Sadly. Hence, observe—(1) Permitted sorrow. Great nature is wiser than we. We recommend weeping, or prate about submission, or say all must die: Nature, God, says, "Let nature rule to weep or not." (2) That grief is no distrust of God—no selfishness. Sorrow is but love without its object. 3. Hopefully—"I go," &c. (ver. 11). "Thy brother" (ver. 23). 4. In reserve. On the first announcement Jesus speaks not a word. When He met the mourners He offered no commonplace consolation. He is less anxious to exhibit feeling than to soothe. But nature had her way at last. Yet even then by act more than word the Jews inferred His love. There is the reserve of nature and the reserve of grace. We have our own English reserve. We respect grief when it does not make an exhibition. An Englishman is ashamed of his good feelings as much as of his bad. All this is neither good nor bad: it is nature. But let it be sanctified and pass into Christian delicacy. Application. In this there is consolation: but consolation is not the privilege of all sorrow. Christ is at Lazarus's grave, because Christ had been at the sisters' home, sanctifying their joys, and their very meals. They had anchored on the rock in sunshine, and in the storm the ship held to her moorings. He who has lived with Christ will find Christ near in death, and will find himself that it is not so difficult to die. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The import of Jesus' tears*:—The weeping was preceded by groans. After the groans come tears—a gentle rain after the violent storm. Jesus in this, as in all things, stands alone. 1. Different from Himself at other times. 2. Very unlike the Jews who came to comfort the two sisters, and—3. unlike the sisters themselves. Jesus' tears imply—I. THE RELATION BETWEEN THE BODY AND THE MIND (Lam. iii. 51). Tears are natural. The relation existing

between matter and mind is inexplicable. Yet it exists. From this fact we can reason to the relation existing between God and the material universe. II. THE RELATION BETWEEN THE HUMAN AND THE DIVINE. Here we have a proof of His humanity. What more human than weeping? Following this manifestation of humanity is the manifestation of divinity. We should guard against the old errors concerning the constitution of Christ's person; for they appear from age to age under new forms: 1. Arianism—denying His proper Divinity. 2. Appolinarianism—denying His proper humanity. 3. Nestorianism—dual personality. 4. Eutychianism—confounding the two natures in His person. III. THE RELATION BETWEEN CHRIST AS MEDIATOR AND HUMANITY, IN GENERAL, IN ITS MISERY, AND HIS PEOPLE, IN PARTICULAR, IN THEIR AFFLICTIONS. 1. The question, why He wept? is here answered. (1) He was sorrowful because of the misery caused by sin. As Jerusalem was before His eyes when He wept over it, so here humanity in its sin and all its misery passed in review before His face. (2) His weeping was a manifestation of His sympathy. No comparison between His consoling, comforting tears and those of the Jews. 2. The intercessory work of Christ as our High Priest in heaven is here implied. He is the same there as when here upon earth (Heb. xiii. 8). Has the same heart beating with ours. He is our sympathizing Friend and Brother there. APPLICATION: 1. Have you wept on account of your sins? They have caused, and are still causing, Jesus to weep. 2. Do you realise Christ's friendship for you? 3. Let us learn from His example to sympathise with the sorrows of our fellow-men. (*T. E. Hughes.*) *A unique verse*:—I have often felt vexed with the man whoever he was, who chopped up the New Testament into verses. He seems to have let the hatchet drop indiscriminately here and there; but I forgive him a great deal of blundering for his wisdom in letting these two words make a verse by themselves, "Jesus wept." This is a diamond of the first water, and it cannot have another gem set with it, for it is unique. Shortest of verses in words, but where is there a longer one in sense? Let it stand in solitary, sublimity and simplicity. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Embodied sympathy powerful*:—"Ideas are often poor ghosts; our sunfilled eyes cannot discern them. They pass athwart us in this vapour and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh, they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft, responsive hands, they look at us with sad, sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones. They are clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power, and we are drawn after them with a gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame." (*George Eliot.*) *Jesus sympathizes with all who suffer*:—If a man be found weltering by the road-side, wounded, and a stranger comes along, he will pity him, for the heart of man speaks one language the world over. But if it were a near neighbour or strong personal friend how much more tender the pity. That of the man's own father far transcends those. But the noblest heart on earth is but a trickling stream from a shallow fountain compared with the pity of God, which is wide as the scope of heaven and abundant as all the air. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ satisfying the instinct of sympathy*:—There is a word in our language—the iron Roman had to arrange many circuitous approaches to it—we borrow it straight from the plastic, responsive Greek—the word sympathy I. THE INSTINCT. The word has gone through one process since it left its root "to suffer," which root does not mean suffering in our common sense, but "being affected." So sympathy does not mean fellow suffering, but community of affection. It may be—(1) A community of congruity. There is sympathy between two persons where there is such a likeness of disposition that they are mutually drawn to each other. (2) A community of contagion. You sympathize with a person when in some particular sorrow or joy you share the feeling arising out of circumstances not your own. 1. As a community of disposition, sympathy is—(1) The spring of all love. We see in the soul which looks through those eyes, its windows, the very counterpart and complement of our own. Even beauty acts through sympathy. It is not the flesh, grace, colour, &c., but the idea or promise of beautiful qualities which wins the heart. Another may be more comely, but we are not attracted because we read not the disposition which ours craves. We blame ourselves for not loving. Why do we not love? For the lack of that sympathy of congruity represented by the word "liking." (2) The inspiration of eloquence. What is there in that insignificant figure, uncomely countenance, unmusical voice which nevertheless sways multitudes as the orator lists. An empire has hung in suspense while one man has talked to 10,000. Why? Because of the charm of sympathy. (3) The secret of power in poetry and fiction. What is it which draws tears from eyes which

know they are witnessing imaginary sorrows? It is the skill with which genius draws upon the resources of human feeling. The moment the tragical passes into the artificial, the tear dries of itself. (4) The explanation of all magnificent successes. A want of sympathy accounts for the failure of men possessed of every gift but one. You see it in oratory: there is learning, industry, &c., but the audience is unimpressed because there was no heart. You see it in action: there is education, character, opportunity, &c., but coldness of temperament chilled the touch of friendship. (5) This sympathy has its excesses. It is so charming and remunerative that some men are guilty of practising on good impulses, and become insincere, and destroy others by means of the soul's best and tenderest affections. 2. Sympathy of contagion, too, is an instinct. To feel is human; we call a man unnatural, unhuman who cannot pity. But some men feel without acting, and consequently feeling is deadened. Others keep away from them what will make them feel, and waste the instinct. To this kind of sympathy belong all those efforts by which we throw ourselves into another's life for benevolent influence. This alone renders possible an education which is worthy of the name, the teacher sharing personally the difficulties, games, weaknesses, &c., of the taught. II. CHRIST SATISFYING THIS INSTINCT. 1. He presented Himself to us in one thrust, as possessing all that beauty which has a natural affinity to everything that is noble and true. (1) He appeals to the instinct in its form of likeness. We must be cautious here, and not confuse the ruined will, the original temple. Still there is no one who has no response in him to that which is lovely and of good report. The instinct finds not its rest here below. Some profess to be satisfied: they have what they want. They are happy—might it but last; were there no storms and eventual death. But for the rest care, toil, ill-health, bereavement have forbidden it, or they have not yet found the haven of sympathy. The first movement of such in hearing of Christ satisfying the wants of the soul is one of impatience: they want something substantial. What they really want is community of affection. There is offered to them a perfect love. (2) Christ guides and demands sympathy. He makes it religion, which is sympathy with God; "liking" the drawing of spirit to spirit by the magnet of a felt loveliness. "I drew them with cords," &c. Without this religion is a burden and bondage. 2. Christ satisfies the sympathy of contact. We might have thought that the Creator would shrink from the ugly thing into which sin has corrupted His handiwork. But He never heard the lepers cry without making it a reason for drawing nigh. Again and again He went to the bereaved, and it was to wake the dead; and this not officially, as though to say, "This proves Me the Christ." Jesus wept. There was no real peril or want with which He did not express sympathy. He loved the rich young man; He wept over Jerusalem with its unbelief and hypocrisy; He was in all points tempted, and so is able to sympathize with our infirmities. What He sympathized with was poor sin-spoilt humanity, and for that He died. Conclusion: What Christ did He bids us do—not in the way of condescension, but as men touching to heal, not loving the sin, yet loving the sinner. Lonely people cease to be alone. "Rejoice with them that rejoice," &c. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The tears of the Lord Jesus*:—I. JESUS WEPT; FOR THERE WAS CAUSE WORTHY OF HIS TEARS. The finest, noblest race of God's creatures dismantled, sunk in death before Him, all across earth and time from the world's beginning. Tears, we know, show strongest in the strongest. When you see the strong man broken down beside his sick babe you cannot but feel there is a cause. Whatever else there may be in the man, you see that he has a heart, and that his heart is the deepest, is the Divine part of him. As the father's tears over his child testify the father's heart, so the tears of Jesus testify that He has a heart which beats with infinite love and tenderness toward us men. For we are His, and in a far more profound and intimate sense belong to Him, than children can to an earthly parent. And the relation into which the Lord Jesus has come with our humanity is closer and tenderer than that of earthly parent. We speak of Him as our Brother, our Elder Brother; but the truth is, Christ's relation to us is Father, Mother, Brother, Sister, Husband, Friend, all in One. But He knew—further—that a sadder thing than death and its miseries lay behind, even sin. This touched and affected Him most, that we were a fallen and dishonoured race, and therefore death had come upon us and overshadowed us. Why else should we die? The stars do not wax old and die, the heavens and the earth remain unto this day, though there is no soul or spirit in them. Why should the brightness of an immeasurably nobler and more exalted creature like man wax dim? Stars falling from heaven are nothing to souls falling from God. The one are but lights going

out in God's house, the other the very children of the house perishing. Jesus wept then for the innermost death of all death, the fountain misery of all miseries. But while in His Divine thought and sorrow He penetrated to the root and source of that evil and of all evil, the mighty attendant suffering awoke in Him the truest and deepest compassion and sympathy. He wept, then, with each one of us; for who has not been called to part with some beloved relative, parent, partner, companion, guide, or friend? With all sorrowing, desolate hearts and homes of the children of men He then took part. Again, the Lord Jesus felt how much the darkness and sorrows of death were intensified and aggravated by the state of ignorance and unbelief in which the world lay. How mournful to His spirit at that hour the realization of the way in which the vast bulk and majority of the human race enter the world, go through it, leave it! for He knew, better than any other that has been on earth, man's capability of higher things and of an endless life and blessedness. "Like sheep they are laid in the grave," says the writer of the 49th Psalm. What a picture! Like that abject, unthinking, and helpless animal, driven in flocks by awful forms, cruel powers, they can neither escape nor resist, to a narrow point and bound, where all is impenetrable darkness. II. Let us consider "THE TEARS OF JESUS" AS REVEALING THE DIVINE HEART. Are we to believe that He out of whose heart have come the hearts of all true fathers and mothers, all the simple, pure affections of our common nature and kinship, of the family and the home; are we to believe, I say, that God has no heart? Some one may say, There is no doubt God can love and does love—infinitely; but can He sorrow? Now, my friend, I pray you, think what is sorrow but love wanting or losing its objects, its desire and satisfaction in its objects, and going forth earnestly in its grief to seek and regain them? Sorrow, suffering, is one of the grandest, noblest, most self-denying, and disinterested forms and capabilities of love, apart from which love could not exist, whether in nature or in name. III. THE TEARS OF JESUS ARE THOSE OF A MIGHTY ONE HASTENING TO AVENGE AND DELIVER. They are not the tears of one whose pity and sympathy can only be thus expressed, but who has no power—whatever may be his willingness and desire—to help. The tears of Jesus are those of a hero over his native country and kingdom laid waste by an enemy whom he hastens to meet and avenge himself upon. There is hope, there is help for our world; Jesus Christ weeps over it, and He "will restore all things" of which we have been robbed and spoiled. IV. HENCE WE LEARN OUR TRUE SOURCE OF COMFORT, HELP, AND RESTORATION. He who wept and bled and died for man has proved Himself to be our great Deliverer. Do we ever feel we can go anywhere else but to Him when sickness and death threaten and invade us and ours? (*Watson Smith.*)

Ver. 36. **Behold how He loved him.**—*Christ's love to man:*—This is seen—I. IN HIS ORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT IN HIS FAVOUR. By covenanting to live with us, die for us, and take our happiness into His hands. II. IN HIS ASSUMPTION OF HUMAN NATURE. 1. He passed by the higher nature of angels. 2. He took our nature with all its poverty and trial. III. IN THE TENOR OF HIS LIFE AND CONVERSATION. 1. His inspiration was that of mercy. When His disciples would have called down fire from heaven He told them that that was not *His* spirit. 2. This mercy was not a sentiment which dwelt in imagination on miseries it was not prepared to relieve, but was a vigorous active principle. "He went about doing good." IV. IN THE SOURCES OF HIS JOY AND GRIEF. Nothing reveals the character so much as the action of the passions. 1. We have joy when our health, friends, temporal circumstances are good. Christ's joys turned not on Himself, but were connected with the happiness of men. 2. His griefs, too, were not connected with His own poverty and trouble, but with our misery. "Ye will not come unto Me." V. IN THE CHARACTER OF HIS MINISTRY. 1. Its subject—salvation. 2. Its invitations, so tender and winning—"Come unto Me." 3. Its very threatenings are only hedges thrown up against the way to danger. VI. IN HIS DEATH. 1. He died for us, which is a proof of love in any case. 2. He died when He had no need to die. 3. He died as no other could die. VII. IN HIS LEAVING THE WORLD. 1. This was expedient for *us*, not for Him. 2. He establishes the ministry of reconciliation as He leaves. 3. He now governs all things for our good. (*A. Reed, D.D.*) *Demonstration of Christ's love:*—If the Jews exclaimed, Behold how He loved Lazarus! merely because they saw Him weeping at the tomb, with how much reason may we exclaim, Behold how He loved us when we see Him at Bethlehem, in Gethsemane, and on Calvary! Christ's love is demonstrated—I. BY THE SACRIFICES IT MAKES.

The greater the inconvenience to which our friends submit for us, the greater do we take their love to be. To what has not love impelled affectionate parents and devoted servants. But Jesus, "Though He was rich," &c., He laid aside His glory and lived a life of labour, poverty, and contempt for us. Persons who had seen heaven only would be able to estimate this sacrifice—II. BY THE SUFFERINGS IT ENDURED. Self-love makes us unwilling to suffer. Here again we labour under a difficulty arising from ignorance. We can know little even of His physical sufferings, which were the smallest of His agonies. His mental pain wrung from Him great drops of blood, the occasion of which was the curse of the law He bore for us. Of this He said, "If it be possible"; this extorted the "My God," &c. "Greater love hath no man than this." Should we die for a friend we should but anticipate what would come sooner or later; but Christ was immortal: and although as averse to suffering as we consented to die in a most painful manner. III. BY THE GIFTS IT BESTOWS. Tried by this Christ's love is great beyond all comparison. He gives Himself, and all that He possesses—pardon, illumination, grace, comfort, heaven. Nor does He give what costs Him nothing. If we measure His gifts by what He gave for them they are inestimable. IV. BY THE PROVOCATIONS IT OVERLOOKS. To love the kind and grateful is easy; but to persevere in doing good to the ungrateful and perverse, to forgive again and again is the triumph of love. The love of Christ transcends a father's or mother's love for their ungrateful offspring. He came to a race which for four thousand years had been disobeying Him, and when He came He was persecuted, and so He has been ever since. Even His professed disciples treat Him with distrust, &c.; but He endures still the contradiction of sinners. Conclusion: Is the love of Christ so immeasurably great? 1. Then surely we ought to return it with a love which bears some proportion to His. 2. Those who have not loved Christ begin to love Him now. (*E. Payson, D.D.*) *Christ as a Friend*:—I. KNOWS ALL OUR CIRCUMSTANCES AND FEELINGS. Want of knowledge is a great impediment to friendship, and so is want of suitable expression. But Christ knows all, and needs no laboured utterances of ours. II. HAS MANIFESTED SUPREME AFFECTION. No mother, sister, or lover can compare with Him. His love is neither impulsive, influenced by fancy, variable, selfish, or fastidious. III. HAS HAD GREAT EXPERIENCE. He has always been in the world making friends. Abraham rejoiced to see His day; Jacob enjoyed His friendship; and He will continue to form new friendships as long as the world stands. Hence He knows how to treat different types of friends. IV. HAS PASSED THROUGH GREAT AFFLICTIONS. In such a world as this an angel would be an unsuitable friend; there would be no minor key in his feelings, for what has he ever known of sorrow. We want a friend "stricken of God and afflicted." Then we can tell each rising grief, knowing that He has felt it. In all points tempted as we are, and as Captain of our salvation made perfect through suffering, He has been wherever it must be our lot to go. V. IS CONSTANT. "Having loved His own," &c., He never gave up one friend for another. Those whom He loves once He loves for ever. Amid the changes of life, and when we cease to move the affections once felt for us, the Saviour will love us as He did when we were young. VI. IS KIND. 1. He never reproaches or upbraids. Who has not been subdued by the delicate methods of a true friend? "His gentleness hath made me great." 2. We should have broken the heart of any other friend; but He is long suffering. VII. IS ALWAYS WITH US. Some of our greatest trials are by separations. We land among strangers, but Christ is at our side. VIII. CAN DO FOR US WHAT NO OTHER FRIEND CAN. 1. When the wisdom of friends fail He is the Wonderful, Counsellor. 2. When our friends are dead He abides. 3. When friends are impotent, as at the hour of death and in the day of judgment, He is the hope of glory. IX. IS EVER ACCESSIBLE. If we called on our best earthly friend as often as we call on Christ, he could not endure it. When we have stated our case to our friend we have to leave it; Christ permits us to state it over and over again. Conclusion: 1. Whoever may love us we cannot be truly happy without the friendship of Christ. 2. We should be such friends to others as Christ is to us. 3. The greatest sin, which is not unpardonable, is ingratitude to Christ. (*N. Adams.*) *The tender love of Christ*:—He never flattered the friends who enjoyed His closest intimacy; but He made them feel His penetrating affection; "See how He loved him" was a testimony to the deep reality of a calm, unostentatious SORROW. (*Knox Little.*) *The love of Christ*:—"Behold how He loved him." What? for shedding some few tears for him? Oh, how then did He love us for whom He shed the dearest and warmest blood in all His heart! (*J. Trapp.*)

Ver. 38. **Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave.**—*The burial of Lazarus:*—"It was a cave," such as that rocky neighbourhood abounds with, "and a stone lay upon it." Among some nations the bodies of the dead were burned, and the ashes consigned to urns. This was never a Jewish custom, though there were exceptional cases in which it was practised (Saul and his sons, and Amos vi. 10)), which seems to have been owing to pestilence. The Jews buried. When a person died, after the affecting solemnity of the last kiss and closing the eyes, the body was washed in lukewarm water, and perfumed, and then swathed in numerous folds of linen, with spices in the folds. Thus, *e.g.*, Joseph and Nicodemus and the women showed their affection for the Lord. The limbs were bound in linen bands, not together, but separately; and in many cases the very fingers; while the head was wrapped in a linen cloth (the *sudarium* or napkin), which also veiled the face, thrown loosely over it. The necessary preparations being completed, burial took place within twenty-four hours after death. By a wise arrangement, absolutely necessary in the East, the burial-places were always situated without the cities, though seldom if ever at any great distance. In case poverty permitted nothing more, the dead was laid in a grave as with us, and a little plain mason work was placed above; at the least a simple slab of the white rock of the country. For the most part, however, the burial-places were caves, either natural or hewn out of the solid rock. In such a cave a number of persons could stand upright: and all around its sides there were cells (no coffins being used) for the dead, of such a size as to contain each a single body. In such a cave, in the rocky side of Olivet, amid the luxuriant vegetation of the district, where birds sang, and flowers blossomed, and feathery palm branches waved, and the soft golden sunshine fell from the skies of morn on the spangled turf, and evening threw its grateful shadows, there the body of dead Lazarus was laid; and, for protection against the ravages of beasts of prey, the cave's mouth was closed by a large closely-fitting stone, which it required the strength of many men to move. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *The story of the grave:*—I. THE GRAVE VICTORIOUS. 1. In the first family (Gen. iv. 8; v. 5). 2. Among the patriarchs (Gen xxiii. 2–4, 19, 20; xxxv. 19, 20). 3. Over kings (1 Sam. xxxi. 4–6; 1 Kings ii. 10; Dan. v. 30). 4. Over conquerors (Josh. xxiv. 29, 30; 2 Sam. iii. 27). 5. Over prophets (Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6; 2 Kings xiii. 20, 21). 6. Over all men (Psa. lxxxix. 48; xc. 3; Heb. ix. 27). 7. Over Jesus (Isa. liii. 9; Matt. xxvii. 60; Mark xv. 45, 46). 8. Ends all service (Psa. vi. 5; lxxxviii. 11; Eccl. ix. 10). 9. Destroys the body (Psa. xlix. 14; Matt. xxiii. 27). 10. Opens suddenly to some (Job xxi. 13; Acts v. 5, 10). II. THE GRAVE VANQUISHED. 1. Redemption therefrom assured (Psa. xlix. 15). 2. Ransom therefrom provided (Hos. xiii. 14). 3. Deliverance typified (Jonah ii. 1, 2; Matt. xii. 40). 4. Lazarus brought from the grave (John xi. 43, 44). 5. Other saints came forth (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53). 6. Christ came forth (Matt. xxviii. 2–6; 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4). 7. All shall come forth (Dan. xii. 2; John v. 28, 29). 8. The song of victory (1 Cor. xv. 55). (*S. S. Times.*) *Christ at a grave:*—I. THE GROANS OF JESUS. 1. Over mortal man. He felt as with an electric shock that He was in a world of pain and infirmity. 2. Over sorrowing man. Jesus sympathized with sorrow as sorrow. He was moved by the mere contagiousness of grief. 3. Over unbelieving man. The sisters and the Jews alike lacked faith, and lack of faith always troubled Him. There might be more than one feeling here. (1) an oppressive sense of loneliness. (2) A deep conviction of the guilt of unbelief. (3) A distressing feeling of the miseries of unbelief. II. THE WORDS OF JESUS. 1. He spoke to God (ver. 41)—a thanksgiving for an answer not yet vouchsafed to an unrecorded prayer. 2. He spoke to men—"Take ye away the stone." This was the work of man, and therefore not included in the scope of the miracle. And in religion we have a part to play as well as God. He gives the grace, we must use it. "Work out your own salvation." III. THE WORK OF JESUS. 1. Direct resurrection: here physical; in us moral. 2. Indirect. (1) Faith; as an effect of the miracle (ver. 45). (2) Unbelief and animosity (ver. 46). (*Caleb Morris.*) *The raising of Lazarus:*—I. THE LITERARY RECORD OF THE MIRACLE. 1. The preparatory order (ver. 39). Christ never sought to accomplish by supernatural means what could be done by natural (chap. ii. 7, 8; vi. 10–11). 2. The encouraging remonstrance (ver. 40). 3. The solemn thanksgiving (ver. 41); expressive of—(1) Gratitude for the assurance of power to accomplish the miracle. (2) Confidence that as the Son He always stood within the Father's favour. (3) Care for the multitude that they might be prepared to believe when they beheld the stupendous sign. 4. The awakening summons (ver. 43). (1) Affectionate. (2) Authoritative. (3) Efficacious. 5. The concluding charge (ver. 44). Issued—(1) For the sake of Lazarus, to complete his

restoration to the world. (2) For the sake of the sisters that they might withdraw with and rejoice over their brother. (3) For the sake of the spectators, to convince them of the reality of the miracle. II. ITS HISTORIC CREDIBILITY. 1. Objections. (1) The silence of the synoptists. Answer—(*a*) This is not more strange than their other omissions (chap. ii. 1-11; 13-22; ix. 1-41). (*b*) This less strange than the omission of the raising at Nain by Matthew and Mark, or that of the five hundred witnesses mentioned only by Paul (1 Cor. xv. 6). (*c*) This not at all strange if we consider that the narrative would compromise the safety of the family, that it and the earlier miracles at Jersusalem did not enter into the scope of the Synoptists who dealt with the Galilean ministry. (*d*) This is required to account for the popular outburst of enthusiasm which all record (Matt. xxi. 8-11; Mark xi. 1-10; Luke xix. 29-40). (2) The so-called improbabilities of the narrative. (*a*) Christ's representation (ver. 4). (*b*) Christ's delay (ver. 6). (*c*) The disciple's misunderstanding of the figure already employed in the house of Jarius (ver. 12, 13). (*d*) Christ's grief in prospect of resurrection (ver. 35). (*e*) Christ's prayer for sake of bystanders. (3) The non-mention of the miracle at the trial of Jesus. But—(*a*) Christ offered no defence at all, nor did He call any witnesses on His behalf. (*b*) The Sanhedrim were naturally silent (ver. 47). It would have destroyed their plot. 2. Considerations in support of authenticity. (1) It is evidently the report of an eye-witness. (*a*) In what it includes (vers. 28, 32, 33, 38, 44, &c.). (*b*) In what it omits —the return of messengers, call to Mary, &c. (2) It was performed publicly, and in the presence of enemies. (3) The Sanhedrim believed it (vers. 46, 53). (4) The insufficiency of other offered explanations that the mirable was a myth, that Lazarus was not really dead. III. ITS DOCTRINAL SIGNIFICANCE. Its bearing on—1. The question of the Divinity of Jesus. He proclaimed Himself the Son of God, and appealed in vindication of that to the miracle He was about to perform. 2. The doctrines of the spirituality and separate existence of the soul; which are abundantly demonstrated. 3. The truth of a future resurrection. (1) It shows its possibility. (2) It is a type of it. There will be the same loving call, authoritative summons, efficacious word. (3) It presents contrasts. Lazarus was raised to this world of sorrows to die again. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*)

Ver. 39. **Jesus said, Take ye away the stone.**—*Taking the stone away*:—I. GOD NEVER PERFORMS AN UNNECESSARY ACT. We know most of God in Christ, and Christ never spoke an unnecessary word or did an unnecessary deed, although He had omnipotence at His command. Had this merely been delegated to Christ as a man it is inconceivable that He should not at some time have put forth His power to gratify the curiosity of friends, or to bind the hands of foes. But He never did; then God never does. It is the merest fanaticism to pray that God would give us a sign and set the universe agape. II. GOD NEVER DOES DIRECTLY WHAT HE CAN DO THROUGH OTHERS. He has begotten children capable of knowing, feeling, and acting. He has made them free, He gives them the field, He allows them time; they must do the rest. 1. He will never do for the race what the race can do for itself. He could have stocked the world at the first with all the implements of agriculture, travel, and research. But He did not. He put man down among the quiet facts and laws of His universe, with physical, intellectual, and moral powers, and man was to produce the result. God made the garden because man could not, and then set man to dress it because God would not. 2. The same rule holds good spiritually. Man's agency precedes God's working. In regeneration there is first the agency of man in Churches, preaching, books, &c., and then the power of God doing what man cannot do. III. THE HELP WE CAN RENDER GOD IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS GREAT DESIGNS. We can remove the stones which hinder spiritual resurrections. What are they? 1. Indifference. This is produced by—(1) The engrossing work of life. Your friend is like the racer who does not notice whether the sun is shining or clouds gathering, all he thinks of is the goal. All he needs is to be arrested and made to feel that he is wasting his energies for a prize he may not gain, or if gained, nothing in comparison with what is lost. (2) Ignorance. He does not know that there is gold in California, and so keeps at his potato patch. Not knowing the treasures of religion he satisfies himself with the best he knows—worldly pursuits and joys. (3) The frigidity of the religious atmosphere he breathes. When people are at freezing point they would rather die than stir. It is no mercy in a fellow-traveller to indulge a freezing man with a short nap. It may be the sleep of death. 2. Scepticism. There are two courses open to doubters. They may open their minds to their friends. Their friends may sympathetically

enter into their questions and answer them, and thus remove the stone. Or their friends may do, as too many do, treat them as lepers, in which case they bury their doubts in their own hearts, and a stone is placed over them. Don't do that. Do as Christ did with Thomas. 3. The inconsistency of Christians. How many neighbours, employés, are kept away from Christ by the practical unbelief of the professors with whom they are in daily contact. 4. Vicious indulgence which can only be removed by personal influence and example. (*C. F. Deems, D.D.*) *The sphere of instrumentality* (text and ver. 44):—Although God alone is the Quickener there are many things which we can do for others. I. BEFORE CONVERSION. 1. We can call in the Master, as the sisters did. We must earnestly pray for souls and get them in contact with the Saviour 2. We can believe as they did, that whatsoever Christ asks of God will be granted; that He is able and willing to raise the spiritually dead. 3. We can roll away the stone of—(1) Ignorance. Let not the people die for lack of knowledge. (2) Error—that they will be saved by their good works, &c. (3) Prejudice. (*a*) That religion is gloomy, by being happy. (*b*) That religion is effeminate, by being men. (*c*) That religion is mere sentiment, by experimentally demonstrating its reality. (*d*) That religion is not for "such as us," *i.e.*, the working classes, by showing that Jesus is the people's Man. (4) Solitariness. Let men feel that Christianity is social and fraternal. (5) Degradation. Help men out of the mire of sin. (6) Despair. Infuse hope into the most hopeless. II. AFTER CONVERSION. Lazarus is alive, but he is encumbered with grave clothes; it is the business of his friends to loose him and let him go. New converts want loosing for the sake of their own:—1. Comfort. Remove their doubts and fears. 2. Freedom. Gently lead them out of those habits which still bind the new man. 3. Fellowship. Just as Lazarus could not enjoy his sisters' society till his swathing bands were off, so real Christians are kept back from fellowship by a sense of unfitness, &c. Encourage them: compel them to come in. 4. Testimony. Lazarus was unable to bear witness while the napkin was about his head, so young converts are deterred by nervousness, &c. 5. Service. Take them by the hand and teach them how to use their hands and feet for God. 6. Communion with Christ. After Lazarus was unbound he sat at the table with Jesus. Don't leave the new convert until he enjoys full fellowship with Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Man as a helper in Divine work* (text and ver. 44):—God's power is all-sufficient. He does not need human help. The utmost that man can do is little. What little man is required or permitted to do is for his own welfare and improvement. I. IN THE REALM OF NATURE. 1. Physical. God has given bodily life, and then continues to uphold its powers, so that man is capable of work within the appointed limits. 2. Natural. God has adapted the seed to the soil, and sunshine, rain, and seasons to harvests; but to man He has given the important work of combining the conditions. God will not plough and scatter the seed; neither will He cut and grind the grain. God stops His work where man's may begin, and begins His where man's must stop. II. IN THE REALM OF THE SUPERNATURAL. 1. The miraculous. It was just as easy for Christ to do all, in the raising up of Lazarus, as only a part. But at the grave He said, "Take ye away the stone;" and after the working of the miracle, Jesus said unto them, "Loose him, and let him go." This the friends of Lazarus might do, and in doing might either receive unmistakable proof of the life-giving power, or show their tender sympathy for the sisters and the risen man by ministering to them and him. 2. The spiritual. It is the Holy Spirit that gives life or renews the soul, and then the means of grace are to be faithfully used in building up a Christlike character. 3. The providential. Here the renewed are directed to offer prayer for the fulfilment of the promises as relate to nations and individuals, for the evangelization of the world, for the coming of God's kingdom, and then faithfully to employ all necessary instrumentalities by which to secure these ends. III. INFERENCES. 1. "Take ye away the stone." This is preliminary. If the word is to enter a soul "dead in trespasses and sins," the stone of prejudice, ignorance and unbelief must be taken away, and then the life-giving word will enter and do its work. 2. "Loose him." Let us help others to a greater freedom and larger usefulness. 3. "And let him go." Let us not chide others if they do not work in exactly our chosen methods, or in the same branches of moral and spiritual work. There is "one Spirit," and "to every man his work." (*L. O. Thompson.*) *The stone taken away*:—When Luther received the Divine call: "Take away the stone!" the body of the Church had already lain more than four hundred years in the Romish grave, and more than one faint-hearted Martha shrank from the smell of corruption which was being wafted by the stone-removing Reformation; but

Luther's faith prospered unto the seeing of the glory of God. And we, if we would believe, should then know by real experience that the fragrance of incorruptible life, which goes forth from the Head of the Church, is powerful enough to overcome the corruption which Death is working in her members. Before every Lazarus-grave of Jesus' beloved Church the glory of the Lord stands ready to reveal itself. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) *Pity must be followed by active help*:—Suppose we had read, Jesus wept, and went about His daily business, I should have felt small comfort in the passage. If nothing had come of it but tears, it would have been a great falling off from the usual ways of our blessed Lord. Tears! what are they alone? Salt water! A cup of them would be of little worth to anybody. But, beloved, Jesus wept, and then He cried, "Lazarus, come forth." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The reticence of power*:—The Divine modesty, if we may so say, of the miracle which tells us that this setting aside for once of the stern law of death is the work of Him who is the Lord of law, and respects it in all His worlds—the Author not of confusion, but of peace. To have done these other things without means would not have rendered the true marvel greater, it would only have added something of prodigy to miracle, which Jesus never did. What is still more to the purpose, it would have been out of keeping with His working, who never wastes His power, who never confuses the natural and the supernatural, the human and the Divine. In His all-wise hand the two systems are one plan. The supernatural is never made to do the work of the natural, but the natural is the basis and preparation for the supernatural. The principle is a most important one, and most pointedly applicable to the kingdom of grace. You say, if God means to save my friend, or my child, his salvation will be of grace; and grace is wholly supernatural. The new heart is a Divine gift; nothing but an immediate act of Divine power will make him a new creature; just as nothing but the voice of Jesus could call Lazarus from the tomb. True! yet He bids you "take away the stone." Remove ignorance, root up bad habits, implant good ones, rescue your neglected brother from degradation and misery. Give your children Christian education, prepare their minds to receive the truth in Jesus. Do these things, then may you pray and look for the raising of the morally lifeless. But if you do nothing; if you neglect to teach, to train, to strive and pray for them, wonder not if they sink into utter ungodliness and spiritual death. (*J. Laidlaw, D.D.*)

Ver. 40. **If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God.**—*The soul's organ of sight*:—I. THE DUTY ENJOINED. Faith is—1. A transaction between God and the soul. 2. A voluntary process. 3. Is to be exercised regardless of apparent difficulties. 4. Is to be employed in connection with corresponding works. II. THE BLESSED RESULT. We shall see the glory of God in—1. Nature. 2. Providence. 3. His Word. 4. The Resurrection. (*W. W. Wythe.*) *Persuasives to faith.*—Mark:—I. MAN'S SLOWNESS TO BELIEVE. The words of our text may refer to some checking, on the part of the elder sister, of the expectation of a wondrous work to be done by Christ. She had said, "I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." She was doubtless no stranger to His wondrous power; and yet, now, when He is there, and her part should have been silent obedience, she must needs interpose, perhaps to prevent that very thing which, if effected, would be the consummation of their highest desires. And in this was she not a type of humanity? Will not men acknowledge that God can do all things, and yet interpose difficulties in the way of His doing that which would be most for their advantage? The fact is, man measures God by himself. He will not believe a thing can be done because he himself cannot do it, or because he cannot see how it can be done. Think rather of what He has done, and await what He may, and what indeed He promises to do. II. MAN SHALL NOT LOSE BY BELIEVING. We are far from denying the possession of faith by the trembling, mourning sister of Lazarus. She knew that He *had* done great things. And now her faith and theirs was rewarded; for from that dark sepulchre *he* came forth whom they had so mournfully laid there; and had not the sister indulged the feeling that led her to interpose a check upon Christ's act, the event might have rewarded her even more. Think of the rewards which Abraham, the father of the faithful, received upon his faith. Must not the result of trusting the infinite God be a good one? If you honour Him, will He not be likely to honour you? A right course is sure to be attended with profit: to trust in God is a right course; therefore it shall be attended with profit. And, as it could be shown that to believe on the Son of God, even on Jesus Christ, is the most righteous course for man to take,

so it is that one which is attended by the most profit. It is the means of obtaining righteousness in the sight of God—justification—present peace and future glory—the greatest possible blessings. III. For God has connected the sight of His glory with the exercise of our faith. "Said I not unto thee," &c. Wilt thou, therefore, not desire to behold the light of God's glory—a light that eclipses the sun, and pours fresh life and joy into the souls of them upon whom it falls—a glory that shall know no gloom, no cloud, no night, and yet be always pleasant, always sweet—yea, a thousand times more so than that of our brightest morning of joy after a night of sorrow? Dost thou rejoice to see the light and feel the heat of the sun? and wilt thou not desire to look upon and be beneath the blessing of Him whose smile fills a thousand suns with light? The very love of this world thus becomes an argument for the love of that which is to come. But men seem willing to lose the last in their too eager efforts to gain the first. That was wondrous glory which lit up the dark tomb of Bethany, and which poured the light of life into those sightless eyeballs; but a greater glory shall shine into and revive the frame of him whom the Saviour shall call forth into everlasting life. How appropriate will the words of our text be in his case! IV. There is something in man which makes him look for greater than present blessings, and this makes the exercise of faith suitable to him. Our life, to a great extent, is one of expectancy. Let our cup be *full* in the present life, yet are we not completely satisfied. If the Scripture asks for faith it is in harmony with the constitution of man's mind. The great future throws its shadow forward, and man is conscious of its coming. Rich in all good, it draws him, as the heavenly bodies act upon our earth; only too, too often, he supposes that future is bounded by the time of his physical death. Let him indulge the expectancy natural to his mind only in a larger degree, and let it have holier and better objects. Let him place his expectations in God and in heaven rather than in himself, his fellow-creatures, or the world. Let him only transfer his faculty of trust to higher, or rather to the right objects, even to God and His promises in Christ Jesus. Consider, in conclusion, with what force and beauty the words of our text may be addressed to the faithful when they are surrounded by the scenes of heaven—when the promises of Scripture are more than fulfilled. The sceptic may look doubtfully on now, but he will look ruefully on then. Let us look forward with faith in Christ to that glory. (*A. Hudson.*) *Believing to see:*—Man always desires to see in order to believing. Martha is called upon to give an example of the contrary process: of believing in order to see. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *The seeing of God's glory suspended on faith:*—Though the sun shines, yet if my eye is closed I am in darkness. If you meet a man in the spirit of unbelief, or scorn, or pride, he will not unbosom himself to you; and if you so meet God, neither are you fitted to see, nor will He disclose to you, His glory. The order is, If thou wilt believe, thou shalt see. We recognize this order throughout our Lord's procedure. "He could not do many of His mighty works there because of their unbelief." "All things are possible to him that believeth." What is needed is not so much a keen, strong intellect, that can fight its way through perplexities and falsehoods, that can cross-question witnesses, that can balance evidence—not this half so much as the spirit of a little child. This is heaven's law throughout the economy of grace, He that believeth shall see. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *The importance of faith:*—I. Faith reproved because of its weakness. Martha's was genuine, but weak, and Christ's delay was to strengthen it. God's dealings are mysterious, but gracious in design. Do not question Christ's power or doubt His word. II. Faith enjoined because of its worth. 1. It enriches the soul. "Rich in faith." "Precious faith." 2. It is the channel of Divine communications—pardon, purity, peace, joy, &c. 3. It is the eye of the soul, and sees things unseen and eternal. 4. It is necessary to the saint passing securely through the world and out of the world. "All things are possible to him that believeth." III. Faith encouraged because of its reward. "Thou shalt see." Death vanquished by Christ. (*J. Dobie, D.D.*) *The honour given to faith:*—1. That which alone is worth seeing, which gladdens the soul, which Moses prayed to see, which holy men of old saw only in glimpses, which heaven and earth were intended to reveal, for the beholding of which our eyes were formed, for the appreciation of which our minds were made, for the revelation of which Christ lived and died, is "the glory of God." 2. Christ does not speak of God Himself, but of some visible display of His invisible excellencies. The glory of God is that which shows Him to be the glorious Being He is, and through it we reach the knowledge of Himself; but the special glory here is that of the bringer of

life out of death. That Lazarus's resurrection was a signal display of Divine glory is evident from the greatness of the thing itself. To remove the penalty of death, to undo its work, to swallow it up in victory, are things in which man can have no share, and the glory God is to get from it is the greatest next to Christ's resurrection. One man raised was to show His glory; what will not myriads do? I. GOD'S PURPOSE TO REVEAL HIS GLORY. Man may hide himself because he has nothing of his own; God cannot, because all His fulness is His own. For His own sake and the creature's He must show Himself. For the sun to withdraw its shining would not be half so terrible as God's refusal to reveal Himself. II. CHRIST'S DESIRE IS THAT WE SHOULD SEE THE GLORY OF GOD. Sin had hidden the Father, Christ came to roll off the clouds. Love for the Father makes Him desirous of this, for He desires the Father's glory; and love to us, for He desires our blessedness; and all our life, consolation, holiness, heaven, lie in this. III. UNBELIEF HINDERS OUR SEEING HIS GLORY. 1. It hinders Christ from working those works which show the glory (Matt. xiii. 58; vi. 5, 6; Mark ix. 23, 24). 2. It hinders us from perceiving the glory that is in the works even when they are wrought (John vi. 26). To unbelief the miracles appeared only striking things in which there was little meaning; it was faith that drew aside the veil. 3. It hinders us from enjoying the glory even after we have in some measure seen it. We only get rays at intervals when we should see the whole sun continuously. IV. CHRIST'S REPROOF OF UNBELIEF AND CALL TO FAITH. Let Christ's words shame us out of our unbelief. Trust Him in your sorrows as well as your joys, and you will see the glory of God in both. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *Faith is of supreme importance*:—An Evangelical clergyman, visiting the late Princess Charlotte at Claremont, Her Royal Highness said to him, "Sir, you are a clergyman; will you have the goodness to give me an answer to a question which I wish to propose to you?" The clergyman replied, "Most readily shall I answer any question your Royal Highness shall please to put to me." "Then, sir," said the Princess, "which is the way a sinner can be saved?" The clergyman modestly replied that Her Royal Highness must be informed upon that subject, and had frequent opportunities of knowing the opinions of eminent persons respecting it. Her Royal Highness said she put the same question to every clergyman, and their opinions being at variance, she requested to have his. He then replied, "Through faith in the sacrifice and work of the Lord Jesus Christ." Her Royal Highness then observed, "That is what my grandfather told me; he said, 'Faith in Christ is everything in religion.'" (*Religious Tract Society Anecdotes.*)

Vers. 41–44. **Jesus lifted up His eyes and said.**—*The words of Christ at the grave of Lazarus*:—I. THOSE HE ADDRESSED TO HEAVEN (vers. 41, 42). In these we have—1. His recognition of God as His Father. He was the Son of God in a higher sense than any other has been or will be. (1) In mutual resemblance. "The express image of His Person." (2) In mutual love. "This is my beloved Son." 2. His consciousness of the Father's regard. Ever in close communion with the Father, to every aspiration He felt the Father's response "always." No true word of prayer is ever lost. 3. His consideration of the people in His devotions. "Because of the people." Audible words, though not essential, and having no influence on God, are often useful to our fellow men. II. THOSE HE ADDRESSED TO THE DEAD (ver. 43). These were—1. Personal. "Lazarus." 2. Earnest. He could have done it by a whisper or volition, but He raised His voice to the highest pitch to startle bystanders into solemn thought. 3. Mighty. They struck life into the dead. III. THOSE HE ADDRESSED TO THE LIVING (ver. 44). Here again is the human co-operating with the Divine. Conclusion: This resurrection is an illustration of that of a dead soul which can be effected only by Christ, may still be entangled with old associations, habits, &c., and requires in order to its freedom the help of the living. The work of a living church and ministry is to loose encumbered souls. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ's prayer and thanksgiving*:—I. THE PRAYER WHICH JESUS HAD EVIDENTLY OFFERED. It is unrecorded, doubtless because silent. 1. Probably His first feeling on hearing of the sickness of Lazarus was one of sadness (ver. 5). 2. This sadness it would seem soon relieved itself through prayer. By a natural filial instinct His heart rose out of its depression into confident communion with His Father. 3. The practical lesson for us is not to measure the force of prayer by its elaborateness or audibleness. The most effective are frequently unuttered. This should not discourage public, but encourage private devotion. II. CHRIST'S ASSURANCE THAT HIS PRAYER WAS ANSWERED. 1. To "hear" prayer in Scripture means to answer. The miracle was not wrought, but the Saviour was

conscious of His own adequacy and its accomplishment. 2. This hearing was no rare favour. "Always" (Heb. v. 7). 3. The secret of this was the perfect oneness of Christ's will with the Father's. Many of our prayers are unanswered for the opposite reason (1 John v. 14). III. CHRIST'S THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S RESPONSE. Nothing is more noticeable in Christ's prayers than His sense of filial obligation. Although not inferior to the Father He will not stand on His prerogatives, but as man's representative shows His sense of need and His trustful dependence. 1. Let us rejoice in this proof of Christ's complete assumption of our humanity. 2. Let us learn to gratefully acknowledge God's goodness in answering our prayers (Psa. CXVI. 1, 2). IV. CHRIST'S PURPOSE IN THIS THANKSGIVING. Had Christ wished simply to thank God audible words would have been unnecessary. That were as pleasing to God as the unspoken prayer. But Christ wanted to show others that His claim to be the Son of God was no arrogant assumption, and that His works were wrought by no diabolical aid. In this also Jesus is our exemplar. We must not only have the thankful feeling, but express it (Psa. lxvi. 16, 17). We should be careful as to—1. The sincerity of our praises. 2. Their propriety. 3. Their earnestness. (*B. Wilkinson.*) *The force of the prayer and thanksgiving*:—By addressing His Father Christ put God into the position of either granting or withholding His co-operation. If Lazarus remained in the tomb let Jesus be acknowledged an impostor, and all His other miracles be attributed to Beelzebub! If God, who was thus solemnly invoked, should manifest His arm, let Jesus be acknowledged as sent by Him! Thus this act before the still occupied sepulchre made this moment one of solemn ordeal, like that of Elijah on Carmel, and imparted to this miracle a supreme and unique character in the life of Jesus. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) **Because of the people which stand by.**—*The folly of merely "standing by"*:—It would seem to all who knew you a very odd thing if you were seen loafing about a certain shop for an hour and a half one day in the week for twenty years, and yet you never bought a pennyworth of goods. Why do you hang about the gospel shop and yet purchase nothing? On your own showing you are a fool. I do not like using a hard word, still it is used in Scripture for such as you are. He who believes a thing to be so important that he spends one day in the week in hearing about it, and yet does not think it important enough to accept it as a gift, stultifies himself by his own actions. How will you answer for it at the last great day when the Judge shall say, "You believed enough to go and hear about salvation; why did you not believe enough to accept it?" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 43, 44. **Lazarus come forth.**—A royal command befitting the majesty of God. (*St. Cyril.*) *The scene*:—Look at our Lord by this grave. How truly man, partaker of our common nature! The sight of the tomb awakens all His grief; the sufferings of these two sisters, clinging to each other, touch His loving heart; and there He stands, for ever sanctioning sorrow, and even exalting it into a manly, most noble thing. His eyes swim in tears, groans rend His bosom; He is so deeply, so visibly affected, that the spectators say, "See how He loved him!" Jesus wept. So it was some moments ago. But now what a change! The crowd retreat, surprise, wonder, terror seated on every face; the boldest recoiling from that awful form which comes shuffling out of the grave. This Man of tears, so gentle, tender, easily moved, endued with a sensibility so delicate that the strings of His heart vibrated to the slightest touch, has by a word rent the tomb. Struck with terror, the Witch of Endor shrieked when she saw the form of Samuel. What a contrast this scene to that! Not in the least surprised at the event, as if, in raising the buried dead, He had done nothing more remarkable than light a lamp or rekindle the embers of an extinguished fire, calm and tranquil, Jesus points to Lazarus, saying, "Loose him and let him go." (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The raising of Lazarus*:—I. A MEMORABLE MIRACLE. There is no measuring miracles, for they are all displays of the infinite, but in some respects it stands as the head of a wonderful series, and is a type of what Jesus is doing now in the world of spirit. Its memorableness is seen—1. In the subject of it. (1) Lazarus had been dead four days. When a man has newly died he might seem to resemble an engine just now in full action, and now though motionless, the valves, wheels, and bands are still there: only rekindle the fire and re-apply the motive force and the machinery will work. But when corruption comes, valves displaced, wheels broken, metal eaten away, what can be done now? It were an easier task to make a new man than to reanimate a corrupted one. (2) There are some who are symbolized by this case, who are altogether abominable. The pure mind desires

to have them put out of sight. It does not seem possible to restore them to purity, honesty, or hope. But when the Lord makes them live, the most sceptical are obliged to confess "this is the finger of God." However far a man may be gone he is not beyond the Lord's arm of mighty mercy. 2. The manifest human weakness of its Worker. In no passage is the manhood of Christ more manifested. (1) He showed the sorrows and sympathies of a man. (2) As a man He seeks information. (3) He walks to the tomb—quite unnecessary action. (4) He seeks human assistance. (5) He prays. This is a parable of our own case as workers. Sometimes we see the human side of the gospel and wonder whether it can do many mighty works, yet out of the foolishness of preaching the wisdom of God shines forth. Despise not the day of small things, but glory in your infirmity. 3. The instrumental cause—a repetition of the man's name and two commanding words. A miracle seems all the greater when the means are apparently feeble. So in the salvation of men. It is marvellous that poor preaching, a short sentence, should convert great sinners. But the quickening power is not in the words but in the Spirit of the living God. 4. The result. The thunder of Christ's voice was attended by the lightening of His Divine power, and forthwith life flashed into Lazarus and he came forth, and that at once. It is one of the glories of the gospel that it does not require weeks to quicken men. 5. The effect on the bystanders. Some believed; others reported to the Pharisees. Never mind what enemies do so long as sinners are saved. II. A SINGULAR SPECTACLE. 1. A living man in the garments of death. Some quickened by Divine grace have still their grave clothes about them, and the superficial question their vitality. 2. A moving man bound. So some souls can move away from sin, but seem bound hand and foot as to faith. 3. A repulsive object, but yet attractive—how charming to the sisters! So some sinners are enough to frighten people with their groans, but what Christian does not love to see them? 4. A man strong and yet helpless. Lazarus was able to quit his grave but not his grave-clothes. So men have been mightily moved by the Spirit, but unable to enter into the liberty of Christ. III. A TIMELY ASSISTANCE. 1. What are the bands which often bind newly-awakened sinners? (1) Ignorance, which we must enlighten. (2) Sorrow, that we must comfort. (3) Doubts, that we must resolve. (4) Fears, that we must assuage. (5) Prejudices, that we must remove. (6) Evil habits, that we must help tear off. 2. Why are these bandages left? (1) Because Christ will not work an unnecessary miracle. Christ is as sparing with the genuine as Rome is prodigal with the counterfeit coin. Men could do this, therefore Christ did not. (2) That those who came to unwind Lazarus might be sure that he was the same man who died. For some such cause Christ permits a quickened sinner to remain in a measure of bondage that he may know he was the same who was dead in trespasses and sins. (3) That those disciples might enter into rare fellowship with Christ. It is sweet to do something with Christ for a saved person. It gives us such an interest in Him. 3. Why should we remove these grave-clothes? (1) The Lord has bidden us do so. (2) But perhaps before conversion we helped to bind them on him, and after by our coldness or unbelief helped to keep them on. (3) Somebody has helped ours off, and if we cannot repay that individual by a similar service let us do so for some one else. IV. A PRACTICAL HINT. If Christ employed these disciples in this He would employ us in similar work. Saul is struck down by Christ, but Ananias must visit him that he may receive his sight. The Lord is gracious to Cornelius, but he must hear Peter. Lydia has an opened heart, but only Paul can lead her to Jesus. When the prodigal came home the father personally forgave and restored him; but the servants were told to bring forth the best robe, &c. The father might have done this, but he desired that the whole house should be in accord in the joyful reception. Christ could do all for a sinner, but He does not do so because He wishes all of us to have fellowship with Him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A picture, a parable, or a prophecy*:—I. Take it as A PICTURE OF CHRIST. Here we note the following aspects of the Saviour—1. The interceding One (vers. 21, 22). 2. The prophetic One (vers. 23, 24): promising to us the same resurrection that He promised to the friends of Lazarus. 3. The living One (vers. 25, 26): who has life in Himself, not as an endowment, but as an element of His Being. 4. The anointed One (ver. 27): the word "Christ" meaning "anointed," and pointing to the mission of Jesus to the world. 5. The sympathizing One (vers. 28–38): who is afflicted in all our affliction. 6. The commanding One (vers. 39–41); whose commands are to be obeyed, even when they seem strange and contrary to nature. 7. The quickening One (vers. 42–44): who gives life to the dead. II. Take it as

A PARABLE OF SALVATION. 1. Lazarus is the type of a world dead in sin. 2. There is but One who can impart spiritual life, the One who is "the Life." 3. When Christ comes to give life He enters into fellowship with our sufferings. 4. Though we cannot give life we can help to give it by rolling away the stone and bringing those spiritually dead into relation with Christ. 5. When Christ calls the soul must obey, and come forth from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. III. Take it as A PROPHECY OF THE RESURRECTION. 1. Death is universal. 2. Death is corrupting. 3. No human power can call the dead from their graves. 4. Christ can summon the dead, and His voice will reach them in their abode. 5. There will come a day when the picture of Lazarus rising from his tomb will be repeated in a general resurrection. *Lazarus of Bethany:*—The significance of this mighty deed we cannot over estimate, for it is, on the one hand, a profoundly significant symbol of Christ's redemption, and, on the other, a signal testimony to His right and power to redeem. Whether we regard it as a symbol or a witness, it is equally noteworthy. This great transaction was—I. AN EMINENT EMBLEM OF CHRIST'S REGENERATING AND SOUL-QUICKENING WORK; and that both in the details and in the substance. The details if followed out make an almost complete allegory of spiritual resurrection. The sinner, like Lazarus, is dead, buried, we may say already corrupt and loathsome. Christ comes Himself to the sinner's tomb. He bids, "Take away the stone." He calls His servants to ply all preliminary means. He sends His agents to warn and teach. But when all this is done there is no life till He calls. He cries with a loud voice. It is the "effectual call" of His Word and Spirit. The man hears, the dead lives, the soul is converted. Then comes in the use of means. Let the living help their new-raised brother—"Loose ye him and let him go." 1. The Divine element in the transaction. The mighty shout which raised Lazarus of Bethany was not the prayer of a mortal. It was the command of God. The Divine will is first cause, without the intervention, in the act itself, of any second cause whatever. 2. This power which raises the dead is the power of God in the voice of Jesus. The Father hath given all things into His hands. The spiritual resurrection is going on. One rises and leaves his lusts and base passions, and becomes a sober, true, God-fearing man. Another leaves his poor legal strivings and becomes a humble debtor to the grace of God for righteousness. Another rises from the tomb of doubt—that "creeping palsy of the mind, despair of truth"—and sits clothed at the Redeemer's feet. II. A SUPREME TESTIMONY TO THE DIVINITY AND GLORY OF JESUS. (*J. Laidlaw, D.D.*) *Newly-quickened souls may yet be spiritually bound:*—Some of them are blindfolded by the napkin about their head; they are very ignorant, sadly devoid of spiritual perception, and withal the eye of faith is darkened. Yet the eye is there, and Christ has opened it; and it is the business of the servant of God to remove the napkin which bandages it by teaching the truth, explaining it, and clearing up difficulties. This is a simple thing to do, but exceedingly necessary. Now that they have life we shall; each them to purpose. Besides that, they are bound hand and foot, so that they are compelled to inaction; we can show them how to work for Jesus. Sometimes these bands are those of sorrow, they are in an awful terror about the past; we have to unbind them by showing that the past is blotted out. They are wrapped about by many a yard of doubt, mistrust, anguish, and remorse. "Loose them and let them go." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ's resurrection different from the restoration of Lazarus:*—There was no revelation of the future made by the restoration of Lazarus, and his silence was in perfect keeping with that fact. He was brought back to the old life, with its old relationships to his sisters, his neighbours, and his friends, and he had to die again. When Christ rose from the grave, however, He did not come back, but went forward. His resurrection was not a return but a going on. He saw His followers, indeed, but it was not after the former fashion. There was a complete difference between the nature of His intercourse with them after His resurrection and that of His fellowship with them before His death. He did not come back to His former life; but He went forward to a new and higher human life, and so His resurrection was also a revelation of the nature of the life beyond. He brought life and immortality to light by it, and He did so because He rose not to die again but to pass in spiritual and glorified humanity up to the throne of glory. This is what gives its distinctive feature to His resurrection, as contrasted with all mere restorations to life—such as those effected by prophets and apostles, and even by Christ Himself. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The raising of Lazarus:*—I. WE HAVE HERE A REVELATION OF CHRIST AS OUR BROTHER BY EMOTION AND SORROW. This miracle stands alone in

the whole majestic series of His mighty works by the fact that it is preceded by a storm of emotion, which shakes the frame of the Master, which He is represented by the Evangelist not so much as suppressing as fostering, and which diverges and parts itself into the two feelings expressed by the groans and by the tears. Here, for one thing, is the blessed sign and proof of His true brotherhood with us. Here we are also taught the sanction and the limits of sorrow. Christianity has nothing to do with the false stoicism and the false religion which is partly pride and partly insincerity, that proclaims it wrong to weep when God smites. But just as clearly and distinctly as the story before us says to us "Weep for yourselves and for the loved ones that are gone," so distinctly does it draw the limits within which sorrow is sacred and hallowing, and beyond which it is harmful and weakening. Set side by side the grief of these two poor weeping sisters and the grief of the weeping Christ, and we get a large lesson. They could only repine that something else had not happened differently which would have made all different. Thus oblivious of duty, murmuring with regard to the accidents which might have been different, and unfitted to grasp the hopes that fill the future, these two have been hurt by their grief, and have let it overflow the banks and lay waste the land. But this Christ in His sorrow checks His sorrow that He may do His work; in His sorrow is confident that the Father hears; in His sorrow thinks of the bystanders, and would bring comfort and cheer to them. A sorrow which makes us more conscious of communion with the Father who is always listening, which makes us more conscious of power to do that which He has put it into our hand to do, which makes us more tender in our sympathies with all that mourn, and swifter and readier for our work—such a sorrow is doing what God meant for us; and is a blessing in so thin a disguise that you can scarcely call it veiled at all. II. And now turn to what lies side by side with this in the story, and at first sight may seem strangely contradictory of it, but in fact only completes the idea, viz., THE MAJESTIC CALM CONSCIOUSNESS OF DIVINE POWER BY WHICH HE IS REVEALED AS OUR LORD. A consciousness of continual co-operation with the Almighty Father, a consciousness that His will continually coincides with the Father's will, that unto Him there comes the power ever to do all that Omnipotence can do, and that though we may speak of a gift given and a power derived, the relation between the giving Father and the recipient Son is altogether different from and other than the relation between the man that asks and the God that receives. III. THE REVELATION OF CHRIST AS OUR LIFE IN HIS MIGHTY, LIFE-GIVING WORD. The miracle, as I have said, stands high, not only in the greatness of the fact, but also in the manner of the working. With tenderest reticence, no word is spoken as to what followed. No hint escapes of the experiences which the traveller brought back with him from that bourne whence he had come. Surely some draught of Lethe must have been given him, that his spirit might be lulled into a wholesome forgetfulness, else life must have been a torment to him. But be that as it may, what we have to notice is the fact here, and what it teaches us as a fact. Is it not a revelation of Jesus Christ as the absolute Lord of life and death, giving the one, putting back the other? And there is another lesson, namely, the continuous persistency of the bond between Christ and His friend, unbroken and untouched by the superficial accident of life or death. Wheresoever Lazarus was he heard the voice, he knew it, and obeyed. And so we are taught that the relationship between Christ-life and all them that love and trust Him is one on which the tooth of death that gnaws all other bonds in twain hath no power at all. Christ is the Life, and, therefore Christ is the Resurrection. And the thing that we call death is but a film which spreads above, but has no power to penetrate into the depths of the relationship between us and Him. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christ the Life of the spirit*:—This raising is a parable as well as a prophecy; for even as Christ was the Life of this Lazarus so, in a deeper and more real sense, and not in any shadowy, metaphorical, mystical sense, is Jesus Christ the Life of every spirit that truly lives at all. We are "dead in trespasses and sins." For separation from God is death in all regions, death for the body in its kind, death for the mind, for the soul, for the spirit in their kinds; and only they who receive Christ into their hearts do live. Every Christian man is a miracle. There has been a true coming into the human of the Divine, a true supernatural work, the infusion into a dead soul of the God-life which is the Christ-life. And you and I may have that life. What is the condition? "They that hear shall live." Do you hear? Do you welcome? Do you take that Christ into your hearts? Is He your Life, my brother? (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 45, 46. **Then many of the Jews . . . . believed on Him. But some went their ways to the Pharisees.**—*Different effects of the same revelation on different men:* —1. Many believed. In their case—(1) The moral end of the miracle was then answered. They saw the "glory of God." (2) The end of Christ's mission was answered. He became their Saviour. 2. Some did not believe. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets." The different effect of the same revelation on different minds is—I. A COMMON OCCURRENCE (Acts xvii. 32–34). The gospel is to some the "savour of life unto life," &c. In every congregation there are believers and unbelievers. Like the sun, which wakes the vital germ in a grain of corn, and calls into being a beautiful and manifold life yet draws poisonous vapours out of the morass, so the gospel brings life to some objects and death to others. II. A SIGNIFICANT OCCURRENCE, indicating—1. Diversity in men's minds. If all men were alike, the same cause acting upon them would produce the same results. But they are not alike. (1) Naturally. No two have the same kind and measure of faculty. (2) Morally. No two have the same quality and force of disposition. (3) Educationally. No two have had exactly the same training. At St. Paul's conversion some saw the light, but heard not the voice. Here is an extraordinary circumstance which is common in life. Everywhere there are men hearing the same voice but receiving different impressions; seeing the same lights, but observing different objects. A voice fraught with deep meaning to some is mere empty sound to others: a light revealing the grandest realities to some discloses nothing to others. 2. The moral force of depravity. Men, through prejudices, sinful habits and carnal tendencies, become strong enough to resist the mightiest evidences and appeals. "Ye do always resist the Spirit of God." 3. The uncoerciveness of the gospel. The gospel is the power of God, but not a resistless force. It reasons and persuades, but does not outrage the freedom of the soul. 4. The need of perseverance in the Christian preacher. Do not be discouraged because some do not believe; other's will. "Sow beside all waters." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The power of unbelief:*— Death more readily yielded to Christ than man's infidelity. (*J. A. Bengel.*) *The consequences of unbelief:*—A vessel named *The Thetis* was cruising in the Mediterranean in search of a shoal or bank, or something of that kind, said to exist beneath the treacherous waters. The captain, after he had adopted all the means he thought necessary, having failed, abandoned the enterprise, declaring that the reported danger was all a dream. An officer on board formed a different judgment, went out by himself on an expedition afterwards into the very same latitude and longitude, and there discovered a reef of rocks, which he reported at the Admiralty; and it was inserted in the charts, the discoverer being rewarded with a high appointment. The intelligence came to the captain's ears; he would not believe in the discovery. He was a shrewd, clever, practical man, but unscientific, incredulous, and obstinate. "The whole thing is a falsehood," he exclaimed, adding, "If ever I have the keel of *The Thetis* under me in those waters again, if I don't carry her clean over where the chart marks a rock, call me a liar, and no seaman." Two years after he was conveying, in the same vessel, the British ambassador to Naples. One windy night, he and the master were examining the chart on deck by the light of the lantern, when the latter pointed out the sunken rock on the map. "What!" exclaimed the old seaman, "is this invention to meet me in the teeth again? No; I swore I would sail over the spot the first chance I had; and I'll do it." He went down into the cabin, merrily related the story to the company, and said, "Within five minutes we shall have passed the spot." There was a pause. Then, taking out his watch, he said, "oh! the time is past. We have gone over the wonderful reef." But presently a grating touch was felt on the ship's keel, then a sudden shock, a tremendous crash: the ship had foundered. Through great exertions, most of the crew were saved: but the captain would not survive his own mad temerity, and the last seen of him was his white figure, bareheaded, and in his shirt, from the dark hull of *The Thetis*, as the foam burst round her bows and stem. He perished, a victim of unbelief. So perish multitudes. (*J. L. Nye.*)

Vers. 47–53. **Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council.**—*The Sanhedrim:*—I. The NAME *συνέδριον*. Sanhedrin is more accurate than Sanhedrim, though this is more frequently used, and means a sitting together, an assembly. II. SIGNIFICATION: the supreme, theocratico-hierarchical court of the Jews, resident at Jerusalem. III. COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION. It consisted of seventy-one members forming three classes—chief priests, elders, scribes. At that time it was

composed of Pharisaic and Sadducean elements. Its president was ordinarily the High Priest who was assisted by a vice-president. IV. SESSIONS. 1. Extraordinary: in urgent cases at the house of the High Priest. 2. Ordinary: held daily, with the exception of the Sabbath and feast days, of old in a session-room adjoining the Temple, called Gazith, but from a period of forty years before the destruction of the Temple in places near the Temple mount. V. MATTERS COMING UNDER THE COGNIZANCE OF THE COURT AS A FORUM. Matters concerning a whole tribe, a false prophet, the high priest, an arbitrary war, or blasphemy. VI. PUNITARY POWER. Formerly infliction of capital punishment; stoning, burning, beheading, hanging, later, excommunication and recommendation for capital punishment. VII. ADMINISTRATION. Connection with the minor courts; highest court of appeal from these; intercourse with them through surrogates and apparitors. VIII. EXTENT OF AUTHORITY: legislation, administration, justice. IX. HISTORY. According to the Talmudists, this court originated in the institution of Moses (Numb. xi. 24). That probably was prelusive. So, too, the supreme court of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xix. 8). Increased importance of this institution after the Exile. The γενουσία in the time of the Seleucidæ (2 Macc. i. 10.); the first decided mention at the time of Antipater and Herod ("Jos. Antiq." xiv. 9, 4). (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) **What do we.**—*Men active for destruction*:—Alas! if only this question had been: "What must we do to be saved?" But, like all ungodly men, they are, as Augustine says, more active in devising ways to cause destruction than to escape destruction. "What do we?—this man doeth many miracles!" What a fearful antithesis is here! (*R. Besser, D.D.*) It is ever in the way of those who rule the earth to leave out of their reckoning Him who rules the universe. (*Cowper.*) *The perplexity Jesus occasions His enemies*:—Man cannot come into the presence of truth and purity without shame and confusion. The Chief Priests and Pharisees felt this in the presence of Jesus. The subject suggested is—The perplexity Jesus occasions His enemies. I. ONE SOURCE OF THEIR PERPLEXITY WAS FOUND IN HIS POSSESSION AND EXERCISE OF MIRACULOUS POWER. "This man doeth many miracles." What should have been to them the strongest proof of the dignity of His character, and validity of His mission, only excited their jealousy and increased their fears. Unbelievers fear the power of Christianity, while they despise its teaching, and reject its author. II. THEIR PERPLEXITY WAS INCREASED BY THE FAME AND SUCCESS OF HIS MISSION. "If we let Him thus alone all men will believe on Him." The resurrection of Lazarus, added to the fame of Jesus, which had been increasing as He swept along in His career. His success recorded in verse 45. Nothing troubles infidels more than the tenacious life of Christianity, and its irrepressible extension. III. THEIR PERPLEXITY REACHED ITS CLIMAX WHEN THEY DECIDED TO PUT HIM TO DEATH (ver. 53). Murder has ever been the miserable subterfuge of the tyrant—the ghastly policy of the weak and despotic. But what a condition of heart does this reveal—bewilderment, cowardice, cruelty. The man least disturbed was their victim. Calm and unmoved, Jesus pressed forward to finish His work. IV. THE DEED BY WHICH THEY SOUGHT TO END THEIR PERPLEXITY ONLY INCREASED IT. To die was the object of Christ's coming into the world. By His death atonement was made for sin. The cruelty of the wicked defeats its purpose. V. HOW VASTLY WAS THEIR PERPLEXITY INCREASED WHEN JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD! Learn—1. How vain and fatal a thing it is to fight against God. 2. That believing in Jesus is the readiest and only way of ending all perplexity concerning Him. (*G. Barlow.*) *The prime agents in the Crucifixion*:—In the events of the Passion three chief actors offer in individual types the springs of hostility to Christ. Blindness—the blindness that will not see—is consummated in the High Priest: weakness in the irresolute governor: selfishness in the traitor apostle. The Jew, the heathen, the apostate disciple form a representative group of enemies of the Lord. These men form a fertile study. I. All that St. John records of CAIAPHAS is contained in a single sentence; and yet in that one short speech the whole soul of the man is laid open. The Council in timid irresolution expressed their fear lest "the Romans might come," &c. (ver. 48). They both petrified their dispensation into a place and a nation, and they were alarmed when they saw their idol endangered. But Caiaphas saw his occasion in their terror. For him Jesus was a victim by whom they could appease the suspicion of their conquerors (ver. 49, &c.). The victim was innocent, but the life of one could not be weighed against the safety of a society. Nay, rather, it was as His words imply, a happy chance that they could seem to vindicate their loyalty while they gratified their hatred. To this the Divine hierarchy had come at last. Abraham offered his son to God in obedience to the Father in whom he trusted;

Caiaphas gave the Christ to Cæsar in obedience to the policy which had substituted the seen for the unseen. II. Caiaphas had lost the power of seeing the truth: PILATE had lost the power of holding it. There is a sharp contrast between the clear resolute purpose of the priest, and the doubtful wavering answers of the governor. The judge shows his contempt for the accusers, but the accusers are stronger than he. It is in vain that he tries one expedient after another to satisfy the unjust passion of his suitors. He examines the charge of evil doing and pronounces it groundless; but he lacks courage to pronounce an unpopular acquittal. He seeks to move compassion by exhibiting Jesus scourged and mocked, and yet guiltless; and the chief priests defeat Him by the cry "Crucify" (chap. xix. 6). He hears His claim to be a "King not of this world" and "the Son of God," and is "the more afraid"; but his hesitation is removed by an argument of which he feels the present power (chap. xix. 12). The fear of disgrace prevailed over the conviction of justice, over the impression of awe, over the pride of the Roman. The Jews completed their apostasy when they cried, "We have no king but Cæsar"; and Pilate unconvinced, baffled, overborne, delivered to them their true King to be crucified, firm only in this, that he would not change the title which he had written in scorn, and yet as an unconscious prophet. III. Caiaphas misinterpreted the Divine covenant which he represented: Pilate was faithless to the spirit of the authority with which he was lawfully invested; JUDAS perverted the very teaching of Christ Himself. If once we regard Judas as one who looked to Christ for selfish ends, even his thoughts become intelligible. He was bound to his Master, not for what He was, but for what He thought that he would obtain through Him. Others, like the sons of Zebedee, spoke out of the fulness of their hearts, and their mistaken ambition was purified: Judas would not expose his fancies to reproof. St. Peter was called Satan, an adversary; but Judas was a devil, a perverter of that which is holy and true. He set up self as His standard, and by an easy delusion he came to forget that there could be any other. Even at the last he seems to have fancied that he could force the manifestation of Christ's power by placing Him in the hands of His enemies (chap. vi. 70; xviii. 6). He obeys the command to "do quickly what he did," as if he were ministering to his Master's service. He stands by in the garden when the soldiers went back, and fell to the ground, waiting, as it were, for the revelation of the Messiah in His Majesty. Then came the end. He knew the sovereignty of Christ, and he saw Him go to death. St. John says nothing of what followed; but there can be no situation more overwhelmingly tragic than that in which he shows the traitor for the last time, "standing" with those who came to take Jesus. (*Bp. Westcott.*) **One of them named Caiaphas being the high priest that same year . . . prophesied.**—*A memorable year*:—If this circumstance had taken place in the palmy days of the theocracy, the expression would be incomprehensible; for, according to the Mosaic law, the high priesthood was held for life. But since the Roman supremacy, the rulers of the land, dreading the power derived from a permanent office, had adopted the custom of frequently changing one high priest for another. According to Josephus the Roman governor, Valerius Gratus, "deprived Ananus of the high priesthood and conferred it on Ishmael, and afterwards deposing him made Eleazar, son of Ishmael, high priest. A year after he also was deposed, and Simon nominated in his stead, who, retaining the dignity for a year only, was succeeded by Joseph, surnamed Caiaphas." The latter continued in office from A.D. 24 to 36, and consequently throughout the ministry of Jesus. These frequent changes justify the expression of the Evangelist, and deprive criticism of any excuse for saying that the author of this Gospel did not know that the pontificate lasted for life. But since Caiaphas was high priest for eleven consecutive years, why did St. John three times over (vers. 49, 51; xviii. 13) use the expression, "that year"? Because he desired to recall the importance of that unique and decisive year in which the perfect sacrifice terminated the typical sacrifices and the Levitical priesthood as exercised by Caiaphas. It devolved upon the high priest to offer every year the great atoning sacrifice for the sins of the people, and this was the office now performed by Caiaphas, as the last representative of the ancient priesthood. By his vote he, in some degree, appointed and sacrificed the victim who in that ever memorable year was "to bring in an everlasting righteousness," &c. (Dan. ix. 24–27). (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Unconscious prophecies*:—If some historian were to write that Abraham Lincoln was president of the United States that same year in which the great civil war broke out, would any be justified in imputing to him the mistake that the presidency was an annual office, or in concluding that the writer could not have been an American living at the time, and to whom the ordinary sources of

information were open? And who has a right to ascribe to the words of St. John any further meaning than that Caiaphas was high priest *then*? Whether he had been so before, or should be after, was nothing to his present purpose. The oracular, even prophetic, character which his utterance obtained requires some explanation. That a bad man should utter words which were so over-ruled by God as to become prophetic, would of itself be no difficulty. He who used Balaam could use Caiaphas. Nor is there any difficulty in such unconscious prophecies as this evidently is. It exactly answers as such to the omina of Roman superstition, in which words spoken by one in a lesser meaning are taken up by another in a higher, and by him claimed to be prophetic of that. Cicero ("De Divin," i. 46) gives examples: these, too, resting on the faith that men's words are ruled by a higher power than their own. How many prophecies of a like kind meet us in the history of the Crucifixion! What was the title over our Lord but another such scornful, yet most veritable prophecy? Or what, again, the purple robe and the homage; the sceptre and the crown? The Roman soldiers did not mean to fulfil Psa. xxii when they parted Christ's garments, &c., nor the Jewish mockers when they spoke those taunting words; but they did so none the less. And in the typical rehearsals of the crowning catastrophe in the drama of God's providence, how many a Nimrod, Pharaoh, Antiochus and Nero—Antichrists that do not quite come to the birth—have prophetic parts allotted to them which they play out, unknowing what they do. We have an example of this in the very name Caiaphas, which is only another form of Cephas. But the perplexing circumstance is the attribution to him because He was the high priest of these prophetic words. But there is no need to suppose that St. John meant to affirm this to have been a power inherent in the high priesthood; but only that God, the extorter of the unwilling, or even unconscious, prophecies of wicked men, ordained this further: that he in whom the whole theocracy culminated, who was "the Prince of the People" (Acts xxiii. 5), for such, till another high priest had sanctified Himself—and his moral character was nothing to the point—Caiaphas truly was, should, because he bore this office, be the organ of this memorable prophecy concerning Christ, and the meaning and end of His death. (*Archbishop Trench.*) **Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people.**—What is morally wrong can never be politically right. (*C. J. Fox.*) *Caiaphas*:—1. The resurrection of Lazarus had raised a wave of popular excitement. Any stir was dangerous, especially at Passover time, when Jerusalem would be filled with men ready to take fire from any spark. So a hasty meeting of the council was summoned to discuss the situation and to concert measures for repressing the nascent enthusiasm. Like all weak men, they feel that "something must be done." Their fear is not patriotism or religion, but self-interest. They are at a loss what to do. 2. But there is one man who knows his own mind, and no restraint of conscience or delicacy keeps him from speaking it out. Impatient at their vacillation, he brushes it all aside with, "Ye know nothing at all." The one point for us is our own interests. This Man must die. Never mind His miracles, teaching, character. He is a perpetual danger to our prerogatives. And so he clashes his advice down into the middle of their waverings, like a piece of iron into yielding water, and the strong man is master of the situation, and the resolve is taken (ver. 53). 3. But John regards this advice as prophecy. Caiaphas spoke wiser things than he knew. The Divine Spirit breathed in strange fashion and moulded his savage utterance into an expression of the deepest thought about Christ's death. Consider—I. THE UNSCRUPULOUS PRIEST AND HIS SAVAGE ADVICE. 1. He was set by his office to tend the sacred flame of Messianic hope, with pure hands and heart to offer sacrifice for sin, and to witness for the truth. And see what he is! A crafty schemer, blind to Christ's character and teaching, unspiritual, rude, cruel. What a lesson this speech and the character disclosed by it read to all who have a professional connection with religion. Priests of all churches have always been tempted to look upon religion as existing somehow for their personal advantage. And so "the Church is in danger" means "my position is threatened;" and heretics must be got rid of because their teaching is inconvenient, and new truth is fought against because officials do not see how it harmonizes with their pre-eminence. 2. All who professionally handle sacred things are tempted to look upon truth as their stock-in-trade, and to fight against innovations that appear to threaten the teacher's position. 3. But the lessons are for all. This selfish consideration of our own interests—(1) Will blind us to the most radiant beauty of truth; aye, to Christ Himself. Fishes which live in the water of caverns lose their sight, and men who live in the dark holes of their own selfish natures lose their

spiritual sight. When you put on regard for yourselves as they do blinkers on horses you lose the power of comprehensive vision, and only see straight forward upon the line marked out by self interests. Lord Nelson at Copenhagen put his telescope up to his blind eye at the signal of recall, and this is what selfishness does with hundreds who do not know it. There are none so blind as those who won't see; and there are none who won't see so certainly as those who have a suspicion that if they do they will have to change their tack. (2) May bring a man down to any kind and degree of wrong-doing. Caiaphas was brought down by it from supreme judge to assassin. If you begin with "it is expedient" as the canon of your conduct you get on an inclined plane that tilts at a very sharp angle, and is sufficiently greased, and ends away in darkness and death, and it is only a question of time how far, fast, deep and irrevocable will be your descent. (3) Has in it an awful power of so twisting and searing a man's conscience as that he comes to view the evil and never knows there is any wrong in it. Caiaphas had no conception that he was doing anything but obeying the dictate of self-preservation. The crime of the actual crucifixion was diminished because done unconsciously; but the crime of the process by which they came to be unconscious—how that was increased and deepened! 4. The only antagonist to this selfishness is to yield ourselves to the love of God in Christ, and to say, "I live, yet not I," &c. II. THE UNCONSCIOUS PROPHET AND HIS GREAT PREDICTION. 1. The Evangelist conceives that the high priest, being the head of the theocratic community, was naturally the medium of a Divine oracle. In that fateful year the great "High Priest for ever" stood for a moment by the side of the earthly high priest—the Substance by the shadow—and by this offering of Himself deprived priesthood and sacrifice of all their validity. Caiaphas was in reality the last of the high priests, and those that succeeded him for less than half a century were but like ghosts. Solemn and strange that Aaron's long line ended in such a man! 2. Being high priest he prophesied. And there was nothing strange in a bad man's prophesying. Balaam did; so did Pilate when he wrote the inscription, and the Pharisees when they said, "He saved others." 3. The prophecy suggests—(1) The twofold aspect of Christ's death. From the human standpoint it was murder by forms of law for political ends. From the Divine point of view it is God's great sacrifice for the sin of the world. The greatest crime is the greatest blessing. Man's sin works out the Divine purpose, even as the coral insects blindly building up the reef that keeps back the waters, or, as the sea in its wild impotent rage, seeking to overwhelm the land, only throws upon the beach a barrier that confines its waves and curbs their fury. (2) The twofold consequences of that death upon the nation itself. (*a*) The thing which Caiaphas had tried to prevent was brought about by the deed itself. Christ's death was the destruction, and not the salvation, of the nation. (*b*) And yet it was true that He died for that people, for Caiaphas as truly as for John. You must either build upon Christ, the Foundation Stone, or be crushed into powder under Him. 4. The twofold sphere in which that death works its effect. When John wrote the narrower national system had been shivered, and from out of the dust and ruin had emerged the firmer reality of a Church as wide as the world. (1) The scattered children of God were to be united round the Cross. The only bond that unites men is their common relation to Christ. That is deeper than all the bonds of nation, blood, race, society, &c. (2) Christ's death brings men into the family of God. "To as many as received Him," &c. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Truth borne by strange witnesses*:—A flaming torch may be found in a blind man's hand. (*J. Trapp.*) *Caiaphas; or, a glance at government, human and Divine*:—I. AN INIQUITOUS POLICY IN THE GOVERNMENT OF MAN. At the meeting of the Sanhedrim two things were admitted—Christ's mighty deeds; His power over the people. These admissions by enemies are important as evidence and significant as lessons. In relation to Caiaphas's policy, note—1. That it was apparently adapted to the end. Christ was alienating the people from the institutions of the country, and shaking their faith in its authorities; and the most effective plan for terminating the mischief seemed to be to put Him to death. 2. Though seemingly adapted to the end it was radically wrong in principle. The Victim was innocent. The apparent fitness of a measure to an end does not make it right. 3. Being radically wrong it was ultimately ruinous. It brought upon them the judgments which broke up the Commonwealth. Let Governments study the policy of Caiaphas. II. A STUPENDOUS FACT IN THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD. Caiaphas unconsciously predicts a feature of the Divine administration—that the death of Christ was necessary to the salvation of others. 1. Negatively. The death of Christ—(1) Does not change the mind of

God in relation to man. It is the expression, proof, and medium of God's love. (2) Does not relax the claims of laws. Nothing can do this but annihilation. (3) Does not mitigate the enormity of sin, but rather increases it. (4) Does not change the necessary conditions of spiritual improvement—the intellectual study, heart application, and devotional practice of Divine truth. 2. Positively. (1) It gives a new revelation of God. (2) It gives new motives to obedience. "Ye are not your own," &c. (3) It supplies new helps to spiritual culture. (*a*) The highest ideal—the character of Christ. (*b*) The highest incentives—gratitude, esteem, benevolence. (*c*) The highest Minister—God's Spirit. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The modern Caiaphas*:—Caiaphas appears in three characters. I. As a WITNESS—1. To the truth of Christ's miracles. He had every reason to deny it, and that he did not is certain evidence that he could not. In this he was wiser than his modern disciples, who admire Christ's doctrines but deny His works. Eliminate the latter and you throw discredit on the authenticity of the former. If Christ be not risen (the greatest miracle), says Paul, preaching is false and faith vain. And if you get rid of Christ's miracles, what about those of nature and man? 2. To the power of formality—the deep-seated hatred of innovation which is in man. Christ was a mighty Phenomenon. He struck out a new line of thought and life, and those who do that must expect opposition. When Wilberforce began his career a nobleman pointed to a picture of the Crucifixion and said, "That is the end of reformers." If you have not found it true it is because you have not tried to reform anything. Men hate to be disturbed in their sins. 3. To Christ as a disturbing force in history. He may be hated and crucified, but He cannot be ignored. He brings Divine tumult with Him, and divides the world into hostile camps. All kingdoms are shaken that His kingdom may be set up. From the days of Caiaphas to now the supreme question is, "What think ye of Christ?" "What are we to do?" said the priest. "How long halt *ye?*" &c. If Christ be false then "away with Him." But if He be true be honest enough to act on your conviction. II. As a PROPHET. The gift of prophecy was supposed never to have died out of the Jewish priesthood. So when Caiaphas arose all voices were hushed as he said, "It is expedient," &c. Mark how God raises the speech of a frantic bigot so that it becomes a prophecy of the atonement. Even as storm, wind, hail, &c., do God's bidding no less than the sunshine, so God uses even evil men to do the very thing they oppose. What does sceptical criticism do for Christ but reveal that there is that which is above all criticism. The mountain is never so grand as when the storm gathers round it. And so Christ stands unshaken, triumphant amid the loud tempest and tumult of history. The wrath of men praises Him, &c. III. As a PHILOSOPHER. He recognizes the sacrificial element which has always been at work in society. Do you turn to Leviticus and regard it as an obsolete record of curious ancient custom? If so you will never grasp its significance, which goes down to the root of human life. The word written across the Book is "sacrifice." Life is built up of sacrifice. It is the law of motherhood and of love, the soul of heroism, the essence of nobleness. Ages sacrifice themselves for the race that follows. There is nothing Diviner than for a man to die for sins not his own. The world will never be redeemed until men are ready to die for it. Caiaphas defines the meaning of Christ in history. He is "the Lamb of God." (*W. J. Dawson.*) *The counsel of Caiaphas*:—I. THE DEATH OF CHRIST AS A POLITICAL CRIME. 1. The real reason: because Christ would not be another Maccabæus to achieve political emancipation. 2. The ostensible pretext: that He threatened to bring them into conflict with the Roman power, and thus imperilled their interests. 3. The fatal blunder. All political crimes are blunders. The murder of Jesus brought about the destruction of the Jewish State. II. THE DEATH OF CHRIST AS A DIVINE SACRIFICE. 1. Its substitutionary character. It was, and that according to the Divine intention, the death of one Man for the people. The Son of Man gave His life a ransom for many, and died the just for the unjust. 2. Its world-wide significance. Christ died not for Jews only but for Gentiles (1 John ii. 2). 3. Its ultimate design: "that He shall gather," &c. (chap. x. 16). *The enlargement of the Spirit on Caiaphas's prophecy*:—I. FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED. 1. The Jews. 2. The children of God scattered abroad. (1) Then living. (2) Throughout all time. II. THE PURPOSE OF HIS DEATH CONCERNING THESE: to gather them into one. Christ's dying is—1. The great attraction to our hearts. 2. The great centre of our unity. (1) By the merit of His death recommending all in one to the favour of God. (2) By the motive of His death drawing each to the love of every other. (*M. Henry.*) *Substitution*:—A certain town called Ekrikok was devoted to

destruction for high treason. But it was allowed to redeem itself, partly by a fine and partly by *one life* being offered in expiatory sacrifice for the whole, which was accomplished in the person of a new slave, bought for the purpose. Mr. Waddell, the missionary, remonstrating on the subject with "Old Egho Jack, the head of a great family," that personage asserted that "it was impossible the affair could be settled without a death, for Egho law was the same as God's law to Calabar," and he pointedly asked me if it were better for all Ekrikok to die, or for one slave to die for all the town? I thought of the words of Caiaphas, and of the value of life as a substitution and atonement for sin. A poor slave, bought in the market for a few hundred coppers, by his death redeemed a town, for which many thousands of money would have availed nothing. (*Missionary Record of the U. P. Church.*) *Substitution*:—In the time of Napoleon I. a certain man agreed to join the ranks in the place of a comrade who had been drafted. The offer was accepted, the battle was fought, and the man was killed. Some time after another draft was made, and they wanted a second time to take the man whose substitute had been shot. "No," said he, "you can't take me; I'm dead. I was shot at such a battle." "Why, man, you are crazy. Look here, you got a substitute; another man went in your place, but you have not been shot." "No, but he died in my place; he went as my substitute." They would not recognize it, and it was carried up to the Emperor; but the Emperor said the man was right. Napoleon I. recognized the doctrine of substitution. (*D. L. Moody.*) *Vicarious atonement*:—Some 350 years B.C. a great chasm opened in the Forum of Rome, which the soothsayers declared could only be filled up by throwing into it Rome's greatest treasure. Thereupon Mettus Curtius, a young and noble Roman knight, arrayed himself in full armour, and mounted his charger, and, declaring that Rome possessed no greater treasure than a brave citizen, leaped into the chasm, upon which the earth closed over him. (*W. Baxendale.*) *The sacrifice of one the salvation of many*:—At Ragenbach in Germany one afternoon a great number of people were assembled in the large room of the inn. The room door stood open and the village blacksmith, a pious, brave-hearted man, sat near the door. All at once a mad dog rushed in, but was seized by the smith with an iron grasp and dashed on the floor. "Stand back, my friends," cried he. "Now hurry out while I hold him. Better for one to perish than for all." The dog bit furiously on every side. His teeth tore the arms and thighs of the heroic smith, but he would not let go his hold. When all the people had escaped he flung the half-strangled beast from him against the wall, left the room and locked the door. The dog was shot; but what was to become of the man? The friends whose lives he had saved stood round him weeping. "Be quiet, my friends," he said, "don't weep for me: I've only done my duty. When I am dead think of me with love; and now pray for me that God will not let me suffer long or too much. I know I shall become mad, but I will take care that no harm comes to you through me." Then he went to his shop. He took a strong chain. One end of it he rivetted with his own hands round his body, the other end he fastened round the anvil so strongly that no earthly power could loose it. Then he turned to his friends and said, "Now it's done! You are all safe. I can't hurt you. Bring me food while I am well, and keep out of my reach when I am mad. The rest I leave with God." Soon madness seized him, and in nine days he died—died gloriously for his friends; but Christ died for His enemies. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *Self-sacrifice*:—The plague was making a desert of the city of Marseilles; death was everywhere. The physicians could do nothing. In one of their councils it was decided that a corpse must be dissected; but it would be death to the operator. A celebrated physician of the number arose, and said, "I devote myself for the safety of my country. Before this numerous assembly, I swear in the name of humanity and religion, that to-morrow at the break of day I will dissect a corpse and write down as I proceed what I observe." He immediately left the room, made his will, and spent the night in religious exercises. During the day a man had died in the house of the plague and at daybreak on the following morning the physician, whose name was Guyon, entered the room and critically made the necessary examinations, writing down all his surgical observations. He then left the room, threw the papers into a vase of vinegar that they might not convey the disease to another, and retired to a convenient place where he died in twelve hours. (*Homiletic Monthly.*)

Vers. 53–57. **From that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to**

death.—I. THE CROWNING CRIME OF HUMANITY.—1. It was sanctioned by religion. A religious institution is often the corruptest, and a religious man the worst. 2. It was pursued with deliberation. When murder is perpetrated by the impulse of passion it is an awful crime: when by cold deliberation it is worse; when by the deliberation of one man it is hideous; but when by the deliberation of a whole assembly its enormity is enhanced. 3. It was delayed by Christ (ver. 54). II. THE MANIFOLD ASPECTS OF WICKEDNESS. 1. Wretched superstition (ver. 55). They could not partake of the passover if they were defiled. But here are men with murder in their hearts careful to attend a mere ceremony. Wickedness often runs into superstition. 2. Profane curiosity (ver. 56). It was a sort of betting whether He would come or not. 3. Organized malice (ver. 57). (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Watching the good to take them* :—When John Huss retired from the consistory of the Pope and cardinals, his lodging was encircled from that time by watchful sentinels; and a monk was let loose upon him, to ensnare him with dangerous questions—for Huss had protested that he had rather die than be justly condemned as a heretic; and that if convinced of error he would make full recantation. He had the shrewdness to "detect in the monk, who affected the utmost simplicity, one of the subtlest theologians of the day." **Jesus therefore walked no more openly.** I. THE CONCEALMENT OF CHRIST'S PERSON.—1. The reason of His retirement. The fresh outburst of hostility provoked by the raising of Lazarus. Christ never ceased to exercise a holy watchfulness over His personal safety. Not until His hour was come, and the Father gave the signal, would He expose Himself. Nor was it worth while to continue testifying to a generation that would not see or hear. Jerusalem's day of grace had closed, and He had withdrawn for ever. When next He appeared in her streets it would be to fall a victim to her murderous hate, and thereby save a world. 2. The place of His seclusion. Ephraim in the neighbourhood of Bethel, about twenty miles to the north-east of Jerusalem, on the confines of the Judæan wilderness. It was a region full of great memories of Abraham, and Jacob (Gen. xii. 8; xxviii. 10–19; xxxv. 14). 3. The occupation of Christ while at Ephraim. The time spent was about six weeks; and was spent we doubt not in instructing His disciples and preparing Himself for the end. II. THE COMMOTION AT JERUSALEM ON ACCOUNT OF CHRIST'S PROLONGED ABSENCE (ver. 56). 1. The disappointed search. The country people hoped to find Christ in the Temple. There they had seen Him on earlier visits. This was the most natural place to look for Him, and is still. Nor will any who seek with their whole hearts look in vain, 2. The animated conversation. Not finding Christ they formed themselves into eager groups to talk about Him—the best object of talk, given a praiseworthy spirit, as seen in the Emmaus travellers, but not in Caiaphus or these idle and curious gossips. 3. The reduplicated question. They hardly anticipated His presence, because of the action of the Sanhedrim. But they were in error, showing how little reason is capable of understanding the movements of the God of grace. Christ had every reason for being present at the feast. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **Many went . . . to purify themselves.**—*Ceremonial purity not enough* :—The most of them, it may be feared, neither knew nor cared anything about inward purity. They made much ado about the washings, &c., which formed the essence of popular Judaism, and yet they were willing in a few days to shed innocent blood. Strange as it may appear, these very sticklers for outward sanctification were found ready to do the will of the Pharisees and put Christ to death. Extremes like these meeting in the same person, are unhappily far from uncommon. Experience shows that a bad conscience will often try to satisfy itself by a show of zeal for the cause of religion, while the "weightier matters" of the faith are entirely neglected. The very same man who is ready to compass sea and land to attain ceremonial purity, is often the very man, who, if he had fit opportunity, would not shrink from helping to crucify Christ. Startling as these assertions may seem, they are abundantly borne out by plain facts. The cities where Lent is kept at this day with the most extravagant strictness, are the very cities where the carnival after Lent is a season of glaring excess and immorality. The people in some parts of Christendom, who make much ado one week about fasting and priestly absolution, are the very people who another week will think nothing of murder! These things are simple realities. The hideous inconsistency of the Jewish formalists in our Lord's time has never been without a long succession of followers. A religion which expends itself in zeal for outward formalities, is utterly worthless in God's sight. The purity that God desires to see is not that of bodily washing and fasting, of holy water and self-imposed asceticism, but purity of heart. Will-worship and ceremonialism may

"satisfy the flesh," but they do not tend to promote real godliness. The standard of Christ's kingdom must be sought in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. v. 8; Col. ii. 23). (*Bp. Ryle.*) **What think ye that He will not come to the feast.**—*Will He come to the feast?*—The question was doubtless asked from a variety of motives. Curiosity prompted it in many; the fame of Jesus had reached the town or village where they lived; they had heard of His power to heal the sick and raise to life the dead, and the miracle performed on Lazarus had been the talk of the place for weeks; they wished to see what He was like who did such wondrous things. This they thought was their only opportunity, so anxiously they asked whether He had yet come; and when answered in the negative, asked whether they thought He would. There were also some sullen, evil-eyed Pharisees, who gathered together in groups, argued the likelihood of His presence. But in all probability the vast majority of those who asked the question did so because they felt a true desire to see Him, and hear the words of His mouth. To be in His company was their chief inducement in journeying to Jerusalem. "Will He come to the feast?" is ever the language of God's people in all their gatherings; and the motive that prompts the question is that of intense desire for His presence and company. Let us then dwell upon the text not as the language of the Jew at the passover feast, but as the question of the saint in relation to every service. We will dwell first on THE QUESTION AND DIFFERENT REASONS FOR ASKING IT; secondly, we will GIVE OUR ANSWER AND THE REASONS FOR IT BEING SUCH AS IT IS; thirdly, MENTION SOME SIGNS INDICATIVE OF HIS BEING AT THE FEAST; and lastly, TRY AND POINT OUT SOME WAYS TO ENSURE HIS COMPANY. I. First then—THE QUESTION. It was, "Will He come?" They saw many others going up to the feast, but that sight satisfied them not. It is a happy thing to come to the feasts of the Lord, surrounded by family and friends, and if He be present, their company lends an extra charm. But how, if He be absent? Can they supply His place? Ah, "No." The goodness of a meeting can never be reckoned by its numbers. A crowded house may be full without Christ, and the room with only the "two or three" may be full with Him. Nor will the respectability of those present. The best families in the land were doubtless represented in Jerusalem as well as the poorest. Yet their presence in no way lessened the desire for Christ's, the prosperity of the Church, or the value of its services. The child of God would sooner worship with the poorest and their Lord, than with the wealthiest without Him. Many of these Jews had come on purpose to see Him. The journey had been undertaken with this expectation. Let them see never such glorious sights, yet if they see not Him they must return to their homes disappointed men and women, the one design of their coming being unfulfilled. Say, child of God, has not the expectation of meeting your Lord been the sole motive power that has brought you here? There are many reasons prompting the question; dwell on one, and that is that we feel it will not be a feast at all if He does not come. No true child of God can feast on externals. Without Christ the feast is no better than a fast. Here is the touch-stone whereby the true saint is discovered, and the formalist detected. The latter is satisfied with the temple—the people and the service. He never takes the trouble to seek Jesus or ask whether He be at the feast or no. He will desire his Lord's presence, moreover, because it is His being at the feast that gives him a spiritual appetite. Not only must Christ give us the food but He must also give us the appetite to desire the food; and this is most necessary, for the very choicest of food is insipid to the taste if appetite be wanting. This question was also asked, because they knew there were many reasons why He should stay away from the feast. The high priests were up in arms against Him. The Sanhedrim had determined His death. And do not we know of many things sufficient to make us doubt whether He can come into our company? Has He lived in our warmest heart's affections? Have we not to confess to a terrible amount of worldliness, coldness and indifference? Have we not often been ashamed of Him? Blushed to speak His name? Have we not also been often absent from the feast when He has been present? There is yet another cause sufficient to make us wonder whether He can come to the feast, and it is the many vows we have made at former feasts and broken. II. Secondly, I WILL TRY AND GIVE THE ANSWER, AND SOME REASONS FOR IT BEING WHAT IT IS. "Will He come to the feast?" I reply, "Yes, I think He will." Nay, "I believe He will." Yea, more, "I know He will." My reasons for giving such an answer are fourfold. 1. I think He will come to the feast because He loves it Himself Is it a joy to you to commune with Him? It is an equal joy to Him so to do. Do you love His company? He also loves yours. It is no irksome work to Him to be

in company with His people. Therefore, because it is His delight I think He will come to the feast. 2. I think moreover He will come because He has instituted the feast and invited us to it. 3. Very likely also these Jews entertained the hope He would come from the fact that He had often come before. May not we do the same? Cannot we call to mind many times when He has favoured us with His company at the feast, when we have been no more deserving of it than we are now. III. WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF HIS BEING AT THE FEAST? 1. A melting heart on account of sin. Our own unworthiness will appear great in proportion as we have communion with Christ. Self and Christ can never stand together, where He is, self lies in the dust. Pride will be trampled under foot, and every soul be filled with what John Newton termed "pleasing grief." 2. A second sign of His presence will be a joyful heart on account of pardon. When Christ visits His people, He not only makes them see the number of their sins, but also their complete pardon, and it is this double sight that prepares the soul for sweetest fellowship. 3. The third sign of Jesus being at the feast is an indifference and forgetfulness about all externals. IV. And now fourthly and lastly.—I WILL TRY AND POINT OUT SOME WAYS TO ENSURE HIS COMPANY. 1. The first and most apparent way is by asking for it. Christ will never say "nay" to the united request of His people, and we may rest most assured, that when that united request is simply for His presence it will be granted. 2. Another way is by forgiveness. Nothing so surely hinders Christ's communing with us as an unforgiving spirit; where that is, the joy of fellowship cannot be. And now, poor sinner, ere we close, a word to you. Jesus is here, closer to each one of us than we are to the other. He is by your side. He has come up now to the feast. What will you do? What will you say to Him? Oh, invite Him to your feast; tell Him "you have nothing to offer Him but a broken heart and contrite spirit," and He will not despise that. (*A. G. Brown.*) *Festivities:*—I. CHRIST WILL CERTAINLY BE AT OUR FEASTS AS A JUDICIAL SPECTATOR. As God, He is everywhere. No walls or doors will keep Him out. He will know the moral character and bearing of every feast, and bring "every work to judgment," &c. II. HE MAY COME AS A LOVING FRIEND. 1. He is pre-eminently social in His nature. "The Son of Man came eating and drinking." 2. He personally attended feasts when on earth. 3. He has promised to be present in the social gatherings of His people through all time. "If any man will love me," "Where two or three are gathered," &c. If He is not with you it is your fault. Have you invited Him? "Behold I stand," &c. III. IF HE DOES NOT COME AS A LOVING FRIEND WE HAD BETTER NOT HAVE THE FEAST AT ALL. If He is absent—1. It would be an affair unworthy of our natures. 2. It will be an affair pernicious to us. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XII.

The place of the chapter in the Evangelical history:—Every intelligent reader of the gospel will see that John purposely omits at this point certain events which are recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. He passes at once from our Lord's retirement to the city called Ephraim to His return to Bethany for the last time. In this interval will be found the things related in Matthew xx. 17–34; Mark x. 32–52; Luke xviii. 31, to xix. 1–28. In whatever part of Palestine this city Ephraim was, it is almost certain that between it and Bethany Jesus passed through Jericho, healed two blind men there, converted the publican Zacchæus, and spoke the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country, after giving to his ten servants ten pounds. Why St. John did not record these facts we do not know, and it is mere waste of time to inquire. A reverent mind will be content to remember that John wrote by inspiration of God, and was guided by infallible direction, both as to what he recorded and what he did not record. Reason and common sense, moreover, tell us that if the four Evangelists had all narrated exactly the same things, their value as independent witnesses would have been greatly damaged. Their variations and diversities are a strong indirect proof of their credibility. Too close an agreement would raise a suspicion of collusion, and look like an attempt to deceive. (*Bp. Ryle.*)

VERS. 1-16. **Then Jesus six days before the passover.**—The following calendar of the Passover-week is taken from Lightfoot (ii. 586):—NISAN IX.; *The Sabbath.* Six days before the Passover, Jesus sups with Lazarus at the going out of the Sabbath, when according to the custom of that country their suppers were more liberal.—NISAN X.; *Sunday.* Five days before the Passover, Jesus goes to Jerusalem on an ass, and in the evening returns to Bethany (Mark xi. 11). On this day the lamb was taken, and kept till the Passover (Exod. xii.), on which day this Lamb of God presented Himself, who was the Antitype of that ride.—NISAN XI.; *Monday.* Four days before the Passover, He goes to Jerusalem again; curseth the unfruitful fig-tree (Matt. xxi. 18; Mark xi. 12); in the evening He returns again to Bethany (Mark vi. 19).—NISAN XII.; *Tuesday.* Three days before the Passover, He goes again to Jerusalem; His disciples observe how the fig-tree was withered (Mark. xi. 20). In the evening going back to Bethany, and sitting on the Mount of Olives, He foretelleth the destruction of the Temple and city (Matt. xxiv.), and discourses those things which are contained in Matt. xxv.—NISAN XIII.; *Wednesday.* This day He passeth away in Bethany. At the coming in of this night, the whole nation apply themselves to put away all leaven.—NISAN XIV.; *Thursday.* He sends two of His disciples to get ready the Passover. He Himself enters Jerusalem in the afternoon. In the evening eats the Passover, institutes the Eucharist: is taken, and almost all the night had before the Courts of Judicature.—NISAN XV.; *Friday.* Afternoon, He is crucified.—NISAN XVI.; *Saturday.* He keeps the Sabbath in the grave.—NISAN XVII.; *The Lord's Day.* He riseth again. **Came to Bethany.**—*The arrival of the Passover caravan:*—Coming into Bethany, the nearest point of the great road to Galilæans' Hill, the caravan broke up; the company dispersed to the south and north, some seeking for houses in which they could lodge, others fixing on the ground where they meant to encamp. Those marched round Olivet to the south, following the great road, crossing the Cedron by a bridge, and entering the Holy City by the Sheep Gate, near Antonio; these mounted by the short path to the top of Olivet, glancing at the flowers and herbage, and plucking twigs and branches as they climbed. Some families, having brought their tents with them from Galilee, could at once proceed to stake the ground; but the multitude were content with the booths called Succoth, built in the same rude style as those in which their father Israel had dwelt. Four stakes being cut and driven in the soil, long reeds were drawn, one by one, round and through them. These reeds, being in turn crossed and closed with leaves, made a small green bower, open on one side only, yielding the women a rude sort of privacy, and covering the young ones with a frail defence from both noontide heat and midnight dew. The people had much to do, and very little time in which it could be done. At sundown, when the shofa sounded, Sabbath would begin; then every hand must cease its labour, even though the tent were unpitched, the booth unbuilt, the children exposed, the skies darkening into storm. Consequently the poles must be cut, the leaves and branches gathered, the tents fixed, the water fetched from the wells, the bread baked, the cattle penned, the beds unpacked and spread, the supper of herbs and olives cooked before the shofa sounded from the Temple wall. But every one helped. While the men drove stakes into the ground and propped them with stones, the women wove them together with twigs and leaves, the girls ran off to the springs for water, the lads put up the camels and led out the sheep to graze. In two or three hours a new city had sprung up on the Galilæans' Hill—a city of booths and tents—more noisy, perhaps more populous, than even the turbulent city within the walls. This Galilæans' Hill made only one field in a great landscape of booths and tents. All Jewry had sent up her children to the feast, and each province arrayed its members on a particular site. The men of Sharon swarmed over Mount Gideon, the men of Hebron occupied the Plain of Rephaim. From Pilate's roof on Mount Zion the lines and groups of this vast encampment could be followed by an observer's eye down the valley of Gihon, peeping from among the fruit-trees about Siloam, dotting the long plain of Rephaim, trespassing even on the Mount of Offence, and darkening the grand masses of hill from Olivet towards Mizpeh. All Jewry appeared to be encamped about the Temple Mount. From sundown all was quiet on the hill-sides and on the valley, only the priests and doctors, the Temple guards, the money-changers, the pigeon-dealers, the bakers of shew-bread, the altar-servants being astir and at their work. There was no Sabbath in sacred things. But everywhere, save in the Temple Courts, traffic was stayed, movement arrested, life itself all but extinct. (*Hepworth Dixon.*) **There they made Him a supper.**—*Jesus honoured:*—I. BY IMPROMPTU ACTS. One of the plainest proofs of the inspiration of the Bible is its

selection of facts for the world's instruction. Its standard of utility is not ours. Acts to us unimportant are given a prominence that arouses our curiosity and lead to profitable study. Thus the single act in Jacob's life, which is used as a proof of his faith in Heb. xi., is his blessing the sons of Joseph on his dying bed. We should have selected the scene at Bethel. Nothing gives such a solemnity to the last judgment as the picture of the separation of good and bad. On what ground? Not on that of an intelligent and determined rejection of Christ's claims or of pronounced and heroic service, but upon what we should call the waste and forgotten materials of life—things done so naturally and thoughtlessly that both cry out, "When saw we Thee," &c. And so, according to the common standard, these two acts here of unpremeditated honour are given undue importance. The anointing was done in a few moments, yet Jesus selected that one act as a service never to be forgotten. The scene on the day following had no great utility. A modern reporter would have called it a simple outburst of popular enthusiasm. But Jesus needed these songs of welcome and prized them. II. BY UNCALCULATED LOVE. Paul declares that without love we and our works are unprofitable, and John makes it the sum of all virtues. We live in times of great religious activity. The poor in body are with us—the poor souls of heathens are yonder. We do a good deal for both, and we do well. Yet because Christian work is so highly organized and reportable we need the lesson of Mary's incalculating love. We may be inside the great circle of Christian beneficence, and yet lack Mary's "good part." The institutions of Christianity open avenues to pride and ostentation never known before. The machinery of benevolence may exhaust the soul until all its sweetness and grace are wasted. We may shine in use and yet lack the ineffable charm and grace of a life hid with Christ in God. (*Monday Club Sermons.*) *Bethany and its feast:*—The house in which we find ourselves is that of Simon the leper (Matt. xxvi.; Mark xiv.). The feast is a great one; but Christ is the centre, and gives to it and the guests all their significance. Let us consider the latter in their relation to Christ. I. SIMON ENTERTAINING. He had known Christ before, probably first through his leprosy. Our first interview with Christ is respecting our moral leprosy. But Simon finds that he has much more to do with Jesus than merely for His cure: therefore he must have Him under his roof. So our acquaintanceship must be a companionship, and Christ must sit at our table. This is the sinner's side of the gospel. Here it is, not Christ receiving the sinner, but the sinner Christ. We must not overlook either side. II. LAZARUS FEASTING. What a feast, what a company! Simon healed, Lazarus raised, dipping into the same dish, drinking of the same cup with Christ the Healer and Raiser. How Lazarus first became acquainted with Christ we know not; but it was his death that had brought about the special closeness of contact—type now of risen saints who are to take their places at the marriage supper of the Lamb. What has Lazarus now but to gaze and listen? This is our true posture who have died and risen with Christ—listening, not bustling and talking. There is a time for both. III. MARTHA SERVING. Her usual employment, lowly but not least blessed; like His who came to serve. Angels might covet service to Christ in any form, were it for nothing else than near contact with Him. "Inasmuch as ye have done it," &c. IV. MARY ANOINTING—not entertaining, feasting, serving, but doing what some would consider a useless thing. Yet her act gets most notice. Christ says nothing to Simon, &c. It is no labour, suffering, &c., that gets the fullest commendation but love. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *The supper at Bethany:*—Note—I. THE ABOUNDING PROOFS OF OUR LORD'S GREATEST MIRACLES. Here was Lazarus. No one could pretend that his resurrection was an optical illusion. The same proofs attend the mightier miracle of Christ's resurrection (Luke xxiv. 42). We do well to remember this in this sceptical age. II. THE UNKINDNESS AND DISCOURAGEMENTS CHRIST'S FRIENDS RECEIVE. Mary thought nothing too great and good to expend on such a Saviour. Greatly loved, she thought she could not show to much love in return. But she was blamed by those who had lesser views than hers of the dignity of Christ's person and of their own obligations to Him. There are only too many of the same spirit, who begrudge nothing to push trade or advance science, but count it waste to spend money on Christ's cause. We must not allow ourselves to be moved from well doing by such. It is vain to expect men to do much for Christ who have no sense of debt to Him. We must pity them, but work on. He who pleaded the cause of Mary will not forget the "cup of cold water." III. THE DESPERATE HARDNESS AND UNBELIEF OF THE HUMAN HEART. 1. Unbelief in the chief priests (vers. 10, 11), who would rather commit a murder than confess themselves in the wrong. 2. Hardness in Judas, who after this could betray

Christ (1 Cor. x. 12). (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The true Church:*—I. ITS INTERNAL ASPECT. 1. Christ as the central figure, "They made Him a supper." Lazarus was conspicuous, but Christ was the centre of attraction. In the true Church Christ is in the "midst," and in all things has the pre-eminence. 2. A variety of guests. Lazarus silent, Martha busy, Mary tender, Simon healed and grateful. The true Church embraces all shades of character. 3. The presence of an incongruous character. Judas partaking of the feast, but unsympathetic. He shows three base things—(1) A false estimate of property. Money is not wasted on Christ, but on houses, apparel, fare, &c. (2) A hypocritical philanthropy—Judas cared little for the poor, as his history shows. (3) A heartless intrusion. No man has a right to "trouble" another on account of his religious services. Iscariotism is very prevalent. 4. The display of genuine devotion. Mary's act was—(1) Generous—the ointment was costly. (2) Spontaneous. It was unsought. (3) Open. It was done in the presence of all. (4) Right—(*a*) In principle. She wrought a good work—(*b*) In extent. She did what she could. (*c*) In reason—against the day of Christ's burying. II. ITS EXTERNAL INFLUENCE. 1. Some were attracted by curiosity (ver. 9). The wonderful fact on which the Church's theology is founded, as well as the moral revolutions it is constantly effecting, have a natural tendency to rouse inquisitiveness. Hence the questions, criticisms, and discussions in society, public halls and literature. 2. Some men attracted by malice (ver. 10). The determination of the priests was—(1) Wicked. (2) Foolish. Truth cannot be struck down by physical force. The true Church has always been the object of malice. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Prodigality praiseworthy:*—In the practical working of good agencies, there must almost always be a certain prodigality. The light which illuminates this speck of a world is but a single beam in comparison with that immense body of light which passes off, to be lost, apparently, in endless space. Nature produces a hundred seeds for every one which comes to maturity; and at every sculptor's feet there is an unheeded pile of marble chips which have been sacrificed to the fulfilment of the artist's design. If this is waste, then what the world wants is waste—waste of precious seed in sowing it, late and early, by the wayside, in thorny places, beside all waters. And what many a Sunday School wants is more waste like this—waste of money and time and effort over an apparently hopeless enterprise, waste of thought and speech and prayer in behalf of those for whom these seem to be spent in vain. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *The fragrance of true piety:*—When I was in Paris, I used to rise early and sit at my open window. I always knew when the stores beneath me were open; for one was a flower store, and from its numberless roses, and heaps of mignonette, arose such sweet, sweet fragrance, that it proclaimed what was done. It seems to me that Christians should be as a flower store, and that the odour of sanctity should betray them wherever they are. Not that they should go about obtruding themselves and their actions on others, with the cant of usefulness, but that they should live the purity and joy of religion, so that men might see the desirableness of it, both for the sake of nobleness, and for the enjoyment both of this world and that which is to come. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Power of perfumes:*—Lieutenant Conder, in his "Tent Work in Palestine," mentions that the perfume of the orange groves is detected many miles from Jaffa. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *The lasting perfume of pious deeds:*—It has been shown that the odoriferous molecule of musk is infinitesimally small. No power has yet been conceived to enable the human eye to see one of the atoms of musk, yet the organs of smell have the sensitiveness to detect them. Their smallness cannot even be imagined, and the same grain of musk undergoes absolutely no diminution in weight. A single drop of the oil of thyme, ground down with a piece of sugar and a little alcohol, will communicate its odour to twenty-five gallons of water. Haller kept for forty years papers perfumed with one grain of ambergris. After this time the odour was as strong as ever. And so the perfume of this generous gift to Christ will last throughout all time, and be carried over the whole world. *The philosophy of benificence:*—He who selfishly hoards his joys, thinking thus to increase them, is like a man who looks at his granary, and says, "Not only will I protect my grain from mice and birds, but neither the ground nor the mill shall have it." And so, in the spring, he walks around his little pit of corn, and exclaims, "How wasteful are my neighbours, throwing away whole handfuls of grain!" But autumn comes; and, while he has only his few poor bushels, their fields are yellow with an abundant harvest. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." *Motive for great gifts:*—A poor Protestant congregation in Lyons was trying to build a small house for their public worship. An old soldier brought all his three months' earnings.

"Can you spare so much?" asked the minister. "My Saviour spared not Himself," he answered, "but freely gave His life for me; surely I can spare one quarter of a year's earnings to extend His kingdom on earth." **Then saith one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot.**—Here is—I. A FOUL INIQUITY gilded over with a specious pretence. II. WORLDLY WISDOM passing censure on PIOUS ZEAL. III. Charity to the poor made a colour for opposing an act of piety to Christ. (*M. Henry.*) *Mary's offering: criticised and vindicated*:—I. THE BETRAYER'S CRITICISM OF MARY'S OFFERING. An eminent statesman once said that critics were men who had failed. What a lurid light this definition casts over the conduct of Judas at this hour! Moreover, criticism is too often the outcome of an utter incapacity to appreciate, arising from inferiority on the part of the critic. Judas, too, was not only too prosaic, but was also too official to be touched by the beauty of this deed. It is a hard thing for any man to be the treasurer of one society and maintain the breadth of his humanity. Judas felt that his "bag" had greater claims than his Saviour. Then, again, as a thief he could not understand that there are some offerings which cannot be sold, but which lose all their sacredness the moment you put them under the auctioneer's hammer; that in this instance the alabaster box must be broken in the giving, and that there are offerings the value of which the giver never counts. II. OUR LORD'S VINDICATION OF MARY AND HER OFFERING. 1. He bade Judas and the other disciples whom he had induced to repeat his cry (Matt. xxvi. 8; Mark xiv. 4) to "let her alone." 2. He not only vindicated the deed, but also explained its meaning. What a gracious construction He puts upon our poor services when they are prompted by love! That little child of yours wants to give you a present on your birthday. She buys it a week or so before the day. You notice some mysterious movements and looks, and there are little whispers heard all over the house. She confides in her little brother; and he, too, looks very wise and then very excited. At last the pressure is too great, the safety valve of speech gives way, and out comes the secret; then there is a rush out of the room and back again, and then the disclosure of a present which all the cupboards in the house could not conceal a moment longer. The present is thrust on your lap, and young eyes shoot light and love into yours. It has come before the proper date, but it is all the better for that. Mary, on this occasion, was like that little child, she could keep her alabaster box of ointment no longer; and what had been intended for the dead body was now poured, in the prodigality and impatience of an overflowing love, over His living form. Jesus knew all, and rejoiced over a love which had ante-dated its purpose, and given to the living Lord what had been kept for His burial. 3. Having done this, He emphasized the urgency for such an act as compared with the duty to the poor, who would remain when He had vanished from their sight and this act would be no longer possible. What they desired to do to Him, whether it were Mary to anoint, or Judas to betray, must be done quickly. (*D. Davies.*) *The self-sacrificing woman and the covetous apostle*:—The self-seeking heart in the Church makes balsam into poison. It turns—I. A JOYOUS FEAST INTO AN HOUR OF TEMPTATION. II. THE PUREST LOVE-OFFERING INTO AN OFFENCE. III. THE SACRED JUSTIFICATION OF FIDELITY INTO A MOTIVE FOR EXASPERATION. IV. THE MOST GRACIOUS WARNINGS AGAINST DESTRUCTION INTO A DOOM OF DEATH. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Mary and Judas*:—The parts of Mary and Judas in respect to the death of Christ are brought into sharp contrast. Mary in her devotion unconsciously provides for the honour of the dead. Judas in his selfishness unconsciously brings about the death itself. (*Bp. Westcott.*) *Alabaster box and money box*:—Mark the striking contrast between the money box of Judas and the alabaster box of Mary, his thirty pieces of silver and her three hundred denaries, his love of money and her liberality, his hypocritical profession of concern for the poor, and her noble deed for the Lord, his wretched end and her noble deed for the Lord. (*P. Schaff, D.D.*) *Judas and the disciples*:—In the synoptists it is "His disciples" (Matthew). "Some" (Mark), who remonstrate. It seems that on this as on many other occasions, Judas played among his fellow disciples the part of the leaven which raises the flour. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) **Because he was a thief and had the bag.**—*Judas and the bag*:—Why Jesus should have allowed Judas to carry the bag, when He knew that he could not resist the temptation to which it exposed him, is one of those mysteries which we shall only be able to answer when we understand why God allows any man to be exposed to temptation which He knows he will not be able to resist. It may be that Judas was first selected for this purpose, because he showed an aptitude for making such arrangements as were required for supplying the daily wants of the disciples, and for relieving the poor, and that the opportunity—the

possession of the bag—had developed in him the hitherto latent feeling of avarice. His sin consisted in appropriating to his own individual use some of the money which was given to him for the general good of Jesus and the disciples and the poor. That Judas was not an unblushing peculator, that he did not practise his thefts openly, but with the utmost secrecy, and with every outward appearance of upright dealing, is plain from the fact that the disciples do not seem to have suspected his motives on this occasion. They join with Judas in representing, that the value of the ointment might have been better spent in distributing to the poor, because they had not the slightest suspicion of his honesty. The fearful lesson, which the conduct of Judas teaches us, is the intimate relation which, in the nature of things, exists between appropriating to oneself the goods given to us in charge for Christ and His poor, and the betrayal of Christ Himself, between avarice and treason to Christ. The latter of these is the necessary consequence of the former, not the accidental but the moral consequence, not in Judas only, but in every man. Betrayal of Christ, in some form or other, follows the love of money as regularly and as certainly as night follows day. (*F. H. Dunwell, B.A.*) *Christ and utilitarianism*:—It is easy enough to give an ill name to that which lies beyond the range of our sense or our sympathies. Thus the refinement and culture which give a tone of ease and elegance to higher social circles are regarded by many with contempt. The rare and costly products of skilled labour, which our modern civilization demands, are despised as trivial luxuries. Education in whatever cannot be turned to account in a merchant's office, or in passing an examination, is deemed superfluous, however much it may enlarge and ennoble the scholar's mind. Even the moral delicacy of pure and sensitive natures is scorned as squeamishness. Men steeped in one class of religious ideas seem incapable of doing justice to those who hold other opinions. Mystical devotion sees profanity in thoughtful inquiry. The æsthetic ceremonial of a stately service is but mummery to those whose worship is of a simpler form. Of the purest, noblest, and most generous actions, which are veiled by their own grace, there is little comprehension by the world that toils and struggles all around for its daily bread. Its value in the market gave to the spikenard its only worth in the eyes of Judas. The manufacturer and retailer of it could be justified, for they made it only a means of gain; but not Mary, who poured it out like water in the mere gratification of sentiment. Yet surely if the dignity of human existence is recognized we may plead for a generous while just expenditure upon all that can sweeten and lend grace to life. Painting, sculpture, literature, architecture, have a rightful claim to be fostered. Foreign travel, social hospitality, instead of being forms of selfish indulgence, should enter into the education of whatever is best within us. Still more may we contend that the gifts of friendship, and the consecrated offerings of devotion, but fittingly express the reaching forth of the spirit after fuller and higher being. To value only what can be "sold" is to appreciate least what in nature and man is most glorious, and most capable of affording exquisite and perfect satisfaction. The gold and purple of the sunset, the flushing tenderness of the dawn, the rippling songs of birds, the full-voiced chorus of breaking billows, the pure air fresh with the fragrant breath of wild flowers, the rain pouring its living draught into every arid blade and leaf, are God's free gifts to men. The innocent joy of childhood, the generous enthusiasm of youth, the strength of wisdom, the serenity of a holy trust in God—in what earthly market can these blessed things of the Spirit be bought or sold? With what coin can you purchase the tenderness of sympathy, the confidence of friendship, the devotion of love. The things that cannot be bartered, the price of which no merchant quotes, the value of which no figures can express, which no thief can steal, and no moth and rust corrupt, alone form the wealth of the soul. (*J. R. S. Harrington.*) *Utility not the highest test*:—The question *cui bono*, to what practical end and advantage do your researches tend? is one which the speculative philosopher, who loves knowledge for its own sake, can seldom hear without a sense of humiliation. He feels that there is a lofty and disinterested pleasure in his speculations which ought to exempt them from such questionings. The great minds of the past who thought and laboured for pure truth did not trammel themselves with the question of utility; yet many of the truths they discovered have, in after ages, found a use, and contributed even to man's material progress. (*Sir J. Herschell.*) **Then said Jesus, let her alone.** *Mary's passionate love accepted*:—1. Christ often put aside enthusiasm. When men and women brought Him what looked like lovely flowers, He asked for sterner things. When the woman said, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee"; when men brought Him a crown, and

when the rich young man fell down and worshipped Him, He put their enthusiasm aside, chilled and damped. He would accept no sudden emotions and thoughtless impulses—flowers without roots soon to wither. 2. How different here. Who is to supply ice now? Judas the proper person. Jesus gathered this passion flower and put it for ever into the garland of God—because—I. MARY HAD BEEN GROWING IN LOVE. At first what joy it was to her to sit at the Master's feet; then when her brother came back, her joy and gratitude were overwhelming. She had good grounds for her love; and at last, with a fine impulse, she pours out her choicest gift at His feet. How many years had it been kept, too precious to be used! II. MARY'S LOVE WAS HOLY. She had grown at His feet, and learned by His teaching. Now she could sit there no longer, she must render her tribute. To know what and how to give is one of the last achievements of good manners, one of the most delicate of tasks, and when successfully done, one of the most gracious of acts. It is also one of the greatest victories of the soul to properly receive a gift. Christ does not put by her gift. It is Judas who interferes now; and with his beggarly economics brings in the dirty scales of this world. "Let her alone," said Christ, "she has done well." Why? Because her whole soul was in it, and when the whole soul is in anything arithmetic has nought to do with it. When a little child offers its caresses to some cold-blooded woman, "There, there, there," she says, "you have kissed me once, that'll do." So the little mouth is put back, and the little heart chilled. Yes: it will do for her, for a second kiss wasted on that icicle would freeze the heart from which it came. III. MARY'S GIFT CAME LAST. She had been contemplative, had heard His word, sat at His feet, and last, not first, came the spikenard. Because this passion flower was rooted in the heart and conscience and intellect of the woman, Christ rebuked Judas. Of all things in the house, these are the saddest—greetings where no friendship is, honeyed words which everybody gets, the same welcome for every fool, everybody's hand shaken alike. These things are hateful. But when the fair water-lily, rising from the very bottom of the pool, deep rooted, slow climbing, at last reaches the light, and bursts forth into glory, Christ loves the flowers. Conclusion: What about the three hundred pence? The chances are that those who give to beggars do it without much heart interest; but to kiss those sacred feet, what were three hundred pounds! What has money to do here? Listen to the justification, "I am going to die: there will be no more chance for her. These are flowers thrown on My grave." (*G. Dawson, M.A.*) *The recognition of a noble act*:—I. CHRIST'S MIND REGARDING HIS DEATH.—1. He looked forward to it. It was never absent from His mind. Here it emerges in a scene, the last apparently that could have suggested it. 2. He looked forward to a life above it, and Mary's act was grateful as revealing a love over which death had no power. 3. He had a pleasant view provided Him in regard to it. How cheered He must have been by this act with the cross imminent, and amid the murmuring and unbelief of His friends. II. CHRIST'S MIND REGARDING OUR SERVICE. 1. The timeliness of service. A word spoken, an act done in season, how good it is! There is a time to speak and to be silent, to work and to be still. We need to pray for wisdom. 2. Christ's recognition of our service. He knows what we do, and accepts the service, however trifling, because of the motive. 3. Christ's defence of freedom in our service. 4. Christ's loving construction to quicken our service. (*J. Duthie.*) **The poor always ye have with you.**—*The claims of poverty*:—This word extorted by the rapacity of Judas teaches us that poverty has its claims upon us which we must not neglect. From our definition of "the poor" we exclude the systematic idler and professional beggar. The claims of the real poor are based on—I. THE POSSESSION OF A COMMON NATURE. "The rich and the poor . . . . the Lord is the Maker," &c. A community of nature should—1. Awaken interest. 2. Stimulate sympathy. II. THE RELATIONS OF HUMAN SOCIETY. St. Paul's imagery of the body and the members (1 Cor. xii. 14–22) will illustrate this. The poor have their place in the social economy, and cannot be safely neglected. III. THE RELATIONS OF CHRIST'S CHURCH.—1. The Church is a body of which Christ is the Head. 2. The Church is indebted to the poor for some of the brightest testimonies to the power of Divine grace. It owes a debt in return. IV. THE SANCTIONS OF HOLY WRIT. (Deut. xv. 11; Lev. xxiii. 22; 1 Sam. ii. 7; Job xxix. 11–13; Psa. xli. 1; xlviii. 10; Prov. xiv. 31; xvii. 5; xx. 2; xxi. 31; Isa. xxv. 4; lviii. 7; Dan. iv. 27; Matt. xix. 21; xxv. 36; James ii. 14–16). The Bible is thus the poor man's book. (*Clerical World.*) *The Church and the poor*:—When the deacon St. Lawrence was asked, in the Decian persecution, to show the Prefect the most precious treasures of the Church at Rome, he showed him the sick, the lame, the

blind. "It is incredible," said Lucian, the pagan jeerer and sceptic, "to see the ardour with which those Christians help each other in their wants. They spare nothing. Their first Legislator has put it into their heads that they are all brothers." "These Galileans," said Julian the Apostate, "nourish not only their own poor, but ours as well." . . . . In the year 252 a plague raged in Carthage. The heathen threw out their dead and sick upon the streets, and ran away from them for fear of the contagion, and cursed the Christians. St. Cyprian, on the contrary, assembled his congregation, told them to love those who cursed them; and the rich working with their money, the poor with their hands, never rested till the dead were buried, the sick cared for, and the city saved from destruction. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *The poor represent Christ:*—A rich youth in Rome had suffered from a dangerous illness. On recovering his health his heart was filled with gratitude, and he exclaimed, "O Thou all-sufficient Creator! could man recompense Thee, how willingly would I give Thee all my possessions!" Hermas the herdsman heard this, and said to the rich youth, "All good gifts come from above; thither thou canst send nothing. Come, follow me." He took him to a hut where was nothing but misery and wretchedness. The father lay on a bed of sickness; the mother wept; the children were destitute of clothing and crying for bread. Hermas said, "See here an altar for the sacrifice; see here the Lord's brethren and representatives." The youth assisted them bountifully; and the poor people called him an angel of God. Hermas smiled, and said, "Thus turn always thy grateful countenance, first to heaven, and then to earth." (*J. Krummacher.*) *A motive for care of the poor and depraved:*—A few miles above Montreal, the two great convergent rivers of British America, the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa, meet. The St. Lawrence is a pure stream, of a peculiar, light-blue colour: the Ottawa is dark, as if it were tinged by moss in its way. After their meeting the two rivers run side by side a few miles, each occupying its own half of one broad bed; but gradually the boundary line disappears, and all the waters are mingled in one vast homogeneous flood. Although the life of the inhabitants below depended on preserving the pure cerulean hue of the St. Lawrence, it could not possibly be preserved. All the might of man cannot prevent the Ottawa from tinging the united waters with its own dark shade. Unless the darkness can be discharged from its springs, that great affluent will effectually dye the main river in all its lower reaches. Behold the picture of the process by which the neglected children of our unsaved brother, meeting our own at a lower point in time's rolling current, will blot out the distinction which is now maintained. Behold the rod lifted up in our sight to prevent the neglect now, or punish it hereafter! The dark cellars in which ignorant, vicious, godless parents, now pen their hapless brood, are the springs which feed a mighty river. Our little ones rise in cleaner spots, and in the meantime a solid bank separates the streams. But that turbid river lies within the same basin, and by the laws of nature must converge towards the central channel of society. It is an affluent. We must accept the fact, for we cannot change it. We dread that dark stream which, at a little distance, is flowing parallel with our own. Over the embankments, now not very lofty, we hear sometimes the ominous gurgle of its rapid flow. There is only one way of subduing that terrible enemy. If we cower timidly in our own hiding-place, the destruction which we thereby invite will quickly overtake us. In this warfare there is no armour for the back of the fugitive. Safety lies in facing the danger. The evil which in its issue is a deluge, may in its origin be successfully neutralized. Below you cannot keep the gathered volume out: above you may do much to purify the rising spring. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) **Me ye have not always.**—*Christ absent and present* (For a Communion: text and Matt. xxviii. 20.):—Like many passages these seem in contradiction; but if we grasp their deeper meaning they harmonize. Christ has given us a memorial of Himself in the Lord's Supper—a gem with two facets; on the one is written "Me ye have not always;" on the other, "Lo, I am with you alway." They remind us that we have in Christ—I. ONE WHO IS HUMAN AND DIVINE. 1. "Me," &c. There is something very human and touching in this farewell, which comes at first like a hint, and afterwards became more plain. And the absence of the personal Saviour from our Communion reminds us always of His death, and therefore of His true humanity. "Forasmuch as the children," &c. Let not the thought of His Divinity take away from our view of Him a single fibre of His true humanity. In this memorial of His death, "Behold the sign." 2. But "Lo," &c., reminds us that we have a Saviour who is Divine. So in the memory of His death we must realize His Divinity. The promise is not completed in the continuance of His words, example,

influence, death, memorials going down from age to age. It is the promise of a presence which implies an omnipresence: so that at every Communion He is Divinely repeating the words, "This is My body." And if here, then everywhere—to protect, guide, comfort to the end. II. ONE WHOSE DEATH AS OUR SAVIOUR IS ALL-IMPORTANT, AND NOT LESS HIS LIFE. 1. His death is the first truth which meets us in the Supper, "Me," &c. He instituted it that His death might be kept in memory, and the manner of it—broken body and shed blood—the memorials twice put into our hands that by two witnesses every word might be established. It is impossible to account for this without believing that His death was of supreme importance. Nor can we read the Bible without seeing this. The Old Testament points forward, and the Apostles point back to this. The Incarnation may serve other ends, but the first end to us is that Christ was "made lower than the angels for the suffering of death," &c. 2. But the other word must be spoken by one who is to be a complete Saviour. The Resurrection is connected with the death as the seal and assurance of its success. We have a monument of each—the Lord's table and the Lord's day, "Who was delivered for our offences," &c. III. ONE WHO PRESIDES OVER THE WORLD WHERE WE ARE GOING, AND OVER THE WORLD IN WHICH WE NOW ARE. "It is expedient for you," &c. Christ goes up before, that He may lead the way and say, Come; but He comes to guide and guard on the journey to the place He has gone to prepare. If we had a Saviour only in heaven, we might doubt if ever we should reach heaven. So we have Him there in the noonday, here in the twilight; there amid the palms of victory, here in the heat of battle. "For to this end Christ both died and rose," &c. (*J. Ker, D.D.*)

Vers. 9–11. **Much people of the Jews therefore knew that He was there.** Learn—1. Where Christ pleaseth to make Himself known, He will get respect and followers, were there never so much hazard and opposition in the way; for albeit the Rulers had concluded to put Him to death, and He had withdrawn upon that, and they had given charge to spy Him out (chap. xi. 53, 54, 57), yet much people of the Jews, so soon as they heard of Him, they flocked to Him. 2. Christ gives so glorious proofs of His power and love, as may invite men to flock unto Him; for He hath with Him Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead, to make them flock unto Him. 3. It is an argument to persuade Christ to help His people in their difficulties, that by so doing, He not only doth them good, but doth also bring about the manifestation of His glory, and an increase of followers; for, by raising Lazarus, He draws them out to wait upon Him (Psa. vii. 6, 7). 4. Albeit Christ will get glory, even by the unsound actings and appearings of men for Him (Philip. i. 16, 18; Psa. lxvi. 3), yet it is the sin of many, that they flock to Him rather out of curiosity, than in sincerity, and that they choose rather to gaze upon His works, than fall in love with the worker; for such was their fault here. They were curious to see such a rare sight, and possibly also, to inquire somewhat of Him concerning the state of the dead. (*G. Hutcheson.*) **Not for Jesus' sake only.**—*Imperfect attachments to Christ*:—I. SPECIFY SOME OF THESE ATTACHMENTS. Those whose attachment is influenced. 1. By custom. It was the fashion of the hour to be interested in Christ (vers. 12, 19). May we not truly say that the power of fashion has something still to do with assembling men about Christ. (1) For His sake only ought we to worship in the sanctuary; but we go also because the respectable multitude is there. (2) For His sake only ought we to give; but are not our givings prompted and regulated by social considerations? (3) For His sake only ought we to work; but do we not cast side glances at the public and reckon somewhat on their approbation? 2. By intellectual considerations. "For my sake," *i.e.*, personal love to Christ ought to bind us to Him, and prompt all our obedience and service. "But that they might see Lazarus"—intellectual interest—learn something perchance about the unseen world. Not for His own sake, but because of the light He may shed on great questions. How many in our day congregate about Christ as a prophet, and only faintly realize in Him a Saviour! 3. By secular considerations. Interest sways men in the matter. Virtues are valued as they pay; and Christ is chosen not for His own sake only, but also because of the immediate bearing that Christianity has on our worldly interest (chap. vi. 26). 4. By a regard to moral æsthetics. Not loving Christ only, enamoured with His grace and righteousness, but "cultivating holiness as so much personal adornment." Not loving Christ because He is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, but admiring Christianity because it fashions noble nations. Thus

there may be much that is false and mixed in the feelings which lead men to throng Christ. Fashion is there, because Christ has acquired social credit: intellect is there, because Christ can satisfy some of the hunger of its curiosity: taste is there, because in the shadow of Jesus it can realize some of its ideals: and prudence and policy are there, not because Christ is truth and love, but because He creates loaves and fishes of which they eat and are filled. II. THE PLACE AND VALUE OF SUCH ATTACHMENTS. 1. They may be allowed as the starting-point of Christian discipleship. Many are drawn to Christ not by the highest, and yet by legitimate, motives. Their first ideas, motives, and hopes, mixed and inferior, and yet leading on to what is purer and more perfect. As Matthew Henry says, "God makes the best of the green ears of wheat"; and because He does so, the green ears become golden, fit for the garner of God. 2. But the prize to which we must all press is that of a personal love to Christ. For His sake *only*. Not only when He will answer our mental questionings, but also when He is silent; not only when He is fashionable, but when He is forsaken; not only when discipleship insures honour and wealth, but when it involves poverty and disgrace; not only because He makes us perfect, but because He is perfection. Conclusion—Jesus only. 1. Here we are safe. 2. Here we are supremely joyful. 3. Here we, forgetting everything else, shall find far more than we have forgot. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) **But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death**: Learn: 1. Such as betake themselves to bear down Christ do engage themselves in an endless vexing life and an harder task than they are able to undergo; for they who would kill Jesus would put Lazarus also to death. Yea, they would kill many who would kill all whom Christ made objects of His mercy, for inviting others to come to Him (Exod. i. 12). 2. Men once engaged in opposition to Christ will not readily be reclaimed by insuperable difficulties, nor the convincing beams of His glory shining in their eyes; for, albeit this was a glorious work prevailing on others, and albeit they see more and more impediments in their way, yet they will go on. 3. None are so malicious and bitter enemies to Christ as corrupt churchmen, when they once decline; for it is the chief priests who are so cruel as to kill a man for being the harmless occasion for drawing men to Christ and whom God had newly delivered from death, and testified He would have Him live. 4. It is the great preferment, and most special mercy that can be conferred on any when they are made means and instruments of advancing Christ's honour and kingdom; for this was Lazarus' dignity, that because many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus. It is not needful to assert that the faith of the most of them was sound, but the least degree of it in the worst of them was enough to irritate the rulers. 5. Such as have received special mercies from Christ, or are made instruments of His glory, may expect that they shall meet with a rub, and be made the butt of the malice of enemies; for there is a resolution against Lazarus' life, who was thus highly honoured. 6. How mad soever enemies be, or their projects cruel; yet they would be far enough from their point, if Christ pleased, though they got their will; for, suppose they had put Lazarus to death, could not Christ raise him up again as He had done even lately to their knowledge, and so make His glory shine yet more brightly? (*G. Hutcheson.*) *Putting the witness away*:—1. The conduct of these men presents the chief difficulty in the way of the hope of some final universal salvation. For hardening themselves against Christ, they reveal the power of the human heart to become utterly blinded to the truth, even while the Life of Love is an increasing light round about it. The difficulty lies not in the nature of God or in the Cross of Christ, or in any temporal bounds put on the omnipresence of the Spirit of God; but the obstacle at which our knowledge must stop lies deep in the will of man and its fearful possibilities of evil. 2. The simple reason why they sought to put Lazarus to death was that "many of the Jews went away (from them) and believed on Jesus." But that thought was only an exaggeration of a common tendency of our human nature. For consider how natural it was. They had no special spite against Lazarus, but they did not wish to lose their power. As consistent Sadducees they could not allow his resurrection, but his existence was an unwelcome suggestion of its possibility, and an evidence of it which was misleading the people. Dogmatists must always close their minds against evidences of new truth. 1500 years later the same men would have put Lazarus to the rack until he recanted. 1800 years later they would have broken down his influence by misrepresentation and appeals to popular prejudice in the organs of their sect. If we do not want to receive

Christ or His truth, the next thing for us is to put away anything that may remind us of it. This is illustrated—I. IN THE ATTITUDE OF COMMUNITIES TOWARDS NATIONAL DUTY. In the troubled days before the American civil war there were merchants who did not wish to have their profits stopped. Selfish politicians who for the sake of office and ease were willing to reject the truth of freedom, and ready to put down every Lazarus whose presence was leading the people away after the new faith. II. IN THE ATTITUDE OF PERSECUTORS TOWARD THE GOSPEL. 1. In the book of the lives of martyrs and witnesses we find abundant illustrations—in the conduct of the Roman emperors, in that of the papacy, and in that of the opponents of popular movements who refuse to inquire what unheeded truths are beneath them, or what more human gospel may be waiting to enter our cities. 2. An obvious exemplification is the counsel of irreligious men to put the Church or the Bible out of the way. Social Sadducees cannot secure their reign in an anarchic humanity, so long as the people have the Bible in their homes, and so long as the churches stand to bear witness to the gospel. III. IN OUR OWN ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE TRUTH. 1. Christ draws nigh the cities of our souls in a duty, privilege, opportunity, clearer perception of truth. How do we receive His approach? We saw that it would interfere with our plan of life, disturb our ease, spoil our pleasure, leave us poorer, and we become afraid lest we should yield. And there was something near which reminded us of it. At least we could get rid of that. It may have been the sight of a friend; we avoided him: some spectacle of want or suffering; we passed by on the other side: some inward feeling or thought; we repressed it. So we remembered to forget that duty. We put its Lazarus where he would not trouble us. 2. Christ draws near sometimes in a new sense of faith, or hope, or possibility of life richer, truer, happier; and then we turn and other desires of life gather quickly round us, and the vision fades: we belong to the world again. We put that Lazarus also to death. (*Newman Smyth.*)

Vers. 12–16. **On the next day much people . . . when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of the palm-trees.**—*The triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem:*—In the morning Jesus set forth on His journey. Three pathways lead, and probably always led, from Bethany to Jerusalem; one a long circuit over the northern shoulder of Mount Olivet; another a steep foot-path over the summit; the third, the natural continuation of the road, by which the mounted travellers always approach the city from Jericho over the southern shoulder. There can be no doubt that this last was Christ's road. Two vast streams of people met on that day. The one poured out from the city; and as they came through the gardens, whose clusters of palm-trees rose on the southern corner of Olivet, they cut down the long branches, as was their wont at the Feast of Tabernacles, and moved upwards towards Bethany, with loud shouts of welcome. From Bethany streamed forth the crowds who had assembled there on the previous evening, and who came testifying to the great event at the sepulchre of Lazarus. The road soon loses sight of Bethany. It is now a rough, but still broad and well-defined mountain-track, winding over rock and loose stones; a steep declivity below on the left; the sloping shoulder of Olivet above on the right; fig-trees below and above, here and there growing out of the rocky soil. Along the road the multitudes threw down the boughs severed from the olive-trees, through which they were forcing their way, or spread out a rude matting formed of the palm-branches which they had already cut as they came out. The larger portion—those, perhaps, who had escorted Him from Bethany—unwrapped their loose cloaks from their shoulders, and stretched them along the rough paths to form a momentary carpet as He approached. The two streams met mid-way. Half of the vast mass, turning round, preceded; the other half followed (Mark xi. 9). Bethany is hardly left in the rear, before the long procession must have swept up and over the ridge, where first begins "the descent of the mount towards Jerusalem." At this point the first view is caught of the south-eastern corner of the city. It was here (Luke xix. 37) —may it not have been from the sight thus opening upon them?—that the hymn of triumph, the first hymn of Christian devotion, burst from the multitude— "Hosannah," &c. There was a pause as the shout rang through the long defile; and as the Pharisees who stood by in the crowd (Luke xix. 39) complained, He pointed to the stones which, strewn beneath their feet, would immediately cry out if these were to hold their peace. Again the procession advanced. The road descends a slight declivity, and the glimpse of the city is again withdrawn behind

the intervening ridge of Olivet. A few moments, and the path mounts again; it climbs a rugged ascent, it reaches a ledge of smooth rock, and in an instant the whole city bursts into view. It is hardly possible to doubt that this rise and turn of the road was the exact point where the multitude paused again, and "He, when He beheld the city, wept over it." (*Dean Stanley.*) *The entrance into Jerusalem*:—Four heads of thought.—I. THE MULTITUDE. This a vast concourse of people who are accompanying Jesus from Bethany to Jerusalem, and of people coming out of Jerusalem to meet Him. It was composed of Galileans, of Jews from foreign countries, and even of Jerusalem (John xii. 11), these latter being led by the miracle of the raising of Lazarus to reconsider the claims of Jesus, and to believe on Him, at least temporarily. The enthusiasm offers a sad contrast to the furious cry, "Crucify Him," so soon to be heard; but it seems sincere enough. With palm-branches, symbols of triumph (Lev. xxiii. 40), and with loud acclamations, they welcome the King to the royal city. In verse 13 we have the Divine mission and the national work both recognized. II. JESUS HIMSELF. Hitherto He had resisted the enthusiasm of the people (John vi. 15); now the time to yield to it has come. He sees the yielding to be in accordance with the Father's will. It is not a move calculated upon, but unfolding itself out of, the course of events. He does not say, "Now I will fulfil the prophecies which concern Me"; but simply accepts the situation, recognizing (as He always did) Divine guidance. Two things have to be done: 1. He has to assert Himself; He has openly to announce His true relation to the theocracy, and to take the consequences of doing so, which He clearly foresees. 2. He has to assert Himself in such a way as to give no countenance to mistaken Messianic ideas; but rather to symbolize the spiritual character of His royalty. This is accomplished by riding on an ass, and thus, in the most simple and natural way, the ancient prophecy is fulfilled (Zech. ix. 9). III. THE DISCIPLES. They had joined with the people in their homage to Jesus; but even they did not understand the significance of their actions. They had submitted to the influences of the moment; and afterwards, looking back, discovered that they had been unconscious instruments of fulfilling the purpose of God concerning His Son (*cf.* Acts xiii. 27). IV. THE OPPONENTS OF CHRIST. For the moment they seem paralyzed. "They had lost what they looked upon as their own." But it was their own after all; and it came back to them. The world at large does not and will not accept Christ. It swings back to its centre. Conclusion: We may learn how to distinguish between emotion and principle: between a momentary enthusiasm and the complete surrender of heart and will to the Saviour. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*) *Jesus coming*:—I. TO CONFOUND HIS FOES. II. TO CONSOLE HIS FRIENDS. III. TO COMPLETE HIS WORK. *The coming of Jesus*:—I. AS A MAN AMONG MEN. II. AS A POWER AMONG SAINTS. III. AS A KING AMONG NATIONS. (*S. S. Times.*) *The King comes to His capital*:—I. THE KING'S PERSON. Jesus—1. Recently condemned by the Sanhedrim. 2. Who had tacitly claimed to be Zion's King. 3. Who had repeatedly proved His right to this dignity, and lately established it by the miracle at Bethany. 4. Who now asserted it in the most open and unambiguous manner by riding in royal state into His capital. II. THE KING'S CREDENTIALS—1. Consisted in the fact that He was coming to His metropolis in the name of the Lord. He was no usurper, but One to whom the throne belonged by Divine appointment. The crown pertained to Him in a more real sense than to any of Israel's kings. 2. Were displayed in the manner of His coming. He came exactly as predicted. Had He come as kings of the earth are wont to approach their capitals—as Solomon and His successors—on fiery chargers, there would have been required no further demonstration that He was not God's Messiah. He came in humility and righteousness—indisputable tokens of His claim. III. THE KING'S WELCOME. 1. The multitudes—accompanying, meeting. 2. Their homage—waving palms and strewing garments in the way. 3. Their acclaim—"Hosannah." IV. THE KING'S ATTENDANTS. The disciples. 1. Ignorant at the time of its significance; perhaps imagining the present realization of their earthly hopes. 2. Afterwards alive to its spiritual and eternal meaning. IV. THE KING'S ENEMIES. The Pharisees. The spectacle seemed for a moment to confound their plots. It filled them with indignation, urged them to recrimination, made them more determined. Caiaphas' prophecy appeared on the eve of coming true. The nation was slipping from their hands. Lessons: 1. The religious instincts of the multitudes. 2. The credibility of ancient Scripture. 3. The illumination Christ's glorification has cast on history. 4. The certainty that the world will ultimately be won by Christ. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Welcoming*

the Monarch's approach:—Going out to meet an approaching guest, and escorting him to one's house with a show of honour, is a common custom throughout the East. A ruler of any sort, or a conquering hero, is welcomed in that way as a matter of course. Thus it was that Abraham was welcomed by the kings of Canaan when he returned from his pursuit of Chedorlaomer; that Jephthah was welcomed by his daughter and her companions; that David was welcomed by singing and dancing women, out of all the cities of Israel, as he came back from the slaughter of the Philistines. Herodotus records that when Xerxes was passing over the bridge of the Hellespont, the way before him was strewed with branches of myrtle, while burning perfumes filled the air. Quintius Curtius tells of the scattering of flowers in the way before Alexander the Great when he entered Babylon. Monier, in our own day, saw the way of a Persian ruler strewn with roses for three miles; while glass vessels filled with sugar were broken under his horse's feet—the sugar being symbolical of prosperity. (*S. S. Times.*) *Two royal progresses*:—The immense host which accompanied Xerxes in his attempted conquest of Greece—a concourse gathered together from the Indies to the Lybian desert; a sea of nations rolling on in serried waves, with turbans and helmets of brass and steel, of silver and gold—were seven days and seven nights without intermission, and under the stimulus of the lash, in crossing the boat-bridges of the Hellespont; and as they took up their line of march, they all moved on with exultation, and strewed branches in the pathway of their king. But what a contrast in spirit, in purpose, and in result, between that occasion and this! There, a vast army, held together by the bands of military force, and moving in abject submission; here, a spontaneous multitude, kindling with the impulses of wonder and of love. That, marching to the work of terror and of desolation; this, celebrating the achievements of a healing and restoring goodness. Here, among a rejoicing people, with eyes that had been blind, turned toward Him in beaming gratitude; with tongues that had been dumb, crying hosannas to His name; with hands that once were impotent, strewing branches and garments in His path, comes the King of Israel, the Saviour of mankind, in humble raiment and wayworn sandals, riding upon an ass. (*E. H. Chapin, D.D.*) *Three classes in relation to Christ*:—Two things strike us at the outset. 1. The highest majesty under the garb of meanness. Christ as a mere man was great. But how does this "Prince of the kings of the earth" enter Jerusalem? In a triumphal chariot? On a prancing steed, accompanied by a magnificent cavalcade? No! On an ass. The more truly kingly a man is, the less he cares for conventional pageantry. Hearts of oak requires neither veneer nor varnish. A great age has never been an age of millinery and gold rings. "Howe'er it be, it seems to me," &c. 2. An eternal idea developed in an apparently incidental appearance. It seemed perfectly casual that Christ should have required a creature to ride upon, and that there should be such a creature at hand; but all this was but the carrying out of an eternal plan, indicated six hundred years before. Caprice and impulse had no part in the control of Christ's life. The life of virtue is never that of accident; it is always the unfoldment of an eternal idea. We have here—I. THE POPULACE, a type of the unsophisticated masses unbiassed by doctrinal and ecclesiastical prejudices. These men—1. Saw Divine royalty under the garb of secular meanness. Men in our age and land are so blinded by pride and prejudice that they can discover no moral greatness under the garb of poverty. 2. Because enraptured with the morally great for its own sake. Conscience is bound by the law of its own constitution to exult in the right and morally great. "I delight in the law of God after the inner man." 3. Felt the reality of Christ's miracle. The sophisticated and prejudiced tried to argue it away, and refused to believe it. But the common people saw it, and had no interest in denying it. Thus the "people" went with Christ and honoured Him; and this they will always do if Christ is presented to them as He really is, not as metamorphosed by churches and creeds. II. THE DISCIPLES. 1. They were partially informed (ver. 16). They knew nothing of what Zechariah (ix. 9) uttered in relation to Christ. Though they had been with Christ so long, and heard Him expound the Scriptures, they were yet very ignorant. 2. They were enlightened by history. After Christ had ascended, and the Spirit come down, a new light dawned upon them. The facts of His life were brought vividly to their minds, and were compared with their older Scriptures, when they saw the fulfilment of ancient predictions. History is the best interpreter of prophecy. III. THE PHARISEES (ver 19). These men were —1. Bound to acknowledge the failure of their efforts. "Ye prevail nothing." All the antagonists of Christianity will have to acknowledge this sooner or later.

2. Bound to acknowledge a most disagreeable fact. "The world is gone after Him." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 16–18. **These things understood not His disciples at first.**—1. Men may be in the midst of great mercies and actings, and may not only be witnesses of the Lord's working and the works of others, but even actors themselves in that which for the time they do little or nothing understand; for these things understood not the disciples at the first. Men have much brutish ignorance fed with inadvertency and may be little expecting the things that God is doing in such a time or case (Gen. xvi. 13; xxviii. 16), and therefore do not discern them. 2. When the Lord's people are ignorant and under a cloud, He useth not to take advantage of them, but can guide them as right as may be, so that a back-look thereunto when they get light will be sweet unto them; for in all this they act as rightly as if they had understood, and afterward they find that what was written of Him they had done unto Him (Psa. lxxiii. 22, 23, 24). 3. However, the Lord for a time suffer His people to lie under clouds, and ignorant of what He or they are doing, yet in due time He will clear them in so far as is needful; for afterward they remembered (John xiii. 7). 4. The treasures of knowledge hid up in Christ were not fully opened up till Christ was glorified; for when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they, &c. Hereby is kept a due proportion betwixt the head and his members, that he shall be first exalted before they get their full allowance. And hereby also Christ being exalted giveth evidence that He remembers His people (John vii. 39; Acts ii. 33; Eph. iv. 8). 5. Confession of infirmity and ignorance is a sweet fruit of the Spirit poured out; and the more one have received they will be the more sensible of, and ready to acknowledge their frailties; for John, the beloved disciple, being now enlightened, is most forward to record that they understood not these things at the first. 6. When the Spirit of God is most amply poured out, He will still lead men to the Scriptures to discern of Christ and compare their own actings by it; for so was it in the disciples' best days, they remembered that these things were written of Him and that they had done these things to Him. It is an evidence of Christ's being exalted at the right hand of the Father for the good of His people when He brings Scriptures to their minds, makes them clear to them, and clears their practice there, for, when Jesus was glorified, this was a comfortable evidence of it, they remembered these things. (*G. Hutcheson.*) *Prophecy*:—I. GOD DOES FORETELL IN HIS WORD MANY EVENTS BEFORE THEY COME TO PASS. This appears from the text and from the whole history of His conduct from the first prediction of Genesis to the last in Revelation. Witness the fulfilled promises concerning the Jews, heathen nations, Christ, His Church, &c. II. GOD ALWAYS BRINGS TO PASS THE EVENTS WHICH HE FORETELLS. This will appear if we consider—1. That we have no evidence that He has ever failed to bring to pass any event that He has foretold. Though the disciples did not know at first that Zechariah's prophecy had been fulfilled, they knew it afterwards. 2. God never foretold any events but such as—(1) He was willing to bring to pass. He never could be under any compulsion to foretell. (2) His own glory requires to be brought to pass. (3) He is able to bring to pass. God can do anything that power can do and that does not involve a contradiction. His opponents He can break in pieces. III. GOD HAS GOOD REASONS FOR FORETELLING EVENTS BEFORE THEY COME TO PASS. 1. To convince men that He is concerned in bringing them about. 2. To demonstrate the truth of His bringing to pass other events not predicted. Predicted events stand inseparably related to unpredicted. The Messianic prophecies are connected with other events which took place in every part of the world. Improvement: It appears from the design of prophecy, that the Bible predictions—(1) Are the last He will ever give (Rev. xxii. 18, 19). 2. Will answer their end though not understood till fulfilled. 3. Being disbelieved does not destroy their evidence or importance. 4. Are an infallible evidence of the truth of the Bible. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *The continuous fulfilment of Scripture*:—There was much written as in sympathetic ink, invisible for a season, yet ready to flash out in lines and characters of light whenever the appointed hour had arrived. Or to use another figure, Holy Scripture progressively unfolding what it contains may be likened to some magnificent landscape on which the sun is gradually rising, and even as it rises is bringing out one headland into light and prominence, and then another; anon kindling the glory smitten summit of some far mountain, and presently lighting up the recesses of some near valley which had hitherto abided in gloom, and so travelling on till nothing remains in shadow, but the whole prospect stands out in the clearness and splendour of the brightest noon.

The Church informed and quickened by the Spirit of God, more and more discovers what in Scripture is given her. She has always possessed what she now possesses, only not always with the same distinctness of consciousness. He has not added to her wealth, but she has become more and more aware of that wealth; her dowry has remained always the same, but that dowry was so rich and rare that only little by little she has counted over and taken stock and inventory of her jewels. She has consolidated her doctrine compelled thereto by the provocation of her enemies, or induced to it by a growing sense of her own needs. She has brought together utterances of Holy Writ, and those which apart were comparatively barren, when thus married, have been fruitful to her. And yet all this she possessed implicitly though not explicitly—even as the shut hand is as perfect a hand as the open, or as our dominion in that huge island of the Pacific is as truly ours, and that region as vast in extent now as it will be when every mountain and valley, rivulet and bay, have been explored, and the flag of England has waved over all. (*Archbishop Trench.*) **The people therefore . . . bare record.**—*The popular testimony to the resurrection of Lazarus*:—1. It is the part of all such as have been witnesses to Christ's working on themselves or others to publish the same to His praise; for the people that was with Him when He called Lazarus, &c., bare record. 2. As it is at all times a sin to smother the praises of Christ. So, in particular, in days of solemnity, it is our sin not to join and bring in what we know to make up the song, for they bring in that particular to make up the triumph. 3. In a day of Christ's power, and when He is to get glory to Himself, He can furnish means and make them effectual to bring it to pass, for He makes that miracle an occasion to bring about this triumph. 4. It may encourage men to publish the praise of Christ's working as they know of it, that God may make their weak endeavours effectual to work upon very many, for the testimony of some drew out this great confluence to Christ. 5. It is the duty of them who hear anything of Christ's commendation to go and seek Him, and do homage to Him, for, for this cause, the people also met Him, for that they had heard that He had done this miracle. (*G. Hutcheson.*)

Ver. 19. **Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold the world is gone after Him.**—*The failure of infidelity*:—Like the prediction of Caiaphas and the inscription of Pilate, an unconscious prophecy is hidden in these words. What the Pharisee affirmed hyperbolically Christ's friends may now affirm almost literally. Note—I. THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL. Four important facts concerning this progress are admitted by friends and foes. 1. That during the first four centuries it was rapid and extensive. 2. That its human instruments were few and feeble. 3. That it was in spite of bitter and persistent opposition. 4. That it was not achieved in the dark, but in the most enlightened age of antiquity, and in the most populous and polished of ancient cities. The company of one hundred and twenty soon became three thousand, then five thousand men alone, then multitudes in Jerusalem only. In less than half a century Christian Churches were planted in all the chief cities of the Roman empire; in less than three centuries more, it was the religion of that empire. And from that day it has continued to spread until the most civilized nations are Christian and become Christian. II. THE EFFORTS OF INFIDELITY TO STOP THAT PROGRESS. Such was the nature of the opposition to Christianity that if our standpoint had been the first instead of the nineteenth century we should be forced to the conclusion that it would fail. 1. The Jewish world opposed it. The rulers crucified its Author but that effort was unavailing, for Christ rose again. They killed Stephen and James, but the disciples, driven in every direction, spread the gospel. Wherever the apostles went the Jews stirred up the people against them; but being persecuted in one city they fled to another preaching until thousands of Jews, including many priests, became obedient to the faith. 2. The Gentile world opposed it. Polytheism was so firmly enthroned in the hearts of the people, and so completely interwoven with the government, the arts and trade, that Christianity was regarded as treason against religion, the state, common sense and good taste. First, the Christians were slandered and ridiculed, then slaughtered in thousands. But all the efforts of the empire and paganism combined prevailed nothing. 3. The modern world has opposed it. Changing its tactics, infidelity, instead of assaulting men bodily, has assailed their minds and hearts, and marshalled its hosts under the banners of science and literature. But still it prevails nothing. III. WHY INFIDELITY HAS FAILED. The Christian answer is because the hand of God is in the progress of Christianity. The answer of infidelity—in human instrumentality—refutes itself. Infidelity has failed because—

1. It has dashed itself against the Rock of Ages. There is no successful arguing against such a character as Christ. 2. The evidences of Christianity are too convincing. Intelligent people would not continue for nineteen centuries to use a remedy that never cures. 3. Infidelity has no substitute for Christianity. (*W. B. Stewart, D.D.*) *The world is gone after Him:*—It is a confession of defeat, "There has been a long struggle and it has gone against us." The triumphal entry had shown the hold which Christ had on the people. I. WHAT WAS IT IN CHRIST WHICH SO DEEPLY STIRRED THE ENMITY OF THE PHARISEES? 1. We are in some respects hard on the Pharisees. When Christ called them hypocrites, He meant that sort of doubleness which may be but half-conscious, or which may be quite unconscious to the man himself. They were moral men, and it is not hard to reconcile this with their conduct towards Christ. Who are they now, who are most sensitive to the appearance of what they regard as irregular teachers of religion? And who can wonder if the last to give their sympathy to the new doctrine are the established exponents of the old? 2. Doubtless it was the sin of the Pharisees to be prejudiced against Christ, but we lose the lesson if we regard them as monsters of the past, which is the danger of prejudice in things of the soul. We ought not to be so wedded to one form or formula as to be incapable of profiting by any new light. II. WHAT WAS IT THAT MADE THE WORLD GO AFTER HIM. 1. Reality. We may trifle with Christ; but He never trifles with us. The Pharisees were triflers, as are their modern representatives, whether of wealth, literature, or the Church. Men then, as now, were weary with childish discussions, and were then, as now, ready to follow a real man who meant and lived what he said. 2. Unworldliness. It is a mistake for a religious teacher to court popularity by compromise with the world, "All things to all men." The people see through it all and despise the man who flatters himself that he has won them. The secret of John the Baptist's power was his unworldliness, and it was the incomparable unworldliness of Christ that attracted the world after Him. 3. Wonderful love. It was new to publicans and sinners to be treated with love, and still more strange that with the love of Christ there should be blended such an inflexible righteousness. But the people followed Him because of the love which won them from the sin which purity condemned. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Why Christianity triumphed:*—Our curiosity is naturally prompted to inquire by what means the Christian faith obtained so remarkable a victory over the established religions of the earth. To this inquiry an obvious but satisfactory answer may be given, that it was owing to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and to the ruling providence of the great Author. (*Gibbon.*) *The triumph of Christianity:*—During the decay of the Roman Empire, a pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men, grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigour from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the Cross on the ruins of the capitol. Nor was the influence of Christianity confined to the period or to the limits of the Roman Empire. After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries that religion is professed by the nations of Europe, the most distinguished portion of the human kind in arts and learning as well as in arms. By the industry and zeal of the Europeans, it has been widely diffused to the most distant shores of Asia and Africa, and by the means of their colonies has been firmly established from Canada to Chili, in a world unknown to the ancients. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 20–33. **And there came certain Greeks; . . . the same came therefore to Philip . . . saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.**—*The incident and its significance:*—These Greeks belonged to those numerous Gentiles who, like the Ethiopian eunuch (Act viii.), had embraced Judaism and came to Jerusalem to keep its festivals. They must be carefully distinguished from the Jews (Hellenists) speaking the Greek language, who dwelt in heathen lands. The spacious court of the Gentiles was devoted to these proselytes according to the words of Solomon (1 Kings viii. 41–43). If these strangers witnessed the entry of Jesus, and were present at the expulsion of the sellers—an act by which Jesus restored to its proper use the only part of the sanctuary open to them—we can all the better appreciate their desire for nearer acquaintance with such a person. Assuredly they did not, like Zacchæus, want merely to see Jesus with their bodily eyes; for such a purpose there was no need of Philip's intervention, since they might have seen Him as He passed through the court. Besides, the solemnity of our Lord's reply obliges us to attribute a more serious intention to this step. What they desired was to have a private conversation on religious subjects. How do we know even whether, having witnessed the opposition

He encountered from the rulers of His own nation, they did not desire to invite Him to turn to the Gentiles who would better appreciate such a sage than these bigoted Jews? Eusebius has preserved the memory of an embassy sent to Jesus by Abgarus, king of Edessa, in Syria, to invite Him to take up His abode with Him, and to promise Him such a royal welcome as should compensate Him for the obstinacy with which the Jews rejected Him. This fact is not without resemblance to the one in the text, and in which we behold, in one of the first demonstrations of the heathen world in favour of the Gospel, the first indication of that attraction which its moral beauty was soon to exercise over the whole human race. Jesus was undoubtedly, at the time, in the court of the women, which was entered after crossing that of the Gentiles, and in which He frequently taught. The term "approached" has a certain tone of gravity and solemnity. The address, "Sir," shows the respect they felt for the disciple of such a Master. "They desired," expresses an action begun and awaiting its completion, the answer of Philip. Θέλομεν—"We have decided to . . ."; procure us therefore the means—"to see." These strangers used the most modest expression: to see Him more closely. The fact that Philip was of Bethsaida may serve to explain why they applied to him. They came perhaps from Decapolis on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, where were several entirely Greek cities. It is remarkable that Philip and Andrew are alone those whose names were of Greek origin. The Greek name went hand in hand with the Greek culture, Mark the cautious character of Philip. He feels the gravity of the step he is asked to take, and before asking Jesus to deviate from His habitual conduct (Matt. xv. 24) brings the matter before Andrew, who in all the catalogues of the apostles is placed next to Philip, and are mentioned together in chapters i. and vi. It is probable that the latter, the more vigorous and decided character, was the spokesman, and that this is the reason why his name is placed first. Why did this circumstance make so profound an impression on Jesus? First it aroused within Him the feeling of His sovereignty over the Gentile world. Religions wants expressed by Gentiles and to Him! It is, as it were, the first bursting forth of a new world. But this sovereignty could only be realized so far as He should Himself be freed from His Jewish covering and raised to a new form of existence. Hence His thoughts turned to Calvary. Hence, instead of answering yes or no to the question, He was absorbed in the reflections it called forth, The Gentiles were knocking at the door of the kingdom of God: it was the signal that a decisive hour had come—(1) For Himself (vers. 23–30); (2) For the human race (vers. 31–33); (3) Especially for Israel (vers. 34–36). (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Seeing Christ*:—It is one of the many curious things that assure us that the Gospels themselves are substantially fragments out of the real life and times of Jesus Christ, that these men should be Greeks, at that time probably the most inquisitive and newsy race on earth. They had come, I presume, from Corinth or Ephesus; and, when they went back home, the first question would be, "What's the news?" Now, the news was Jesus. He was just then the common subject of discussion; and it would be a great thing for them, when they got home, to say, "We have seen Jesus, and talked with Him." And the answer of Christ, though it seems at the first glance to be no answer at all, touches the very heart of all such question and answer, and is, beside that, a beautiful instance of the rich, transcendental nature of this Son of God: "Except a corn of wheat," &c. As if He would say, "These men want to see Me. What can they gain by that? What they will see is not Me. The root is not the flower. This common, footsore man, with this poor brown face, so thin and worn that men think I may be nearly fifty, while I am but thirty—what can I be to men whose ideal is Apollo? My simple words about God and man, and duty and destiny, would be foolishness to them. Let them wait until the world burns with the lustre of what is sprung out of Me. When I have whispered my comfort and confidence to millions of desolate souls; when I have created new homes for purity and peace to dwell in, and brought men and women and children back to the Divine will; when the love and truth and self-sacrifice of which God has made me, though I seem but a poor peasant, shall have done what all the genius of all the ages has failed to do; when I have hushed the fevered heart of the world to rest, and quickened it into a new life—then they can see Me. But I must die to live." (*R. Collyer, D.D.*) *The two Epiphanies*:—There were two manifestations of our Lord to the Gentiles. One took place at the beginning and the other at the close of His life. The Magi, the wise men of the East, came to the cradle of Jesus; the Greeks, the wise men of the West, came to His cross. The old world of the East, with its exhausted history and completed

revelation, came to the cradle of the Child of Promise to receive a fresh impulse, to share in the new creation of God and rejuvenescence of the world. The new world of the West with its mobile life, its ever expanding history, its glowing hopes and aspirations, came to the cross of the Redeemer that it might receive a deeper earnestness and a higher consecration. In these two Epiphanies we see harmoniously united the two great systems of pagan religion which separately were but a mere fragment of the truth, and contained no hope or promise of blessing for man. The Orientals had the humiliation of the Godhead as dimly shadowed forth in the Avatars of Vishnu and Buddha; the Greeks had the exaltation of manhood as shown in the apotheosis of the heroes of the Pantheon. Thus appropriately the representatives of the wisdom of the East and the West came respectively to the birth and death of Him who, though He was the equal of God, yet took on Him the form of a servant, and whom God had highly exalted, giving Him a name which is above every name. Equally significant were the symbols of the two manifestations. In both cases they were borrowed from the field of nature. The one was a star, the other a corn of wheat. The star of the wise men of the East—the watchers of the midnight heavens—was changeless as the life and religion of the East. It rose and set, and moved in its orbit for ever the same. The corn of wheat of the Greeks —those restless searchers into the meaning of everything on earth—grew to more and more, and exhibited all the changes and variations of life. The one was a symbol of the night with its dreams and mysteries and spiritual thoughts; the other of the day with its stern facts and active duties and daily bread. "Sir, we would see Jesus" was but another form of the old question which the wise men asked, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" The wise men of the East were guided to Christ by a star, a dead silent object of nature. But the Greeks were guided to Him by the living voice and hand of man. And how characteristic was this circumstance of the difference between the Orientals and the Greeks! The Orientals shaped their philosophy and religion in the changeless desert, under the passionless starry heavens, from the calm contemplation of the objects of nature which entered so largely into their worship. The Greeks shaped their philosophy and religion amid the ever-changing haunts of man, and in contact with the busy work of everyday life. Not through the sympathy of nature, but through the fellowship of man, did they rise to their conception of man's origin and destiny, and their solution of the profound mysteries which surround his present and future. It was fitting therefore that they should be guided to Christ, in whom all their hopes should be fulfilled, and all their mysteries solved, not by a star but by their fellow-men. (*H. Macmillan, D.D.*) *East and West coming to Christ*:—This is a companion picture to the visit of the Magi—science and thought seeking Christ. The Magi, on the one side, are the representatives of the world's godly scientists, the forerunners of the Galileos, the Keplers, the Newtons, and the Faradays, who never stop at laws but reach to their giver, "from nature rise to nature's God;" who refuse to see the world as a stage only on which man may stand or strut, may display his energy or magnify his pride, but who see it as an "altar-stair that slopes through darkness up to God," and on which it becomes man to kneel and pray. The Greeks, on the other side, are the representatives of the world's godly philosophers, the theistic thinkers; they are the forerunners of the Augustines, the Aquinases, the Anselms, and the Pascals—the men who rescue philosophy from being the painted priestess of pride and purify her to be the sweet handmaid of Christ. "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" "Sir, we would see Jesus." (*G. M. Grant, B.D.*) *Certain Greeks*:—I. THE GREEKS. Three peoples prepared for Christ's coming and three languages waved above His cross. Jewish religion, Roman arms and government, Greek thought. The philosopher connects preacher and politician. 1. In an age far back, when thought had become enslaved in the falsified civilizations of the Nile and Euphrates, an asylum was found in Greece. For five centuries the Greeks marched at the head of humanity. All gathered round the torch of Greek genius. Meanwhile Greek language had been fashioned into the most perfect vehicle of thought ever developed. Neither Hebrew nor Latin had the copiousness or flexibility necessary to deal with a new world of spiritual realities. And this so rich and copious became all but universal. And what a marvellous intellect wielded this weapon. To them was entrusted the brilliant but sad task of demonstrating for all time the necessary failure of culture to regenerate man. The grandeur of the effort is the measure of the greatness of the failure. Their intellectual labours were those of Titans. Of this mission and failure the apostle reminds the Corinthians (i. 21, &c.). 2. At the hour when the failure was most evident. When

instead of being brought nearer to heaven and God man was halting between a superstition which believed everything and a scepticism which believed nothing, these Greeks said, "We would see Jesus." 3. They were proselytes, Greek correspondents of the Roman centurion, brothers of thousands in India to-day who are Christian theists halting at the "gate" of baptism. We can picture the processes by which they reached their position. Born where decorous belief in mythology was professed; then emancipated into a vague scepticism by the speculations and criticisms of the schools (what Western science and literature are doing in India); then plunged into dead, unproductive negation, the spirit protesting, and the longing after positive truth eventually triumphant. The Jewish scriptures reach them, and there they find at least something of that for which they yearned; a warrant for the vague belief throughout the East of the advent of some great one in Judea. The project would be started and carried out to visit Jerusalem. How disillusioned they become at the sight of its secularities. They are permitted to enter the Temple no further than the Outer Court; and how little to solemnize they see there—tables of money-changers, cattle, &c. Then comes Palm Sunday, and the benign form "riding on an ass's colt." Who is this? Jesus. Then follows the cleansing of the Temple. They talk it over. Something more than curiosity awakes within them—a revival of those hopes which the vitiated moral atmosphere had killed. They make up their minds to seek a personal interview, which brings us to—II. THE REQUEST. On two other occasions we hear of a similar desire. Herod, "that fox" (Luke xxiii. 8), had his wish gratified to his condemnation—for Jesus answered him nothing; to such as he our Lord's lips are closed. Zacchæus (Luke xix. 3) was also gratified and salvation brought to his house. 1. The request is marked by directness and simplicity, yet there is more in it than lies on the surface. In their minds a train of possibilities hung upon that "seeing." Jesus might turn out to be a Messiah, or only a kindly enthusiast or a popular idol. 2. But there was much more in it than they knew. They occupied a representative position and spoke for a vast constituency—the devout souls of all time who cry for a Saviour. III. ITS EFFECT. "The hour is come" must have seemed a strange outburst in such a connection; but we can trace the connection easily. 1. Christ saw in them the first fruits of the full harvest of heathen lands—the advance guard of the multitude which no man can number. All that was needful for Him to do as a teacher was now done; what remained of His regenerative mission could be done only by dying. So He goes on to discourse concerning the life efficacy of His death. 2. Christ does not appeal to the Prophets concerning His death as He does when addressing His disciples, but appeals to the secretly prophesying mystery of nature—the prophecy of a Redeeming Death which they could discern everywhere around them, and on which philosophy had long speculated, the mystery of life through death. Only by dying could His Divine energy be set free and exerted for the life of all. 3. This analogy was appropriate to the Greeks. They had sought their ideal of life, not in self-renunciation, but in beauty, strength, self-satisfaction. Their ideal was embodied in Apollo, the very opposite of Jesus, who was "without comeliness" and whose emblem was a cross. The lesson of dying to self was what their race most lacked and therefore most needed. 4. The influence of that interview would never pass away. That grandest prayer, the voice from heaven understood according to spiritual capacity—all that would abide as an instruction and power of life for ever. (*G. M. Grant, B.D.*) *The inquiring Greeks*:—I. THE LONGING TO SEE JESUS IS A MATTER OF CONSTITUTION NOT EDUCATION (ver. 20). These were not Jews, and their visit grew up out of heart-want. Man's need and God's supply must be contemplated together. Religious experience begins in the natural seekings of our constitution, and ends in the gratification of some higher ones which are supernatural. The natural desires demand direct communion with God; but the supernatural are created by the disclosure of a possible purity, and these demand to be led to Christ as a sacrifice. II. SPIRITUAL INQUIRY AFTER CHRIST IS SOMETIMES LITTLE MORE THAN RESTLESS CURIOSITY (ver. 21). These men could not have known just what they wanted. The soul has vague but sincere wishes for something it does not possess—"an aching void." Partly from need and curiosity the Greeks came to ask. Fire ascending seeks the sun; we can imagine some flames so buffeted by winds as to render it consistent for them to say, "We would see the Day-God"; or some compass needles disturbed praying, "We would see the North Pole!" For these constitutional desires will not long tamely bear to be denied of their proper rest. III. MANY MEN TAKE THE ROUNDABOUT WAY IN COMING TO JESUS (ver. 22). They prefer some intervening Philip, some mediating priesthood.

But it is not the Greek name of Philip, nor the experience of Andrew, which is to be relied on for soul rest. Redemption as an individual acquisition is the only reply to the cravings within. IV. THE MOMENT ONE SEES JESUS HE FINDS THAT HE HAS A WORD TO SAY DIRECTLY FOR HIMSELF (ver. 23). Hitherto one may have supposed his own soul to be the object of the atonement. Suddenly he perceives that the glory of God is lying behind the Cross, and it puts a new thought in his mind to learn that the work of the Son of Man was done that the Son of God might have supreme glory. But did not Christ suffer to save souls? Yes; but what was the special need that souls should be saved? V. THE TERMS OF THE GOSPEL ARE IMPERATIVE AS TO AN ENTIRE SURRENDER OF SELF IN ORDER TO SEE JESUS (vers. 24–25). If one wants the grand hope of the gospel in conversion; to attain the full measure of consecration, to know the secret of unfailing success—it is life for life. Jesus means that we are to put our heart into our work, to deny our ease, give our time, money, &c., and sink our selfishness in devotion to Him. VI. WHEN A SOUL HAS FOUND JESUS IT IS TO MAKE ITSELF PERFECTLY SATISFIED WITH JESUS (ver. 25). (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *What the world owes to the Greeks?*—It was the Greeks who first welcomed Christianity, and there cannot be a more striking contrast than between the eagerness with which they received the truth of God manifest in the flesh, and the difficulty which even the Jewish Christians had in realizing its full significance. It was in the Greek tongue that it first addressed its Divine message to the world. It was in the cities and homes of the Greeks that it first displayed its wonderful power of assimilating and transforming all the elements of life, and manifested what it should afterwards become in human society. The gods of Hellas were the first to fall down before the ark of the Son of God; and when He died, it is touchingly said a wailing voice was heard through all the hills and forests of Greece crying, "Great Pan is dead." It is indeed difficult to conceive what form Christianity might have assumed had not Greek faith first illustrated its saving truths; or how it would have prospered had not the Greeks of earlier days spread their language and philosophy through all lands. What the world owes to the Greeks no tongue can sufficiently tell. From them we have received the sublime poems and splendid treatises on science and philosophy which have educated all the higher minds of the human race. From them we have received the matchless sculptures, paintings, and architectural glories which have filled men's souls with visions of ideal beauty. From them we have received the inestimable legacy of our Greek New Testament, which is the light of our feet and the lamp of our path to immortality. It is to them we owe the boon for which we should never cease to be thankful, that the sacred Scriptures passed from the calm lonely lethargic scenes of nature in the East, associated with the infancy and early youth of our race, to the busy stimulating scenes of the West, associated with its manhood; that the lofty, vague Hebrew language, the very language of the loneliness and grandeur of nature, has been translated into the quick, precise, many-mooded Greek, the very language of business and active human life; that the stately oracles of prophets living in deserts, addressing men afar off and from pedestals high above them, have become the familiar epistles of apostles coming constantly into personal contact with the sins, sorrows, and wants of humanity. From them we have received the noble works of the early Greek fathers of the Church, Justin, Origen, Gregory, Chrysostom, Athenagoras, Basil, Cyril of Jerusalem, and John of Damascus, which have proved such invaluable helps in expounding the sacred Scriptures. From them we have received the grand liturgies, the inspiring hymns, the glorious triumph of martyrs, and the devoted lives of saints, which have stimulated the piety and fired the enthusiasm of all Christian churches ever since. The Greeks gathered together, as it were, all that was grandest and most enduring in the world, and, holding it up in their arms for the baptism of Christianity, handed it on thus purified for the blessing of all after ages. (*H. Macmillan, D.D.*) *The movement of Greek thought toward Christ:*—In the courteous but eager desire of these Greeks we hear the longing of their whole heathen world for a Redeemer. The old rites and superstitions had lost their hold on men's minds. Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, and Venus, had all faded from the imagination of the upper classes; and the worship of these deities was left to the vulgar and ignorant, or was retained only as a matter of policy. The oracles were dumb; the altars cold and deserted; and some tried in vain to satisfy their wants by changing religion into poetry or philosophy, or sought as a last resource to fill with sensual pleasure the intolerable vacuity of their hearts. Regretful of the past, hopeless of the future, suicide was recommended as the only cure for human misery; the darkness of despair giving place to the deeper darkness of death. But even in

the utter blankness of such a night, there were men of nobler instincts who could not do without religion—"Memnons waiting for the day." They felt about for the unknown God to whom they might cry for help amid the wreck of every religious system, and the failures and uncertainties of the world around. Some of these "seekers after God," men of the stamp of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, had wandered into Jewish synagogues, which by a providential coincidence at that time were placed in all the chief cities of the world; and there they found to their surprise, in what they had been taught to regard as an "execrable superstition," ledges of faith and hope by which they climbed out of the profound darkness into the happy sunshine. They were irresistibly drawn to the new religion by its unity of the Godhead, its high ideal of domestic and social purity, and above all by the hope which it held out of a coming Messiah who should redress all the evils of the world, dispel its ignorance, and bring in not a cold morality, but a righteousness which should be the offspring of a burning love. Not a few of these went up as pilgrims to the annual festival at Jerusalem; and among them were the Greeks who wished to see Jesus. They expressed the longing of the whole heathen world for Him who was the light to lighten the Gentiles. (*Ibid.*) *The desire to see Jesus:*—I. WHAT IS THERE TO SEE IN JESUS? 1. God manifest in the flesh. In any other aspect the Deity is an object of fear not of comfort. 2. God anxious to save the lost. 3. God rejoicing when the lost is found. 4. God receiving before He expects amendment. 5. The way of salvation through Christ's Cross and Christ's life. 6. God always accessible. II. HOW ARE WE TO RECEIVE JESUS? 1. With deep penitence. 2. With hungry expectancy. 3. With a longing to do His will. (*W. Birch.*) *Wishing to see Jesus:*—These Greeks are—I. ILLUSTRATIONS OF A UNIVERSAL TRUTH—that those who live up to the light they have will be graudally led on to more. 1. They were proselytes, or at least companions of those who feared God, or they would not have been here. They had given up heathenism, and this step was, according to God's moral government, rewarded by another. A desire came into their hearts, awakened, no doubt, by the resurrection of Lazarus, to become acquainted with Christ. 2. There are differences of opinion how people become Christians. Some say there is first a giving up of what is wrong and false, then an intermediate stage in which one feels nothing and is nothing, and then truth taking occasion by the vacuum enters the mind. Others say there is no middle state. But the true theory is, "the wind bloweth where it listeth." In the majority of cases, however, truth comes in and expels falsehood, just as there is no parenthesis between light and darkness, but the moment that it ceases to be dark it is light, and the moment that light has begun darkness is over. II. EXAMPLES OF A UNIVERSAL CRAVING. Theirs was the language—1. Of the whole Old Testament dispensation. The cherubim bending over the mercy seat, as if to look into the mysteries of the ark, were emblems of all the Mosaic ages. The expected Messiah, the desire of all nations, was the point to which all faces turned. "Many prophets and righteous men," &c. As the appointed time drew on the desire was intensified. Simeon and Anna, the Magi and the Greeks, were representatives of the whole Jewish and Gentile world. And during Christ's life, the crowds that thronged His steps bore testimony to the feeling, and Zacchæus was probably not the only man whose pious curiosity was rewarded. 2. Of the Christian Church in regard to Christ's Second Advent. 3. Of penitents under a sense of sin groping their way toward the light. 4. Of Christians who have lost the glimpses they once enjoyed, and are now passing under clouds. 5. Of the dying Christian passing home. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *A sight of Jesus:*—I. A PERSONAL OR BODILY VIEW. No reliable portrait or representation of our Lord has been handed down to us, and we have reason to believe no such portrait was ever taken. It was, no doubt, in the order of God's providence that it should be so, or the portrait, and not the Saviour Himself, would probably have been the object of worship. II. HISTORICAL VIEW. We all know about the incarnation, &c., of Christ, and the other points of His human history, as recorded. III. THEOLOGICAL VIEW. "I and My Father are one"—human as well as Divine—hard to some to believe. IV. BELIEVING VIEW. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," &c. "Look unto Him, and be ye saved." V. IMITATIVE VIEW. After believing, let us go on unto perfection, imitating Christ, "doing good." VI. JUDICIAL VIEW. Christ will sit on His great white throne, &c. VII. HEAVENLY VIEW. "There we shall see His face, and never, never sin," &c. (*L. H. Wiseman, M.A.*) *A sight of Jesus:*—Inspiration has given us no description of the personal appearance of Jesus. God did not intend for us to worship Him through an image. We cannot tell His appearance, but we

know His spirit which shone through His earthly body. We can see Him—I. IN THE ELEMENTS OF HIS CHARACTER AND LIFE. Infidels deny His divinity, but they admire His character, and present His graces for the emulation of men. His is a unique position in history, the only one in the flesh without defect. II. IN HIS SYSTEM OF MORAL TEACHINGS. How superior to all human writings not borrowing from Him! Plato and Mohammed taught much that is good with much that is evil. His teachings are without defect. III. IN THE GLORIOUS SCHEME OF REDEMPTION. By the Cross He graciously solves the problem which baffled the ages, how God can be just and justify the sinner. Man was doomed, but Jesus came to the rescue. The sublime philosophy lies in its supreme adaptedness to the necessities of the case. IV. IN THE KINGDOM HE ESTABLISHED IN THE EARTH. The Jews expected a temporal kingdom, but He came not to subdue Cæsar but Satan. He despised all carnal means, and used nobler methods. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." V. IN THE EFFECTS OF HIS RELIGION ON INDIVIDUALS AND THE WORLD. Christianity is a character-builder. It alone transforms men. It has blessed whatever it has touched. I lift up before you Jesus Christ and beg you to behold Him. He is God; worship with all adoration. (*C. A. Stakeley.*) *We would see Jesus*:—1. We would see Jesus, for we have heard of Him from others. One friend has told of His love, another of His wisdom, a third of His power, a fourth of His faithfulness. Does this second-hand knowledge satisfy you? Has it appeased your spiritual hunger, allayed your discontent, removed the burden of your sins? Oh, let the testimony of others lead you to His feet! 2. We would see Jesus, for we have need of Him. (1) To release us from the burden of our sins. (2) To enable us to overcome temptation. (3) To take away the fear of death. 3. We would see Jesus, for He is so accessible. No barriers stand in the sinner's path when he seeks the Saviour. His court is an open audience-chamber to all. (*G. A. Sowter, M.A.*) *Opportunity to be used*:—These Greeks seem to have seized the only opportunity ever presented to them of coming to Jesus. Shall we, with many opportunities, lose them all? This one may be our last. I have sometimes in passing through a forest seen a tree here and a tree there marked with a line of white paint. What did it mean? Was it a clue to the inexperienced traveller to show him his road? Was it a boundary line between different properties? No; these paint-marked trees were dotted over the whole woods. Then I heard the woodman's axe ringing out in the distance, and I knew that the trees were marked for destruction. The owner had decided which should fall and which should stand a while longer. And the woodman, guided by the marks, was thinning the forest with his deadly axe in obedience to his master's word. Brethren, God's mark may be set upon some of us, we know not upon whom. Oh, trifle not then with your opportunities! Lay hold on them ere they pass away. Take up the language of these Greek visitors to Jerusalem, and cry out of the yearning depths of your inmost hearts, "We would see Jesus." The request will be granted. The heavenly life-giving sight of Him will gladden your eyes, and with that vision the old cry of yearning will change to a new glad shout of hope. No longer "we would see Jesus," but "we shall see Jesus,"—"we shall see Him as He is." (*Ibid.*) *The consequences of seeing Jesus*:—I. REST. There are some objects so calm and restful that the very sight of them is rest. This is the chief of them. II. PEACE. He is our peace; and to see Him is to have peace with God and conscience. III. QUICKENING. He is our life; and the sight of Him as such puts life into us. IV. HEALING. He is "the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings," and in looking to Him we have health. V. ENLIGHTENMENT. He is the Light of the world; and to see Him as such is to have day within us. VI. FREEDOM. He and His truth make free. VII. STRENGTH. All power is in Him; and the sight of Him draws it out to us. VIII. FULNESS. In Him is all fulness; and in looking we are filled. Every void disappears. IX. GLADNESS. We are made partakers of His joy. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *The great exhibition*:—Perhaps the sight-seeing instinct was never more fully developed than at present. We live in a sight-seeing age. This instinct has managed to engage the whole world as purveyor to its enjoyments in its periodical exhibitions in this and that great city. But we may profitably turn to another exhibition, not at present more attractive externally, but intrinsically far more interesting. Not works of human art and industry, but of Divine wisdom, justice, and love, are exhibited. Turn aside and see this great sight. Apply it to—I. INTELLECTUAL EXERCISES. 1. In geographical study we may see the vastness of the theatre on which Jesus's faithfulness performs its promises. His wisdom exerts its guidance, His love pours out its treasures, His

grace fulfils its plans. 2. In botanical investigation we may see His wisdom and goodness, for He painted the colours of every flower, shaded its tints, and infused its perfume. 3. In historical research we find that personages are His agents, and events are controlled for His purposes. 4. Morals take their image from His example and their vigour from His Spirit. II. SOCIAL DUTIES. 1. Conversation; and not only in that part which is interspersed with His name. To see Him is to check trifling, levity, garrulity. To see Him is to transform the daily salutation into a benediction; for who can make "good-day" but Jesus? 2. In visiting, business, recreation, &c., He is to have the pre-eminence. This will make the soul's health secure, guard against temptation, encourage righteousness. III. RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS. 1. Searching the Scriptures. Of these Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, and they will be unintelligible unless we see Him. The doctrines centre in Him. In the practical parts His example is the rule, His love the motive, His blood the purifier. The promises are "Yea, and amen in Him." His testimony is the spirit of prophecy. The ceremonies and characters are types of Him. Take Jesus out of the Bible, and you have taken the sun from the system, the soul from the body, gravitation from the universe. 2. Baptism. Take Christ away and it is an unmeaning ordinance. To see Him in it is to make it a sacrament of life, promise, and power. "Go ye therefore. . . . Lo, I am with you," present, pledging to save. 3. The Lord's Supper. "This is My body," &c. IV. FAMILIAR PLACES. 1. The devotional closet. How cold that is without Christ; how radiant with glory when we see Jesus, having expelled all intercepting objects, thoughts, cares, &c. 2. The domestic tabernacle. If in the human family Christ is a brother, how much more in the believing family. To see Him is to hush all domestic dissensions; to sanctify all family relations, duties, &c. 3. In the public temple. What is Christ's Church without Him? "Where two or three," &c. V. RESPECTIVE CHARACTERS. 1. Two characters would gladly see Jesus. (1) The penitent. Are you sorry for sin? then "Behold the Lamb of God," &c. (2) The believer who now apprehends Christ by faith waits for His full manifestation in glory, and has "a desire to be with Christ," &c. 2 Two classes must be exhorted to see Jesus. (1) The impenitent. Your need is absolute, and your obligation unlimited. (2) The apostate. The Greeks reprove you. They knew not Jesus but would see Him; you know Him but forsake Him. VI. To IMPORTANT STAGES. 1. In discouragement. 2. In temptation. 3. In youth, manhood, and old age. 4. In the hour of death and the day of judgment. (*D. Griffiths.*)

Manifestations of humanity:—I. ITS MORAL CRAVING (ver. 21). These Greeks wanted Jesus for their soul as—1. One who could solve their moral problems. 2. One on whom to centre their supreme love. 3. One to guide them rightly on the way of life. II. ITS GRANDEST WORK (ver. 22). 1. To bring men to Christ is something more than to bring them—(1) To science and art. Such a ministry we disparage not, but highly prize. (2) To a church or sect. Numbers are thus engaged. Their inspiration is sectarianism; and their efforts often immoral and pernicious. 2. To bring them to Christ is to bring them—(1) To the only infallible Physician. (2) To the only efficient Educator. (3) To the only qualified Redeemer. 3. To bring to Christ you must be Christlike. You may bring crowds to your church by clap-trap; you can only bring them to Christ by a life of Christly stateliness, inspiration, and influence. III. ITS SUBLIMEST TYPE (ver. 23). 1. Christ speaks with magnanimity in prospect of His death. 2. With triumph at the prospect of His glory—in His resurrection, exaltation, moral victories over all the errors, curses, miseries of the world. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Andrew: Leading others to Christ*:—The notices of this apostle are extremely rare, but nearly all of them exhibit Him introducing others to Christ—his brother Peter, the lad with the barley loaves, the Greeks. And this is the prime duty of all Christians; let each ask how he has discharged it. Note the qualifications—I. WE MUST OURSELVES KNOW CHRIST. This is something more than a knowledge of gospel history, of Christian doctrine. We may teach these and bring none nearer to Christ Himself. Nor is it these in union with a moral life. To know Christ is to reverence Him as our Master and to cling to Him as our Saviour. This knowledge alone will help us to make disciples and Christians. II. WE MUST BE QUICK TO KNOW OUR FELLOW MEN. The physician can tell much of the history and condition of his patients from their very looks. Like readiness is there with the Physician of souls. This quickness depends on—1. Sympathy. 2. Self-knowledge. III. WE MUST SPEAK FOR CHRIST. We remember this requirement in preaching. But the effort of Andrew was a type of those private ways of doing good which are open to ordinary men and women. There are difficulties in the way

of private personal testimony for Christ—the reticence of etiquette and culture, the sense of the shame of the cross, constitutional sensitiveness, &c. But it is astonishing how difficulties may be smoothed before a willing mind. IV. WE MUST LIVE FOR CHRIST. Words with which the life is inconsistent will lose all attractive power. A life that is wanting somewhat in words may yet bring blessing. The disciple's life should be attractive. (*T. Gasquoine, B.A.*) *Every Christian may be useful:*—See that well on the mountain side—a small, rude, rocky cup full of crystal water, and that tiny rill flowing through a breach in its brim. The vessel is so diminutive that it could not contain a supply of water for a single family a single day. But, ever getting through secret channels, and ever giving by an open overflow, day and night, summer and winter, from year to year, it discharges in the aggregate a volume to which its own capacity bears no appreciable proportion. The flow from that diminutive cup might, in a drought or war, become life to all the inhabitants of a city. It is thus that a Christian, if he is full of mercy and good fruits, is a greater blessing to the world than either himself or his neighbours deem. Let no disciple of Christ either think himself excused, or permit himself to be discouraged from doing good, because his talents and opportunities are few. Your capacity is small, it is true, but if you are in Christ it is the capacity of a well. Although it does not contain much at any moment, so as to attract attention to you for your gifts, it will give forth a great deal in a lifetime, and many will be refreshed. (*W. Arnot.*) *A lesson to pastors and teachers:*—An orthodox clergyman found one Sunday on his Bible a slip of paper, placed there by some members of his congregation, on which was written, "Sir, we would see Jesus." The pastor felt distressed, but was not offended. He set to examine himself humbly and sincerely. The result was that he made the sad but happy discovery that the people were justified in making the above request. He thereupon "went into a desert place," and within a short time he found in his pulpit another slip of paper with the following words, "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." (*Pastor Funcke.*) One afternoon in the Sabbath school where a lad was asked to repeat what he had learned during the week, he said simply "Sir, we would see Jesus." The teacher was strangely conscience smitten. He remembered that he had given excellent lessons on the Creation, the Fall, Israel in Egypt, and similar subjects, but had said little about Christ. He looked at the youth who had spoken these words, and then round on the faces of the others. And then instead of using the lesson he had prepared, he talked to the lads earnestly upon the request made so simply and opportunely. He spoke with such yearning for their souls, that the lads listened as never before; and as he spoke he felt that the Master's presence was in their midst. The want which had unconsciously been felt was met that afternoon, and souls were gathered into the eternal harvest. (*W. Baxendale.*) *Congregations want to see Christ:*—On a lovely Sunday morning in August we arrived at Osborne. We were desirous of seeing her Majesty, but did not succeed. We only saw her house, her gardens, and her retainers. Then we went to Whippingham Church, having been told that the queen would attend divine service. But again we were disappointed. We only saw the seat the august lady was wont to occupy. The ladies and gentlemen of the court came to church, and those we saw; we even heard the court chaplain preach, but of the sovereign we saw nothing. Well this was a disappointment we could easily get over. But with me it led to a serious frame of thought. I said to myself: What if the flock committed to your care should come to church to see the King of kings, and yet through some fault of yours not get to see Him! What if you, the great King's dependent, detain men with yourself, by your words and affairs and all sorts of important matters which yet are trifles in comparison with Jesus! May it not be that we ministers often thus disappoint our congregations. (*Pastor Funcke.*)

Vers. 23-26. **The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified.**—*The significance of this declaration in connection with the incident:*—Why should this be such an hour of trouble and glory? How should the appearance of a few strangers have led to a discussion respecting the falling of wheat into the ground, and its death—the saving of life and the losing it? You will remember that when our Lord spoke of those "other sheep" He connected the formation of the one flock with the death of the one shepherd. The assertion is in strict harmony with the prophecy of Caiaphas. If you turn from St. John to St. Paul you will find that the breaking down of the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles is effected "in the body of Christ's flesh through death." If you reflect on these passages, that

which we treat as though it were only an accident—the calling in of the Gentiles—the unfolding of a universal society, will be seen to be that wonderful event to which all God's purposes, from the beginning of the world, had been tending—the unveiling of the deepest mystery of all, in the relations of God to man, in the Being of God Himself. Without sacrifice Jews and heathen had been taught there could be no unity among the members of a race. Sacrifice must bind them to God and to each other. Only he who can give up himself—so the heart of mankind testified—is a patriot; only he obeys the laws; only he can save his country when it is falling. There had been, then, a sure conviction that any larger union must involve a mightier sacrifice. As the conscience was awakened by God's teaching more and more clearly to perceive that all resistance to God lies in the setting up of self, it began to be understood that the atonement of man with man must have its basis in an atonement of God with man, and that the same sacrifice was needed for both. One thing yet remained to be learned—the most wonderful lesson of all, and yet one of which God had been giving the elements, line upon line, from the beginning: Could sacrifice originate in God and be made, first, not to Him but by Him? All our Lord's discourses concerning Himself and His Father—concerning His own acts as the fulfilment of the Father's will—concerning the love which the Father had to Him because He laid down His life for the sheep—had been bringing these mysteries to light; had been preparing the meek to confess with wonder and contrition that in every selfish act they had been fighting against an unselfish God—that in every self-sacrificing act they had been merely yielding to Him. And so far as they had any glimpses of the accomplishment of God's promises—that He would bring all into one—that the Gentiles should wait for His law—that He would be a Father of all the families of the earth—so far they had the vision of a transcendent and Divine sacrifice. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *The hour of redemption*:—It was given to St. John long after the other evangelists had described the Passion to add some details of the deepest interest. The Transfiguration and Gethsemane St. John omits, but here records the significance of both. The Lord passed through a season of profound agitation—the earnest of the Garden; but out of the darkness light unspeakable arose—the reflection of the Mount. I. THE LORD ENTERS INTO THE DARKNESS OF HIS HOUR AND PROCLAIMS ITS GLORY. 1. "The hour" is the sacred term that marks the Passion as the consummation of the Redeemer's work. He entered the world in the "fulness of time"; He wrought His preparatory work in the "days of the Son of Man"; and now, after ages of waiting had passed into days of fulfilment, the days are compressed into an "hour." From this moment the shadow of the cross throws its sacred gloom upon every incident and word. The Passion has begun, and from that moment went on in its ever-deepening variety of grief, through the indignities of His enemies, the abandonment of His friends, the sense of the world's guilt, to that infinite woe which took from man his curse. It was the first more direct onset since the temptation. It was the beginning of the awful strain on the resources of His lower nature under which He would fain cry "Save me," but that He knows "for this purpose," &c.; the same pressure which caused Him to ask that the cup might pass, a prayer the next moment recalled in the submission of perfect victory. 2. The darkness is not past, but the true light already shines. His first word on entering the dark valley is—"The hour . . . glorified." His lowest humiliation was His highest dignity. The cross in which His servants gloried He here glories in. In it He beholds the glorification of the Father's attributes (ver. 28), an exhibition of the glory of Divine justice visiting upon sin its penalty, and the glory of the Divine mercy providing salvation for the sinner. To this the Redeemer's final "Lo! I come," there is a sublime response from heaven. For the third time the Father proclaims aloud the secret of His constant complacency in the sacrifice of His Son. 3. The record teaches us two errors we must avoid. (1) We must not by our feeble theories mitigate the sorrow that wrought out our redemption and exchange it into a mere demonstration of such charity and self-sacrifice as man might rival and which could never redeem man's soul. (2) It tells us, too, that the Redeemer was filled with a sense of His own glory and His Father's complacency even while He suffered for our sins. He presented Himself as an oblation for man's sin to manifest the love that provided the propitiation, and to declare the glory of the Divine name in the harmony of its perfections. II. FROM THE HOUR OF THE PASSION TO THE LIFTING UP ON THE CROSS THE TRANSITION IS OBVIOUS. Here also we perceive the blending of opposite emotions. 1. St. John has already made us familiar with this expression, which serves the double purpose of signifying the crucifixion and the exaltation. But in the gospels it is used to express the

act of man that lifted Jesus to His cross. In the beginning of His ministry, our Lord spoke to Nicodemus of this lifting up; in the middle He told the Jews that they would do it; and now He refers to it at the close. But the cross is the symbol here of His own reproach, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." 2. But while His soul is troubled—and only in His deepest anguish does He mention His soul—Jesus still rejoiced in spirit. On either side is a word of triumph. (1) "The prince of this world is cast out." He had at an earlier time, and in a higher sphere, "beheld Satan as lightning," &c. Now He beholds, as the result of His redeeming death, Satan fall from his power on earth—not, indeed, with the swiftness of lightning, but absolutely and surely. (2) "I will draw all men unto Me" expresses the tranquil assurance that the virtue of His death would draw in due time—when preached in His word and testified by His spirit—all the children of men to Himself. 3. Here also are two lessons that guard our thoughts. (1) The reality of Satan's relation to our sin and the world's redemption. A doctrine of atonement finds acceptance, which rejects the personality of the being to whom our Lord alludes. But in so doing they must reconstruct the entire doctrine of the New Testament, wrest the Saviour's words to their own peril, and undermine the whole economy of redemption, which assumes that Satan is the representative and ruler of the world's wickedness, whose power and law is broken. (2) That through our redemption we are delivered from the reign of sin; that the drawing of Christ is as universal in its influence as the virtue of His atonement; that we may enter into our Master's joy and exult over a vanquished enemy. III. WE PASS FROM THE HOUR, THROUGH THE LIFTING UP, TO THE SELF-SACRIFICING DEATH WHICH GIVES LIFE TO MULTITUDES. Here again we have two contending emotions. 1. All His allusions to the coming end connect His own loss with our gain, His death with our life. So it is here, only the emblem is the most affecting He ever employed, expressive of the entireness of His surrender, and the absolute connection between His death and the abundant life of His people. What in the similitude of the corn of wheat expresses the deep anguish of this prelude to Gethsemane the Lord does not say. There was a mystery in the anguish of His soul that nothing in the secret of human dying will account for. 2. But the rejoicing of His spirit keeps not silence. He passes immediately to the much fruit that would grow from His death, the example He would set to His saints, and the supreme honour which He and His imitators in the self-renouncing charity of holiness would partake together throughout eternity. Nor is His rejoicing marred by the prospect that His death will not give life to all mankind. And should we be discontented when our Master sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied? Conclusion: 1. The only word of exhortation that we hear in this solemn hour is, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me." This is the voice of Him who passes through the garden to the cross. There is no loyalty to the Redeemer which does not share His passion. For Him we must sacrifice our sins, and, in imitation of His last example, must live, and, if need be, die for others. 2. "Where I am," &c.; for a short season in the gloom of sorrow and conflict, but for ever in His glory. 3. "If any man serve Me," &c.; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *The hour of Christ's suffering and triumph* (text and vers. 27–28):—I. THE HOUR. It stands out from all other hours amid the reminiscences of the past and anticipation of ages to come. Time's stream set in to bear upon it. All prophecy met here. One dispensation after another was introduced and completed in relation to it, and derived all their importance from that relation. It was an hour—1. Of intense suffering. Who can tell the physical agony? His soul was troubled within a body of sensibility as keen as ours; and what anguish racked His spirit when He was executed as a malefactor and forsaken of His Father! 2. Of triumph. An hour in which He glorified God and God Him; in which all the Divine attributes harmonized as they never had before, and never could again. They received glory which covered all obscurations that had appeared, and which can never be tarnished to eternity. II. THE SEEMING RELUCTANCE OF CHRIST TO MEET THIS HOUR (ver. 27). His spirit is perplexed, for He was as truly man as God. But wherefore these cries and tears? Because of—1. The death of ignominy which He, innocence itself, was about to die. 2. The unbelief and ingratitude of the Jews. "He came to His own," &c. 3. The desertion of His disciples, the denial of Peter, the betrayal of Judas. 4. The buffetings of Satan during "the hour and power of darkness." 5. The hiding of the Father's face (Zech. xiii. 7; Matt. xxvii. 45, 46). Well might His soul be troubled and say, Father, save Me from this hour—if there is any other way of saving sinners. But God spared not His own Son, and the

Son acquiesced. III. THE GROUNDS ON WHICH HE OVERCAME HIS APPARENT RELUCTANCE. They respect—1. Himself. He knew that on this hour depended all that He came to do, and this consideration dispelled the cloud human nature raised. He had done too much to allow of His retracting. Why the Babe of Bethlehem if He refused to be the Man of Sorrows? He came to finish the work God gave Him to do. 2. His people. If I would save others I dare not save Myself. If they are to have life I must endure death. 3. His Father. To glorify Him was the design of His coming into the world. "Lo! I come," &c. IV. BY WHAT MEANS GOD WAS GLORIFIED IN THE WORK OF CHRIST. 1. In the fulfilment of Messianic prophecy. God had in all the introductory announcements of the Redeemer for four thousand years, connected His glory with the completion of redemption by Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin (Heb. i. 1–3; Luke ii. 7–14). 2. The incarnation. "We beheld His glory," &c. 3. The discourses, miracles, and character of Christ. 4. His death, resurrection, and ascension. 5. The spread of the gospel. 6. The resurrection and judgment. (*T. Raffles, LL.D.*) *The glorification of the Son of Man*:—1. Christ here displays His broad humanity. Not "Son of David." The Jewish side of His mission is no longer prominent. As "the Son of Man" Jesus is near akin to every man that lives. 2. He speaks of His glory as approaching suggested by the sight of these first-fruits among the Gentiles. Christ is glorified in the souls He saves, as a physician wins honour by those he heals. 3. The same visitors led the Saviour to use the metaphor of the buried corn. Wheat was mixed up with Greek mysteries. Christ was undergoing the process which would burst the Jewish husk in which His human life had been enveloped. Aforetime He said He was not sent save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Note —I. PROFOUND DOCTRINAL TEACHING conveyed in several paradoxes. 1. Glorious as He was, He was yet to be glorified. (1) Jesus was always glorious—as one with God, in the perfection of His moral character, in His great love, in His complete consecration, and also in the wonders of His birth, baptism, and transfiguration. (2) But something was to be added to His honour—death, resurrection, ascension, &c. 2. His glory was to come to Him through shame. It is His highest reputation to be of no reputation. His crown derives new lustre from His cross. If we merge the crucified Saviour in the coming King we rob our Lord of His highest honour. 3. He must be alone, or abide alone. Unless He had trodden the winepress alone, and had cried, "My God! My God!" &c., He could not have saved us. If He had not died He would, as man, have been alone for ever: not without the Father, the Spirit, and the angels; but there had not been another man to keep Him company. Our Lord cannot bear to be alone. Without His people He would have been a shepherd without His sheep, a husband without His spouse. His delights were with the sons of men. In order that He might draw all men unto Him, He was lifted up upon the cross alone. 4. He must die to give life, not teach, &c. If the ethical part of Christianity is the most important, why did Jesus die? But since He did fall into the ground and die, we may expect much as the result of it. The travail of the Son of God shall not bring forth a scanty good. II. PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION. What is true of Christ is in a measure true of Christians. 1. We must die if we would live. 2. We must surrender everything to keep it. We can never have spiritual life except by giving everything up to God. 3. We must lose self in order to find self. The man who lives for himself does not live—he loses the essence and crown of existence: but if you live for others and God, you will find the life of life. "Seek ye first," &c. 4. If you wish to be the means of life to others, you must, in your measure, die yourself. The self-sacrificing life and death of saints has always been the life and increase of the Church. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ's cross, Christ's glory*:—As regards—I. THE GREAT ENEMY. In the wilderness Christ did not achieve a complete victory. The devil departed from Him for a season only, and was actually and finally vanquished on the cross. He who hoped to crush Adam was himself crushed in Christ. Satan had brought ruin and misery into a happy world. Christ brought out the world into happiness tenfold as bright and holy as that which Satan ruined. II. MAN. On the cross was transacted the central event of man's world. All before had reference to this; all after flow from it. The whole system of types found its end on the cross; the whole state of acceptance in which believers stand before God, the whole dispensation of the Spirit, had its origin here. Wherever there breathes a man, there the cross has a deep and never-failing interest. Here also was the triumph of human nature. You hear of the power and dignity of human nature, its wonderful capacities for knowledge, its high endowments for enterprise; but in none of these

did it reach its noblest height, nor bear its fairest fruit. Not in Athens or Rome, in poesy or art, has man been most glorified; but on the cross of Jesus. There manhood bore its fruit of love untouched by a blight, and was honoured with the union of the Godhead, stooping to share its sentence of death and to bring it to glory. III. HIMSELF (Rom. xiv. 9). Christ was born that He might be a King; and here we have His Lordship established and His kingdom inaugurated. Remember what He said to the dying thief. The cross is Christ's throne; His atonement His basis of empire (Rev. v. 6); from it proceeds the work of the Spirit, whose office it is to glorify Christ. IV. THE FATHER. By the counsel of the Father's will was the plan of redemption directed, and His perfections find their highest example on the cross. 1. Love. "Herein is love," &c. 2. Truth. "For this end He came into the world, to bear witness unto the truth"; and He bore it here. 3. Righteousness. "He made Him to be sin for us," &c. (*Dean Alford.*) *The work and glory of the Saviour*:—In eternity there are no hours: yet there have been two hours in time which are drawn out over the length of eternal ages. One, pregnant of evil, when Eve plucked the forbidden fruit. When time shall be no more that unhappy hour will live in the memory and be felt in the misery of the lost. The other hour, pregnant with greatest good, was when the Son of Man said, "It is finished," and the head He bowed in death was crowned with its brightest glory. I. THE VISIBLE GLORY OF THE CROSS. There never was a death like this. 1. Rays of Godhead streamed through the darkest stages of Christ's humiliation. Angels attended His humble birth, and a new star rested above the stable. His hands were rough with labour, but at their touch eyes received their sight. His voice cried in infancy and death, but it quelled the storm and burst the fetters of the tomb. His eye was quenched in darkness, but it had read man's heart and penetrated futurity. He wore no costly robes, but the hem of His garment cured inveterate disease. He trod on no luxurious carpets, but His step was on the sea. His simple drink was water, but water changed into wine at His bidding. No sumptuous banquets entertained His guests, but the few fishes and barley loaves in His hands satisfied multitudes. 2. But this glory was still more apparent in His dying hours. Men had left undone nothing to heap shame upon Him. To pour contempt on His kingly claims they crowned Him with thorns; in mockery of His omniscience they asked Him to tell who struck Him; in ridicule of His omnipotence they challenged Him to leave the cross. Yet even in this dark hour He was glorified. "If these should hold their peace the stones would cry out," was now verified. Men were silent, dumb nature spoke. The rocks, whose bosoms, less hard than man's, were rent, cried out on earth; the sun, veiling his face from a scene on which man looked without emotion, cried out in heaven; the dead, disturbed in their graves by so great a crime, cried out from their open tombs; and the temple's veil added its solemn testimony to theirs. II. THE MORAL GLORY OF THE CROSS. 1. Christ's death afforded the fullest display of His love. Not that it had not been displayed before. It was when Moses smote the rock that its hidden treasures were unsealed. It was when the alabaster box was broken that its value became known. It is when the clusters of the grape are crushed that they yield the wine. And so Christ's gracious attributes were not fully disclosed till His dying hour. But for that it had never been known how He loved. He had been despised and rejected of men, but He died to prove His willingness and power to save the chief of sinners. 2. By His death He conquered hell, death, and the grave. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The law of self-sacrifice exemplified in the death of Christ*:—We shrink too much from investigating the mental struggles of Jesus as though it were a profanation. But in this we commit two errors. 1. We lose sight of Christ's proper humanity, of the fact that He had a mind governed like our own, a heart and sympathies which throbbed as ours. 2. A false conception of true reverence. It is reverential to be cautious of approaching too closely an earthly sovereign, because near approach would only produce familiarity, and make us feel that he too is but a frail and sinful man. But the Majesty of Jesus requires no such precautions, because the nearer we get to Him the more we realize His Divine Majesty. Note—I. THE LAW OF THE ATONEMENT. 1. The gloriousness of suffering. There are two ways of looking at every act—at the appearance, and at the reality. Hence what seems mean is often inwardly glorious, and *vice versâ*. Thus there is nothing in the outward circumstances of a soldier's death to distinguish them from an ignoble brawl; but over the soldier's death is shed the glory of that cause for which his life was offered. So in external circumstances Christ's death was mean, but in

inward principles it was glorified by God. We say that a throne is glorious and a coronet noble; but nothing can ennoble cowardice or selfishness. We say that a dungeon, scaffold, and the lower arts of life are base; but Christ's death has sanctified the cross, and His life shed a glory over carpentry. 2. The death of one for the life of many. This is the great law upon which God has constructed the universe. If there is to be a crop, there must first be the destruction of the seed. The lives of vegetables and animals are given for us. So the doctrine of the atonement is no strange, arbitrary principle. The Father who made the law by which the flesh of living things sustains the life of others is the same Being who made and obeyed the law by which the flesh of Christ is to the world "meat indeed." 3. Self-devotion (ver. 25). The previous parallel fails in one thing. We do not thank the grain of wheat for dying, because its death is involuntary; and therefore to constitute a true sacrifice a living will is needed. Christ's sacrifice was a voluntary act, else it had been no sacrifice at all. II. THE MENTAL STRUGGLE BY WHICH THAT LAW WAS EMBRACED AS THE LAW OF THE REDEEMER'S LIFE. It is one thing to understand a law and another to obey it. To admire that which is right is one thing, but to do what is right is another. The Divine life of Christ subordinated innocent human ideas to itself by degrees. Here He was literally distracted between the natural craving for life and the higher desire to embrace the will of God. But the victory was won by prayer, that communion of the mind with God through which our will becomes at last merged into His. And so there was one perfect will, the will of the Father being that of the Son. "Father, glorify Thy name." (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*)

Vers. 24–26. **Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die.**—*A corn of wheat*:—The original word is not *sperma*, a seed, but *kokkos*, a berry, a fruit. It shows the extreme, even scientific, accuracy of our Saviour's language; for the corn of wheat, and other cereal grains, consist of seeds incorporated with seed-vessels, and are in reality fruits, though they appear like seeds. It is not the bare seed that falls into the ground, and, by dying, yields much fruit, but the corn of wheat—the whole fruit with its husk-like coverings. A corn of wheat is beautiful and complete in itself. It is full of latent life; it contains the germ of boundless harvests. But it is hard and narrow and isolated. How then are its dormant capabilities to be quickened? Clearly not by keeping it as it is. In its present state it abideth alone. It can never be anything else but bare corn if kept out of the ground. But if sown in the field, and covered by the earth, and quickened by the sunshine and showers of heaven, it softens and expands. It seems to die. It surrenders itself to the forces of nature which take possession of it, and seem to put it altogether aside. But this apparent death is in reality more abundant life. Its burial-place becomes the scene of a wonderful resurrection. The spark of vitality has been kindled by the very elements that seemed to work its destruction. The embryo grows at the expense of the decomposing perisperm. Lengthening downwards by the radicle and upwards by the plumule, the seed becomes a bright, green, beautiful plant which lays all nature under contribution for its sustenance, borrows the materials of growth from earth and sky, and at length becomes a luxuriant stalk of corn laden with its fruitful ear. Seed-time in this country is in spring. The sower goes forth to sow when the day is lengthening and brightening, and a warmer feeling is in the air. The dark days and wild storms of winter are over; and before the seed sown there is an almost uninterrupted continuance of genial weather till the harvest. But in nature seed-time is at the close of autumn, when "the melancholy days have come, the saddest of the year." The important process of scattering the seed over the waste places of the earth is accomplished amid the fading and falling of leaves, and the destruction of nature's strength and beauty. The chill air and feeble sunlight put a stop to all further growth; and the dreary rain and boisterous storms which prevail at this season are needed to shake down the ripe fruits from stem or bough, to scatter them over the face of the earth, and to rot them in the ground, so that the imprisoned seeds may escape and find a suitable soil in which to grow. Thus, the dark ungenial weather which so often proves disastrous to our cereal crops when they are about to be gathered into the barn, is a wise provision of nature to facilitate the dispersion of the ripened fruits and seeds of the earth. We step between nature and her purpose, snatch the corn from its appointed destiny as the seed of a future crop, and convert it into human food; and thus diverting a law of nature into a new channel, we cannot always expect that the weather which would be favourable to the natural process should be

equally favourable to the artificial. Nature fulfils her designs perfectly; she is faithful to the law of her God. But when she comes into contact with man she does not harmonize with his designs. The primeval curse rests upon the toil of man's hands, and the earning of man's bread; and nature therefore will not give us her blessings without a stern struggle with hostile elements. How true is all this of the stormy end of our Saviour's life; that dreary autumn seed-time of which He said, "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say, Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour." And further, how true of His entombment is the natural fact that the seed thus sown in the decaying autumn, amid the wreck of life and beauty, and to the wailing dirge of the devastating storm, lies passive and inert in the soil all the winter, chilled with the frosts, drenched with the rains, and buried in its grave of darkness beneath a shroud of snow, waiting for its resurrection under the bright skies of spring. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) *The corn of wheat; or growth through death*:—We see the principle of propagation by self-surrender operating in the region of—I. INDIVIDUAL LIFE. 1. If a man will be an individual in the strict sense of the term he will be his own destroyer. If the seedling of a babe would grow physically he must—(1) give, by stretching forth the tendrils of its undeveloped faculties; and (2) take, by the aliment which such exercise supplies. Thus the first condition of physical life is faith. The same law operates in—2. The acquisition of knowledge. A man must believe before he knows, and faith is the depositing of self in the ground of human testimony. A boy must work with self deposited in the ground of study under disciplinary influences, and convert his time, &c., into materials for developing the seeds of knowledge. 3. The formation of character. When we say that a man has character we mean he has acquired self-control. Self-control is the fruit of submission. Submission during the period of youth grows into those principles of conduct which are the polestar of manhood, through mortifying acts of obedience. II. SOCIAL LIFE. A man is obliged to work for others if he would enlarge and propagate his life and influence. We see this illustrated in—1. Family relationships. The law of marriage enjoins the giving up of self to another, so as to become a larger, happier self. Parents who fulfil God's idea, think, work, pray, live for and in their children. If the father does not thus lose himself and die he "abides alone," and when he departs this life he has no one to propagate his likeness, and becomes extinct except in name. 2. Legislation. Law, to a certain extent, consists of those things which individuals have agreed to surrender for the maintenance of society and is the fruitage of seeds of individual knowledge put into the soil of public experience. 3. The extension of knowledge. Ideas and schemes in the mind are so many seeds having life in them which have to be cast into the ground of public opinion in order to bear fruit. They must get out of the mind if they are not to "abide alone." The thinker communicates his scheme to another, or publishes it in the newspaper, and by and by, under the influence of the opinions and suggestions of others, the thought, once his, bears fruit. This holds true of apparently trivial thoughts. A casual remark made in the hearing of a thoughtful friend may yield a rich harvest of knowledge. 4. Historic influence. The good that men do lives after them. Men in advance of their age are never known till they die. This is true of poets, statesmen, &c., but of none so much as Christ. No one was ever so misunderstood—so little known; but every succeeding century carries a truer picture of His unique life. III. CHRISTIAN LIFE. 1. Christ who was "the Life" had to surrender that life in order that He might be for and in the world. Had he "spared Himself" He would have abode alone, had He never been "bruised" He would not have been the "Bread of life." 2. So in regard to the principle of Christian life. Self is given away in holy efforts for others, in order to produce in them, and so be found again in, the fruits of righteousness. 3. The mainspring which sets all going is love. Love is self-sacrifice, and by that principle we live unto God and are filled. IV. THE RESURRECTION. Like the seed corn the body must be put into the ground if it would rise again and bear fruit. Conclusion: The subject teaches—1. The difficulties of selfishness and the terrible daring and force of sin. (1) God has placed us under a system of laws which make it natural and imperative to serve others. To break through this system involves effort and secures self-destruction. (2) Yet sin has the audacity to recommend this course, and is thus the grand antagonist of nature as well as grace. 2. The nature and functions of Christianity—that it is no afterthought suggested by the fall, but what agrees with principles already in operation. 3. The feelings of awe and hope with which we should regard death. (*S. C. Gordon, B.D.*) *The*

corn of wheat dying:—1. A corn of wheat—how insignificant. A little child may hold it in its tiny hand; and yet not all the science of the world could produce it. That depends on the strict preservation of all the laws and influences of the universe; were one interfered with all life would perish. 2. Our Lord's disciples were probably excited over the triumphal entry, and expectant that their Master would assume that throne they had imagined for Him. Hence He reminds them of His approaching death and its significance. 3. The great truth here declared is that life comes through death and exaltation through humiliation. Again and again had our Lord taught this, but the disciples failed to apprehend it. Nor can we wonder at that, for it is the great stumbling-block of our day. 4. But of what use is a corn of wheat except it die? It would hardly supply a meal for the smallest bird. It is a thing of beauty perfectly shaped and you may put it in a casket worthy of it, but it is worthless while kept "alone.' But place it in the earth where showers and sunshine may reach it, and who can tell what may become of it? So it was with Him who compared Himself to one. The disciples would have kept that inestimably precious life all to themselves. Had they done so it would have stood "alone," and been but an angel's visit. It would have supplied man with a pattern, but one which would have filled the race with despair, and made it at best local and temporary. What man wanted was an adequate motive power which death only could supply. 5. Not only so, but "except it died" how could it multiply itself? Place a corn of wheat among the regalia of the realm, and it will remain "alone," but place it in suitable soil and it will spring up thirty, sixty, &c. "The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for *many*." The preaching of a crucified Christ won three thousand on the Day of Pentecost; and it is this same truth which has ever since been the life-blood of the Church. 6. Moreover, it is by the death of the corn of wheat that we have hope and promise of a more glorious body by and by. Turn up the earth in a month or so after the seed has been sown, and what do you find but a black, mouldy mass with death written on every particle of it? But go to the same spot on the reaping day, and can any contrast be greater? "Sown in corruption," &c. (*D. Howell.*) *The seed corn*:—I. THE FACTS. 1. The symbolical corn of wheat has a real existence—Christ. (1) Wheat! The Word of God is called by this name. It is not like chaff; it has nourishment in it, and is pre-eminent among all words, as wheat is among grain. Believers are called wheat. The wicked are chaff, tares, which have no value in them. Christ is the Word of God in a higher sense than scripture, and between Christ and believers there is union. The rank which wheat holds among cereals may remind us that Christ is chief among ten thousand; the delicate purity of it, that He is the Holy One of God; and the great purpose that it serves, that He is the bread of life. (2) A corn of wheat. There is life in that, so there is in a blade or leaf; but these cannot propagate their life, whereas that has life to give away. Their life, too, is dependent and continually derived from the stem and root from which they must not be divided; but that has life that it carries with it wherever it goes. So the life that is in Christ comes not by transmission. He is "the Life." (3) A corn of wheat keeps its life a long time. It has been found in the hand of a mummy after thousands of years. The Son of God became a corn of wheat, for the purpose expressed in our text, before the foundation of the world. 2. The corn of wheat, has fallen into the ground. This is a figurative expression of the fact of the incarnation. When the vital powers of wheat are to be called into action it is necessary to take it from the garner and sow it. One corn of wheat was taken from the Father's bosom and put into this sinful world. How great an abasement! The Creator became a creature, and was subjected to a creature's duties and obligations. 3. When a corn of wheat falls into the ground it dies. One corn of wheat has died because it was sown. If the Eternal Son had not been sent down His death would not have taken place. He was made under the broken, offended law which slew Him with its curse. 4. When a corn of wheat dies its life-giving power is developed. One corn of wheat has not remained alone. Christ's death has great results. It was to Him what the deep sleep was to Adam—it gave Him a spouse. His death is the root, the collective Church is the stem, and individual believers its fruit with which the stem is laden. "When thou shalt make His soul," &c. He saw this seed at Pentecost and at many a Pentecost since, and will continue to see it till the Church is complete. And when He sees His seed He recognizes them, and that because of their likeness to Himself. When a corn of wheat produces seed, it is seed of its own nature. So the seed of Christ are like Him. II. THE DEATH OF CHRIST. 1. Its character. (1) Glorious. The shame

was outward and transcient, the glory essential and imperishable. (2) Fruitful. In this its glory largely consists. The consequences are destined to cover the earth and outlive time. (3) Not a natural death but a death of violence. There are various kinds of violent deaths. (*a*) Martyrdom. This is glorious, and has fruits. Christ was a martyr. (*b*) That of a soldier. A peculiar lustre attaches to Wolfe, Nelson, and the heroes at Thermopylæ, who conquered while they died, as did Christ. (*c*) The felon's death, which answers useful ends. And Christ suffered the punishment sin deserved. The holy law was trampled underfoot; His death lifted it up and took away its reproach. (*d*) The death of a substitute, such as David wished for when Absalom was slain, and Paul, in Rom. ix. The ram substituted for Isaac and the sacrifices of Judaism were examples of the same thing. Christ's death was vicarious. "The Lord laid on Him," &c. 2. Its necessity. (1) The simple fact proves this. Christ was not capable of throwing away His life, and God would never have given it had it not been necessary. (2) Its character proves this—as that of a warrior, martyr, &c. (3) But there was a special necessity for it. "Except a corn of wheat," &c. Had He not died He had been a head without a body, a shepherd without a flock, a king without a kingdom, &c. (*A. Gray.*) *The seed corn:*—Two travellers, journeying together, tarried to rest by the way at an inn, when suddenly a cry reached their ears that there was a fire in the village. One of the travellers forthwith sprang up, and leaving his staff and his bundle behind him, hastened to afford assistance. But his companion strove to detain him, saying, "Why should we waste our time here? Are there not hands enough to assist? Wherefore should we concern ourselves about strangers?" The other, however, hearkened not to his words, but ran forth to the fire; when the other leisurely followed, and stood and looked on at a distance. Before the burning house there was a mother transfixed with horror, and screaming, "My children! my children!" When the stranger heard this, he rushed into the house among the falling timbers, and the flames raged around him. "He must perish!" exclaimed the spectators. But after they had waited a short time, behold, he came forth with scorched hair, bringing two young children in his arms, and carried them to their mother. She embraced the infants, and fell at the feet of the stranger; but he lifted her up, and spoke words of comfort to her. The house meanwhile fell with a dreadful crash. As they two, the stranger and his companion, were returning to the inn, the latter said, "But who bade thee risk thy life in such a rash attempt?" "He," answered the former, "who bids me put the seed corn into the ground, that it may decay and bring forth new fruit." "But how," said the other, "if thou hadst been buried beneath the ruins?" His companion smiled, and said, "Then should I have been the seed corn myself." (*J. Krummacher.*) *The corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying:*—I. The corn of wheat ABIDING ALONE. It is Christ's humiliation which we are mainly called in these words to ponder. But in order, by contrast, to bring out the wonders of that humiliation, let us, as here suggested, go back to a past Eternity, and contemplate that corn of wheat abiding alone. Immensity a void. The mysterious Trinity in unity, pervading and filling all space: No need of worlds or angels to glorify them. There was the corn of wheat abiding alone: the Eternal Son with the Eternal Father, in the glory which He had with Him before the world was. II. We are next called to consider the corn of wheat FALLING INTO THE GROUND, AND DYING. Impelled by nothing but His own free, sovereign, unmerited grace, Christ resolves not to abide alone. He is to come down to a ruined world in order to effect its ransom and salvation. But, how replace it? How, in other words, is this redemption from sin and death to be effected? There are two words in our text, on which we may for a moment instructively pause. The one suggesting the necessity, the other the voluntariness of the death of Jesus. 1. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground." "Unless." There was no other possible way by which the world could be redeemed. Without the dying of corn seed—no life. 2. We have the voluntariness of Christ's death here set forth. "If it die!"—"If." This same monosyllable He Himself repeats with similar emphasis a few verses further on: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." This leads us —III. To the corn of wheat BRINGING FORTH MUCH FRUIT. It was prophesied regarding the Redeemer, that He should "see His seed" (Isaiah liii. 10). "This," says He, "is the Father's will who hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John vi. 39). He—the Tree of Life—was to be felled to the ground; the axe was already laid to the root. But as many a noble denizen of the forest, coming with a crash on

the sward, scatters its seed all around, and in a few years there starts up a vast plantation, so Christ, by dying, scattered far and wide the grain of spiritual and immortal life. The seed and the leaves of this Tree are for the healing of the nations. The Divine corn seed drops into the ground; a golden harvest waves, and heaven is garnered with ransomed souls. Oh wondrous multitude which no man can number! A multitude growing ever since Abel bent, a solitary worshipper, in the heavenly Sanctuary, with his solitary song—the first solitary sheaf in these heavenly granaries. Yes! the song is deepening; the sheaves are multiplying. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *The dying seed fruitful*:—The blood of the martyrs has evermore "been the seed of the Church." Thus have the "corns of wheat" been again and again planted, to die and live again in great harvests. We are reminded of the saying of Cranmer to Ridley, as they were fastened to the stake and the fire was lighted under them: "Be of good courage, Master Ridley. We will kindle a fire this day that will be a light to all England." *The life of Christ without and within*:—I. In one point of view Christ's life was AN ENTIRE FAILURE. He did not get the things which men think to be most valuable; nor did He derive much gratification in those faculties which men live to gratify; nor, though endowed with a wondrous versatility of powers, did He employ those powers as to make it appear that He gained the object of life. Regarding our Saviour in His general relations—1. He could scarcely have entered life at a worse door than at the portal of Jewish nationality. For in that age it was a misfortune to be born a Jew in the estimation of everybody except a Jew. So far as worldly opportunities were concerned He might better have been born a heathen. 2. He had but few opportunities in youth. Men are dependent for their standing on the fact that they began with the capital of their predecessors. Christ had nothing of the kind, and He never strove to repair these conditions of fortune. 3. He secured no wealth, not even enough to redeem Himself from dependence. 4. Though He had great power of exciting enthusiasm, He never gained or kept a steady influence over the people. Even His disciples failed to enter into His ideas or career. 5. He failed even more, if it were possible, to secure any personal or professional influence on the minds that ruled that age. There were political rulers of great sagacity whom He never seems to have fallen in with, and He never had a place among men of letters, nor was He a power in any philosophical circle. 6. Even more remarkable is it that He did not produce any immediate impression on the religion and feelings of His age. 7. Nor did He found a family, the object of most great men's ambition. All this being the case, what could His life produce that should remain? Nothing, apparently. It seemed to be like an arrow shot into the air. His trial and condemnation were more than ordinarily ignominious and fruitless, whereas there are many whose trial, &c., is the most glorious event in their history. He died leaving no trace behind. In His resurrection there was not much alleviation, for He never appeared in public; and His ascension closed His career. Was there ever a life that seemed to be thrown away more than Christ's? II. WHAT ARE THE FACTS ON THE OTHER SIDE? Did He not save His life by losing it. 1. Born a Jew, no man now ever thinks of Him as a Jew. There is victory in that what hung about Him as a cloud is utterly dissipated. 2. Born without opportunity in His social relations, there is not a household or community in Christendom that is not proud to call itself Christian. The very kings of the earth bring their glory and baptize it with His name. 3. Having no learning, when has there been a school or university or philosophical system for a thousand years that has not been conscious of receiving its germ from Christ? 4. He was indifferent to the ordinary sources of wealth, yet from out His life there has issued an influence that is to control money-making. 5. He never gained much influence with the masses, yet what name evokes so much enthusiasm among the common people as Christ's? 6. He made little impression on political and intellectual rulers, but He has now filled the channels of thought and poetic sentiment, and more and more do you find in treaties of law the principles of Christian justice. His life was thrown away, just as grain is thrown away, into the soil: it died to give growth to life. III. WHAT WAS THE SECRET OF IT ALL? If you had asked at that time, "What are the secrets of power in the world?" any Jew would have pointed to the temple. If, as he did so, you had seen some Greek smiling and asked him the same question, he would have said, "Have you been in Athens?" And if, while he yet spoke, a disdaining Roman had passed by, and you had asked him, "Wherefore that smile?" he would have said, "Jews and Greeks are full of superstitions and are blinded as to the true source of the world's power. That power is centred in Rome." And how would Jew

and Greek and Roman joined in the derision if you had pointed to Jesus crucified as the secret of the world's power. And yet Jews, Greeks, and Romans have gone down while this shadow fills the world. It was His death, and the sacrifice involved by that death that was and is the secret of His unique power. But His life was a daily death—a constant self-surrender, and only in so far as we copy Him shall we share His power. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The death of Jesus:*—I. DEATH THE MOST DREADFUL OF EVENTS HAS OFTEN BEEN MADE A BLESSING. 1. The death of the believer has been the life of the sinner. After turning their backs on a sermon men have been convinced by a dying bed. 2. The death of a parent has proved the life of the child. The expiring change has never been forgotten. 3. The death of a minister has been the life of the hearer. Little regarded when living, his word has come with power when gone. 4. The death of a martyr has been the life of the beholder. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." 5. But where are we now? The death of Jesus is the life of the world. II. THE DEATH OF JESUS CONFERS THE LARGEST BLESSING. By His death Christ fills heaven with praise, the Church with blessings, the world with followers. 1. A grain of corn multiplies by yielding other grains like itself. If barley is sown, barley comes up; if wheat, wheat; if Christ, Christians. He was not of the world—they are not of the world; He went about doing good—they serve their generation by the will of God; He was meek and lowly of heart—they are learning of Him. 2. A grain of corn is capable of yielding a large crop—one may stock a country. Christ was asked, "Are there few that be saved?" He told the questioner to strive himself to enter into the straight gate; a wiser course for us than speculation. But were the question asked properly we might reply, No, He is leading "many sons to glory"—a multitude which no man can number. III. EVERYTHING THAT ENLIVENS US AND CONFORMS US TO HIM OWES ITS EFFICACY TO HIS DEATH. 1. The convincing and renewing influences of the Spirit. 2. Deliverance from spiritual enemies. 3. The lively hope by which we draw nigh to God. 4. Holiness. (*W. Jay.*) *The law of fruitfulness:*—The people were full of expectation of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah. Therefore our Lord lays down the principles on which His kingdom shall come. It is spiritual, but conforms to the law which says, No power comes into this world, or attains its end, but on the condition of suffering: only in death can life be achieved. I. ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS LAW. When we distinguish between the laws of Christian and the laws of ordinary life, we make a false distinction. The former are but the highest spiritual expression of the conditions which underlie and rule all nature. 1. Our Lord takes us to the lower side of life—that of physical nature. 2. So it is with every beautiful and joyous thing that exists. Not a little child's laughter makes home ring with gladness but it has found its life in the trembling agony that has gone before. 3. Take life on its commercial side. The spirit of enterprise does not mean the hugging of your savings, but reinvesting them. A man wins wealth by his readiness and wisdom in fulfilling the law of sacrifice. 4. It is true also in the world of intellect. The power of genius and talent largely consists in the power of self-denial and industry. It is only when a man puts his whole will into the subject he is studying, denying himself pleasure, enduring physical pain and hardship, patiently proving the certainties of his discoveries, that he stands at last amongst his fellows as one who has something to teach. 5. So in all noble and high enterprise. Columbus has his dream, but he must first incur the ridicule and indifference of those who plume themselves on being the wise men of the day. 6. It is true in regard to social life. The same law has its illustration in the case, *e.g.*, of Israel. Their position at first was that of a mere assemblage of tribes with individual preferences, needs, &c., surrounded by the determined hostility of the nations of Canaan. The duty of tribal suffering was the condition of the nation's unity. The Song of Deborah teaches this. That was in its youth; but Solomon taught that the same principle was at work. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth," &c. The real wealth of the nation depends on the people's willingness to sacrifice themselves. When the spirit of selfishness came into the land it was easy for the prophets to predict its doom. II. WHAT DO WE OWE TO CHRIST IN CONNECTION WITH THIS PRINCIPLE? Christ did for it that which makes it capable of operating throughout the whole length and breadth of human life. 1. Christ unfolded to the intellect and brought into the consciousness of life this law. This is His claim to originality. No man can claim originality in inventing new laws. Sir Isaac Newton only brought into human thought the law of gravity, which had existed ever since the stars were made. The truest benefactor is not he that brings

novelties, but who makes us acquainted with the laws which underlie our national existence. 2. But intellectual perception is not enough. Example is the potent agent of action, and therefore Christ brought the law home to the will. You teach a law by an example because you thus stir up the principles of admiration and emulation. Christ is no mere demonstrator; He stood to the yoke of the very laws He had made. He passes by all temptations to selfishness leading a life of self-consecration from Bethlehem to Calvary. And what is the harvest? His power is the kingdom which is the measure of the world's empire to-day. Where is the power of Egypt and Assyria, the wisdom and genius of Greece? These, founded on mere selfishness, have passed away. But every land has worshippers of Him who died on the cross. 3. The work must be carried yet further. A man may clearly perceive a thing and most earnestly resolve it. You may gain his intellect and will, but you have not won the man until you have got hold of the affections. It is love which illuminates the actions and understanding, and lifts men's lives into courses which make the whole life obedient to them. Christ was not only the educator and the embodiment of the law; behind both there was the inspiration of His love. And so "we love Him because He first loved us." (*Bp. Boyd Carpenter.*) *Alone:*—There are two conditions of being possible, either of which must constitute our character—love and self. Love seeks its life outside itself: self seeks its life in itself. Love, in order to possess, sacrifices selfishness; while self, in order to possess, keeps itself and sacrifices love. An unloving soul is —I. WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD. God's love toward us is certain; but of what avail is that if our hearts are closed against Him. "He that loveth not knoweth not God." He may be, as He is, everywhere present; but unless the heart receives His love and returns it, it is the same to us as if God did not exist. The world is without the sun at noon-day to the blind man. II. WITHOUT CHRIST. Jesus is one with the Father in Being and in love to man. He came not merely to atone for sin, but to impart His life of love. He represents Himself accordingly, as knocking, &c., the symbol of fellowship of brotherly love. But how can such fellowship be realized if self bars the door? Jesus may be as near to us as He was to Satan in the wilderness, and yet between us the same moral gulf. Judas was as far from Him when he sat by His side as when he went forth to his own place. So we may be near Christ when He saves others, but abide "alone." He cannot dwell in the selfish heart. III. WITHOUT THE SPIRIT. The Spirit sheds abroad the love of God. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ," &c. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." But if we quench Him, whatever His love may be, it may be said of us "not having the Spirit." IV. WITHOUT COMMUNION WITH SAINTS. There is but one family in heaven and earth, and one Spirit pervades the whole—love. Prisons, loss, and bereavement cannot shut Christians out from this. The unloving soul is not rejected: he is invited, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good"; but he responds, "I desire only myself." V. What is to become of such a man? He has rejected God, &c. As years advance the conviction steals over him that his companions are falling away. Old age comes, and the world becomes like a cell where he must suffer solitary confinement. The deathbed at last is reached, and he must go forth "alone" into the unknown. How sad and dreary. He has lived alone and now finds himself WITHOUT HEAVEN. (*J. T. Pitcher.*) **He that loveth his life shall lose it.**—Suppose that Jesus, seeking only His personal safety, had now gone to the Greeks to play among them the part of a sage, or to organize the state like another Solon, He might indeed thus have saved His life, but would in reality have lost it. In having given it up to God, He could not have received it from Him glorified (ver. 23). Thus kept by Him, it would have remained doomed to sterility and earthly frailty. It was by renouncing the life of a sage that He became a Christ, and by renouncing the throne of a Solon he obtained that of God. This saying included the judgment of Hellenism; for what was Greek civilization but human life cultivated from the view-point of enjoyment, and withdrawn from the law of sacrifice. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *The bearing of the present on the future life:*—The text—I. APPLIES TO THE POSITION CHRIST OCCUPIED AT THE TIME. The gratification of a selfish desire in Christ at this time meant the world's ruin—ruin intensified by the fact that the work of deliverance was so nearly completed. Christ was the exemplification of the text (chap. x. 17, 18; xv. 13; Gal. ii. 20). II. THE GENERAL APPLICATION TO US. It points to two subjects on which we propose to dwell. 1. Selfishness indulged—the cause of irreparable loss. "He that loveth His life shall lose it." See how selfishness operates on and affects the life. (1) It isolates. Man is intended to be a social being. Selfishness shuts

out society and turns a man in upon himself. (2) It debases. Man is intended to benefit his race. While getting good he is to do good. Selfishness obstructs the work of charity and usefulness. The life that should find loving room for all is reduced to its own enjoyment and gratification. (3) It destroys. "Shall lose it." An irreparable loss, which cannot be fully understood, but of which some conception may be formed when you consider—(*a*) The excellence of its nature—God-bestowed. (*b*) The duration of its existence—eternal. (*c*) The price of its redemption—the sacrificial death of Jesus. This leads us to ask, What is meant by loving life? Not the pure enjoyment of life by a healthy vigorous person, but the love bestowed without restraint on the purely animal life, indulging appetite, fulfilling sensual lusts and delights, following fashion, craving for fame, a passion for riches and pleasures—loving these more than Christ. The worldling who gives his soul for the world. 2. Self-denial practised—the security of eternal life. "He that hateth," &c. Self-denial is not a gift, but a cultivation developed by exercise and practice. It is the resurrection of our personality buried in the grave of deception. In self-denial we find our true selves. Man's choice lies between temporary gain and eternal loss. The false says the present; the true part of our nature says the future. "Hatred" of life is not misanthropy. It is this life loved less than the life to come; everything here treated as being incompetent to give true joy, preferring God's favour to all below. Crucifying the flesh, keeping the body under, enduring persecution for Christ's sake—the seed of "much fruit." "Shall keep it," &c. Selfishness enervates, loosens the grasp, and allows the treasure to slip away. Self-denial tightens the hold and retains possession. "Life eternal"—deliverance from trial, the enjoyment of rest and reward. (*J. E. Hargreaves.*) *Life loved and lost:*—Richard Denton, a blacksmith, residing in Cambridgeshire, was a professor of religion, and the means of converting the martyr, William Woolsey. When told by that holy man that he wondered he had not followed him to prison, Denton replied that he could not burn in the cause of Christ. Not long after, his house being on fire, he ran in to save some of his goods, and was burnt to death. **If any man serve Me, let him follow Me.**—*Following Christ:*—I. LET WHOM? II. FOLLOW WHOM? III. FOLLOW WHENCE? IV. FOLLOW WHITHER? V. FOLLOW HOW. (*S. S. Times.*) I. The LEADER. II. The FOLLOWER. III. The JOURNEY. IV. The DESTINATION. (*Ibid.*) *Following Christ:*—When Amurah 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." *Christ's servant: his duties and rewards:*—The motto of the Prince of Wales is "*Ich dien*"—I serve; it should be the motto of every prince of the blood royal of heaven. I. PLAIN DIRECTIONS FOR A VERY HONOURABLE OFFICE. 1. We should all like to minister to Christ. If He were here now there would be nothing which we would not do for Him, so we say. But much of this is mere sentiment. If Christ were to come now as He came at first, probably we should treat Him as He was treated. This sentimentalism has at the bottom of it the idea that we should be honouring curselves by it. But if you really would serve Christ, you can, by following, *i.e.*, imitating Him. (1) One says, "I should like to do something to prove that I really would obey my Lord. I would show that I am not a servant in name only." Imitate Christ, and you then show your obedience. (2) Another says, "I would joyfully assist Him in His wants." Imitate Him, then, and go about doing good. Behold His wants in the poor saints. (3) "I would do something to cheer Him." The solace of His sorrow is the obedience of His people. When He sees that He sees of the travail of His soul, &c. (4) "I would honour Him." Christ is most honoured when His saints are most sanctified. Follow Him thus, and you will honour Him more than by strewing palm branches in His way and shouting "Hosannah!" 2. Let me mark out Christ's way, and then, if you would serve Him, follow Him. The proud flesh wants to follow Christ by striking out new paths, to be an original thinker. It is not for us to be originals, but humble copies of Christ. (1) He went to Jordan to be baptized. If you would

serve Him don't say this is not essential; it is not a servant's business to determine that. (2) The Spirit led Him to be tempted of the devil; don't think that temptation is a mark of being out of Christ. (3) Now He comes forth to work. So you must follow Him in labour. If you cannot preach to thousands you can to tens, or to one, as He did by Jacob's well. (4) He bears bold witness before His adversaries. Let there not be a foe before whose face you would fear to plead His cause. (5) He comes into the black cloud of reproach; they say He has a devil and is mad. Follow Him there. (6) He comes to die. Be ready to yield thy life if called upon, and if not, devote every moment of it to Him. II. GENEROUS STIPULATIONS FROM A NOBLE MASTER. "Where I am," &c. Whoever heard of such conditions. The master is in the drawing-room, the servant in the kitchen; the master presides at the table, the servant waits at the table. Not so here. 1. This was Christ's rule all His life long. (1) He went to a wedding, to the house of Lazarus, to the Pharisee's house, and had He been an ordinary man He would have said, "I cannot take these poor fishermen with Me;" but they were always with Him: with Him too in His triumphal entry and His last great feast. "With desire," &c. (2) But if He thus shared His comforts among His disciples, He expected them to share His discomforts. He was in a ship in a great storm, and they must be with Him though they were sore afraid. He goes to Gethsemane, and they must be with Him there; and though He had to tread the winepress alone, yet they were with Him in death, for they suffered martyrdom. 2. This stands true to us. Where Christ was we must be. He is gone to heaven now, and where He is we shall be also. Fare ill or well we are to have joint stock with Christ. III. A GLORIOUS REWARD FOR IMPERFECT SERVICES. "Him will my Father honour." 1. In his own soul. He shall have such peace and fellowship that this honour shall be apparent. How greatly God honoured Knox, who never feared the face of man, with unruffled serenity of heart! 2. By success in whatever he may attempt. Why is it that little success rests on some who labour for God? Because they do not serve Christ by imitating Him. Ecclesiastical courts and rubrics confine too many. 3. At the last, before the angels. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Service and its reward*:—I. THE COURSE OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE. What are men's ideas of life? The gratification of animal appetites, the desire for social pleasures, the love of distinction. Is it any wonder that these ideas should prompt the question, "Is life worth living?" These are ends which life itself will ultimately disdain. Turn, then, to Christ's idea—service true and lasting. 1. Christ's life was one of full consecration to God. This consecration was —(1) Active—"I come to do Thy will." (2) Entire—"My meat is to do the will," &c. (3) Realized in the largest degree—"Into Thy hands I commit My Spirit." (4) Triumphant, "It is finished." (5) Was maintained by prayer. 2. Christ's life was inspired with one aim—the elevation of mankind. Achimedes said that if he could find a fulcrum he would make a lever that would lift the world. The fulcrum in our redemption was God's eternal purpose, and the lever Christ's own life—His teaching and example. This is the Church's mission to-day. 3. Jesus never made present success the ground of His life. After 1800 years there is more power in it than when He saved the dying thief. II. THIS SERVICE LEADS WHERE JESUS IS. There is elevation in the very nature of Christian service. Men wearing titles and honours which they have never deserved are looked upon with contempt. To bear Christ's name and to wear His livery without serving Him is despicable. But that service is calculated to destroy one of our most debasing passions—selfishness; and the moment that that is dead at the feet of Jesus we begin to rise. We are not blind to other elevating influences—knowledge, taste, industry, uprightness, but a heart consecrated to Christ is higher than all. It has higher conceptions of life, sweeter sentiments of duty, aims at higher ends. III. THIS LIFE OF SERVICE WILL BE CROWNED WITH DIVINE HONOURS. 1. A place in heaven. 2. Distinguished signs of approbation. 3. Association with Jesus. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *Self-denial*:—I. THE SELF-DENIAL IN WHICH WE SHOULD FOLLOW JESUS. 1. It was free. Voluntariness is the essence of this virtue. For others to deny us a benefit or to constrain us to hardship we would avoid is not self-denial. Christ "emptied Himself," &c. 2. It was wise. It was not placed in trifles. If He restrained innocent desires or endured what was painful it was for noble and generous ends. 3. It was extensive, reaching from the humble stable to the malefactor's cross, and all was foreseen. 4. It was disinterested. Many deny to serve themselves; but "ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. Would we be Christ's followers? Our self-denial must be like His—free, wise, &c. II. THIS SELF-DENIAL IS THE PATH TO TRUE HONOUR AND GREATNESS, because—1. It is great and honourable in itself. These

qualities arise from character and conduct, and are independent of the judgments of men. They are not derived from noble descent, magnificence, dominion, &c. To rise above self-love requires a vigour in which there will always be found true greatness of mind. 2. It conducts to true greatness. Voluptuousness rusts the best talents, blunts the most undaunted courage, perverts the soundest judgment, and corrupts the purest heart. All these qualities a habit of self-denial improves. That which the world counts greatness can only be achieved by self-denial—learning, statesmanship, war. But Christian self-denial makes man truly great. 3. It is honoured by God. This is seen in the case of Christ. For His self-denial God gave Him a name above every name. (*J. Erskine, D.D.*) **Where I am there shall also My servant be.** I have heard that a noted Methodist preacher, who commenced his ministry very early in life, suffered not a little at first because of his humble origin and unpromising exterior. Being sent on the circuit plan to a certain house on a Saturday night, to be in readiness for preaching on the Sunday, the good woman, who did not like the look of him, sent him round to the kitchen. The serving man was surprised to see the minister in the kitchen when he came from labour. John, rough as he was, welcomed the despised preacher, and tried to cheer him. The minister shared John's meal of porridge, John's bed in the cockloft, and John's humble breakfast, and walked to the House of God with John in the morning. Now, the preacher had not long opened his mouth before the congregation perceived that there was somewhat in him, and the good hostess, who had so badly entertained him, began to feel a little uneasy. When the sermon was over there were many invitations for the minister to come home, and the hostess, fearful of losing her now honoured guest, begged he would walk home with her, when, to her surprise, he said, "I supped with John, I slept with John, I breakfasted with John, I walked here with John, and I'll walk home with John." So when dinner came he was, of course, entreated to come into the chief room, for many friends wished to dine with this young minister, but no, he would dine in the kitchen; he had supped with John, he had breakfasted with John, and he would dine with John. They begged him to come into the parlour, and at last he consented on the condition that John should sit at the same table. "For," he said, very properly, "John was with me in my humiliation, and I will not sit down to dine unless he be with me in my exaltation." So on they went till the Monday morning, for "John was with me at the beginning, and he shall be with me to the end." This story may be turned to account thus: our Master came into this world once, and they sent Him into the servants' place, where the poor and despised ones were. Now the name of Christ is honoured, and kings and cardinals, popes and bishops, say, "Master, come and dine with us." Yes, the proud emperor and philosopher would have Him sup with them, but still He says, "No, I was with the poor and afflicted when I was on earth, and I will be with them to the end, and when the great feast is made in heaven the humble shall sit with Me, and the poor and despised who were not ashamed of Me, of them will I not be ashamed when I come into the glory of My Father, and all My holy angels with Me." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour.**—*Christian service and its honours:*—I. THE SERVICE OF CHRIST. 1. It is not a condition of serfdom. It is perfect freedom. 2. It is not a condition of menialism. In a modified sense it gives equality with Christ (chap. xv. 15). The relation between the Saviour and His servants is tender, intimate, mysterious. "Christ in you the hope of glory." 3. It involves a complete renunciation of every other service and our entire dedication to Christ. Hand and head and heart, time and influence and wealth must be laid on His altar. 4. It is a voluntary service. The Bible, the history of each saint of God, and our own inward consciousness unite in attesting that we possess the power to discern moral distinctions, to recognize the character, and to appreciate the claims of God; the power to render implicit obedience or proudly to defy our Maker. II. ITS ACCOMPANYING HONOURS. 1. The service of Christ is the only path of real honour; but it is the sure way to certain and glorious distinction. 2. This service elevates the physical, gives majesty to the intellectual, and arrays in robes of richest glory the moral and spiritual. It inspires an unwavering purpose. It raises to all the privileges of an adopted sonship. 3. It is emphatically royal. Those engaged in it are "a royal priesthood." Already they have in possession the highest good, and in prospect an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." They are kings, albeit as yet uncrowned, but awaiting patiently their coronation. (*J. W. Jones.*) *The Christian service and honour:*—Few men love service. Man prefers to be his own master, to do as he pleases. But

he who spurns the counsel of God commits an act of suicide on his liberty. He is the free man who serves God. But he who refuses is a slave to Satan or self. I. WHAT IS IT TO SERVE JESUS? We may serve Him—1. In the faith we hold. Studying it, mastering it, loving it, practising it. 2. In suffering for His sake. Bearing meekly persecution, calumny, Divine discipline, and poverty. 3. In the outward acts we perform. Some may serve God in ecclesiastical duties, others in the private duties of religion, and those of daily life. If you cannot serve Christ in one way you can in another—the servant in the household, the nurse in the hospital, the merchant in the rectitude of his dealings. It is not necessary to be a clergyman; you may serve Christ behind the counter or at the plough. II. THE HONOUR GOD CONFERS ON CHRIST'S SERVANTS. 1. In this world. (1) In the midst of the Church. Whatever a man's rank may be, the most useful are after all the most honoured. Let a man deserve position, and his fellow Christians will not be backward in giving it. (2) In the world. You may not know it, but the conscience of the wicked respects the righteous, however scornful the tongue. And for whom does the sinner send on his death-bed? His boon companions? No; the man of prayer. (3) After he is dead. The servant of Christ has honour at the hands of his family, his business connections, his neighbourhood, after he is gone. 2. In the world to come. (1) At the judgment—from persecutors, the wicked, the devil himself. (2) Throughout eternity. "Well done," &c. *Christian service and its reward*:—I. THE SERVICE. 1. The Master who is served. Jesus—Divine and human—One in whom are associated the might of omnipotence and the tenderness of love, who strengthens the weakness of His servants and uniformly leads them to victory and reward. And what else can it be but a service of honour to follow one so pre-eminently glorious? The subject may be proud of the sovereign, the scholar of the teacher, &c., but what sovereign, &c., can be compared with Christ. The conclusion is irresistible. There is no one who ought to be so trusted, loved, and obeyed. 2. The men who serve. Not men of any description, but fit men, chosen, justified, sanctified. How animating to be associated with such—men at the head of their species, whatever the world may say. The soldier congratulates himself on belonging to a profession which includes a Wellington; the student that he traverses a path trodden by Plato and Newton; the artist that he follows in the wake of Raphael and Reynolds; but we follow in the footsteps of Paul, Augustine, Luther, &c. "Wherefore seeing we are encompassed," &c. 3. The object contemplated—the loftiest at which man can aim—the evangelization of the world. The politician may alleviate the burdens of many, the merchant increase the comfort of thousands, the physician and inventor minister to multitudes, but the Christian carries light to the benighted and life to the dead, deposes Satan and enthrones God. 4. Its motive. The love of Christ. Think of that in the constancy of its exercise, the depth of its intensity, the fulness of its abundance, the felicity of its influence, and the munificence of its bestowment, and you will feel with Paul, "the love of Christ constraineth," &c. II. THE REWARD. God honours those who serve His Son—1. By crowning their labours with success. Admiration and advantages are nothing with success, but that compensates all sacrifices and exertions; and Christians always have it, although in a different way and of a different sort to what they expect. 2. By bestowing upon them His friendship and presence. This atones for worldly neglect and contempt. 3. By making them the almoners of His grace. All right-minded men esteem it an honour to dispense blessings, but Christians are channels of the living waters of salvation. 4. By raising them to the blessedness and glory of heaven. (*J. Fleming.*) *The Christian a follower of Christ*:—I. EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN IS A SERVANT OF CHRIST. This is a very frequent description of His people, "My servants." In one sense all men and all creatures are the servants of Christ: they are subject to the control of His power, the direction of His wisdom, the accomplishment of His purposes, and the manifestation of His glory. But it may be more properly said He serves Himself by them, than that they serve Him. We are not to confine this relationship to those who serve Christ in the ministry of the word, either at home or amidst the moral wilds of pagan superstition. They, indeed, are His servants in an eminent, but not in an exclusive sense. To be a servant might seem to imply no very lofty eminence of distinction, no very rich honour. This, however, depends upon the dignity of the person we serve. When the queen of Sheba saw the glory, and heard the wisdom of SOLOMON, she poured forth her raptures in congratulations to his servants, who stood continually in his presence, and ministered before his throne. II. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF A SERVANT OF CHRIST

TO FOLLOW HIM. This, in fact, is the service; the follower is the servant, and no other. The servant keeps his eye upon his master, and avoiding all other persons, and all other streets, treads in his footsteps, and presses as closely as possible to him. Just observe for a moment whom a Christian does not follow. He does not follow the teachers of false opinions in religion, in philosophy, or in morals, with whatever specious sophisms, or seductive eloquence, their notions may be advanced and supported. He does not follow the votaries of pleasure or of fashion, in their epicurean revels, with whatever elegance or refinement they may endeavour to recommend their habits. 1. In what views of Christ do His servants follow him? As their Teacher. 2. We are to follow Him as our Saviour. He came not only to instruct us, but to redeem us. 3. We are to follow Christ as a Master. "Ye call me Master and Lord," said Jesus to His disciples, "and ye say well, for so I am" (chap. xiii. 13). Here it may be proper to consider the rule of our service to Christ. This is the word of God. If I were asked to describe the character of a servant of Christ, not such as His professing people are too generally found, but such as they ought to be, I should say, they are His willing servants; they choose His service with their whole heart, and would not quit it for any consideration of wealth, rank, station, or fame. They are His servants without terms or conditions as to the kind, quantity, time or place of service. If it be not degrading the subject to apply to it a common phrase in domestic use, I would say they are servants of all work: willing to do the work of God in any place, in any condition, in any circumstances; so that if they can serve Him better by suffering than by active duties, in adversity than in prosperity, they are willing to do it. They are His inquisitive servants, searching the Scriptures as the rule of conduct, to know His will. They are His loving servants; loving their Master and His work too. They are His diligent servants, satisfied with no measure of duty, wrestling against a slothful and indolent disposition, and forgetting the things that are behind, in going on unto perfection. They are His faithful servants, taking account of all the gifts, graces, opportunities of usefulness, and means of doing the will of God and serving their generation. They are His waiting servants, looking for the coming of their Master. 4. We are to follow Him as an example. We are to imitate His holy life. Christ must be followed in humble dependence on Divine grace; and with a fixed resolution and dauntless courage in the face of danger, and at the risk of suffering. III. ALL WHO FOLLOW CHRIST ON EARTH WILL DWELL WITH HIM IN HEAVEN. HE SAITH, "WHERE I AM THERE SHALL MY SERVANT BE." (*J. A. James.*) *Christian service:*—Labour is not necessarily service. A good worker may be a poor server. A cook who lets the dinner spoil because she persists in scrubbing the floor when she should be watching the pot, is laborious, but not faithful. Service rather than labour is the measure of usefulness everywhere. God's service is not merely in the church-meeting, nor in the home-closet, but in every legitimate undertaking of life. Whatever distracts us in our proper business distracts from our proper service. The bookkeeper who makes a wrong entry because he is dreaming of the pleasures of last night's prayer-meeting, is practically forgetting God, because he forgets present duty. The pay-master who makes an overpayment because he is framing his next Sunday-school lesson, may think more about God than he thinks of Him. He is a religious worker more than a godly sever. And one may serve the Church to the neglect of the Master. He may forget God in thinking about God. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *The honour God confers upon those who serve Christ:*—We will suppose that the Prince of Wales is wrecked on a certain voyage, and is cast on shore with only one companion. The Prince falls into the hands of barbarians, and there is an opportunity for his companion to escape; but he says, "No, my Prince, I will stay with you to the last, and if we die, we will die together." The Prince is thrown into a dungeon; his companion is in the prison with him, and serves him and waits upon him. He is sick—it is a contagious fever—his companion nurses him—puts the cooling liquid to his mouth—and waits on him with a mother's care. He recovers a little; the fond attendant carries the young Prince, as he is getting better, into the open air, and tends him as a mother would her child. They are subject to deep poverty—they share their last crust together; they are hooted at as they go through the streets, and they are hooted at together. At last, by some turn in Providence, it is discovered where the Prince is, and he is brought home. Who is the man that the Queen will delight to honour? I fancy she would look with greater affection upon the poor servant than upon the greatest statesman; and I think that as long as she lived she would remember him above all the rest, "I will honour him above all the mighty ones in the land." And now, if we shall

be with Christ, the King's Son, if we shall suffer with Him, and be reproached with Him, if we shall follow Him anywhere and everywhere, making no choice about the way, whether it shall be rough or smooth—if we can go with Him to prison and to death, then we shall be the men whom heaven's King delighteth to honour. "Make room for Him, ye angels! Stand back ye peers of heaven's realm! Here comes the man; he was poor, mean, and afflicted; but he was with My Son, and was like My Son. Come hither, man! There, take thy crown, and sit with My Son in His glory, for thou wast with My Son in His shame." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 27–29. **Now is My soul troubled.**—This struggle is like one of those fissures in its crust which enables science to fathom the bowels of the earth. It lets us read the very inmost depths of our Lord's being. And what do we discover? Just the reverse of that impassive Jesus attributed by criticism to St. John. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Lent, a preparation for Good Friday: or the valley of the shadow of death*:—It has been well said that all Lent should be regarded as a preparation for Good Friday and its observance. Just as when we visit some deep and gloomy gorge amongst the mountains, long before we reach the spot where the cliffs rise highest and the day-light is farthest off, the hills begin to encircle us, the bright sunshine is lost and the black shadows of the stern and solemn precipices encompass our path! Thus, for a considerable time before His crucifixion, our Lord by His prophetic foresight entered into "the valley of the shadow of death." And we, in sympathy, should follow His footsteps. When the great pre-historic temple of Stonehenge was perfect, a number of huge stone gateways gave access to the central altar, around which they were ranged. So our Blessed Lord may be pictured as approaching the great Sacrifice on the Altar of the Cross by passing through diverse portals. We may look on Him in different aspects of the preparation for the first Good Friday. I. For instance, we see Him passing through the archway of PAINFUL ANTICIPATION. He knew what awaited Him—He told His disciples—"the Son of Man" was about to be betrayed—given into the hands of strangers—"scourged," "mocked," "spitefully entreated—insulted—crucified!" All, like a harrowing picture, was clear before His eyes, every detail stood out distinctly, and each day the crisis of His obedience drew closer. "For though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by those things which He suffered" (Heb. v. 8). A middle-aged man said that the most agonizing day he ever spent was the one day before an operation was performed on him; he did not know whether it would be very painful or not, and he was afraid to ask, and every time his thoughts wandered to pleasant matters they came back with a start to the grim recollection that every moment brought nearer and nearer the horrible instant that he could not escape! II. Again, we may regard our Lord pressing on to the Cross through the portal of a brave and RESOLUTE DETERMINATION. "He set His face to go up to Jerusalem." When His disciples objected, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?" the warning cannot stay His footsteps. When "the power of darkness" is at hand, He says, with a noble resignation, "The cup that My Father giveth Me to drink, shall I not drink it?" III. Another aspect in which we may observe our Saviour is, that He was called on to take His pathway under the gloomy arch of MORTIFICATION AND FAILURE. The disciples who walked by His side He knew were about to forsake Him. Peter, their chief spokesman, was going to deny Him, and Judas to betray Him, and the multitude were soon to exchange their welcome of "Hosannah" into grim yells of "Crucify Him!" But none of these things daunted the resolution of our Lord. In one golden sentence He summed up His task. (*J. W. Hardman, LL.D.*) *The Saviour's prayer*:—I. THE EXPERIENCE OUT OF WHICH IT AROSE. "Troubled" means tortured, racked, torn, as it were, with intense and various emotions. 1. This trouble arose out of the foresight of the Cross. Between Him and His glory lay Calvary. But the anguish was not on account of the physical torture or personal ignominy He would endure, although extreme; He had tasted the bitterness of sin in the intensity and perfection of His redeeming sympathy, and to pass under the shadow of its retribution. 2. This trouble superinduced a great conflict in His mind, "What shall I say? Father," &c. Some regard this as a petition; others with more propriety an interrogation implying a natural shrinking which it would have been more human not to feel. Gladly would He have said it but for the stability of His redeeming purpose. Purpose and feeling thus came into distressing collision. 3. The conflict, however, was but momentary. It gave place at once to a calm and heroic resignation. II. THE PURPORT OF THE PRAYER. "Father, glorify Thy name." How concise,

yet comprehensive: expressive of—1. Resignation. "Do what Thou wilt so long as Thou be glorified." 2. Fortitude. "The task before Me is a heavy one, but for Thy sake, I will go forward to it." 3. Benevolence. Self is lost sight of, and the Father's purpose and the redounding glory is all in all. 4. Faith. "What Thou hast promised Thou wilt perform." III. THE ANSWER. 1. How it was given. By a voice from heaven, mistaken as thunder, as the voice of an angel, but truly interpreted by Christ. 2. What it was. A declaration—(1) That it had been already fulfilled—in the whole of Christ's life. How this assurance would animate Christ, and endear to Him afresh the Father's will. (2) That the end for which Jesus prayed would be still further attained. Conclusion: Learn to cherish at all times a true and steady regard for the glory of God. (*B. Wilkinson.*) *A foretaste of Gethsemane*:—I see in the whole event here described a short summary of what took place afterwards more fully at Gethsemane. There is a remarkable parallelism at every step. Does our Lord say here—1. "My soul is troubled"? Just so He said in Gethsemane: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. xxvi. 38). 2. "Father, save Me from this hour"? Just so He says in Gethsemane: "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me" (Matt. xxvi. 39). 3. Does our Lord say here, "For this cause came I unto this hour"? Just so He says in Gethsemane: "If this cup may not pass away from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done." 4. Does our Lord say, finally, "Father, glorify Thy name"? Just so our Lord says, lastly, "The cup which My Father hast given Me, shall I not drink it" (chap. xviii. 11). The brief prayer which our Lord here offers, we should remember, is the highest, greatest thing that we can ask God to do. The utmost reach of the renewed will of a believer, is to be able to say always, "Father glorify Thy name in Me. Do with Me what Thou wilt, only glorify Thy name." The glory of God after all is the end for which all things were created. Paul's joyful hope, he told the Philippians, when a prisoner at Rome, was "that in all things, by life or by death, Christ might be magnified in his body" (Phil. i. 20). (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Gethsemane in prospect*:—This world is a world of grief. The infant begins its career with a cry of distress premonitory of all it must suffer from the cradle to the grave. Some suffer more than others—martyrs, *e.g.* (Heb. xi. 36–38). But one stands out pre-eminent for suffering (Isa. liii; Psa. lxix. 1, 2, 20). It was in the foresight of His amazing sufferings that Christ felt this perturbation of spirit, which arose out of—I. AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY UNDER THE TRUST HE HAD ASSUMED. Those most worthy of responsibility feel its pressure most. Some rush into office without sensibility or conscience, prepared to take all responsibility merely to pervert it to private ends. But men who deserve the trusts of life shrink even from their honours—*e.g.*, the conscientious physician, advocate, judge, parent. What was Christ's trust? It was—1. To represent the sinner (Gal. v. 4, 5; 2 Cor. v. 21). 2. To represent God. His holiness, justice, truth, in all the bitter experiences of His Spirit, and that not in His omnipotent Divine, but in His frail human nature. II. THE VIEW OF DEATH AS THE PENALTY OF THE LAW. The dread of death is natural because it formed no part of our original constitution. Whatever belongs to our nature God makes pleasant—*e.g.*, sleep and food. But death is horrible because it has supervened on our constitution (Rom. v. 12). But Christ had to die under the Father's judicial displeasure as the substitute for sinners whom the law condemns. He was made sin for us who know no sin, which sinlessness added to the agony. Who that is in any degree sanctified can help but feel the pain of the sins with which He is brought in contact? How then must it have been with the Perfect Man who *bore all sin*, and all sorrows that are born of sin, even to the privation of the Divine presence. III. THE ANTICIPATION OF CONFLICT WITH THE POWERS OF DARKNESS. It was an old quarrel begun when Satan lifted the standard of rebellion in heaven, continued when Adam fell, and after. We know something of the terribleness of striving with the devil, and as we advance in the Divine life it becomes more terrible. What then must it have been for the spotless Jesus to feel the full brunt of all the forces that hell could muster. Conclusion: 1. All these sufferings are the evidences of Christ's love to us. 2. They show us the awful demerit of sin. (*B. M. Palmer, D.D.*) *The internal sufferings of Christ*:—"It became" Christ to suffer (Heb. ii. 10). His sufferings were many varied and severe, and His external sufferings, though of no common kind, were the least part of them, as may be judged by the fact that they never extorted a complaint, whereas His inward anguish wrung from Him "strong crying and tears." I. THE SAVIOUR'S INTERNAL SUFFERINGS. When the mind is free from uneasiness it is said to be calm like the bosom of the lake when no breath

of wind ruffles its glassy surface. When sorrow and terror takes possession of it, it is said to be agitated, like the ocean in a storm. The latter was the case with Christ here, and chap xiii. 21, and Matt. xxvi. 36–46. 1. Its cause (1) not external circumstances. There was no scourge or cross here, or at Gethsemane. On the contrary, there was much to please. The people had just shouted their Hosannahs to His Messiahship; the Greeks had fulfilled the promise of Isa. xlix. 6. (2) Not remorse. In no case could He wish that He had thought, or felt, or acted differently from what He had done. (3) Not fear of impending bodily sufferings (though no doubt they did give rise to uneasy feelings), for He knew that these would be momentary and would be abundantly compensated. (4) There is but one way of accounting for it. The invisible arm of Omnipotence smites Him. On the head of the spotless, perfect man, Jehovah made to meet, as the victim for human transgression, the iniquities of us all, in all their odiousness and malignity. The more He loved those in whose room He stood, the more would His trouble be increased, just as we are affected more by the crimes of a friend than by those of a stranger. And in addition He was exposed to the attack of malignant spiritual beings whose was that hour and power of darkness. 2. Its purpose. (1) To "make Him perfect," *i.e.*, fully to accomplish Him as Saviour. It formed one important part of His expiation. Mere bodily sufferings could not expiate "spiritual wickedness." (2) To complete His example. This had been incomplete had He not showed His people how to conduct themselves under inward troubles which often form the severest part of their trials. (3) To render Him sympathetic with His people under those trials which most need His sympathy. II. THE EXERCISE OF OUR LORD'S MIND UNDER THESE SUFFERINGS. 1. "What shall I say?" has been regarded as a further expression of suffering—"My sorrows are too great to be uttered in words. Father, save me from my impending sufferings." Christ's sorrows were indeed unspeakable, but He could hardly have asked to be saved from death when He rebuked His disciples for attempting to dissuade Him, and when He was straitened till the baptism of blood was accomplished. 2. The words express the deliberating of our Lord's mind as to what course He should follow—"to what quarter shall I turn for relief. Men are not disposed to pity Me, and cannot relieve Me. I turn to God: what shall I say to Him? He can sustain and deliver Me. Shall I ask Him to release Me from My covenant engagements? No: for this cause I came to this hour. I will not ask it. I will say, Glorify Thy name; finish Thy work in righteousness. Let the end be gained: I quarrel not with the means." 3. What a display of—(1) Love to God in entire devotedness to His glory! (2) Love to man in becoming obedient to death. 4. What a call for gratitude, love and devotion from us! III. THE FATHER'S APPROBATION OF THE SAVIOUR'S EXERCISE OF MIND UNDER THESE SUFFERINGS. "I have both glorified it," &c. The whole universe glorifies God's name, the whole history of the past and future. But this refers to the glorification of God's name—1. In Christ Jesus. His faithfulness in fulfilling His great promise to His Church; His power in bringing into personal union, the Divine and human natures; His mercy in not withholding His only Son. God's glory was seen in Christ's life, teaching, miracles. 2. In the awful events of that "hour." 3. In the glorious results of Christ's death (Psa. xvi. 10, 11; cx. 1; ii. 8; Isa. liii. 12; xlix. 6; xl. 5). The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ; the effusion of the Spirit; the salvation of an innumerable company. The subject—1. Tells the impenitent sinner what he must endure if he refuses to avail himself of the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus." 2. Bids the Christian rejoice that the cup of wrath he deserved has been drunk by Christ. 3. Urges us often to show forth the Lord's death in His own ordinance. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *The soul trouble of Christ*:—I. THE MYSTERY OF THE SAVIOUR'S SORROW. It is usual to explain that the human nature of Jesus shrank from death. But this view lowers Him below the level of the martyrs, and is inconsistent with the haste with which He journeyed to Jerusalem to meet His death; and we cannot think of Him as losing courage. II. SOME LIGHT ON THE MYSTERY. We are apt to take too corporeal a view of Christ's sacrifice. The bodily pain was an essential part of the suffering, but only a part. It was something all His own in dying, from which He shrank, and the shrinking from which He had to conquer. He saw the sin-wrought woes and horrors of all the generations before and after, to the day of judgment, and there was a sense of their being upon Him, and enveloping Him. And so we may hear Him cry, "Spare Me not the scourging, the death agony," &c., but the being made one with the world in its sin. III. THE MEANING OF THE PRAYER. This experience had not been altogether measured beforehand, and now the agony of

the incorporation of the sinless with sin is before Him, He prays for deliverance from conscious sin-bearing. IV. THE ANSWER TO THE PRAYER. "There came a voice." Modern unbelief scoffs at voices from heaven. Reverence will not pass hasty judgments. One said, "It thundered;" another, "an angel spoke to Him." Christ alone hears the audible words, and interprets them when He is alone with His people. "I have glorified it and will glorify it." V. PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. "My soul is troubled." Christ is not alone in that experience; but His troubles were not His own; ours are our own. 2. "Save Me from this hour." Not that He would not suffer for others; but that this going fearfully into the very heart of sin seemed terrible. We may pray this prayer; but let us take care to remember how different is our trouble; and to add, "Glorify Thy name," whatever it may cost us. 3. Can we pray, "Glorify Thy name?" Whatever I suffer for my own sin or for my brother's, only may God be glorified; only may God be seen as He is in His power to save. May this thought take root and grow in us! (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The sorrow and resignation of Christ:*—I. THE HOUR WHICH THE SAVIOUR MET. He names it twice in a very emphatic manner: and there is repeated notice of the fact that "it had not yet come." There have been many important hours, but none like this. It was the hour—1. For which time was made. 2. To which all the dispensations referred—Adamic, Abrahamic, Mosaic. 3. Which all the prophets foretold (1 Pet. i. 11). 4. In which the grandest work was accomplished, and the grandest victory achieved. 5. In which all intelligent creation was concerned. (1) Angels were not indifferent spectators, for they were confirmed in their bliss. (2) Devils, for they were deprived of their last expiring hope. (3) Man, for a full atonement for his sin was made. II. THE AFFLICTION HE FELT. He hardly knew how to express Himself in the prospect; what then must have been the agony itself? No one had ever such reason to meet death with calmness. He had no guilt, was assured of immortality, and saw the blessed issue. Martyrs—mere men—have suffered with magnanimity and joy. Yet He was troubled. Why? Because He was the surety for sinners and suffered for sin. Learn, then—1. The extreme evil of sin. 2. The greatness of the love of Christ. 3. The indispensable necessity of faith in His atonement. III. THE RESIGNATION HE EXEMPLIFIED. "Father, save Me," &c., is not a petition, but an interrogation. Note that—1. Christ's undertaking for sinners was voluntary. He "*came* to this hour," which teaches His inviolable faithfulness, and should encourage our trust. 2. He saw this hour in every period of His existence. It was not unexpected—"For this cause." 3. The motives which had influenced Him to suffer were still the same; and as the hour approached they gathered weight. 4. It was but an hour. The conflict was severe but transient. Such considerations contributed to work this resignation. IV. THE PRAYER HE OFFERED. "Father, glorify Thy name" is more than resignation; it is a consecration of His sufferings to God's glory. How is the Father glorified thus? 1. In His perfections. Already His wisdom, power, and mercy were displayed in the Saviour's mission and miracles: but now He was to display His holiness and justice. 2. As regards His dispensations. (*T. Kidd.*) *The Redeemer contemplating His hour as come:*—I. THE UNIQUE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LANGUAGE. 1. The nature of the hour—the time appointed for the vindication of the Divine government outraged by man, and for the manifestation of Divine love. The world had been spared for this hour. 2. The mysterious agitation with which it was approached. This was natural. Who has not spent anxious days and sleepless nights over an unfinished work, and who does not know the tension as the hour for its completion arrives. 3. The grand consideration which induced Christ to meet this hour—the fact that all the past was summed up in it to the glory of God, and that the glory of God would stream from it. II. ITS APPLICATION TO US. 1. There is an hour in the life of every man, Christian, Church, for which every previous hour is a designed preparation. 2. Seasons of special service and sacrifice have actually occurred in the history of the Church—Israel on the confines of the promised land; the Reformation; the mission of Wesley; the great missionary movement. 3. Such times of effort should be expected, prayed for, ascertained. 4. The due apprehension of our hour would invest us with a consecrating sense of opportunity. 5. On our discharge of impending responsibilities may be suspended consequences of unknown magnitude. 6. Is not the urgency of the hour now greater than ever? (*J. Harris, D.D.*) *The hour of atonement:*—The Redeemer—I. CONTEMPLATED AN IMPORTANT PERIOD. 1. As involving intense and infinite agony—betrayal, desertion, ignominy, corporeal torture, agony in the endurance of imputed sin. 2. As connected with and founding His exaltation (ver. 23). (1) The glory of His personal dignity in His resurrection,

ascension, enthronement, and dominion. (2) The glory of the universal efficacy of His atonement (vers. 24, 32; Isa. liii. 10–12). II. WAS AFFECTED BY A POWERFUL EMOTION. 1. He was perturbed with anxiety arising from the prospect of His sufferings, which incidentally proves that His death was an atonement. How else shall we explain this intense agitation? 2. He was resolute in determination. "For this cause come I to this hour." 3. He was fervent in prayer. "Father, glorify Thy name." III. RECEIVED A REMARKABLE TESTIMONY. 1. Its mode—a voice from heaven. 2. Its announcement—an approval of the invocation. Conclusion: 1. Honour the hour of atonement by admitting its unparalleled importance. 2. Seek with supreme earnestness a personal interest in the redemption this period has provided. 3. Promote the glory of the Father and the Son by the zealous diffusion of that gospel which conveys it. (*J. Parsons.*)

Vers. 28–30. **Father, glorify Thy name.**—*The glorified name:*—1. One important aspect of Christian life is the imitation of Christ. But this is not necessarily doing the same things that Christ did, but involves the discovery of the principles by which His life was ruled, and the imitation of ways of expressing character after we have gained Christ's principles. 2. A man's ruling principle can best be discovered in his prayers, particularly in those which are forced on by sudden calamity or pressure. Then all the guards and formalities around a man are broken down, and the man reveals himself in his heart cry to God. The circumstances of the text present such an occasion, and that we may know what was our Lord's ruling principle, let us study this revealing prayer. I. THE PRAYER THAT EMBODIES THE PRINCIPLE OF THE NOBLE CHRISTLY LIFE. Observe—1. The apprehension of God that is in it. The character of our prayer depends on the name we are able to use for God. Our Lord could only employ the richest and dearest—Father. This apprehension includes some apprehension of the mystery of life and suffering, and a comforting recognition of the Divine purpose. His is a fatherhood of many sons whom He is training for glory. 2. The attitude of soul it indicates. (1) Perfect trust in the goodness of all the Father's arrangements and doings. (2) Simple and unquestioning obedience. (3) Intense love making complete self-sacrifice possible. 3. What is involved in the petition—living out to the end such a perfect sonship that men, throughout the ages, thinking of the life of Jesus, should fill the name of Father with highest, tenderest, and holiest meanings. To live for self is ignoble; to live for God in His character of Father, the noble life indeed. II. THE DIVINE RESPONSE TO SUCH A PRAYER. 1. A side of tender comforting—"I have glorified it; that has been the meaning of all your life's toil and pain." This voice may be heard to cheer all true-hearted sons of God. Their life has not been lived in vain. 2. A sign of assurance for the future—"I will," &c. Therefore our Lord may calmly go on to new scenes of toil and suffering. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) *The glory of God interpreted in Christ:*—The true glory of God must be interpreted in Christ Jesus; and when you understand what it is that God makes to be His glory; when you understand that the glory of God is not self-laudation, nor enriching His own power, nor multiplying His own treasures, but that it is supremely to make others happy; when you understand that the glory of God means loving other people and not oneself, mercy and not selfishness, the distribution of His bounty and not the hoarding it up; when you understand that God sits with all the infinite stores of redemptive love only to shed them abroad upon men for ever and for ever, then you form a different conception of what it is for God to reign for His own glory. If love is His glory; if generosity is His glory; if giving is His glory; if thinking of the poor is His glory; if strengthening the weak is His glory; if standing as the defender of the wronged is His glory; if loving and watching over every being that He has created for ever and for ever is His glory, then, blessed be that teaching which represents that God does reign for His own glory. That is a glory which is worthy of the Divine regality. It will bring out blossoms of joy and gladness in heaven and on earth. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The glory of God in Christ crucified:*—Here shine spotless justice, incomprehensible wisdom, and infinite love, all at once; none of them darkens or eclipses the other; every one of them gives a lustre to the rest; they mingle their beams, and shine with united, eternal, splendour. The just Judge, the merciful Father, the wise Governor—no other object gives such a display of all these perfections; yea, all the objects we know give not such a display as any one of them. Nowhere does justice appear so terribly awful, mercy so sweetly amiable, or wisdom so unfathomably profound. The glories that are found separately in the other works of God, are found united here. The joys of heaven glorify God's good-

ness; the pains of hell glorify His justice; the cross of Christ glorifies both of them in a more remarkable way than heaven or hell glorifies any of them. The justice of God is more awfully displayed in the sufferings of Christ, as the substitute of sinners, than in the torments of devils; and His mercy is far more brightly manifested in these sufferings, than in the joys of angels. (*J. McLaurin.*) *The glory of God the object of grace*:—Whenever God has blessed the Church, He has secured Himself the glory of the blessing, though we have had the profit of it. Sometimes He has been pleased to redeem His people by might; but then He had so used the power that all the glory hath come to Him, and His head alone hath worn the crown. Did He smite Egypt, and lead forth His people with a strong hand and an outstretched arm? the glory was not to the rod of Moses, but to the Almighty power which made the rod so potent. Did He lead His people through the wilderness and defend them from their enemies? Still, did He, by teaching the people their dependence upon Him, preserve to Himself all the glory. So that not Moses or Aaron amongst the priests or prophets could share the honour with Him. And tell me, if ye will, of slaughtered Anak, and the destruction of the tribes of Canaan; tell me of Israel's possessing the promised land; tell me of Philistines routed, and laid heaps on heaps; of Midianites made to fall on each other; tell me of kings and princes who fled apace and fell, until the ground was white, like the snow in Salmon. I will say of every one of these triumphs, "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously;" and I will say at the end of every victory, "Crown Him, crown Him, for He hath done it; and let His name be exalted and extolled, world without end." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Human glory, what it comes to*:—A moment before he uttered his last sigh he called the herald who had carried his banner before him in all his battles, and commanded him to fasten to the top of a lance the shroud in which the dying prince was soon to be buried. "Go," said he, "carry the lance, unfurl this banner; and while you lift up this standard, proclaim, 'This, this is all that remains to Saladin the Great (the conqueror and the king of the empire) of all his glory.'" Christians, I perform to-day the office of this herald. I fasten to the staff of a spear sensual and intellectual pleasures, worldly riches, and human honours. All these I reduce to the piece of crape in which you will shortly be buried. This standard of death I lift up in your sight, and I cry, "This, this is all that will remain to you of the possessions for which you exchanged your souls." (*J. Saurin.*) *Voices from the excellent glory* (Text and Matt. iii. 16, 17; xvii. 5):—I. THE THREE TESTIMONIES. 1. When the voices were heard—(1) In relation to Christ's personal ministry. (*a*) The first at the commencement of His public ministry. (*b*) The second some little time after its central point. (*c*) The last just before its close. How cheering at the beginning of a great enterprise to have God's testimony that He has sent you; how encouraging when the labour is heavy and the spirit faint to receive another affirming word; but best of all to have it when we are about to depart. (2) In relation to His life and enterprise. (*a*) The first celestial witness was given after He had lived for thirty years in obscurity. It was meet when He first appeared that there should be some token that He was what He professed to be. It came also before the temptation, for which there could not be a better forearming. So with us: before temptation, spiritual sustenance. (*b*) The second was when our Lord (according to Luke) was about to send out other seventy disciples. Before extending His agencies of mercy He received a token for good. When the Lord calls us to wider service, let us go up into the mountain to pray, and there too we may expect to enjoy the comforting and strengthening witness of the Spirit. (*c*) The third came just before His sufferings and death. It was meet that the Sufferer who must tread the winepress alone should receive a word meeting the point about which His soul was most concerned, viz., God's glory. (3) In relation to His habits. (*a*) The first came when He was in the attitude of obedience—"fulfilling all righteousness." When you are in the path of filial obedience you may expect the Spirit to bear witness with yours that you are born of God. (*b*) The second came when He was in devout retirement. He had gone up into the mountain alone, and when you are there you may expect to receive Divine testimonies. (*c*) The third came when about His work, preaching in the Temple. If you are called to any form of service, under no pretext neglect it, or you may lose the inward witness. 2. To whom the attestations were given. (1) To an increasing number of persons. The first to John alone; the second to five; the last to many. God's testimony to Christ is an ever growing one. (2) It was given in this wise. (*a*) The first to the greatest of men, yet the voice revealed a

greater than he. (*b*) The second to the best of men, but the voice bear witness to a better. (*c*) The third in the holiest place, and there it testified to a holier. Jesus is everywhere magnified beyond all others. 3. To what God bore testimony. (1) The first was to Christ's miraculous origin: "This is My beloved Son." (2) The second sealed His appointment as the Great Prophet—"Hear Him." (3) The third bore witness to the success of His work—"I have glorified it," &c. Some have thought that the three voices attested our Lord in His threefold office. (*a*) John came proclaiming the kingdom, and Jesus was in His baptism proclaimed the chief of the new kingdom. (*b*) On the second occasion, "Hear Him," ordained Him the Prophet of the people. (*c*) In the third He was owned as Priest. Is this threefold witness received in your hearts the testimony of God, who cannot lie. Behold Christ well pleasing to the Father; let Him be well pleasing to you. Hear Him proclaimed as God's beloved; let Him be the beloved of your hearts. Hear the testimony that He has glorified God, and remember that His further glorifying God depends in some measure on you. 4. How were these testimonies given? (1) On the first occasion the heavens were opened and the Spirit descended. What if this proclaims to us that by His obedience our Lord procured the opening of heaven for us that our prayers might go up and our blessings come down! (2) Heaven was not beheld as opened the second time—the overshadowing cloud represented the Mediatorship of Christ veiling the excessive brightness of the Godhead. (3) In the third our mind rests neither upon the opening of heaven nor on the cloud, but on the voice. The opening of heaven and the interposition of a Mediator are but means to the great end of glorifying God. Let this one great object absorb all our souls. 5. What was it that was spoken? (1) The first time the heavenly voice preached the gospel, "This is My beloved Son," &c. The gospel is tidings concerning a blessed person, and His acceptableness as the chosen of God, and of the Divine pleasure with those who are "*in*" Him. (2) The second time the voice uttered the great command, "Hear Him." Salvation does not come by seeing, as Romanists have it. Faith cometh by hearing, and not the doctrines of men, even such as Moses and Elias, but Him. (3) On the third occasion testimony was given to the gospel's result. It is through the gospel that God is glorified. II. INSTRUCTIVE CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH THESE TESTIMONIES. 1. On each occasion Jesus was in prayer. Learn that if any would have God speak comfortably to him, he must speak to God in prayer. 2. Each time His sufferings were prominently before Him. John, at the waters of Jordan, said, "Behold the Lamb," &c. On Tabor Moses and Elias spoke of His decease. In the Temple His soul was troubled at the prospect of His death. Learn, then, if you desire to see the glory of Christ, as attested of the Father, you must dwell much on His death. 3. Each time He was honouring the Father. In His baptism by obedience, on the mountain by devotion, in the Temple His very words were, "Glorify Thy name." If you would see God's glory and hear His voice you must honour Him. Conclusion: Receive these testimonies. 1. With assured conviction. 2. With profound reverence. 3. With unconditional obedience. 4. With joyful confidence. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The best prayer ever offered*:—I. ITS OBJECT. 1. It is unselfish. Personal apprehension is swallowed up in the craving for Divine glory. Compare this with Matt. vi. 9. Prayer is often too selfish. 2. It seeks the revealing of God's glory. God is changeless and cannot grow more glorious in Himself. But His *name* is glorified when the beauty of His character is revealed. The mountains are not changed when the mists lift; but they are glorified in being unveiled. 3. The particular form is the glory of the Fatherhood of God. His creative glory of wisdom and might had been revealed in nature; His regal glory of justice and government in providence; His highest glory of goodness awaited its full manifestation when His Fatherhood would be seen in personal self-sacrificing love to His children. II. ITS MOTIVES. 1. The name of God as our Father deserves to be glorified. 2. Christ found His own greatest encouragement in the vision of the glory of God. So did Moses (Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19). We are most strengthened when we forget self in God. 3. Christ's work is accomplished when the name of God as our Father is glorified. This name had been dishonoured till Christ raised it to honour among His disciples. The Christian is glorified only as he reflects the glory of God, and this can only be as God is first revealed to him (2 Cor. iii. 18). III. ITS ANSWER. 1. God's Fatherhood had been revealed—(1) In creation, providence, and Old Testament revelation, but dimly and partially. (2) In the incarnation, life, character, words, and works of Christ, but still not perfectly. 2. It was destined to be revealed more fully. (1) In the passion of Christ, by the love of God shown in sustaining His Son, by His holiness

and goodness in the suffering Saviour, and by the great act of redemption then accomplished. (2) In the resurrection, and the proof this gave of God's redeeming goodness. (3) In the fruits of the redemption seen in the history of the Church. (4) Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in helping the Church to read aright the mystery of the Cross, which, after Pentecost, became the central theme of the Church's praises. (*W. F. Adeney, M.A.*) *The changed prayer*:—A man once complained to his minister that he had prayed for a whole year that he might enjoy the comforts of religion, but found no answer to his prayers. The minister replied, "Go home now, and pray, 'Father, glorify Thy name.'" *The truest and deepest view of life*:—I. A MAN TAKING THE TRUEST AND DEEPEST VIEW OF LIFE. A sentence is often a revelation. This is unique, suggestive. If we were to put our deepest desires into words would they be this? The worldly man's life is limited to the self sphere; the very point of this is that Christ had no self sphere. The former is the shallow, the latter the ennobling view. Observe our Lord's—1. Cherished life thought. This inspiring thought for Christ and us starts the question, Will not a cherished sense of our independence do more for us than the sense of dependence, and so of responsibility? Let Christ's life be the answer. The independent view—I am my own—may be fascinating; but it is untrue and deteriorating, and sooner or later is found to be such. What is the condition of the parasite when the tree on which it feeds is dead? or that of the ivy cut below and made independent of its secret rootings? What good is an independent vine branch? 2. Ruling life-force—obedience inspired by affection for His Father. Here we see how all the seeming hardness of dependence is lost in the atmosphere of love. The wife never finds it hard to obey when she loves. Mere obedience is, for man, very hard; but obedience out of love is the highest joy; and this deep joy we find in Christ. 3. Prevailing life-attitude—the activity of submission; for true submission is not mere bearing, but bearing in doing. This is fully illustrated in the life of Christ. II. GOD'S RESPONSE TO THE MAN WHO TAKES THIS VIEW OF LIFE. 1. That the deepest wish of His heart has been already realized and He may read His past in the light of it. All depends on the light in which we read our past. Read Christ's in the light thrown by this response and see how it had been a glorifying of the Father-name of God in—(1) His own Sonship. (2) His teachings about the Father. (3) His brotherhood with men. 2. That the deepest wish of his heart shall yet be realized, and he may go calmly on into darkness with the assurance that even his Cross shall glorify the Father. Death shall do even more than life. The "forsaking" was a final triumph of obedience. The will of God was so beautiful that He could even suffer and die for it. Conclusion: We say, "God is our Father." Do we say, "Father, glorify Thy name." Is this our inspiring life secret? In life-labour, relationships, sufferings, bereavements, death, do I honour myself or my Father? (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) **The people . . . said that it thundered.**—The whole multitude heard a noise; but the meaning of the voice was only perceived by each in proportion to his spiritual intelligence. Thus the wild beast perceives only a *sound* in the human voice; the trained animal discovers a *meaning*, a command, *e.g.*, which it immediately obeys; man alone discerns a thought. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *The voice from heaven*:—I. THE VOICE. 1. Grossly misunderstood by the bystanders—(1) As a natural phenomenon, as thunder. (2) As a supernatural utterance, the speech of an angel—a significant proof of man's incapacity to understand the words of God (1 Cor. ii. 14). 2. Lovingly by Jesus; as an old and familiar voice, the voice of His Father, which twice previously had addressed Him out of heaven. It needs a child's heart to recognize a father's voice. 3. Rightly interpreted again by Jesus—perhaps also by John and his co-apostles—to whom it spoke in the language of—(1) Approbation, "I have glorified it." (2) Consolation, "Will glorify it again." II. THE PURPOSE OF THE VOICE. 1. Not for His sake; since He knew His Father always heard Him (chap. xi. 42). 2. But for theirs—to assure them that He was the Father's Son, the heaven-sent Messiah. Learn—1. The superiority of faith to unbelief in the understanding of Divine revelations. 2. The condescension of Christ in considering man's weakness and infirmity. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*)

Vers. 31-33. **Now is the judgment of this world.**—*The world's hour of deepest revolution*:—It was the signal—I. OF ITS JUDGMENT. To judge is to verify the moral condition. The judgment of the world is based upon the Cross, inasmuch as this discloses the moral condition of man in his natural state. Man, by raising this throne for Jesus, judged himself, and manifested the enmity to God which is

in his heart. Having erected it, he judges himself still more decidedly by his relation thereto; for either by faith he finds therein his salvation, or by unbelief his condemnation. Of this choice the final judgment will be only the ratification. Thus the judgment of the world dates from Good Friday. Its first external manifestation was the destruction of Jerusalem; its second will be the judgment of the Church; its third the last judgment predicted (Matt. xxiv.; xxv.) on the very day on which these words were uttered. II. OF THE EXPULSION OF ITS ANCIENT MASTER. The Cross filled up the measure of tolerance granted to the perversity of the Prince of this world. The Crucifixion was the most odious and unpardonable transgression of Satan; this crime put an end to the long-suffering of God concerning him, and, consequently, to his dominion over mankind. The Rabbis habitually designate Satan "the prince of this world," but place the Jews outside his kingdom, while Jesus includes them as well as the heathen therein (chap. viii.) "Out" signifies not only out of his office and power, but chiefly out of the world—his ancient realm—as is shown by the connection of these words with the preceding, and the opposition between vers. 31 and 32. III. THE ACCESSION OF ITS NEW SOVEREIGN. The overthrow coincides with the accession. Jesus declares Himself appointed to fill this part. But, strange to say, it is not upon this earth, whence Satan is cast out, that He will establish His kingdom. He will not become, as the Jews expected, the successor of His adversary, and, consequently, another prince of this world; He, as well as His rival, will leave the earth; He will be raised from it and above it, and in a higher sphere He will draw to Himself His subjects and realize His kingdom. "Lifted up" must be understood here in the same amphibiological sense as at chaps. iii. 14 and viii. 28. His lifting up on the cross, that throne of love, appears to Him as the gloriously ironical emblem of His elevation to the throne of glory. And this comparison is based on a deep truth. For was it not the Cross which created the abyss between Christ and the world (Gal. vi. 14), and rendered the purely heavenly form of the kingdom of God for the present necessary? "From" or "out of the earth" designates an ignominious expulsion from earthly existence by any capital punishment, and cannot refer to the small distance between the ground and the feet of the crucified. It is "lifted up," which refers to the Cross. The Cross and the Ascension united freed Jesus from all earthly ties and national obligations, and placed Him in a position to extend His agency to the whole world (Rom. x. 12). Once raised to heaven, Jesus will draw around Him a new people, strangers to earth, and, like Himself, of a heavenly nature. He will be both the Author and End of this Divine attraction. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *The Cross*:—In the Cross Christ saw a provision for three great objects. By it—I. THE WORLD SHOULD BE JUDGED. God judged our sins in the person of Jesus, visited our guilt upon Him condemned in our place. That is the true measure, as it is the most awful punishment of our guilt. If men sin on they may see, as clearly as if it were come already, their eternal doom. How can a sinner be so deluded as to think he will escape when he sees the Son of God hanging there. Let him look and realize who He was, and then feel, "I am condemned." Thus Christ knew that the Cross would convince men of sin. What the law could not do, what no mercies or judgments of God could do, this would effect, and His heart exulted in the thought that men at last would see that there was no hope for them save in turning to God through Him. II. THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD REJECTED. That being whose empire none else could shake, whose dominion over men's minds and habits none else could destroy, Jesus saw dethroned. God had predicted this. "The seed of the woman," &c. To accomplish this was the end of His coming. "For this purpose is the Son of God manifested," &c. This end is gained when Satan is banished from the human heart. The Cross avails for this—1. By having procured the gift of the Spirit who turns men "from the power of Satan unto God." 2. By furnishing the most powerful motives to turn from sin, inasmuch as it reveals the guilt and danger of sin, and endears believers to the Saviour who died to reconcile them to God, and therefore weans them from sin. 3. By securing powerful help in such a view of the love of God as inspires faith and hope. III. HUMAN SOULS DRAWN TO CHRIST. 1. The means—wondrous, the last, apparently, calculated to serve this purpose. 2. The method—"draw," not compel, by the attraction of love. 3. The object—"all men." Gentiles as well as Jews. 4. The result—"to Me." (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) *The death of Christ and its results*:—I. THE DEATH OF CHRIST. 1. The fact of His death predicted. It was a wonderful thing that *He* should die, for death is the penalty of sin, and He was sinless, and can only take effect on humanity, whereas He was

Divine. 2. The manner of His death described—crucifixion. The mystery thickens. If He must die, surely it should be naturally and peacefully, or if not, gloriously, as a hero, and amidst the blessings of His race. No, He must die as a felon, a death—(1) profoundly humiliating; (2) excruciatingly painful. 3. The nature of His death unfolded. Its manner partly indicates its nature. (1) It was penal. He suffered under Roman and Divine law, but how differently. (2) It was vicarious, since He was innocent. (3) It was expiatory (Isa. liii. 5, 6). II. Its RESULTS. 1. The judgment of the world. (1) What this means. In the Scriptures to judge means to govern. Hence the "Judges." As King and Ruler the Messiah is frequently predicted as Judge. This interpretation agrees with the context. The Son of Man is glorified by being made King of the world; how, therefore, is the world to be judged by being ruled by Him? A new order of Divine administration has been commenced, having for its object the subjection of the world to God. (2) How is this judgment the result of Christ's death? (*a*) It was the promised and richly-merited reward of His death (Isa liii. 10–12; Phil. ii. 5–11). (*b*) It is the necessary means of His carrying into accomplishment the great design of His death, the salvation of His chosen people (John xvii. 2). 2. The expulsion of the prince of this world (John xiv. 30; xvi. 8–11; Eph. ii. 2). (1) Who is he? (*a*) A real personal existence. (*b*) A potentate. (*c*) Exercising dominion over this world. (*d*) But not independently and uncontrolled, but largely as the executioner of Divine justice, and limited in power by the duration of "this world." (2) What is his expulsion? His being cast out—(*a*) From the human heart. (*b*) From the religious and civil institutions he had controlled. (3) How is he cast out? (*a*) Christ bore the penalty of that for which he held men in bondage, and men paid their debt and suffered their punishment in Christ their substitute. (*b*) By the power of the Spirit, by which men can resist the devil and make him flee. 3. This drawing of all men to Christ. (1) What this drawing is. (*a*) All men, without exception, become the subjects of His mediatorial government. (*b*) All men, without distinction, become the objects of the invitations of His gospel. (*c*) All whom the Father has given Him, an innumerable company out of every kindred, &c., are put in possession of the blessings of His salvation. (2) How it is connected with His lifting up. Had not atonement been made there could have been no salvation to offer, or give or receive. Christ's death removed all obstacles to this, and secured the effectual agency of the Spirit. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) **I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.**—*The uplifted Saviour*:—Nothing is more wonderful about Christ than His unfaltering confidence in the boundlessness and perpetuity of His power, especially when we consider the circumstances in which it was expressed and the grounds on which it was based. The assertion before us is that of a fanatic or of a God. I. THE EXTENT OF THE SAVIOUR'S DRAWING. "All men." 1. The meaning of universal terms in Scripture must be determined—(1) By its great acknowledged principles. One of these is the freedom of the will. So the text signifies merely that there is sufficient power in Christ to draw all men; but the melancholy fact is that many "will not come unto Him that they may have life." (2) By the context. Spoken as it was in connection with the visit of the Greeks, the text means that the benefits of Christ's redemption were not restricted to the Jews, but were thrown open to the world. 2. While, however, some shall reach destruction because they *will* choose the broad way, there is a vastly preponderating aggregate who shall be brought to Christ. The drawing commenced with the dying thief. Seven weeks afterwards three thousand were drawn. Then the whole of the Acts furnishes illustrations. Then eighteen centuries of Church history, particularly great movements like Methodism and missions. Finally, the Apocalyptic visions shall be realized. II. WHAT IS THERE IN THE UPLIFTED SAVIOUR SO CALCULATED TO ATTRACT. In Him is disclosed —1. The ground of full and free pardon for the very chief of sinners. This gives hope to the most despairing, who can get rest nowhere else. 2. Ample provision for the purification of sinful hearts. 3. All those qualities calculated to draw the sympathies and aspirations of the renewed heart. (1) The love of truth is satisfied in Him, who is the Truth. (2) The yearning for fellowship is satisfied in His Brotherhood. (3) The sense of right binds us to Him as our Redeemer Sovereign. (4) The desire for spiritual beauty is gratified in Him, who is the altogether lovely. (5) Impulses to serve our brethren are sanctified and empowered by the constraint of His self-sacrificing love. III. THE AGENCY EMPLOYED. 1. The power of Providence or government of the world is committed to the Redeemer for the ingathering and completion of the Church. 2. The Holy Spirit draws hearts to the

Saviour. He is Christ's Witness and Glorifier. "No man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost." For this purpose He abides with the Church for ever. Hence—3. The Church is Christ's visible agency for this great work, which is discharged—(1) By private testimony. (2) Public proclamation. (*J. Graham.*) *Christ lifted up*:—Christ crucified.—I. CHRIST'S GLORY. Because—1. The manifestation of glorious love. 2. The demonstration of glorious fortitude. 3. The completion of glorious work. 4. The achievement of glorious triumph. II. THE MINISTER'S THEME. Christ lifted up, and not—1. Hell and damnation. 2. Mere doctrine. 3. Inoperative morality. 4. Sacred or secular learning. III. THE HEART'S ATTRACTION. Christ draws—1. Like a trumpet attracting men to hear the proclamation. 2. Like a net drawing men out of the sea of sin. 3. With the bands of love. 4. As a standard in the centre of gathering. 5. As a chariot in which souls are drawn to heaven. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Why Christ was lifted up*:—Expression of text used three times to teach that the Son of Man must be lifted up in order—I. TO GIVE A DEMONSTRATION OF HIS DIVINE MANHOOD (chap. vii. 28). 1. Christ proved Himself to be true man by dying as every man dies. 2. He proved Himself to be Divine by dying as no other man ever died. (1) His death unique in its supernatural accompaniment. (2) In its voluntariness. II. TO BRING TO BEAR THE MOST POWERFUL DIVINE ATTRACTION UPON MAN (chap. xii. 32). 1. The strongest bonds of attraction between man and man are love and sympathy. These two are braided together in a twofold cord in Christ crucified. 2. He was lifted up to draw men out of and keep them away from the sins that had kept them from Him. III. TO ACCOMPLISH A DIVINE REDEMPTION FOR MAN (chap. iii. 14). Salvation is absolutely fastened to Christ crucified. 1. Without the shedding of blood is no remission. 2. The Divine imperative "must." (*A. J. Gordon.*) *The great attraction*:—1. Christ's death must have seemed to His apostles an unmitigated misfortune; but He showed them that it was really the most hopeful of all points in His history. 2. The text must be illustrated by doctrines that are concealed in it, and facts with which it is connected. The prince of darkness enticed poor foolish man to his destruction as fish are taken by the bait, birds lured by decoys, barques wrecked by false lights or sucked into the whirlpool. Christ came to produce a counter attraction. But men stood at a distance from their best Friend; but since man does not come of himself, even when he perceives the gracious errand of Jesus, He condescends to attract him, and that by means of the Cross. I. WHAT IS THE ATTRACTION OF JESUS CRUCIFIED? It lies in that which some count its weakness and reproach. Certain preachers have missed all in forgetting this. Socinians have fondly dreamed that His holy life will provide the attraction. Such has not proved to be the case. Nor has the millenial glory of Christ proved attractive; but men have been drawn to the Cross—1. By the disinterested love there manifested. "Scarcely for a righteous man," &c. 2. By the satisfaction there rendered to justice, through which pardon is provided, and may be accepted honourably. 3. By its exact suitability to man's necessities—thirsty, here is living water; naked, here is a robe of righteousness; vile, here is a fountain; lost, here is salvation. 4. By its agonies, the culmination of all previous sorrows. II. IN WHAT DIRECTION DOES THE CROSS ATTRACT. 1. From despair to hope. 2. From fear to faith. 3. From dread to love. 4. From sin to obedience. 5. From self to Jesus. 6. From earth to heaven. III. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALITIES OF THIS POWER. 1. Gentle. 2. Gracious. 3. Wide. 4. Effectual. 5. Present. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Wondrous attraction*:—In the Paris Salon some few years ago there was a bust of the painter Baudry, by Paul Dubois. Mr. E. Gosse was sitting contemplating the bust, when an American gentleman passed, caught sight of it, and, hovering round it for some time, came and sat down by his side and watched it. Presently he turned to Mr. Gosse, inquiring if he could tell him whose it was, and whether it was thought much of, adding, with a charming modesty, "I don't know anything about art; but I found I could not get past that head." Would we could so set forth Christ that His word might be fulfilled! "I, if I be lifted up," &c. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Invisible attraction*:—A little boy was flying a kite, which had soared so high as to be almost out of sight. Seeing him looking so intensely upward, a gentleman asked him what he had there. "A kite, sir," was the boy's reply. "A kite!" said the gentleman; "how can that be, I don't see it?" "Ah! I feel it pulling, sir," was the boy's unanswerable reply. This should be our evidence that our Saviour is above—we should feel Him pulling. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The attractiveness of Christ*:—This subject ought to be attractive. There is the attraction of one dewdrop for

another, as they hang together on the same blade, and, running together, fall from their momentary glory into a common grave. There is the attraction of the flame for the moth, as it flutters and darts around the fatal glow, until at last it falls, wingless and scorched, upon the floor. There is the attraction of the magnet for the particles of matter through which it is passed, in virtue of which it draws some of them to itself, and has no influence upon others. There is the attraction of the moon for the sea, its pale light shining in tremulous bars on the bosom of the melancholy deep, as it rises and falls, like a dark and guilty conscience heaving and sobbing under the ghostly memories of its past misdeeds. And there is the attraction of the sun for all created things within the circle of the worlds that sweep around him as their centre, finding life and gladness in his beams. The latter is the highest and most glorious form in which the principle of attraction displays itself, and it is that which is exerted by the Sun of Righteousness. Christ is the luminous centre and the effulgent source of all vitality and blessing in the universe of souls. (*F. Ferguson, D.D.*) *The attractiveness of the cross*:—There is a moral power in beauty; it elevates the heart of the man who sees it. It is not enough that a man should display the *law* of holiness; he must display the beauty of holiness. There are some whose religion has every quality but one—attractiveness. They are animated by the sincerest motives; they are ruled by the tenderest conscience; they are influenced by the purest desires; yet their religion is withal a weapon in the hand, not a magnet in the heart; it drives, but it does not draw. They are impressed above all things with the power of the Lord, and they would like to display His power; but they do not see that the uppermost garment of the religious life must be the beauty of the Lord. They have not measured the force of the words of the text. The highest power of the Cross is ability to allure—its beauty. The glory of religion lies in the number of things it can attract. (*G. Matheson, B.D.*) *The attractive power of Christ*:—I. THE IMPORTANT EVENT THE TEXT ANTICIPATES. 1. Primarily the Crucifixion (chap. iii. 14–15). 2. Christ's exaltation to the mediatorial throne. 3. The preaching of the gospel, which displays both the Cross and the throne. This comprehends—(1) The recital of the manner of the Redeemer's death. (2) The declaration of the great design of His death. (3) The proclamation of His power to save, with the terms on which He saves. II. THE GRAND PURPOSE THE TEXT REVEALS. 1. The point to which He attracts. "Me." The centre of humanity, toward which all should gravitate. 2. The manner in which He attracts. By Himself, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. But the uplifting is adapted to the end. (1) What is more calculated to arrest attention than the spectacle of such a Sufferer dying for the sake of a sinful world. (2) The view of the Divine character presented is eminently attractive. (3) The felt wants of our nature are here supplied. 3. The scale on which He attracts. "All men." Some resist. Objects are interposed between the magnet and the substance. But Christ attracts men from every race. (*J. Rawlinson.*) *The attractive power of Christ*:—I. Observe HOW UNIVERSALLY OPERATIVE IS THAT MYSTERIOUS LAW BY WHICH MEN ARE DRAWN TO CHRIST. Explain it how we may, Christ is to-day the central figure in the thoughts of the civilized world, and is becoming more and more so. For the past 1800 years interest in Him has been steadily growing. How many volumes it would take, *e.g.*, to present a faithful account of "Christ in Song" since Luke penned the "Overture of the Angels" down to the time when Keble wrote "Sun of my Soul"! Is the world tired of singing about Christ because He has occupied the central field so long? It is a fact of no little interest that Christ is the only Person all nations of the world have ever united to praise in the same forms of speech. Again, it might be shown that Christ occupies the same position through the ages in art and general literature. No one has ever received such tributes from men of genius as Christ, and about no one is the printing-press so busy. II. WHAT IS IT IN MAN THAT IS THUS DRAWN OUT TO CHRIST. With some it is admiration for His character and teachings; with others it is the interest that a reformer awakens; with others a sense of His Divinity. But if we stop here we shall lose sight of the true reason, so well stated by Napoleon. "Jesus alone founded His empire on love, and to this very day millions would die for Him." It is the human heart that is drawn out towards Christ. As we test the power of the magnet by the weight we attach to it, so Satan experiments with the heart of man. Take a typical case—that of Paul. He weighted Paul's heart with worldly allurements; but Paul cried, "What things were gain to me," &c. (Phil. iii. 7): then with persecutions; but Paul said, "I take pleasure in infirmities," &c. (2 Cor. xii. 10): finally with death; but Paul exulted,

"Who shall separate me" (Rom. viii. 35–39). When a bar of soft iron is brought into contact with a powerful magnet it becomes magnetic, and continues so while in contact; but remove it, and its virtue is gone. So the believer, to be attractive, must live near to Christ (chap. xiii. 35). III. WHAT IS IT IN CHRIST THAT HAS SUCH POWER TO KINDLE NEW AFFECTIONS AND SET UP NEW RELATIONS AMONG MEN? Not merely the influence of His life or doctrines, or of the mysterious union of the Divine with the human, but supremely His Cross. And why His Cross we cannot exactly analyze. We cannot explain the mysterious principle that we see operating in the galvanic battery; but there is clearly something, and we call it Magnetism. And the mysterious *something* in the Cross we call Love (2 Cor. v. 15; Jer. xxxi. 3). Here is a love that has at its command the resources of the Godhead. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead," and a perfect sympathy with all human weaknesses (Heb. iv. 15). What wonder that sinners are drawn to such a Saviour. IV. THE MANNER IN WHICH THAT POWER IS BROUGHT TO BEAR UPON MEN. By drawing (Psa. cx. 3; Cant. i. 4; Psa. lxxiii. 28). (*J. G. Lowrie, M.A.*) *The attractive power of the crucified Saviour*:—1. When a man is leading a great religious movement, the worst thing that could usually happen is that he should die. The death of a pastor is often a hindrance to a good work. But here is one great religious Leader who, through death, draws all men to Himself. 2. But if the death of a religious leader is a disgraceful one, what damage his influence suffers—*e.g.*, Dr. Dodd, who was hung for forgery. But behold a wonder! The death of Jesus on a malefactor's cross is the secret of His highest influence. I. THE ATTRACTIVE POWER OF THE CRUCIFIED SAVIOUR. Himself. 1. Some suppose that Christ was lifted up to draw men unto the priests. 2. To draw men to a church might satisfy a religious bigotry. 3. But Christ alone can satisfy their souls. II. HOW THAT POWER IS EXERCISED TO-DAY. There are degrees of drawing. Those who have never heard of Christ are drawn in a sense, for the world is pervaded with His influence. 1. Some say that the force that draws man is light; but men are sometimes driven away by light. They rebel against it, and use the truth to their own detriment. 2. Men are won to Christ by the force of love. Even earthly love is powerful. Swayed by love, what have not mothers done. Jesus' power lay in His irresistable love. 3. By His sufferings. In the old martyr days, what made England Protestant was the death of martyrs. 4. By the instrumentality of other men. Not by ministers only, but by holy life and loving words. III. WHAT IT EVIDENTLY IMPLIES. 1. That men were far off from Christ. The older philosophers taught that men started like a sheet of white paper, and decried original sin. But the newer philosophers tell us that we have inherited all the desires and vices of our animal ancestors. 2. That men would not come to Christ unless He drew them. 3. That if we feel ourselves drawn, the wisest thing for us to do is to yield. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The attractive power of Christ crucified*:—1. Standing alone, these words might be understood to refer to the Ascension. St. Peter twice applies the expression to that event. But St. John explains the text according to our Lord's own meaning in chaps. iii. 14, and xiii. 28. 2. The Apostle has preserved the text for the purpose of enforcing his main theme—the Divinity of Christ—whereas the stress in the other Gospels is on the manhood, although neither side of our Lord's Person is overlooked by either. This general difference culminates in the picture of the Crucifixion. To the Three that is the lowest depth of Christ's humiliation, and their task is to train our sympathies with the perfect Man. But to St. John the cross is not a scaffold but a throne; not defeat but victory; not a repulsion but a world-wide attraction. 3. If Christianity had come from man its chief attraction would not have been placed here, but to Christ on the Mount or beyond the stars. The wisdom of the Teacher, the prowess of the Conqueror, the majesty of the King would have been put forward, and a veil drawn over these dark hours. Instead of this, Christianity boasts of that which to human eyes must have appeared a failure. Twenty years after this prediction St. Paul echoes it, "We preach Christ crucified," and implies that that is the compendium of all Christian doctrine and morality, "I determined," &c. Wherein consists this attraction? In—I. THE MORAL BEAUTY AND STRENGTH OF SELF-SACRIFICE. This fascinates because—1. It requires a moral effort of the highest kind, and commands admiration exactly proportioned to its intensity. 2. It is rare. The mass of men follow self. The majestic power of keeping well in hand the forces that belong to the life of nature is as rare as it is beautiful. As we admire gems and flowers for their rarity as well as for their beauty, so we are drawn to great examples of self-sacrifice. 3. It is fertilizing. It is not unproductive moral beauty or energy run to waste. All the

good done among men is proportioned to the amount of sacrifice employed. To witness sacrifice is to breathe a bracing atmosphere, and to be capable of it is already to be strong. All intense labour, and particularly that which is at the same time unrecognized or discouraged, is sacrifice of a high order. Such has been that of discoverers whose discoveries have been made public after death. Faraday's life was one example of disinterestedness and vast results of sacrificial labour. There are also lives in which sacrifice is pure suffering, undergone for a great cause or truth. The old pagans knew how to appreciate, *e.g.*, the deaths of the three hundred at Thermopylæ. And who that has ever witnessed the welcome a man receives who saves a fellow-creature from a watery grave, or a burning house, can doubt the empire of sacrifice over every class in society. Our Lord said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." That each gift of what is dear to self adds immeasurably to moral capital is a matter of experience. Wealth consists not in the abundance of things external to ourself but in internal possession, in the force and freedom of the will to do good. That is God-like and Christ-like. Christ surrendered long before all that man cares for most, but on the cross He gave His life. Had He come amongst us without this mark, not doctrine, prowess or majesty would have drawn us to Him. II. THE SUFFERINGS ENDURED. 1. Life is made up largely of pain of body or mind. Some have not begun to feel it, but all do before life closes. What account can be given of this empire of pain. (1) It is a punishment—the advertisement that a deeper evil lies beneath. (2) A purification. (3) A preventitive. 2. Still, an abstract doctrine in justification of pain is not sufficient to support us. We need the sympathy of a fellow-sufferer. Now, if Christ had come fenced in among all the comforts of life by a superhuman power, and, after teaching the true theory of pain, had died on a soft bed, He might have been honoured as a great teacher, but would not have drawn all men unto Him. As it is, He is the Universal Sympathizer. "It behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren." Therefore, after a life of varied suffering, He enforces His teaching by a supreme example of an excruciating death. III. THE ATONEMENT HE OFFERED. 1. The prevalence of sacrifice expresses a truth recognized universally by the conscience, viz., that man carries about him that which is offensive to the purity of heaven. The depth of the sense of sin is proportioned to the soul's vision of moral truth, which becomes clearer as the law of God is more clearly revealed. The law affords a standard of duty, but gives no means of realizing it. Would, then, Christ have drawn all men unto Him had He only left the Sermon on the Mount? Nay, they who have felt the reproaches of the Decalogue would have felt more keenly the reproaches of the Beatitudes. 2. Christ draws all men because He alone offers relief to this our deepest need. The Bible describes three forms which a sense of sin takes, and how Christ crucified relieves us from each. (1) It tells man that sin is like a tyrant who keeps him fettered, and then points to Christ as paying down a ransom by His death. (2) It tells us that since God is holy, sin makes God and man at enmity; and that Jesus removes this by an atonement. (3) It insists that sin once committed is not like a vapour which melts away into the sky, but that it leaves a positive load of guilt behind it, and then it points to Jesus as taking this load and offering for it as a propitiation His supreme act of obedience. 3. Faith unites us with the all-sacrificing Christ. Conclusion: 1. The Cross is the one real principle of unity to the human family. 2. To this common centre we are drawn one by one. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The attraction of the Cross*:—This is one of God's paradoxes. Christendom gathers once a year to commemorate and contemplate a brutal public execution. How is this? The Cross is—I. AN ATTRACTION OF ADMIRATION. 1. Who has not felt his heart burn within him as he reads or sees a life given for another? If a man saves his wife or child from a burning house and perishes we have a natural admiration for the sacrifice. If the sacrifice be one all of duty; if the captain remains with the wreck and dies at his post, or still more, if a man die as a martyr the self-devotion demands higher praise. Yet once more, if the life be thus given not in heat and emotion, but with calm reflection when it might have been avoided, the consideration is heightened. 2. Christ attracts in part with the help of admiration. This is the first feeling a man has who contemplates the Cross. We see there, even before reaching the higher ground of the Divinity and Incarnation, an innocent person, the victim of an old-world formalism, the best of men enduring voluntarily the worst of deaths as a condition of giving life to the world. The observer of the Crucifixion desires to penetrate the heart of the Sufferer, and as he passes in review the prayer for the murderers, the gentle answer to the penitent, the tender consignment of His mother to John, what heart can find no affinity of admiration?

For here in its highest form is what men most admire—strength, courage, presence of mind, tenacity of purpose, might of will, and all combined with perfect tenderness, love and sympathy. II. AN ATTRACTION OF FAITH, growing, in due course, out of admiration. The object of the lifting up was no mere exhibition of a superhuman excellence, but the bearing away of sin. The moment you rob the Cross of this, you take out of it the magnetic virtue. As a mere display of heroic courage other deaths have rivalled it; other martyrs have yielded their life: we admire the sacrifice, but it would be a misnomer to say that it draws us to them. Though admiration may draw us towards Him, faith alone can draw us to Him. Put thy trust in that death: it has in it the balm of all sorrow, the satisfaction of all want, the healing of all disease, and the quickening of all death. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The power of the Cross*:—The gospel, with the Cross as its centre, is destined to exert an influence over the whole race. I. WHEREVER IT IS PROCLAIMED IT CREATES A GENERAL INTEREST AND EXERTS A UNIVERSAL INFLUENCE. The fact is as startling as the assertion. Millions of sympathetic hearts cluster round the Cross, of all orders of intellect, all nationalities, &c. Even infidels, in spite of their antipathies, are drawn to the Cross to write lives of Christ. How can we account for this great influence? 1. The life and sufferings of Jesus are in the highest degree expressions of the Divine mind and heart. Nature is full of attractions. It is uphill work to scale the mountain, but the tourist is drawn up by an irresistible influence. We are always ready for another country walk. Man soon gets tired of human productions, but never of the works of God. The Divine alone can capture the spirit of man, and the Cross is the sublimest exhibition of the Divine. 2. Christ's life and sufferings supply a particular craving in the human breast. What an attraction a fountain has for a crowd of thirsty people, and the Cross attracts because there is that in it which alone can quench the thirst of the spirit. The great questions, "How shall a man be just with God?" "How shall conscience be satisfied?" are only answered there. 3. The same life and sufferings have conferred inestimable blessings on mankind. The influence radiating from the Cross has banished superstitions, liberated slaves, promoted peace, good government, &c., and therefore forces the most reluctant to give it a silent tribute of respect. II. THE SPECIAL INFLUENCE OF THE CROSS IS THE SALVATION OF OUR SOULS. Some lives are more effective at a distance; but the nearer we come to Christ the better. Thousands are near enough to the Cross to be touched by its influence, but not its transforming power. There is here—1. A sacrifice for sin. The Cross is the power which draws us to God for reconciliation. 2. Sanctification from sin—"Whereby the world is crucified unto Me." 3. Elevation above sin "Unto *Me*." (*T. Davies, Ph.D.*) *The attraction of the Cross* (Missionary Sermon):—The text presents us with—I. THE GREAT OBJECT OF MISSIONARY ZEAL. Such an object associates our cause with—1. The design of the Son of God in redemption, the salvation of the human soul. 2. The ultimate end of all Providential arrangements. Providence is the direction of all human events with reference to the kingdom of Christ. 3. The best interests of the human race. If we succeed in drawing men to Christ we save their souls from death, and provide them with a blissful eternity; besides which religion is a civilizing process, and has the promise of the life that now is. II. THE GRAND INSTRUMENT OF MISSIONARY EXERTIONS—the doctrine of the Cross. We see something resembling the splendid fable of Constantine's conversion—"By this conquer." We preach a true crusade whose object is not the recovery of the holy sepulchre, but the setting forth of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, and whose weapons are not carnal but spiritual. 1. What is included in the doctrine of the Cross. (1) The manner of Christ's death—agonizing, ignominious. (2) The design of Christ's death, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation." (3) The Divinity of Christ's Person as constituting the value of His satisfaction. While the hope of a guilty world can rest nowhere but on an atonement, that in its turn can be supported by nothing short of the Rock of Ages. (4) The gratuitous manner in which its blessings are bestowed: "by faith that it might be by grace." (5) Its moral tendency and design as respects the heart and conduct of those by whom it is received. "I am crucified with Christ." 2. The various powers of attraction which the doctrine of the Cross exerts. (1) The stupendous fact arrests and fixes the attention. The whole fabric of Christianity, both as to doctrines and duties, is founded on a fact; and that fact, drawn out into details more touching and tender than can be found in any history or romance. Conceive the effect upon pagans, conversant with nothing but the puerilities of a barbarous state, who heard for the first time of the death of the Son of God. (2) As an

exhibition of unparalleled love, it melts and captivates the heart. John calls it the manifestation of love, as if nothing more now remained to be known of love in any age or world; St. Paul speaks of it as the commendation of love, as if nothing more could now ever be said upon the subject; and Christ uses the remarkable emphasis, "God *so* loved," &c. There is a mighty power in love, and the heart which wraps itself up in the covering of a stubborn and reckless despair against the attacks of severity, like the flower which closes at the approach of the angry blast, will put forth all the better parts of its nature to the smiles of love, like the tendrils of the sea anemone when it feels the first wave of the returning tide upon its native rock. (3) As a system of mediation, it allays the fears of a guilty conscience, and draws the soul into confidence in God. The idea of retributive justice seems far more easily deducible by the sinner from the light of nature, than that of mercy. What is the meaning of all those bloody sacrifices? But the Cross puts an authorized and perfect satisfaction to justice in the sinner's hand. (4) By admitting an individual appropriation of its benefits, it appeals to all the feelings of self-regard and personal interest. It is the glory of the gospel that, while it makes ample provision for the world, it lays its blessings at the feet of every individual. (5) By the suitableness and certainty of its blessings, it awakens hope and establishes faith. Are we guilty, here is pardon; rebels, here is reconciliation; unholy, here is sanctification; agitated, here is peace for a wounded spirit; without knowledge of or hope for the future, here is life and immortality. 3. The effects which the doctrine of the Cross has produced. (1) In Judaism, at the metropolis, and in heathen lands. (2) In heathenism at Antioch, Corinth, Athens, and more recently in India, &c. III. THE FIRST CONSUMMATION OF MISSIONARY SUCCESS. 1. Review the present results of missionary zeal. 2. Forecast its future triumph. (*J. Angell James.*) *The attraction of the Cross*:—The Crucifixion furnished a significant type of the influence which the Cross would exert. Witnessing that spectacle were all classes of men. In the Roman centurion behold a representative of the intellectual and sceptical convinced, saying, "This is the Son of God." In the multitude remark the careless and thoughtless roused and agitated, "smiting heavily on their breasts." In the thief see the power of the Cross to stir and still the guilty clamour within. Whatever the intellect of man there is an argument in the Cross to convince him; whatever his heedlessness there is an energy in the Cross to rouse him; whatever his guilt there is a magnetism to draw, a magic to change, and a mystery to save him. (*R. Fuller, D.D.*) *Christ the Great Magnet*:—When I was a student at Princeton, Professor Henry had so constructed a huge bar of iron, bent into the form of a horseshoe, that it used to hang suspended from another iron bar above it. Not only did it hang there, but it upheld four thousand pounds weight attached to it! That horseshoe magnet was not welded or glued to the metal above it; but through the iron wire coiled round it there ran a subtle current of electricity from a galvanic battery. Stop the flow of the current one instant, and the huge horseshoe dropped. So does all the lifting power of a Christian come from the currents of spiritual influence which flow into his heart from the living Jesus. The strength of the Almighty One enters into the believer. If his connection with Christ is cut off, in an instant he becomes as weak as any other man. (*T. L. Cuyler.*) *The great attraction*:—Our world has two forces: it has one tendency to run off at a tangent from its orbit; but the sun draws it by a centripetal power, and attracts it to itself, and so between the two forces it is kept in a perpetual circle. Oh, Christian! thou wilt never walk aright, and keep in the orbit of truth, if it be not for the influence of Christ perpetually attracting thee to the centre. Thou feelest (and if thou dost not feel always, it is still there)—thou feelest an attraction between thine heart and Christ; and Christ is perpetually drawing thee to Himself, to His likeness, to His character, to His love, to His bosom, and in that way thou art kept from thy natural tendency to fly off, and to be lost in the wide fields of sin. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The moral attraction and separation of the Cross*:—He was lifted up, that He might draw all men unto Him by drawing them out of, and away from, the sins that had put them so far off from Him. The sun, lifted into the meridian heavens, draws through its far-reaching beams from ten thousand lakes, and rivers, and oceans. But there is separation as well as attraction. Here a crystal drop is lifted from a muddy pool, but with no trace of impurity remaining in it; and there another drop is drawn from the Dead Sea waters, but with no taint of the acrid salts left in it. There is attraction and separation in one process. So, the beams of love from Christ's Cross fall upon this sinful world, and draw men to Him. Not alone to win you to Himself did Jesus die; but also to win you away

for ever from the sins that have held you in the bondage of corruption. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." (*A. T. Gordon.*) *The universality of Christ's attraction and resistance to it*:—The image, which most naturally suggests itself to the mind on reading the declaration, is that of the loadstone attracting on all sides the iron to itself. But this is a defective image; the loadstone draws only one kind of substance; Christ declares that He will draw all men, however diverse their character. Some of the ancient philosophers, observing the attractive power of the earth, by which various bodies are made to fall towards its surface, inclined to the opinion that the earth itself was one huge loadstone. Sir Isaac Newton fairly argued that the earth attracts a feather as much as a piece of iron; whereas the loadstone attracts only iron, and he therefore contended there could be nothing analogous between the loadstone and the earth. Now it will follow from this, that Christ must be thought of as having the properties of the earth rather than of the loadstone. Some bodies indeed are so light that they float in the air, but this is not because the earth attracts them not, but simply because the air resists their descent. If there were no air, the tiniest leaf would fall as rapidly as a mass of lead. And here we cannot but observe a beautiful analogy. Only a few are actually drawn to Christ, the great mass of men continue at a distance. But Christ, like the earth, attracts all—though, as with the earth, all come not to Him. Why, then, are not all literally drawn unto Him? Oh! just because there is a carnal atmosphere round them, which neutralizes, as it were, the attractive power; and thousands float in it, who, if it were destroyed, would rush eagerly to Jesus as their centre. So that in these respects the earth, though not the loadstone, is the exact emblem of Christ; there is attractive virtue enough in each case to draw all; but in each case there is also a resisting medium which prevents the lighter bodies from descending. And it is possible, that this is something more than imagery, and ought to be received as interpretation. It is clear that the fact of one substance drawing another does not depend on the two being actually brought into contact. The earth draws the feather as much as it draws the lead; yet the feather falls not, and the lead rushes. Thus with Christ: it is not that He did not die for all; it is not that He does not love all; it is not that He does not invite all; and therefore we cannot be warranted in saying that He does not draw all—just as the earth draws all. But the feather of the unstable and worldly mind descends not, whilst the lead of the weary and heavy-laden spirit approaches Him rapidly. All are drawn; but one is inflated with vanity, and therefore floats; another is burdened with sin, and therefore falls. So that by illustration, at least, if not by argument, we make out that Christ might say of Himself that He would draw all, and yet know that all would not come to Him for life. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The mighty magnet*:—The attraction of gravitation is an invisible force, whose centre is the sun. This natural force illustrates the attractive power of the Cross. The Cross attracts—I. By Its exhibition of justice (Rom. iii. 25). 1. Violated law demands the punishment of the guilty. This principle is inherent in man's conscience. There is a distinction between chastisement and punishment. The one originates in love, and its end is the good of the offender; the other originates in justice, and its end is the maintenance of the majesty of law. 2. The Cross of Christ satisfies the demand of conscience for justice. Christ is "the propitiation for our sins" (2 John ii. 2). (1) The sufferings of Christ were penal. He bore our sins (Isa. liii. 4–6). He was "made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13). "God made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21). (2) The sufferings of Christ were vicarious (1 Cor. xv. 3). (3) All the difficulties of this truth find their practical solution in the union of the believer with Christ (Heb. x. 22). II. By its exhibition of love. 1. It has its origin in love (1 John iii. 16). 2. It reconciles the attributes of God. The substitution of Christ for sinners is not a mere arbitrary interference (Psa. lxxxv. 10). 3. The sacrifice of the Cross was voluntary, and in accordance with a covenant arrangement between the Father and the Son (chap. x. 17, 18). III. This exhibition of love and justice in the Cross of Christ is the mighty magnet of the spiritual world. 1. The power which draws near to the Cross is the work of the Holy Spirit (chap xvi. 8–11). 2. There is no passion, affection, or desire of the human heart which the Holy Spirit cannot subdue by the Cross. 3. The attractive power of the Cross, through the influences of the Holy Spirit, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. (*Homiletic Review.*) *Christ drawing all*:—Note: I. Christ's sublime confidence. He knew that the triumphal procession to Jerusalem was but a funeral march. The Church has had many moments of despair since then, but never one like that. There is much

to weary and depress in the slow progress of the Church, yet how much brighter is our outlook than His. Yet He never faltered. And He is standing in the midst of His waiting Church to-day, sure of Himself, and of His truth and His destiny. II. THE CONDITION OF VICTORY "lifted up." Eighteen hundred years were needed to explain this—lifted up out of the passions of men, their prejudices, errors, misconceptions, sins—He was so far above His age that it has taken eighteen centuries of moral growth to enable men to partially understand Him. By and by the world will see the King in His beauty, and then this promise will be fulfilled. III. THE TRUE CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S POWER—"draw." It is the magic attraction of Divine beauty, and not the compulsion of Divine terrors. He would have no slaves, but free men. He disdained to entice men by the bribes of this world or the next. He had faith in human nature, and laid hold of its aspirations with His love. IV. THE VAST KINGDOM OVER WHICH CHRIST WILL REIGN—"all men." The text lies parallel to Christ's prophecy of one fold and one shepherd, and the apostles' anticipation of the complete victory Christ will win when He shall put all things under His feet. (*J. G. Greenhough, M.A.*) *Christ drawing, not dragging*:—The words *σύρω* and *ἑλκύω* differ. In *σύρειν*, as in our "drag," there lies always the notion of force, *e.g.*, the headlong course of a river; and it will follow, that where persons, and not merely things, are in question, *σύρειν* will involve the notion of violence (Acts viii. 3; xiv. 19; xvii. 6). But in *ἑλκύειν* this notion does not of necessity lie. It may be there (Acts xvi. 19; xxi. 30; James ii. 6), but not of necessity, any more than in our "draw," which we use of a mental and moral attraction, or in the Latin *traho*. Only by keeping in mind this difference can we vindicate from erroneous interpretation this doctrinally important passage. The word here is *ἑλκύσω*. But how does a crucified, and thus an exalted, Saviour draw all men unto Him? Not by force, for the will is incapable of force, but by the Divine attraction of His love. Again (chap. vi. 44) "Father which hath sent Me draw him" (*ἑλκύσῃ αὐτόν*). Now, as many as feel bound to deny any *gratia irresistibilis*, which turns man into a mere machine, and by which, willing or unwilling, he is dragged to God, must at once assert that this *ἑλκύσῃ* can mean no more than the potent allurements, the allective force of love, the attracting of men by the Father to the Son; compare Jer. xxxi. 3 (*εἵλκυσα σε*), and Cant i. 3, 4. Did we find *σύρειν* on either of these occasions (not that I can conceive this possible), the assertors of a *gratia irresistibilis*, might then urge the declarations of our Lord as leaving no room for any other meaning but theirs; but not as they now stand. In agreement with all this, in *ἑλκύειν* is predominantly the sense of a drawing to a certain point, in *σύρειν* merely of dragging after one. Thus Lucian likens a man to a fish already hooked and dragged through the water. Not seldom there will lie in *συρειν* the notion of this dragging being on the ground, inasmuch as that will trail upon the ground (Isa. iii. 16), which is forcibly dragged along with no will of its own: as for example, a dead body. We may compare John xxi. 6, 11, with ver. 8 of the same chapter, in proof of what has just been asserted. At ver. 6 and 11 *ἑλκύειν* is used: for there a drawing of the net to a certain point is intended: by the disciples to themselves in the ship, by Peter to himself upon the shore. But at ver. 8, *ἑλκύειν* gives place to *σύρειν*, for nothing is there intended but the dragging of the net, which had been fastened to the ship, after it through the water. (*Abp. Trench.*) *The power of Christ's death*:—I. THE MANIFESTATION OF THE POWER OF CHRIST'S DEATH. 1. Evidences of this power are to be found in the national and social life of countries wherever His death has been proclaimed. Is it not marvellous that an obscure teacher, who spent but a few years in making known His doctrines to a despised people, and was so despised by them that they put Him to death, should draw to Him the steadfast gaze of all who have heard His name? 2. Within the broad circle of popular homage to Christ, there is the narrower one containing those who are personally attached to Him. He who was despised and crucified is loved by millions with an ardour that death cannot quench. 3. Whatever may now be the power of Christ's death, it will be greater still. "Every knee shall bow" to Him. The fulness of the promise is not yet realized; but because the stream of homage has daily risen higher, the hope is kindled that the whole family of man will be gathered into the household of God. 4. But if this hope be not realized, in yet another sense all men will be drawn to Christ. "When He cometh with clouds every eye shall see Him." II. WHENCE COMES THIS ATTRACTIVE POWER? 1. Christ's death is significant, because in it He triumphed over the prince of this world (ver. 31). He shook the kingdom of evil to its foundation, and gave to all the power to become the sons of God. So men are drawn to Him

as their Deliverer. 2. Christ's death exemplifies the highest form of self-sacrifice, and declares with greatest emphasis the love of God. The world knows of no greater forces than love and self-sacrifice. 3. Christ's death is the ground of the impartation of spiritual life (ver. 24). (*F. Carter.*) *The centripetal power of Christ overcoming the centrifugal attraction of sin*:—I. MAN THE WANDERER. The centrifugal influence of sin has been felt not only by devils, but by men. It has so separated man from God that he has neither the disposition nor the ability to return. 1. Cain-like he has gone out from the presence of God. 2. Prodigal-like he has gone into a far country. 3. Pharoah-like he has asked, "Who is the Lord that I should serve Him?" 4. Eve-like he has been seduced from his allegiance. II. CHRIST THE RESTORER. A Divine Person, one representative and a substitute. 1. He has provided for our restoration by the Cross. He was lifted up in the very heart of Satan's kingdom. In the midst of fiery-flying serpents He heals our diseases and restores us to our place of duty in His kingdom. 2. From earth to heaven. "Led captivity captive." "A highway shall be there." "I am the Way." Thus only is the wandering star brought back to its orbit by the attraction of the Sun of Righteousness. III. THE BLESSINGS THUS SECURED. 1. Man is freed from sin; its guilt, pollution, love, power, alienation, and curse. 2. Mammon is no longer His Master. As the greater fire extinguishes the less, so the love of Christ puts out the love of Mammon. 3. He is drawn to Christ. This first; to Church and ordinances after. Union is followed by communion. Being like Him, we shall spend eternity with Him. IV. APPLICATION. Men by nature are drawn by sin to hell; they must by grace be drawn from sin to heaven. Which power controls you, the centrifugal or the centripetal? The one will land you in the zenith of glory; the other sink you in the nadir of despair. (*Homiletic Review.*) *Christ's kingdom*:—I. THE OBJECT OF CHRIST WAS TO DRAW ALL MEN UNTO HIM. The opposition in which He sets Himself to the prince of this world (ver. 31) shows us that by drawing He means attracting as a king attracts to his name, claims, standard, person. Note some of the characteristics of this kingdom. 1. It is a kingdom; a community of men under one Head. Those who are attracted to Christ are formed into one solid body or community. Being drawn to Christ, we enter into fellowship with all the good who are labouring in the cause of humanity. Every man out of Christ is an isolated individual. 2. It is a universal kingdom—"all men." The idea of universal monarchy has visited the great minds of our race. But an effectual instrument has ever been wanting. Christ turns this grandest dream into a rational hope. He appeals to what is universally present in human nature, and there is that in Him which every man needs. He does not say that His kingdom will be quickly formed. If it has taken a million ages for the rocks to knit and form for us a standing ground and a dwelling place, we must not expect that this kingdom, which is to be the one enduring result of this world's history, and which can be built up only of thoroughly convinced men, and of generations slowly weeded of traditional prejudices and customs, can be completed in a few years. 3. Being universal it is necessarily inward. What is common to all men lies deepest in each. Christ knew what was in man, and knew also that He could sway all that was in man. This He would do by the simple moral process of drawing. It is by inward conviction, not outward compulsion, men are to become His subjects. And because Christ's rule is inward, it is therefore of universal application. The inmost choice being governed by Christ, all conduct is governed by Christ. The kingdom of Christ claims all human life as its own. If the statesman is a Christian, it will be seen in his policy; if the poet, his song will betray it, &c. Christianity does not mean churches, creeds, Bibles, but the Spirit of Christ. It is the most portable and flexible of all religions, and therefore the most persuasive and dominant in the life of its adherent. II. THE CONDITION OF HIS ATTAINING IT. Not His remarkable life, but His shameful death. Wherein then consists the superiority of the latter as a constraining force? 1. Because it presents in a dramatic and compact manner the devotedness which is diffused through every part of the life, and was the culmination and seal of the life. 2. Because Christ was the representative of God, and His death the last syllable of the utterance of God's great love for man. It draws us because the very heart of God is laid bare to us. It is this which is special to the death of Christ, and separates it from all other deaths. Nothing could be more noble or pathetic than the way in which Roman after Roman met His death. But beyond respectful admiration they win from us no further sentiment; they have no connection with us. But Christ's death concerns all men, and the result of our contemplation of it

is not that we admire, but are drawn into new relations with Him whom that death reveals. (*Marcus Dods, D.D.*) *A lesson for preachers and churches*:—"You have," said the Hon. and Rev. W. B. Cadogan, to a young clergyman, "but one thing to do; exalt Jesus, and the promise is, 'I will draw all men unto Me.'" The Moravians laboured in Greenland for a number of years with no apparent fruit. When they spoke to the savages of the being and attributes of God—of the sin of man—of the necessity of an atonement—of the evil of sin—of the excellence of holiness—of the glories of heaven, or of the horrors of hell—their hearers talked of seal-catching, and said they did not understand these things. But, on one of the missionaries one day describing to them, with unusual minuteness, the sufferings and death of Christ, one of the savages suddenly stepped forward, and said, "How was that? Tell me it once more. I also would fain be saved." This amazed and delighted the missionaries, and led them to adopt a new method with their pagan disciples. They preached the Cross. They held up Jesus, lifted up from the earth, and virtue came forth from Him. The poor brutalized Greenlanders were interested; their dark understandings were enlightened; their stubborn hearts melted; in a word, they were drawn to Christ; the Spirit wielded resistlessly His favourite instrument—the Cross. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *Nothing but the Cross "draws" for any length of time*:—Take Unitarianism, for instance, Christianity with the Cross left out, the Gospel with the Atonement struck off. What is the result? It does not "draw." One of the leaders of English Unitarianism declared publicly in Birmingham the other day that Unitarianism failed to "draw." The English public will not attend their chapels. That is just what Christ foresaw. He knew that nought save His Cross would serve to draw men. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw." It is not His character, though spotlessly white, not His teaching, though sublimely pure, not His person, though mysteriously Divine, but His Cross that is the centre of the world's attraction. The popularity as well as the efficacy of Christianity is mainly dependent on the Cross. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*)

Vers. 34-36. **We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever.**—*Misunderstandings and explanations*:—I. MISUNDERSTANDINGS (ver. 34). They considered perhaps that Psa. cx. 4; Isa. ix. 7; Dan. vii. 13 referred to Christ. Their question would be, therefore, "If Thou art to die, how canst Thou be the Messiah? We know who the Son of Man in the Old Testament is; but who is *this* Son of Man?" Men have always misunderstood the Cross. It is foolishness to the Greek, &c. 1. Some now speak of the Cross as a means of appeasing the wrath of the Almighty. 2. Some as a transaction that will purchase souls. 3. Some as the procuring cause of God's love. 4. Whereas it is the effect, demonstration, channel of God's love for man. II. EXPLANATIONS. Christ does not explain the difficulty by logical disquisition, but by exhorting them to practice holiness (ver. 35). It is the pure heart, not the logical understanding, that solves the problems of Christianity. Christ urges the spirit of holiness on three considerations. 1. Their possession a special advantage. They had the light with them. From Christ's presence, words, deeds, holiness beamed brightly on them. They were moving in the rays of the highest moral excellence. 2. Their special advantage was only temporary—"Yet a little while." A few days more and their moral sun would be set. Man's opportunities for spiritual improvement are very transcient. 3. The departure of their special advantage would expose them to danger—"He that walketh in darkness," &c. To walk on in moral darkness to the great eternity, how dismal and dangerous! 4. The right use of their advantage would fill them with light (ver. 36). Trust in Christ will fill the soul with Divine illumination. "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **Who is this Son of Man?**—*The Son of Man*:—This question of utter bewilderment negatives the supposition that it was equivalent to the Messiah. The two names do not cover the same ground; for our Lord avoided the one and habitually used the other. The name is found on no other lips, and no man applied it to Christ but Stephen. The two apparent instances in which it occurs—in Revelation—probably read *a*, not *the* Son of Man. It has been supposed to be taken from Daniel. No doubt there is a connection, but the Prophet speaks of "one *like a* Son of Man," in contradistinction to the bestial forms. What, then, is the force of the name? I. CHRIST THEREBY IDENTIFIES HIMSELF WITH US. 1. The name declares the fact of the Incarnation and the reality and fulness of His humanity. It is employed where special emphasis is to be placed on our Lord's manhood. (1) As, *e.g.*, when He would bring into view the depth of His humiliation—"Foxes have holes," &c. "Not merely am I

individually homeless, but I am so because I am truly a Man, the only creature who builds houses, and the only creature that has not a home. Foxes can rest anywhere; any bough will do for birds; I, as the representative of humanity, wander a pilgrim." We are all restless and homeless: the creatures correspond to their environment. We have desires and needs that wander through eternity; our Representative "hath not where to lay His head." (2) When He would emphasize the completeness of His participation in our conditions. "The Son of Man came eating and drinking"—having ordinary dependence on external things: nor unwilling to taste whatever gladnesses may be found in man's path through the supply of natural appetites. (3) When He would emphasize this manhood as having truly taken upon itself the whole weight and weariness of man's sin. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto," &c. 2. All these instances suggest to us—(1) How truly and blessedly He is "bone of our bone" &c. All our joys, sorrows, wants were His. The Son of Man is our Brother and Example. (2) Is it not beautiful that this name, which emphasizes humiliation, and weakness, and likeness to ourselves, should be always on His lips. Just as if some teacher who went away into savage life might adopt some barbarous designation and say, "That is my name now." II. CHRIST THEREBY DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF FROM US, and plainly claims an unique relationship to the whole world. How absurd it would be for one of us to perpetually insist on the fact that He was a man, and the very frequency and emphasis with which the name comes from our Lord's lips lead one to suspect that there is something behind it. The impression is confirmed by the article *the*. 1. Appropriately, then, the name is used with suggestions of authority and dignity, contrasting with those of humiliation. "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath," "hath power on earth to forgive sins," &c. And it is significant that the designation occurs more frequently in the first three Gospels than in the fourth, which is alleged to present higher notions of Jesus. In substance Christ claims, what Paul claimed for Him, to be the Second Adam. "Aristotle is but the rubbish of an Adam," and Adam is but the dim outline sketch of a Jesus. The one man as God meant him, the perfect humanity, is He who claimed that for Himself, and as He did so said, "I am meek and lowly of heart." "Who is this Son of Man?" A perfect Son of Man must be more than a Son of man—"the Christ the Son of the living God." 2. The name is employed in connections in which He desires to set Himself forth as the solitary medium of all blessing to mankind—"The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many," "the angels of God ascending and descending," &c.,—the Medium of all communication between earth and heaven. He who is perfect manhood touches all men, and all men touch Him, and the Son of Man whom God hath sealed will give to every one of us bread from heaven. III. THE PREDICTIVE CHARACTER OF THIS DESIGNATION. If not a quotation from it is an allusion to the prophecy of Daniel. Hence we find the name occurring in passages which refer to Christ's second coming—"Hereafter ye shall see," &c. "He hath given Him authority," &c. "Standing at the right hand of God." 1. The name carries with it a blessed message of the present activity and perpetual manhood of the risen Lord. Stephen does not see Him sitting, but standing, as if He had sprung to His feet on response to the cry of faith from the first of a long train of sufferers. He is the ever-present Helper. 2. That perfect manhood will be our Judge. It could not end its relationship on the cross or at the Ascension. That He should come again is the only possible completion of His work. That Judge is our Brother. So in the deepest sense we are tried by our Peer. With the omniscience of Divinity will be blended the sympathy of humanity. Conclusion: Let us lay hold by true faith on the mighty work which He has done on the cross, then we shall rejoice to see our Brother on the throne. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **Yet a little while is the light with you.**—*Light and its little while*:—I. THE LIGHT. Light is that which reveals, as darkness hides. Christ is the Light: He reveals the Father, the Father's love and righteousness, and all the riches of His grace; and we, opening our eyes to take in this light, are thereby enlightened. II. THE LIGHT WITH US. The first gleam came in the first promise. After that the rays multiplied. Then the Light came and remained here for thirty-three years. It is still, though impersonally, with us; and it will be yet more gloriously so when Christ comes again. We may withdraw from it, but it never withdraws from us. We may shut our eyes and our windows, but the light still shineth—not starlight or moonlight, but sunlight. "The darkness comprehendeth it not." Oh dark world, child of darkness, when wilt thou let in the light. III. THE LITTLE WHILE OF THE LIGHT. Our Lord's personal presence. There are other little whiles. Israel had hers; the

Churches have had or are having theirs; so with nations, congregations, souls. A little while of Sabbaths, sermons, sacraments, providences, and all is done. Then the light departs, and its little while for thee may be near. Improve it. Jesus is coming, but with darkness to the despisers of the light. IV. THE USING OF THE LIGHT. "Walking" is equivalent to the whole of a man's life. Our Lord's meaning is "Use this light for whatever you do." 1. Believe in the light, and in no other. The light of reason, literature, science will do nothing for the soul. At best they are but starlight, clear but cold, distinct but distant. God proclaims His testimony concerning this light, and it wants admission. 2. Become children of the light. He into whom it enters becomes a child of light, and a light to others. V. THE REFUSAL TO USE THE LIGHT—by neglect, delay, hatred, rejection. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *Too late*:—A man who would enjoy the pleasures of this world said it was too soon for him to think of another world. He journeyed, and was taken ill very suddenly, and in the middle of the night, at an inn. The people there sent for a clergyman. He came; and the dying man, looking him in the face, before he could speak, said to him, "Sir, it is too late!" The minister said, "Christ is able to save to the uttermost," and explained the gospel to him. He replied, "Sir, it is too late!" The clergyman asked, "Will you allow me to pray with you?" His only reply was, "Sir, it is too late!" He died, saying, "It is too late!" (*Arvine.*) *The similitude of the light.*—I. A GRACIOUS PRIVILEGE. "While," or "as ye have," &c. 1. Great. A day without light, a world without the sun, expressive but faint emblems of a soul without spiritual illumination, of humanity without Christ. 2. Present. The world was never without it, but only since the Incarnation has it attained to meridian splendour. 3. Temporary. It is not permanent to us any more than it was to the Jews, or than the natural light is to any. II. A SOLEMN DUTY. "Believe in the light." 1. Plain. Christ's language neither vague nor ambiguous. 2. Easy. It is not work or suffer for, but only believe, trust, walk in the light. 3. Continuous. It is not one act of faith and then all is done. "Walk" implies continuance and progress. III. A GLORIOUS RESULT—"That ye may become," &c. 1. Magnificent. The light, for man, can illuminate his understanding, purify his heart, quicken his conscience, vitalize his spirit, direct his conduct, beautify and dignify His whole life. It can put Him in direct contact with and assimilate him to Him who is the Light. 2. Designed. This it does not unexpectedly or accidentally, but purposely and necessarily. 3. Certain. He who walks in the light will as certainly be transfigured by it as the flower is transformed into a spectacle of beauty by the beams of the sun. Lessons—1. Thankfulness to Him who hath furnished the light. 2. Watchfulness lest the light should pass away unimproved. 3. Hopefulness with respect to the future of those who believe on the Saviour. 4. Pitifulness for the fate of those who still walk in darkness. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The gospel of light*:—The gospel is "light." This marks its origin from heaven. It is no human device, but comes from God Himself. It is "light." This denotes its truth. It is fitting that what is truth, without mixture of error, should be compared to the most simple substance in nature. It is called "light" because of its penetrating and subtle nature. Kindle it up, and no shade is so gross that it cannot penetrate it; there is no imposture so well devised which it will not expose; there are no works of darkness which it will not drag to light and shame; there is no conscience so callous but this light will search it. It is called "light," because of the discoveries which it makes. It is a "great light." It makes manifest the invisible God, in His awful and mild glories. It shows Him in His works, His providence, and His grace; it opens to view the path of peace which has been so long lost; it presents the model and the promises of holiness; displays the connection between the present state of probation and eternity; it plays round the darkness of the tomb, and illuminates the mansion of the grave with hope of a resurrection; it makes the future start to sight, and is both "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." But it is called "light" for another reason. It is life and health to the world; it shows us "the Sun of Righteousness," rising with "healing in His wings." The comparison is made to the parent bird, warming her young to life, and giving health and strength by brooding over them. Such is the sun to nature. It warms to life, purges the atmosphere of its vapours, and renews the health of the world. Such is the light of the gospel. Where it prevails, spiritual life is inspired, and the moral disorders of the soul give place to health and vigour. (*R. Watson.*) *Children of light*:—I. LIGHT is the symbol of —1. God the Father (1 John i. 5). He is the Medium through which all spiritual things are discerned. It is only in God, as light, that we can see God or have any

notion of Him. The old pervasiveness of light, too, is an apt emblem of omnipresence. 2. Christ Himself (chap. i. 4). He is the Light of God to man in a state of darkness. Without Him we cannot know God, ourselves, or the relations between the two. 3. The written Word (Psa. cxix. 105). The fact of our receiving the light in any of these senses throws upon us a vast amount of responsibility. II. BELIEVE IN THE LIGHT. Not believe it, or about it, or reason about it, but believe so as to participate in it. Of what use is it for man to believe in the fact of the sun, or in some theory about it, or to reason about its effects, especially if he is charged with some mission which requires its light, if he persists in keeping his shutters closed. Yet how many there are who, requiring the Light of the World to illuminate their path to heaven, content themselves with mere orthodox views about Him. Numbers are more ready to argue about the Divinity of Christ than to say with adoring trust, "*My* Lord and *my* God." Numbers more are content with acknowledging God's claims and the reasonableness of Bible precepts who never think of fulfilling the one or walking by the other. III. CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT means more than being enlightened. "Children" implies parentage, propagating power. Light produces light, and by believing in Him who is the Light we become light in the Lord. And if light as applied to God sets forth His perfections, the enjoyment of that light means the perpetration in us of holiness, truthfulness, &c. (*G. Fisk, LL.B.*) *Gospel light*:—I. THERE ARE SEVERAL KINDS OF LIGHT WHICH YET FALL SHORT OF THE GOSPEL, and leave a man in fatal obscurity. As—1. The light of nature. 2. There is the light of infidel philosophy. This is full of self-importance and swelling pride. 3. There is the light of enthusiasm. This is a sort of wild-fire, it blazes as straw, bewilders the mind, and produces an obstinacy not easily eradicated. 4. But Christ is the "Light of Life." That which is pure, unadulterated, and unchangeable. This blessed light centres in Christ, and emanates from Him. Jesus Christ neglected—disregarded—undervalued, must give the death-wound to a man's brightest hopes, and his best felicity (see 1 Cor. xvi. 22). II. THE DARKNESS OF THE HEART IS MADE EVIDENT BY SOME CERTAIN SYMPTOMS. 1. Gross ignorance; a mind perfectly uninformed. The Sadducees did not know the Scriptures nor the power of God. 2. A heart inflated with vanity, and puffed up with its own consequence. Some of the Corinthians were thus puffed up. If they had a little light, they had much darkness. 3. Self-righteousness and self-sufficiency are evidences of positive darkness dwelling within (see Rom. x. 3, 4; Matt. xxiii.). Affected royalty in a lunatic provokes a smile, but self-righteousness in a sinner ought to produce astonishment and grief. III. THE WAY TO BE SECURE IS TO TAKE HEED. To look well within and wisely around. We must guard against pride, the operations of which preclude the entrance of truth, as the gay colouring of cathedral windows excludes the common light of day. We must guard against prepossessions and prejudice. These often operate upon the mind greatly to a man's disadvantage. Prejudice will turn that which is beautiful into deformity, and then reject it. Beware of two great evils, negligence and unbelief. Negligence (see Heb. vi. 12; Prov. xix. 15). Unbelief (see Heb. iii. 12–19). Do not resist conviction, do not shut out the light. 1. Let the infidel take heed lest his boasted light terminate in a worse than Egyptian darkness. 2. Let the proud, self-righteous Pharisee come down from the pinnacle of his elevation, and seek both light and life in Jesus Christ. 3. Let the profane sinner, venturesome as he now is, look out in time; go to Jesus Christ the Sun of righteousness, in time. IV. MENTAL DARKNESS, THAT OF THE UNDERSTANDING, IS THE WORST KIND OF DARKNESS. It produces enmity to the truth of God, and neglect of His ways. Permit me to give you a word of friendly counsel in reference to this light. 1. Set a just value on it. Buy it at any expense, sell it not on any account. 2. Labour to gain more of it. 3. Communicate it to others, and that to the extent of your abilities. 4. Remove obstacles to its shining whenever you can. 5. Triumph in the happy victories which the light and truth of God may at any time gain, in any one family, at any one place. 6. Look forward to its final and complete triumphs, its unfading and eternal splendour! (*The Evangelist.*) *Believing in the light and its effects*:—In certain parts of Asia there is a curious plant which grows in the forests. These forests are very dense and gloomy, for the trees grow thick together, and twine their branches into one another at the top, till the forest almost seems to have a great roof over it keeping out the sunlight. This plant at first is a very slim and feeble-looking plant—just a straight stalk, with only a thin leaf here and there upon it. But it shoots up and up, and gathers strength as it grows, till it becomes like a tall bamboo rod. And now it reaches up to the first branches of the trees, then up to the middle ones,

then up to the topmost boughs, and pierces its way through the thick roof of leaves at the top; then, for the first time, it lifts its head unto the sunshine. And now, it does what it never did and never could have done before. It puts out beautiful blossoms and flowers; and, by and by, out of these it brings fruits and seeds. Once it has become a child of the light it begins to blossom and be fruitful. This explains the text in this way: at first the plant had a little light, and that little made it glad. It loved the light, and believed it was good for it. It believed in the light, and it found that the more it loved the light the more light it got, because it was growing more up to it, and from being a sickly, pale plant it became strong and beautiful. Now Jesus is the Light of the soul. We know a little about Him, that He loved us and died to save us, and wants to make us good. We have a little light, and what we have now to do is to love that light and believe that light, that our souls may be changed by the light from day to day, till we also become children of light. Suppose that plant, when it had only a little light, had said to itself, "Ah, I don't want the light, I don't want the light; I am tired of always trying to grow higher into the light. I think it would be much nicer if I could become a creeper and grow on the dark ground!" Well, if the plant said that and did that, it would bend down and down and away from the light, and it would receive less light and less light, and it would never have any flowers or any kind of fruit, just because when it had the light it would not believe in the light, or try to get more of it, or love it. It is the same with you. If you do not want that light, if you do not believe in it, if you prefer to do this thing and that which is sinful, then you will be growing away from the light, and receive less and less light still, and you will forget the light you once had, and your life will be lost. (*J. R. Howat.*) *Light limited in duration:*—Alexander the Great, when he besieged a certain city, kindled a torch, and offered pardon and peace to the besieged citizens if they would surrender themselves so long as the torch continued to burn, but threatened them with destruction and death if they did not surrender during the blazing light of the torch. So will it be with God and ourselves. Let us therefore work while we can enjoy the light that shines from heaven and leads us to heaven, for when this light is quenched, if we have not before surrendered ourselves to God, we must certainly, as He has warned us, meet with eternal death and destruction at His hands. (*T. H. Leary, D.C.L.*) *Delay leads to the winter of the soul:*—How dangerous to defer those momentous reformations which conscience is solemnly preaching to the heart! If they are neglected, the difficulty and indisposition are increasing every month. The mind is receding, degree after degree, from the warm and hopeful zone; till at last it will enter the arctic circle, and become fixed in relentless and eternal ice. (*J. Foster.*)

Vers. 37–50. **But though He had done so many miracles . . . . yet they believed not on Him.**—*Our Lord's ministry:*—I. ITS DETAILS. 1. The doctrines He taught (vers. 44–50). These words are an abridged statement of our Lord's words uttered at different times. In verse 36 we have the formal close of our Lord's mission, and this summary appropriately follows. It teaches—(1) The Divinity of His mission (ver. 49). There is nothing that our Lord stated more frequently or plainly than this. His name for God is often "He who sent Me." This claim leaves no alternative between receiving Him as a Divine Messenger or rejecting Him as fanatic or impostor. (2) The Divinity of His doctrine (vers. 44, 49, 50). He did not bring it forward as an opinion of the man Jesus, but as the truth He had heard of the Father. (3) The Divinity of His Person. His authority here is clearly co-ordinate with that of the Father. (4) The design of His mission. To be a light to the world; not to judge the world but to save it. The two declarations are synonymous. Men are in a state of darkness, *i.e.*, of ignorance, error, guilt and depravity; at a distance from God who is "light." Jesus is the "light" as He is the author and bestower of that salvation which dispels our moral darkness. (5) The manner of being interested in His salvation. "He that believeth on Me." (6) The doom of those who refuse to believe (ver. 48). 2. The manner of His teaching (ver. 44). (1) Public. He did not confine His teaching to a few, and like Mohammed and other impostors conceal His doctrines, till by private exertions He had secured a considerable body of followers. (2) Earnest. Sometimes He quietly "talked with the people," but at other times He cried aloud and spared not. The conviction He had of the truth and importance of His message produced a holy excitement. (3) Fearless. He well knew how unpalatable His doctrines were and how great the dangers to which He exposed Himself. But He "set His face as a flint, and refused to be

ashamed." In all this Christ is a Model to His own ministers. 3. The evidence He produced. (1) He did miracles, *i.e.*, "signs," tokens or signals of the truth of His doctrines. These miracles were—(2) "Great," as the words "so many" may be rendered—far and obviously exceeding human power. (3) Many. (*a*) More than those of Old Testament prophets. (*b*) Many in kind, remarkable for variety. (4) "Before" His countrymen; not like pretended miracles of later ages for the most part in the presence of those interested in supporting His system. (5) These miracles were also—(*a*) Beneficient. (*b*) Unostentatious. (*c*) At a time and in circumstances where imposture could be detected. (*d*) In conformity with Messianic predictions. II. ITS RESULTS. 1. The body of the Jewish nation did not believe. (1) This disbelief fulfilled prophecy (vers. 38–41). (2) In this prophecy we have the true cause of their rejecting Him. They had blinded eyes and hardened hearts, and therefore they could not perceive and understand. (3) This blindness was first voluntary and self-imposed, then judicial, a punishment of God. 2. A minority who did believe from worldly motives suppressed their convictions (vers. 42–43). (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *The rejected messenger*:—I. THE CLOSED MINISTRY (ver. 36). It had been a ministry of—1. Manifested glory. Glory one of the key-notes of the Gospel. The Divine Being looked upon by Israel in the first temple had been rejected by Israel in the second. This glory—(1) Was of a higher order than that seen by the prophet. That was symbolical, this real. (2) Of more frequent exhibition. He had only one glimpse, they repeated manifestations. 2. Offered grace. The ministry was one persistent effort to secure their personal and social redemption. 3. Attesting power (ver. 37). II. THE FORSAKEN PEOPLE. "Did hide Himself" (ver. 36). 1. The unbelieving majority (ver. 37). The completest evidence had been laid before them. Yet they voluntarily closed their eyes to the light. One would have expected the opposite from ver. 13. But Christ was not deceived by popular applause. 2. The believing minority. (1) Considerable, embracing many of the rulers. (2) Sincere, though defective. (3) Timid, afraid of excommunication. (4) Reprehensible, preferring human approbation to Divine. III. THE FULFILLED PREDICTION (ver. 38). 1. The prediction. (1) That the report of Jehovah's suffering Servant would not be believed. (2) That the "signs" would not be understood. 2. The fulfilment. This came to pass when the nation misinterpreted the signs, disbelieved the message, and rejected the person of Christ. 3. The connection: the fulfilment necessary because of the prediction. (1) Not that compulsion was laid upon the Jews to reject Christ to save the credit of a prophet. But—(2) that the foreordained programme of human history should come to pass. That, however, did not exempt the Jews from guilt. IV. THE ACCOMPLISHED DESIGN (ver. 39). 1. The law of moral hardening. The truth rejected always results in a diminution of the soul's susceptibility for receiving it. 2. The Author of this law, God. It being part of the moral order of the universe (Eph. iv. 19), God does not shrink from the responsibility. 3. The working out of this law. They could do no other than reject the Saviour, because they hated the light. Lessons—1. The day of grace may terminate before the day of life. 2. Unbelief seldom springs from lack of evidence. 3. No prediction of God will ever fail. 4. The Divine foreknowledge exempts no man from responsibility. 5. It is perilous to shut one's eyes against the light of truth. 6. Unbelief is a disease for which Christ is the only Physician. 7. Christ the healer of souls is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. 8. It is not enough to believe on Christ; we must also confess Him. 9. They who follow Christ must expect persecution. 10. Who love the praise of men more than the glory of God cannot be saved. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Jesus and the Jews*:—I. A GUILTY UNBELIEF (ver. 37). Why did they not believe? 1. Not for want of evidence. For many miracles had been wrought amongst them. 2. Not for want of warning (ver. 38). The ministry that was fitted by God to bring them to spiritual knowledge and repentance they turned to opposite results (ver. 40). When a man has not three things—(1) Evidence; (2) The capacity for examining evidence, and (3) The opportunity for doing so—his unbelief is not guilty; but this is not the unbelief of England to-day. II. A COWARDLY FAITH (vers. 42–43) arising from—1. Fear of men. 2. Love of popularity. "Glory" would be a better word than praise. It is implied—(1) That between the glory of men and the glory of God there is an essential difference. Glory in the estimation of men is wealth, fame, titles, &c. In the eyes of God these are worthless. The glory of God is holiness. (2) That a higher appreciation of the glory of man than of God is inimical to a courageous faith. The faith of Peter before the Sanhedrim; "we cannot but speak," &c., is the true type. III. REDEMPTIVE TRUSTFULNESS (ver. 44). 1. It is faith in

Christ's identity with the Father. Christ claimed no position independent of the Father. 2. It is faith, the absence of which tends to a terrible doom—"Darkness," *i.e.*, ignorance, remorse, despair. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *No welcome for Christ:*—Perhaps there is no episode recorded in history more interesting than that of Charles V. when he landed at Tunis. Ten thousand men and women who were slaves within the city, when they heard of the approach of their deliverer, rose and broke their chains, and rushed toward the gate as the emperor was entering the town; and this mighty procession knelt down, hailed him as their deliverer, and prayed God to bless him. But when Christ the world's deliverer comes to His own His own, alas, receive Him not. **That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled.**—*The Gospel report:*—I. THE GOSPEL REPORT IS TRUE AND DIVINELY MIGHTY. 1. It is true because it is implied that it ought to be believed. What is genuinely believable must be true. 2. It is mighty because called "The arm of the Lord." Redemptive truth is "the power of God unto salvation." II. THOUGH TRUE, ITS TRUTH IS OFTEN UNBELIEVED AND UNFELT. It was so in the days of the prophets, of Christ, of the apostles, and of all subsequent times. "Therefore they could not believe"—not because of the prediction, or of any Divine decree, but because of the state of their minds. As long as men are in the depths of moral corruption they can neither see nor feel Divine things. A malignant nature cannot see love, nor an avaricious generosity and disinterestedness. III. THESE MORAL STATES OF MIND INIMICAL TO FAITH ARE OFTEN INTENSIFIED BY LISTENING TO THE REPORT. "He hath blinded," &c. (Matt. xiii. 14; Acts xxviii. 26). It is a fact proved by the nature of things, and patent to the observation of all, that the hearer of the gospel who believes not is made more blind and hard by listening. Then as free agents have the power of counteracting the moral tendencies of things, turning blessings into curses and *vice versa*. The unbeliever is ever doing the former and the believer the latter. IV. THE AWFUL RESULTS OF THE GOSPEL UPON MEN POSSESSING THESE STATES OF MIND ARE ALL FOREKNOWN OF GOD. The prophet was told what would be the fate of his "report." But God's foreknowledge did not render the result necessary, nor interfere with freedom of action, nor lessen guilt. V. ALTHOUGH GOD FOREKNOWS THE TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE GOSPEL ON THE UNBELIEVING HEARER, HE STILL COMMANDS IT TO BE PREACHED. The proclamation of Gospel truth is a good in itself, and a good to the universe, though it may enhance the misery of millions. Though God knows that storms will spread fearful devastation, yet He sends them forth. Man is not the only creature to be served. (*Ibid.*) *The Gospel not believed:*—I. THE GOSPEL IS A MESSAGE OR REPORT TO MAN UPON MATTERS OF SUPREME IMPORTANCE. A system introduced by such agency as that of the Son of God could not be insignificant. The gospel is a message—1. As to the character and claims of God—the Majesty of His nature, the harmony of His attributes, the import of all His relations to the universe as Creator, Governor, Benefactor and Judge. 2. As to the character and condition of mankind; our depravity consequent on the fall, our alienation from God, our exposure to the curse. Beyond the gospel announcements on these subjects we want nothing. Here are the principles of true philosophy and untiring observation. Outside them all is delusion. 3. As to the method of salvation by the intervention of a Mediator—the counsels of eternity respecting it, the Author of it, the nature of His office, the value of His sacrifice, and the effects on earth and in heaven are all clearly and fully set forth. II. THE GOSPEL IS COMMUNICATED TO MAN FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF BEING BELIEVED. 1. The report of the gospel is worthy of faith on account of the evidence by which it is confirmed. We are not called upon to believe it without evidence. The historic testimony to its authenticity, the fulfilment of prophecy, the performing of miracles, its wonderful adaptation to the circumstances of all men and its wonderful achievements constitute a conclusive claim to the embrace of every enlightened mind. 2. Faith in the report of the gospel is the only medium by which it can be rendered available to our safety and final happiness. Observe the statement of Scripture respecting the connection between—(1) Faith and justification. (2) Faith and sanctification. (3) Faith and the salvation which is the glorious consummation of justification and sanctification. 3. Faith in the gospel results from the operation of Divine power on the soul. "The arm of the Lord" signifies His power, and the manifestation of that arm consists in the implantation of the principle of faith. It is an affecting thought that nothing can overcome the depraved incredulity of the human heart but an agency omnipotent and Divine. This agency is the Holy Spirit secured by the death, resurrection, &c., of Christ. III. IT BECOMES A MATTER OF SOLEMN INQUIRY AS TO THE NUMBER BY WHOM THE GOSPEL HAS BEEN

EMBRACED. "*Who* hath believed?" 1. The implication which this inquiry involves, viz.: that the number is comparatively small. It was so in the days of the prophet, in those of our Lord and the apostles, and in subsequent Christian history. And now, while we must not overlook the revived interest in religion and the success of missions, how few are the saved in comparison with the unsaved. 2. The results which from that implication must be produced. (1) Compassion for sinners. (2) Exertion for their salvation. (3) Prayer that our efforts may be blessed. (*J. Parsons.*) **Therefore they could not believe.**—*The loss of faith:*—I. THE TEMPERAMENT WHICH RENDERS FAITH IMPOSSIBLE. The statement is a strong one and is derived from Isaiah vi. 9, 10. This refers to no arbitrary act of Divine sovereignty. The Hebrews never conceived of a mere mechanical law, but regarded all sequence as a mode of God's power. And as overlooking intermediate cause they spoke of Him as making day and night, so they spoke of Him as making spiritual day and night. In the stolidity inevitable when the soul refuses the report of God's messengers, and closes itself against the light, they beheld law, and beholding law they discerned God. St. John dwells much upon cans and cannots (chap v. 19, 30; vi. 44; iii. 3), which refer to impossibilities which have their root in the presence or absence of certain dispositions; and the "could not" here implies the operation of a spirit inconpalible with trust in Christ. The difficulty of ver. 34 arose out of a state of mind impervious to Christ's manifest Divine life. Intellectual cavillings were allowed to intercept spiritual light, and so they could not believe. For the same reason many do not believe now. There is a type of mind which is often praised as a sign of intellectual smartness—disputatious, so constantly posing as debater or critic that the light which would illumine doubts cannot get into the heart. Such should deeply ponder the text. II. THE SPIRITUAL INACTION WHICH INVOLVES THE LOSS OF FAITH (vers. 42, 43). Compare this with chap. viii. 45–52. Only one then protested, now we learn that there was a considerable party in favour of Jesus although prudential considerations prevented them from confessing Him. What was the consequence of their timidity? A few days after the hiding of Jesus, they were all with two exceptions implicated in the plottings which issued in the crucifixion. It is dangerous to delay the expression of conviction in appropriate action. Christ requires confession, and no peculiarity of disposition should hinder it. So-called reserved people run the risk of weakening their own faith and love as well as hiding God's righteousness (Psa. xl. 10). "He who is not for Me is against Me" (Rom x. 8–10). III. THE ACTION IN WHICH FAITH IS PRESERVED AND PERFECTED (vers. 35, 36, 46, *cf.* Eph. iv. 15; v. 13). 1. Believe and walk. The error of the people is that they stand still, putting their scruples between them and Christ. His command is, Use what light you have; set yourselves in the path which faith in the light shall indicate (Hosea vi. 3). 2. Believe that you may be the children of light. Not to believe is to pass into darkness. (*J. M. Lang, D.D.*) **Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on Him.**—*The conduct of the rulers:*—There were rulers, chief rulers, and many of them believed. What a pleasing circumstance. God grant that it may be the same with our rulers up to the sovereign; but may their faith go further; for the Jewish potentates did not confess Christ because they feared men and were anxious to secure their praise. I. THERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS OF BELIEVING IN CHRIST. Faith is made a great matter of in Scripture. Salvation hangs altogether on it, "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life." Are we then to infer that every one who is convinced that Christ is the Saviour shall be saved? No, for the rulers were thus convinced, and there are many who believe all the truths of the Bible and yet are not believers. We read that the devils believe and tremble, but never that the devils believe and live. The text helps us to discriminate between a true and a false faith. The faith of the rulers was one which could lie in their bosoms and could be smothered by fear of man and love of his praise. But a true faith cannot be stifled. It must speak out (Rom. x. 9). And not only will the lips speak out, but the life in all the graces of the Christian character. We live in days when it is no disgrace to say that we are Christians, but to show it. II. THERE ARE TWO GREAT OBSTACLES TO FAITH. 1. The fear of man as withering now as then. "What will the world say?" often casts a damp on godly resolutions. Men cannot bear the thought of ridicule, and so lower the standard of religious conduct and conform to the world. But grace enables the true believer to say, "I will not be afraid," and he "rejoices that he is counted worthy to suffer shame." 2. The love of man's praise in preference to that of God. How many a man's faith is nipped by no other cause? To live agreeably to the gospel is not the way to gain man's praise. Man does not praise the poor in

spirit, the meek, &c., but the proud, &c. He therefore who seeks to please the world puts on such qualities as these. But the true believer acts differently. He is not indeed indifferent to the good opinion of his fellow-creatures, yet he values God's esteem above this, and to secure that is the great aim of his life. (*A. Roberts, M.A.*) *The meanness of not confessing Christ*:—I believe there are many in this congregation who wake every morning to pray, and who never let the evening shadows go without perfuming them with their grateful thanks for the mercies of the day; who study their Bibles more than many professing Christians; and who believe that the life they now live is by faith in the Son of God, but who yet do not wish to have it known, and shrink from joining the Church, and making a public acknowledgment of the debt they owe to Christ. They mean to be Christians, but not to avow themselves such. Thus they will leave the world to suppose that their manifest virtues are self-cultured, and that Christian lives may be led without Christ. If I were a pupil of Titian, and he should design my picture, and sketch it for me, and look over my work every day and make suggestions, and then, when I had exhausted my skill, he should take the brush and give the finishing touches, bringing out a part here and there, and making the whole glow with beauty, and then I should hang it upon the wall and call it mine, what a meanness it would be! (*H. W. Beecher.*) **For they loved the praise of man more than the praise of God.**—*The uses of praise*:—I. PRAISE IS ONE OF THE MOST ACTIVE AND IMPORTANT OF ALL THE INFLUENCES THAT AFFECT HUMAN LIFE. A man without a sense of pleasure in other men's approbation is not well fitted to live among men. Its operation tends continually to restrain men from offence. It incites to doing of a thousand things which are agreeable and which we should not have thought of doing if it had not been for the desire to produce pleasure in others, and so reflexly to win their favour. In these directions it co-operates easily with benevolence. When it works upward, and is in alliance with reason, duty, and religion, then it becomes a glorious incitement, a stimulus to industry and to chivalry. If those from whom we desire praise are praiseworthy, then to desire their praise is to set in operation within ourselves the machinery by which we lift ourselves toward their level. Where it includes the approval of great spirits generically, and of God, then the highest form of motive power is reached. II. THE VALUE OF THIS FUNCTION IN LIFE DEPENDS ON ITS ASSOCIATIONS AND EDUCATION. Of all the faculties it is the most illusive. When not rightly trained it is deceiving, and when improperly exercised it is weakening. Associated with conscience it should reject all undeserved praise. Men ought to be ashamed to be praised for what they know is not true, and when they lay traps for it how beggarly is the degradation to which they have come. How many array themselves on the side of right to be praised! Who accepts truth which is unpopular, and love that which their conscience tells them is just when it will bring down upon them the discredit of the whole community? How easy is it to bring men on the side that is popular. As long as slavery was an accredited fact and not to be disturbed, it was a very ungracious thing to stand up for human liberty; but no sooner was the public sentiment changed than men sprang up thicker than asparagus and cried, "Oh, the preciousness of emancipation." So men think they are following the truth when they are simply lusting for praise. As an auxiliary there can be no objection to it. If a man in the performance of duty afterwards finds himself the subject of praise, all well and good; but it is necessary that it should be the second or the third, and not the primary or dominant motive. Those surrounded by a low-toned public sentiment are apt to have an indiscriminate hankering after praise and to be so demoralized that they even become vain of sinful courses. There are men whose foul tongue is their strength and they glory in it. There are men proud of their rudeness. They think it praiseworthy to be singular in this respect. Men enter into competition with each other as to which can eat or drink the most. Yea, crimes become virtues in the sight of many. III. ILLUSTRATIONS. 1. As an incitement to artistic work, the love of praise should always wait on and follow achievement, and never precede it. No man who works for praise can ever become a leading artist. 2. This is true also of literary work. No author will *live* whose paper is a looking-glass. No man will write *thoughts* but he who is utterly unconscious and lost in his subject. 3. In politics everything is made to turn on the popular vote, and our public men grow up questioning not, "What will be the influence of this or that as to the right or wrong?" but, "How will it strike my constituents and affect my chances?" And the inspirations of God in the lines of truth are sacrificed to this miserable and mercenary regard for praise which men want and do

not deserve. 4. Of all places there is none where self-consciousness and the love of praise are so fatal as in the pulpit. There is a wide range for the selection of themes by the preacher, but how many are chosen that jar on the nerves of the lovers of pleasure, wealth, &c.? In the treatment especially of great public questions, what conservatism and fear of men's opinions there is? No man can effectually preach the truths of the Christian life who is not willing to throw himself instantly into anything that is needful and be lost to popularity so that it is with truth and God that he stands. IV. IN THIS SUBJECT WE HAVE MATTER FOR VERY PROFOUND SELF-EXAMINATION. 1. It is a question for many how much of your religion is other than conformity to public custom, and how much is simple conformity to what is respectable. 2. Is the praise you receive beneficial in its effect upon you? Is it preparing you for higher association in the kingdom above? The day hastens. Soon we shall stand before Him who has declared that if in this evil generation we are ashamed of Him, He will be ashamed of us. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The praise of men*:—I. THE FOLLY OF AN OVER-VALUATION OF THE OPINION OF MEN. The condemnation was not that the rulers loved the praise of men, but they loved it more than the praise of God. This overweening regard to human opinion is—1. Very common. Not that the esteem of others is sinful, because deference to the opinion of the wise and good is wisely implanted in our nature. The perversion of an instinctive tendency does not convert a good principle into a bad one. The love of praise is not to be condemned if limited to the praise of good men for right sentiments and good actions. It must, however, be an insufficient principle of conduct, because it may be extended to the praise of bad men for bad actions. We must not then say that the love of praise or fear of blame is necessarily sinful. Opinion is the prop and stay of all social intercourse. Reputation for honour, &c., is essential, while man is man. "No man liveth to himself." Jacob said of Judah, "Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise"; and to stand well in the opinion of good men is a means of blessing to the Church and the world. St. Paul says, "If there be any praise, think on these things." Only remember that this love of praise should be followed by a love of praiseworthiness, and a fear of blame of blameworthiness; otherwise it will be only vanity in disguise. The man who is above or below the good opinion of others, must be more or less than man. He who sets no value upon the just estimation of society is often careless of the actions which tend to produce it. 2. It may be abused, and become implicit idolatry like that of the heathen who served the creature more than the Creator. It was the same with the young ruler, Pilate and Felix. "This is the victory that overcometh our faith—*even the world*." 3. This sinful preference of man to God is dangerous in its issue. It hazards the loss of the soul, and draws down the displeasure of God (see following verses). II. CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY CORRECT THIS EVIL. 1. The worthlessness of the men for whose commendation we are ready to renounce Christ. Let us know why and for whom we are prepared to make shipwreck of faith and good conscience. For what did Judas betray Christ? The favour of worthless Pharisees and thirty pieces of silver. For what did Esau renounce his birthright? And for what do we give up the hope of acceptance with Christ? For the wretched smile of trifers, for the ribaldry of Paine and the "don't know" of Spencer—a mess of pottage indeed. "An atheist's laugh is a poor exchange for a Deity offended." 2. The study of the best models. The men of whom this world was not worthy, were not the men who bowed to ruling opinions. Paul conferred not with flesh and blood; Columbus turned a deaf ear to worldly wisdom, or he would never have discovered a new world. Had Milton been swayed by popular opinion he would never have left a name immortal. Defoe was offered wealth and preferment to support government measures by a venal pen, but he sternly refused, and borrowed a guinea to supply his wants for the day. Study the answer of the Three Hebrew Children and the example of Christ. We talk of the public opinion of earth, but forget that there is a public opinion in heaven (Heb. xii. 10). 3. Estimate of the value of the Divine opinion. God is the standard of all excellence. His approbation is the seal of honour. 4. Anticipate the decisions of the great day. (*T. H. Day.*) *The supreme value of that honour which cometh from God*:—I. THERE IS NOTHING IN THE NATURE OF PRAISE THAT IS ABSOLUTELY SINFUL. It is nowhere condemned except in the form of flattery, which is not praise but simply lying. It is needful to bear this in mind, because, through erroneous notions, many receive what is done for them or for God's cause with chilling indifference, which has a detrimental effect particularly on the young. To see that praise is not sinful, we have but to study the generous commendations of our Lord and of St.

Paul. Then how frequently has it animated the faint and discouraged, as in the case of St. Paul at Appii Forum. II. THE PRAISE OF MEN AND THE PRAISE OF GOD ARE FREQUENTLY OPPOSED. For man often condemns what God approves, and *vice versa*. God cannot look upon any form of sin with allowance, but man condones and sometimes applauds the grossest vices. III. BOTH IN BESTOWING AND ACCEPTING PRAISE WE SHOULD BE GUIDED ENTIRELY BY THE MIND OF GOD. He knows what is praiseworthy, and has revealed His mind on the subject. Never receive or give flattery for what the Bible condemns. IV. TO THIS UNHAPPY PREFERENCE FOR THE PRAISE OF MAN BEFORE THAT OF GOD MAY BE TRACED THE MISERY AND RUIN OF MANKIND. (*Congregational Remembrancer.*) *The desire for admiration*:—The human eye of admiration I seek is like the scorching ray that destroys all the delicate colours in the most costly material. Every action that is done only to be seen of others, loses its freshness in the sight of God, like the flower that, passing through many hands, is at last hardly presentable to any one, much less to a dear friend. (*T. H. Leary, D.C.L.*) *The peril of the love of praise*:—A clergyman once had a dream, in which another popular clergyman appeared to him in his garden and asked the time of the day. "Twenty-five minutes past four," said the other. "It is then exactly an hour since I died, and I am damned;" "Damned for what?" said the other. "Not for not preaching the gospel, for I have many seals to my ministry; but I have sought the praise of men more than the praise of God." The first clergyman on going to the service in the evening (Sunday) was asked "if he had heard of the loss of such a church whose minister had died." "When?" said the clergyman. "Twenty-five minutes past three this afternoon!" *Love of fame rebuked*:—There was one Michael Fenwick that travelled with Wesley as a sort of groom, nurse, and occasional exhorter. The good man was vain enough to complain, one day, that his name was never inserted in Wesley's published "Journals." In the next number of the "Journals" he found his name in a connection that probably did not serve to increase his vanity. "I left Epworth," wrote Wesley, "with great satisfaction, and about one, preached at Clayworth. I think none were unmoved but Michael Fenwick, who fell fast asleep under an adjoining hayrick." (*Dr. Haven.*) **Jesus cried and said.** *The rejected message*:—A message of—I. LOVE FROM THE FATHER (ver. 49). 1. The substance of the message—a revelation of the Father (ver. 45). (1) Of His name, Father. (2) Of His character, love. (3) Of His gift, the Son. (4) Of His purpose, salvation (ver. 47). 2. The medium of its transmission—through Christ, God's (1) Son (ver. 50); (2) Representative (ver. 44); (3) Commissioner (vers. 44, 49). 3. The heinousness of its rejection—to reject Christ and His message the same thing as to reject the Father and His message (ver. 44). II. SALVATION FOR THE WORLD (vers. 46, 47). 1. Of Salvation from the darkness of (1) Intellectual error. (2) Moral unholiness. (3) Legal condemnation. (4) Eternal death. 2. Of salvation through faith—through hearing, believing, keeping Christ's words. 3. Of salvation for ever—through escaping the final judgment and entering at the last day upon eternal life. III. JUDGMENT FOR THE UNBELIEVING (ver. 48). 1. Its time—the last day. 2. Its author—the Word of Christ. 3. Its ground—unbelief and disobedience. IV. ETERNAL LIFE FOR THE FAITHFUL (ver. 50). 1. The object of the Father's commission. 2. The burden of the Son's commission. 3. The issue of the individual's faith. Lessons—1. Thankfulness for the gospel message. 2. Watchfulness against the sin of unbelief. 3. Prayerfulness that the news of salvation may be propagated through the earth. 4. Trustfulness that we may escape the judgment of the last day. 5. Earnestness to lay hold of eternal life. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **I am come a Light into the world.** *Light for the world's darkness*. I. OUR WORLD IS DARK. God did not make it so, but man has darkened it, and Satan and sin have darkened it. It is a darkness of—1. Sleep. The sleeper sees not the light. He may dream that he does so, but that is all. 2. Death. With life, light flees. 3. The tomb. Buried, the darkness is double. 4. Satan. He is the ruler of the darkness of this world. 5. Hell. Our world is an earnest of the blackness of darkness for ever. The shadow of hell is over it. II. THERE IS LIGHT FOR IT. Deep as is the darkness, it is not hopeless. There is enough of light in God and heaven yet. Light has not been quenched throughout the universe, though driven from our world. III. THIS LIGHT HAS COME. It is not in heaven merely; it has come down to earth. The gospel is an announcement of the arrival of the light. IV. CHRIST IS THE LIGHT. The brightness of Jehovah's glory; the true Light; the Sun of Righteousness; the Day Star; the bright and morning Star. All the light of the Godhead, of heaven, of the universe, is centred in Him. He is the Light of the World

because—1. Of what He shows us of the Father. He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father. 2. Of what He does to us—pardons, heals, comforts, blesses, saves. 3. Of what He is yet to do for our world. His reign shall be the reign of light, and the earth shall rejoice in His light. V. THE WAY IN WHICH THE LIGHT ENTERS. Not in working or waiting, but believing. Faith ends the darkness, and lets in the glorious light. VI. THE FREENESS AND UNIVERSALITY OF THE LIGHT. "Whosoever." (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *Believers shall not abide in darkness*:—Perhaps the worst feature of darkness is, that it is so bewildering. You have to walk, and yet your way is hidden from your eyes. This is hard work. God will help His children, will He not? Ay, that He will, but we cannot see how! We look upward, and see no twinkling star; downward and do not even find a glow-worm. Surely we shall see a candle in some window! But no! we are lost in a dark wood. Have we not somewhere about us a match that we could strike? We fumble for it; we find it, it is damp, we have no light. The question that now chills the heart is—How can God deliver me? We do not see how He can make a way of escape. What simpletons we are to fancy that if we do not see a way of deliverance God does not see one either! If you have ever steamed up the Rhine, you have looked before you, and it has looked as if you could go no further; the river seemed to be a lake; great mountains and vast rocks blocked up all further advance. Suddenly there has been a turn in the stream, and at once a broad highway has been before you, inviting you to enter the heart of the country. Perhaps in Providence you are in one of those parts of the river of life where no progress appears possible. You are quite blocked up, and this causes you darkness of mind. Cease from this unbelieving bewilderment. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him, and He shall give thee thy heart's desire." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 47–48. **If any man hear My words.**—I. THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGE THAT MAN CAN ENJOY. It is a priceless privilege to hear the words of any great sage, poet, moralist. But what are the best human words compared with those of Christ? They are spirit and life; more pure than crystal, more refreshing than the morning breeze, more quickening than the sunbeam, they are recreative forces. What have they accomplished ere now? II. THE GREATEST CRIMINAL NEGLECT OF WHICH A MAN CAN BE GUILTY—"and believe not," *i.e.* keep them not. Such is guilty of—1. The most egregious folly. 2. The most heinous ingratitude. 3. The most hardened impiety. III. THE MOST TERRIBLE DOOM WHICH A MAN CAN APPREHEND. "I judge him not." I as a Saviour have nothing more to do with him; I leave him to the retributive treatment of My Father. Mercy leaves him, and justice apprehends him. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The words of Christ*:—I. AS LAWS TO BE OBEYED. Christ's words are not like poetry for entertainment, or abstract science for speculative thought; they are laws to be kept; not so much a creed as a code. It is only as they are embodied in actual life that their mission is answered, that they are of any real or lasting service to man. II. AS A MEANS OF SALVATION. Had Christ come to judge the world, His words would have breathed the indignation of insulted justice. But He came to save, and hence His words are full of all that can restore man to holiness and God. The salvation which Christ came to effect is restoration from spiritual ignorance to intelligence, from selfishness to benevolence, from bondage to freedom, from inward conflict to inner harmony, from social perniciousness to social utility. To this His signs and words are adapted. "Save the world," not a class. III. AS CRITERIA OF JUDGMENT (ver. 48). The man to whom Christ has spoken, and who rejects or nullifies His words, needs no other judge but His words. These words will judge him in his conscience and will condemn him for ingratitude, folly and rebellion. (*Ibid.*) *Christ is both able and willing to save the world*:—When the Duke of Argyle was taken in rebellion in Scotland, and brought before James II., the king said to him, "You know that it is in my power to pardon you." It is reported that the prisoner answered, "It may be in your power, but it is not in your nature"—a speech which, whether true or not, cost him his life. He died like a stoic, executed at Temple Gate. But Christ has both the power and the disposition to pardon sinners. **He that rejecteth me . . . hath one that judgeth Him.** *The redemptive becoming retributive*:—I. CHRISTIANITY MAY BE REJECTED NOW. It is possible to accept Christ's creed and to reject His authority. II. THOSE WHO REJECT CHRISTIANITY NOW, MUST BOW TO ITS JUDICIAL FORCE HEREAFTER. "The last day" is the retributive period that awaits us all. Then the "Word" which has been trodden under foot will rise from the dust and take the throne. 1. There is nothing arbitrary in the decision or pro-

cedure of the last judgment. The glorious words of mercy which are rejected will spring from their graves, and conscience will invest them with judicial authority. 2. Man should be profoundly cautious as to how to treat the words of Christ now. His words are not sounds but things—terrible things. They must live for ever in every soul into which they have fallen. Old sermons will be preached again by memory many ages on. "How shall we escape." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge Him.** I. THERE IS A LAST DAY. The world shall not always roll on. God shall interpose at length. In one sense there is no last day either to righteous or wicked. But in reference to the existing order there is a winding up, a reckoning. "To-morrow" shall then cease, and that word of mystery and procrastination and suspense be known no more. II. THAT DAY SHALL BE ONE OF JUDGMENT. The long unsettled cases of earth shall be settled then. Time's riddles shall be solved and its wrongs righted. The oppressed shall be vindicated and the evil-doer be put to shame. The judgment shall be just, undoing the evil and establishing the good. III. CHRIST'S WORD SHALL JUDGE US. Not that the word is to supersede the Judge, but it will form the ground of judgment. We can imagine in connection with that word such questions as these: 1. Did it reach you? 2. Did you listen to it, or spend your lives in listening to some one or thing else? 3. Did you treat it as a true word? Professing to receive it as true, did you treat it as untrue? 4. Did you treat it as Divine? by reverence and submission. 5. Did you accept it as suitable, as meeting your case? or did you reject it? By this word, then, let us judge ourselves now, that so we may not be condemned by it at the great day. (*H. Bonar.*)

Vers. 49–50. **For I have not spoken of Myself.** *Christ as a teacher:*—I. HIS PROFOUND HUMILITY. "I have not spoken of Myself." As if He had said, I take no credit for the thoughts that I have addressed to men: they are not the flashes of my own genius, or the conclusions of my own reason. I am not their fountain but their channel. A teacher is great and divine just in proportion to his humility. Alas! the vanity of preachers has become proverbial. II. HIS CONSCIOUS DIVINITY. "But the Father which sent Me," &c. No man is a true spiritual teacher who is not conscious that the thoughts he utters are not his own but God's. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XIII.

VERS. 1–19. **Now before the feast of the Passover.**—*A threefold marvel:*—I. A MARVELLOUS LOVE: that of Christ for His own. Marvellous in respect of—1. Its time. (1) Before the feast of the Passover, when His thoughts might have been occupied with its memories. (2) Before His departure, when He might have been absorbed in the contemplation of death or the heaven beyond. (3) Before His exaltation, when the vision of the coming glory might have fixed His Spirit's eye. 2. Its intensity—"unto the end." (1) To the uttermost, or in the highest degree, with a love passing knowledge (Eph. iii. 19), which many waters (of affliction) could not quench, nor floods (of sorrow) drown (S. Song viii. 9). (2) To the latest moment of His life, with a love which, as it had been without beginning, so also would it be without end (Jer. xxxi. 3). (3) At the last, surpassing every previous demonstration and stooping even unto death for its objects (John xv. 13; 1 John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8). 3. Its reason. While He was departing from, they were remaining in the world, exposed to the enmity and evil He was escaping. The thought of their feebleness and defencelessness, and their sufferings and imperfections, added fuel to the fire of His affection (Heb. iv. 15). II. A MARVELLOUS DEED (ver. 5). An act of—1. Amazing condescension, considering—(1) Its nature—the work of a slave (1 Sam. xxv. 41). (2) His dignity—the Incarnate Son, conscious of His heavenly origin and destiny (ver. 3), on the eve of grasping the sceptre of the universe (Matt. xxviii. 18). (3) The objects—frail and erring men and one of them a traitor. Had Christ been only man He would have spurned Judas: being God, He loved him and even washed his feet. 2. Sublime significance. Symbolic—(1) Of Christ's self-abasement who, in order to effect the spiritual cleansing of His people, laid aside the form of God, assumed the garment of humanity, and poured His purifying blood from the cross (Phil. ii. 7, 8; 1 John

i. 7). (2) Of the working of regeneration through which sin's defilement is removed (Eph. v. 26; Titus iii. 5). (3) Of the daily cleansing which the renewed need (Psa. li. 7; 1 John i. 9). III. A MARVELLOUS OBLIGATION (vers. 14, 15). Christ's example calls His disciples to—1. Personal humility. If the Lord and Master could stoop and wash the feet of a Judas, it ill became them to be puffed up with thoughts of their own greatness (Rom. xii. 3; Luke xxii. 27; Matt. ix. 29; 1 Pet. v. 5). 2. Loving service. Not that Christ instituted a new religious service. The Pope is Christ's ape rather than His imitator. Christ's example is to be followed spiritually in ministering to necessity and practising Christian kindness (John xv. 17; Matt. xxv. 34–40; Rom. xii. 9, 10, xiii. 8; Gal. v. 13, 14, 22, vi. 2; Eph. v. 2; 1 Tim. v. 10). 3. Brotherly forgiveness. Christ had washed and therefore forgiven them; they were to practise the charity which covers a multitude of sins (Matt. vi. 12; Mark xi. 28; Luke xvii. 3, 4; Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13). Learn—1. The supreme Divinity of Christ. 2. The diabolical depravity of the fallen heart. 3. The imperfections of even Christ's followers. 4. The absolute necessity of Christ as a Saviour. 5. Christ's perfect knowledge of men. 6. The duty of taking Christ as our example. 7. Obedience the royal road to happiness. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **Jesus knew that His hour was come.**—*Christ's knowledge*:—I. ITS FULNESS. II. ITS SOURCES. III. ITS USES. (*Ibid.*) *Christ's hour*:—I. SO LONG CONTEMPLATED. II. SO FULL OF SUFFERINGS. III. SO FULL OF RESPONSIBILITY. (*Ibid.*) *Christ's death*:—I. HE HAD A DIVINE PRESENTIMENT OF THE EXACT TIME OF HIS DEATH. "When Jesus knew," &c. All men know that they must die sooner or later. This throws a shadow on the whole path of life, but the exact time is in mercy hidden from us. But Christ knew His hour from the first, and instead of endeavouring to avoid it comes forth to meet it. What mere man would have done this? And with such heroic calmness! II. HE HAD A GLORIOUS VIEW OF THE NATURE OF HIS DEATH. 1. It was a departure from this world. With the exception of the beauties and blessings of the earth, everything in the world must have been repugnant to Him. It was a world of rebels against the government of His Father, of enemies against Himself. To Him it must have been what the cell is to the prisoner or the lazaretto to the healthy. To leave such a scene could not have been a matter for regret, but rather of desire. May not every good man look on death thus? What is there in the human world to interest him? 2. It was a going to the Father, where—(1) He would get the highest approbation of His work. (2) He would enjoy the sublimest fellowship. So with the Christian. III. HE HAD A SUBLIME MOTIVE FOR MEETING WITH HIS DEATH. Love for His own, *i.e.*, all who in every land and age consecrate themselves to God, whose they are. This love continues—1. To the end of every man's existence. 2. To the end of the mediatorial system. Nay, will it ever have an end? Never in essence, but in achievement. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *A great and solemn hour*:—1. It was the hour of His departure. "Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto His Father." Such was His death, even though it was the death of the Cross, "a departure." 2. It was the hour of His love. If He rejoiced in the thought of departing to be with the Father, there was also a strain upon His heart at the thought of leaving His disciples, whom, "having loved as His own in the world, He loved to the end," that is, "to the uttermost." 3. It was the hour of His betrayal. What a frightful contrast is here! In this hour, when His Divine heart was swelling nigh unto bursting with the intensity and vehemence of His love, there was one of their number whose heart was filled with a devilish purpose of betrayal. 4. It was the hour of His supreme and sublime self-consciousness—"Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came forth from God, and was going back to God." 5. The hour of His lowly service to His disciples. (*G. F. Pentecost.*) **That He should depart out of this world unto the Father.**—He came from God, and yet not leaving Him, and He goeth to God not leaving us. (*St. Bernard.*) **Having loved His own which were in the world.**—*The Divine love*:—1. It is not strange that the hour of departure should be the hour of quickened affection. When the child leaves home, father and mother seem more dear than before. And had this been the Saviour's home, and those around Him His relations, it would not have been strange that He should have felt more strongly for them than at any previous time. 2. On the other hand, when for purposes of health, business, or pleasure one has long been an exile, and the day comes for return, although he has made pleasant acquaintances, yet the thought of home swallows up every other. Applying this, who can imagine the vision that arose

before Jesus at this hour? The infinitude of His power was to be restored, and the companionships He had known from eternity. Yet at this hour it is said that "having loved," &c. 3. This is wonderful. For consider what the disciples were. If Christ had dwelt in the accomplishments of the heavenly land, what must they have seemed to Him? Not one had any extraordinary endowment except John, and none save he and Peter and James have left any record except their names. Had Christ selected heroes like Luther, Melanchthon, Hampden, Sidney, Washington, or geniuses like Dante, Shakespeare, or Goethe, we can imagine how, surrounded by the greatest natures, He should have suffered at parting from them. But these were men with not only no royalty of endowment, but selfish, prejudiced, ambitious, and mean. And yet taking them with all their imperfections which the glory to which He was departing threw into bolder relief, having loved them He loved them unto the end. 4. It is plain that Divine love includes other elements than those usually imagined. It is not strange that God loves loveliness. We do that. But who of us loves that which is unlovely? This is what God does. But it does not follow that this love is not more qualified with growing excellency than without it. It is that kind of love which a parent feels toward children who are not in themselves attractive. Parental love, however it may grow, is what we feel by reason of what is in us, not of what is in our children. The new-born babe has neither thought, love, nor power of expression; and yet there is in the mother that which loves it with an intensity which is like life itself. So there is in the Divine nature a power of sympathizing with things at the lowest and poorest. 5. In this simple thought we find the world's hope and comfort. You may dismiss from your minds, if you can, all who are not your near relations; but I cannot. It is a burden on my soul what becomes of the vast multitudes of Africa, Asia, and of our great cities who crawl like vermin in and out of dens of vice and poverty. The only light on this problem comes from the fact that there is a God who loves things that are not lovable. 6. This universality of the Divine sympathy interprets the declaration, "God so loved the world," &c. His affection for a world lying in brutality and wickedness was such that He gave what was most precious to Him to redeem it. Men think that this obliterates the motives to right. Not so. Is there any feeling in the parent's mind stronger than this: that the beloved child shall grow out of nothingness into largeness and beauty? And God aims to purify and exalt and enrich human nature. He loves men without reason in them, but with infinite reason in Himself. His love is not simply good nature. It is intensely earnest and just, and suffering flows from it. There is nothing lovable in us at first, but under the fructifying influence of the Divine soul working on ours, germ after germ begins to develop into something lovable; and the Divine complacency takes hold of us as we rise to higher love and perfection. 7. What a consolation this representation presents to those who are battling with their imperfections. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ's love to His own*:—I. THE LOVE OF CHRIST IS A PERSONAL LOVE. 1. This personal love is not to be contrasted with, although it is to be distinguished from, His love of the whole world. Without supposing the universal love that pities misery everywhere, we cannot make our way to a personal love. You cannot be sure of a love that passes by great multitudes. 2. This personal love is just the application of the general love to the person. It is not merely that the individual believes in that general love and appropriates just so much to himself as he needs, but that in that very appropriation he practically increases the love of Christ to himself. His love to Christ makes Christ's love to him a love of complacency and friendship. 3. The belief of this is the turning-point of life. When a man can say, "He loved me and gave Himself for me," he has passed or is passing from darkness into light. His destiny is solved. Not to believe that assurance so solemnly and affectingly given, is to be without the comfort of the blessed gospel, to abide under wrath. 4. It is either wrath or love. There is no explaining it away or shading it off. Come to Christ, believe the gospel, you are in love. Stay away from Him, distrust His gospel, leave it lying there unopened, untouched, as you would some printed circular you don't care to be troubled with, and the whole world is full of wrath. It darkens and embitters your whole life. Just say this and believe it, for it is true, "He loved me," &c.; and then you are out of wrath into love, you leave the ranks of His enemies, you enter among "His own." II. CHRIST LOVES HIS OWN UNTO THE END, *i.e.*, to the end of His own life. In proof of which, here at the very end is a most thoughtful, touching instance of His intense desire to do them a good that would last long after He was away. 1. He was going into great suffering. No

agitation, no depression, no entering into the sorrow before the time; but this calm, beautiful action of feet-washing which they might recall for ever as an overwhelming proof of the endurance of His love to His own. 2. He was going into great glory. Work all done. Suffering nearly finished. Home now to God! What then? A great elation of spirit and a corresponding forgetfulness of these common persons and these inferior things? No; but the washing of the disciples' feet! A yearning, enfolding love of "His own" unto the end. No trial of love could be more searching, more complete, than is furnished by those two great things, both so near—the suffering and the glory. Application—1. You who are "His own," it concerns you much to believe that He will "love you unto the end." Why should He not? (1) Even His own great suffering could not cast a shade between the loving Master and the trembling disciple when He was here. And now there is no suffering to come between you and Him. (2) And as to the glory of His heavenly life, even now when throned and crowned and worshipped by ten thousand times ten thousand, the joy that is dearer to Him than all this is that which He wins yet down here when He seeks and finds the sheep that was lost. We think poorly of Him if we suffer ourselves to think of Him as enjoying heaven yonder while we suffer and die. (3) And as for your unworthiness, you were unworthy when He began to deal with you, and you have been unworthy every day since, and you are now, and He knows all this. Having loved His own with an unbought, uncaused love from the beginning, and thus far along their individual histories, He will love them so, and no otherwise, unto the end. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *Christ's love for His own:*—I. THE RELATION—"His own." This relation is formed by Himself. "To them gave He power to become the sons of God." It is not, therefore, from a mere profession of religion. "Ye are clean; but not all." There were persons endued with miraculous powers who nevertheless were not "His own," and to whom Christ will say, "I never knew you." II. THE POSITION "in the world." It is one of—1. Trial. You are exposed to a position of sorrow, and struggling, and conflict. Here is something that will try you. What influence has the world had on your spirit and conduct? If you are called on to suffer, is there the language of Eli: "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth good unto Him"? or obstinacy and rebellion? 2. Danger. You are exposed—(1) To innumerable adversaries. "Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about," &c. (2) To great temptations. How many run well for a time and afterwards fall short! III. THE AFFECTION—"having loved." If your position is to be a test of your affection for Christ, what a proof it will be of His affection for you! What evidence of love will you ask at His hands? What can He do more than He has done? "Greater love hath no man than this," &c. IV. THE ADHESION—"unto the end." Can you say this of any human affection? Can the child calculate on the affection of the parent, the most durable of all, to the end? "Can a woman forget her sucking child? . . . Yea, she may forget; yet will I not forget." There is no unchangeable love but His because there is no unchangeable being but God. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," &c. (*W. Bengo Collyer, D.D.*) *Christ's love of His own.* The Saviour has a treasure of immortal spirits who are not in the world. Angels and spirits of the just made perfect are all His own—a multitude which no man can number. This verse, however, shows the relationship of Jesus to His faithful followers who "are in the world." The disciples were no monopolists of Christ's love. The lapse of time may change the tense, but it does not change the sense of this gracious text. I. THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS ARE CALLED BY A PECULIARLY ENDEARING NAME—"His own." All things are His own. "All souls are Mine," even the rebellious and unthankful. Here, however, the words imply a relationship of the dearest and closest kind. A true mother has a sympathy for all children; but there is a singular depth in her words, as she looks into the eyes of the darling of her heart, and says, "My own!" The gift in the hand of a child is enhanced when it is understood to be his "very own." With such intense affection and delight does Christ regard His people. He constantly challenges them as "My brethren," "My sheep," "My friends," and emphatically, "Mine." They are His own—1. As the purchase of His blood. They had sold themselves for nought, were sold under sin. Christ was their Redeemer. He gave His life a ransom for them, and they are become His purchased possession. "He justly claims us for 'His own,'" &c. 2. By willing personal surrender. This is an all-essential endorsement of His claim. The price of his freedom may be proffered to the slave, but if he will not accept it he is still in bonds. Christ hath purchased all souls. Yet it needs the assent of their understanding, and the consent of their will, in order to bind them to Him by

the special tie and to make them peculiarly His own. 3. They bear the name, seal, and image of the Saviour. 4. As the gift of the Father, the reward of His mediatorial work. In chap. xvii. we see how the Saviour gathered strength and comfort from the thought of their prospective possession. "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." II. THE TEMPORARY POSITION OF CHRIST'S OWN! "In the world." When a sinner is converted and all is safe for heaven, how desirable it seems that he should be removed out of the world. Let him be taken away from the evil to come that he may never run the hazard of losing so rich a prize. Amid the troubles of life the Christian pilgrim is often tempted to say, "Oh that I had the wings of a dove," &c. But the Lord keeps "His own" in the world—1. For their own sake. Eternal life is the gift of God unmerited and free; yet the Christian's future will be largely influenced by the tone and character of his life on earth. According to his spiritual growth, his moral victories, his love and sacrifice and service, will be the fulness of the glory which shall be revealed. 2. For the Saviour's sake. The world holds Him in dishonour, and gives His glory to another. Christians are in the world to represent the Saviour! "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them, that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me." 3. For the world's sake. The world cannot spare them. Its only hope lies in the element of godliness which is slowly leavening it more and more. "Ye are the salt of the earth." III. THE SAVIOUR'S UNCHANGING LOVE FOR HIS OWN. "He loved them to the end." These disciples of His, from the day He called them, had been the objects of tenderest regard. They were full of faults and failings, were sadly slow of heart to receive the truth; yet in and through all He loved them. Now that the time is at hand when the bitter cup shall be lifted to His lips, His anxiety for their well-being is the foremost feeling of His heart. He pours into their ears the richest strains of comfort and consolation. "Let not your hearts be troubled," &c. He promises them a Comforter, and bids them "be of good cheer." In the garden, His gentle forbearance to the unwatchful three reveals the fixity and depth of His love. When the officers came, He wards His trembling disciples from the threatening crowd. Their desertion was a sharper pang than any made by jailer's scourge or soldier's spear. And yet it was quenchless love that "looked" on Peter. When He left the tomb, He gave the angel watchers a kindly message for His flock, and mentioned the penitent denier by name. And when at last they gathered round Him on the hill of Bethany, His latest movement was to lift His hands and bless them; His latest word a promise to be with them even to the end of the world; when a cloud received Him out of their sight, two angels stood before them to tell them that as they had seen Him ascend, so should He again descend, that He might receive them unto Himself! Afterwards, when seated at the right hand of God, Stephen's cry for help brought Him to His feet! Do you wonder that when the aged apostle called up each look, tone, deed, and word that marked his Saviour's later days, that with a gush of unrestrained devotion he should write, "Having loved His own," &c.? Conclusion: 1. Believer, you are in the holy and the privileged succession. (1) Christ loves you with an abiding love. Your memory bears grateful witness. Many an Ebenezer stands out and tells how His love came in the hour of your sorest need. Your backslidings have been many; your imperfections more, but His love hath endured through all. Be of good cheer. He will love you to the end, and draw closer and nearer as the end draws nigh. (2) Seek a closer, more perfect union with your Saviour. Be "His own" entirely. 2. Sinner! you are not in this saving sense "His own." Then whose are you? You are a servant of the devil, whose wages is death! Yet the Saviour loves you! Give Him your heart, then you shall be "His own." (*J. Jackson Wray.*) *Jesus loving His own that were in the world:*—For the inspired Evangelist not only specifies the precise date —"Before the feast of the Passover"—but he also mentions a particular fact of a moral nature, of the utmost importance, as giving us an insight into the Saviour's mind: "When Jesus knew"—or Jesus knowing—"that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father," &c. The idea plainly is, that just because He knew—not merely although, but just because He knew—that His hour was come, that He should leave this world, and that, consequently, His disciples would be left alone in it—as He had always previously loved them, so He now manifested His love in a very peculiar manner, corresponding to their necessities; and this, too, under the most affecting circumstances, and to the utmost extent. I. The OBJECTS of this love are described, in the first instance, more generally as being "His own." It is true, indeed, that, in one sense, all things are His own, as being their Creator and Preserver—all things, from the highest

archangel to the meanest insect that crawls upon the ground. But His people are His own in a sense peculiar to themselves. But the objects of this love are described not only as His own, but more particularly as His own that were in the world. Jesus had many of "His own" that were now in glory; and doubtless these were objects of peculiar complacency and delight. Oh! see them in their white robes, as they shine so bright! But still the precious truth for us is, that it was His own that were in the world that He is here said to have loved. And why were they singled out from the rest? Why, but because of the peculiar difficulties and dangers to which they were exposed. Ask that tender-hearted mother, which of her many children recurs oftenest to her memory—those of them who are safe at home under the parental roof, or the one that is far away at sea? Jesus was now to depart out of the world, but they were to be left in it; and therefore His heart turned in love towards them. But without dwelling further on this idea here, is it not a most delightful and encouraging truth, that, though Jesus is now in glory, yet He still regards His own that are in the world with peculiar care suited to their circumstances and necessities? But methinks I hear some one say, "Alas! I feel that I am in the world, not only because of the sins of others, but because I sin myself; because I have 'a body of death' within me, and often it breaks out in word and action." Yes, indeed, but Jesus loves His own that are in the world still; He sees and knows all the sin and imperfection, that you have to contend against, and yet He loves His own notwithstanding. "But, oh!" says some one, "my case is of a different kind still: I have come hither to-day, burdened with a heavy heart." It may be that it is some dear relative that is sick, and apparently near to death. All this proves that you are still in a world of sorrow. But then Jesus loves His own still, and looks down upon them with ever watchful eye. II. But I come now, in the second place, to mention SOME OF THOSE WAYS IN WHICH JESUS HAD ALWAYS PREVIOUSLY MANIFESTED HIS LOVE TO THEM. 1. See, for example, how having once chosen them in His love, He ever afterwards proved His love by continual companionship with them. 2. See, too, how tenderly, how graciously He instructed them. His instructions were always very simple, because He loved them so well. His love was stronger than their unbelief and ignorance. 3. See, moreover, how ready He was to sympathize with them, and to render them every kind of assistance. Whenever they were in trouble, He was their willing and able Friend. 4. And, oh, with what patience did He bear with them in all their weakness and infirmities! III. But what I wish you specially to notice now is THE STEADFASTNESS OF THIS LOVE—ITS UNFAILING AND UNFLINCHING FAITHFULNESS, AS IN LIFE SO ALSO IN DEATH. "He loved them unto the end"—not only to the end of life, but to the utmost extent, and under the most affecting circumstances. And if He thus loved them, in the view of the agonies of Gethsemane and the death of Calvary, think you does He now forget them—now that He has passed within the veil? Ah! no, it is impossible. But I must also add, if Jesus Christ loved His own unto the end, then surely they ought to persevere in their love to Him. But I have this also to say in closing, what misery must it be to be without such a Saviour! (*C. Ross.*) *Christ's love unto the end*:—I. THERE WAS NOT MUCH IN THEM TO LOVE—YET HE LOVED THEM. I have no wish to disparage these early disciples. Everything betokens that most of them were what the narrative tells us—unlearned Galilean fishermen, who had been nurtured in the free, clear air of Nature, and so they had to the end a sort of frankness about them which was very enjoyable. I think that was something in them which Jesus Christ appreciated. It must not be forgotten that there was also in them an unselfish readiness to endure sacrifice in the cause of Him who had charmed their hearts and excited the questioning wonder of their minds. Yet in spite of all this, what was there particularly in these men that one like Christ should find to love? I think of the sensitiveness of His nature, the gentleness of His disposition, the purity of His thought, the utter unselfishness of His purposes, the grandeur and sweep of His ideas, His conceptions of nature, of man, of God. What was there that Christ could perceive in these rude, uncultured, somewhat coarse men, men most limited in their thoughts, who had little of what we call spirituality in them to attract Him towards them? Yet He gave them His very heart; He loved them with a love that is simply matchless and astounding. Ah! doubtless He saw more in them to love than common eyes could possibly see. For the greatest natures always do discover beauties of character in the humblest which escape the observation of ordinary people. But look at the Divine side. See Him as the Incarnate Son of God, the Holy One, the Perfect, the Divine One, and how the wonder grows that He should have humbled Himself to associate on terms of generous love with the disciples!

Why has Christ loved you—your heart, mind, soul? It is a fact; that you know. Why is it? Ah! that you cannot answer, I cannot answer, except we say, It is the nature of God to love, and the more weak, feeble, helpless, unworthy we are, the more compassionately does He bend to pour the fulness of His heart into our sinning lives. II. THERE WAS MUCH IN THEM THAT TESTED HIS LOVE—YET HE LOVED THEM. It is not necessary to speak much of the trial that Christ's first disciples were to Him over and over again. Quarrelling, petulance, scepticism, blindness of thought, cowardliness, treachery have no power to destroy that supreme love. How often we have stumbled at the revelations He has made, and, through a doubting spirit which we have encouraged, have asked foolish sceptical questions simply for the sake of asking them! How we have prayed for more light and clearer visions of God, when close at our side, all around us, have been manifestations of the Father! How, when asked to watch with and for Christ, we have pleaded weariness and slept! III. THERE WAS A CONTINUOUS NEED OF HIS LOVE, AND HE LOVED THEM UNTO THE END. Thus His life was a discipline of love to them, His death a sacrifice of love for them. (*W. Braden.*) *The great love of Christ for His own*, as shown—I. IN THE DIVERSIONS IT HELD AT BAY. 1. The consciousness that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world. And knowing the fact, He also knew all the particulars of the tragic exode. The actual endurance could not be much worse than such a distinct anticipation of it as He had. And yet the tremendous pressure of this foresight did not divert Him from the most tender and considerate attention to those whom He was about to leave. 2. The consciousness that He was about to return to God. There was a joy set before Him for which He endured the cross, despising the shame. Yet such was His affection for His disciples, that not all the glories of heaven in the act of opening to receive Him, could for a moment disturb His warm and compassionate attentions to them. II. IN THE REPULSIONS IT SURMOUNTED. There was much unworthiness and carnal crudeness in these men to repel the Saviour's affection. They did not so love Him. A few hours and they all had deserted Him. That same night, one of the most devoted of them denied Him. Another of them was harbouring at the time the Satanic instigation to betray Him. And in the hearts of all of them worked a most unseemly jealousy and contention (Luke xxii. 24). The Saviour had given them lesson after lesson on this point, and yet their miserable pride and selfishness had not been cured. How painful the contemplation! How disheartening and repellant to Him who had so loved them. And yet, the more unworthy they were of His love, the more intensely did it flame forth. III. IN THE CONDESCENSION IT INDUCED. He into whose hands the Father had given all things, stooped to employ those hands in washing a traitor's feet! Nor did He only take the menial's attire and work, but, when Peter objected, Jesus set Himself to new efforts to meet new manifestations of disease. And even Judas, with all His known treachery, was not relinquished without the most faithful and tender endeavours to bring him to himself. And when the washing was finished, the Lord preached still another sermon on humility and the true Christian spirit. IV. IN THE SACRAMENT IT ORDAINED. Though not given in the text, the other Evangelists have stated it in full (Matt. xxvi. 26–28). Herein is the great love of Christ manifest toward His own, that, on the very eve of His great passion, He appointed and left to them and us this perpetual legacy and memorial of His affection, in which He continually administers to all believing celebrants of this holy sacrament the very manna and bread of heaven, and incorporates His living Self with us as our salvation and our eternal life. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The method by which we become Christ's own*:—His redemption is not a mere breaking of bonds in which we were enthralled. It is not as when one comes upon a wild animal caught in a snare, and undoes the snare, and lets the panting, struggling thing return to its wild liberty again; it is rather as if one not only delivered it from the snare, but likewise attached it to himself, and tamed it to His will, so that it becomes his own. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *Christ's transcendent love*:—The experiences of love are such sometimes, even in this life, as to be an earnest, a blessed interpretation, of something more glorious yet to come. There is one thing which the New Testament is always in labour with, and which is never born, and that is, the conception of the greatness of the love of Christ to our souls. When all language is exhausted, when every one of its variations of figures and illustrations has been employed to set it forth, still it is never finished. Like music that transcends the scale of the instrument, it leaves the strain always unexpressed. The apostle, first in one key and then in another, tries all the melodies and harmonies of this Divine theme; but, after all, the love of Christ has never been told. The apostle declares

that it is past understanding, and so it is; but there are elements of experience that teach us something of it; and there are moments in which we put these elements together, and get some sense of it. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The love of the departing Christ:*—The text should perhaps read "to the uttermost" —expressing the depth and degree rather than the permanence of our Lord's love. It is much to know that the emotions of these last moments did not interrupt Christ's love. It is even more to know that in some sense they perfected it. So understood, the words explain for us the foot-washing, the marvellous discourses, and the climax of all that High-Priestly prayer. I. Look at that love AS A LOVE WHICH WAS NOT INTERRUPTED, BUT PERFECTED BY THE PROSPECT OF SEPARATION. 1. "He knew that His hour was come." All His life was passed under the consciousness of a Divine necessity laid upon Him, to which He cheerfully yielded Himself. On His lips there are no words more significant, and few more frequent, than "I must!" And all through His life He declares Himself conscious of the hours which mark the several crises of His mission. No external power can coerce Him to any act till the hour come, or hinder Him from the act when it comes. And thus, at the last and supreme moment, to Him it dawned unquestionable and irrevocable. How did He meet it? "Father! save Me from this hour. . . . Yet for this cause came I unto this hour." There is a strange, triumphant joy that blends with the shrinking that the decisive hour is at last come. 2. Mark, too, the form which the consciousness took. The agony, the shame, the mysterious burden of a world's sins that were to be laid upon Him; all these elements are submerged in the one thought of leaving behind all the limitations, humiliations, and compelled association with evil which, like a burning brand laid upon a tender skin, was an hourly agony to Him, and soaring above them all, unto His own calm home, His habitation from eternity with the Father. 3. This marvellous consciousness is set forth here as the basis and the reason for a special tenderness, as He thought of the impending separation. (1) Does this not help us to realize how truly flesh of our flesh, and bearing a heart thrilling with all innocent human emotions that Divine Saviour was? We, too, have known what it is to feel, because of approaching separation from dear ones, the need for a tenderer tenderness. At such moments the masks of use and wont drop away, and we are eager to find some word, to put our whole souls into some look, our whole strength into one clinging embrace that may express all our love, and may be a joy to two hearts for ever after to remember. The Master knew that longing, and felt the pain of separation; and He, too, yielded to the human impulse which makes the thought of parting the key to unlock the hidden chambers of the most jealously-guarded heart, and let the shyest of its emotions come out for once into the daylight. So, "knowing that His hour was come, He loved them then unto the uttermost." (2) But amidst all the parting scenes that the world's literature has enshrined, there are none that can be set by the side of this supreme and unique instance of self-oblivion. This Man who was susceptible of all human affections, and loved us with a love like our own human affection, had also more than a man's heart to give, and gave us more, when, that He might comfort and sustain, He crushed down Himself and went to the Cross with words of tenderness and consolation and encouragement for others upon His lips. (3) And if the prospect only sharpened and perfected His love, the reality has no power to do aught else. In the glory, when He reached it, He poured out the same loving heart; and to-day He looks down upon us with the same face that bent over that table, and the same love flows to us. "Knowing that He goes to the Father, He loves to the uttermost," and being with the Father, He still so loves. II. A LOVE WHICH IS FAITHFUL TO THE OBLIGATIONS OF ITS OWN PAST. Having loved, He loves. That is an argument that implies Divinity. About nothing human can we say because it has been therefore it shall be. Alas! we have to say the converse, because it has been, therefore it will cease to be. They tell us that the great sun itself, pouring out its rays exhausts its warmth, and were it not continually replenished must gradually, and even though continually replenished, will one day be a dead, cold mass of ashes. But this heart of Christ, which is the Sun of the World, shall endure after the sun is cold. He pours it out and there is none the less to give. "Thy mercy endureth for ever." III. A LOVE WHICH HAS SPECIAL TENDERNESS TOWARDS ITS OWN. These poor men, who, with all their errors, did cleave to Him; who, in some dim way, understood somewhat of His greatness and His sweetness—and do you and I do more?—were they to have no special place in His heart because in that heart the whole world lay? Surely, because the sun shines down upon dunghills and all impurities, that is no reason why it should not lie with special brightness on the polished mirror that

reflects its lustre. Surely, because Christ loves the outcasts and the sinners, that is no reason why He should not bend with special tenderness over those who, loving Him, try to serve Him, and have set their whole hopes upon Him. The rainbow strides across the sky, but there is a rainbow in every little dewdrop that hangs glistening on the blades of grass. And there is nothing sectional, narrow in the proclamation of a special tenderness of Christ towards His own, when you accompany with that truth this other, that all men are besought by Him to come into that circle of "His own," and that only they themselves shut any men out therefrom. The whole world dwells in His love. But there is an inner chamber in which He discovers all His heart to those who find in that heart their heaven and their all. "He came to His own," in the wider sense of the word, and "His own received Him not;" but also, "having loved His own He loved them unto the end." There are textures and lines which can only absorb some of the rays of light in the spectrum; some that are only capable of taking, so to speak, the violet rays of judgment and of wrath, and some who open their hearts for the ruddy brightness at the other end of the line. IV. A LOVE MADE SPECIALLY TENDER BY THE NECESSITIES AND THE DANGERS OF ITS FRIENDS. "Which were in the world." We have, running through the discourses which follow, many allusions to His leaving His followers in circumstances of peculiar peril. "I come unto Thee, and am no more in the world, but these are in the world. Keep them through Thine own name." The same contrast between the certain security of the Shepherd and the troubles of the flock seems to be in the text, and suggests a reason for the special tenderness with which He looked upon them. As a dying father on his deathbed may yearn over orphans that he is leaving defenceless, so Christ here is represented as conscious of an accession even to the tender longings of His heart when He thought of the loneliness and the dangers to which His followers were to be exposed. It seems a strange contrast between the emperor, sitting throned there between the purple curtains, and the poor athletes wrestling in the arena below. It seems strange to think that a loving Master has gone up into the mountain, and has left His disciples to toil in rowing on the stormy sea of life; but the contrast is only apparent. For you and I, if we love and trust Him, are with Him in the heavenly places even whilst we toil here, and He is with us, working with us even whilst He sitteth at the right hand of God. We may be sure of this, that that love ever increases its manifestations according to our deepening necessities. The darker the night the more lustrous the stars. The deeper, the narrower, the savager, the Alpine gorge, usually the fuller and the swifter the stream that runs through it. And the more enemies and fears gather round about us the sweeter will be the accents of our Comforter's voice, and the fuller will be the gifts of tenderness and grace with which He draws near to us. Our sorrows, dangers, necessities, are doors through which His love can come nigh. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The constancy of Christ's love*:—A short time previous to the death of the Marchioness of Tavistock, and when she was preparing to go to Lisbon for the recovery of her health, a consultation of physicians was held at Bedford House; and one of the gentlemen present requested, while he felt her pulse, that she would open her hand. Her frequent refusals occasioned him to take the liberty of gently forcing the fingers asunder; when he perceived that she had kept her hand closed to conceal the miniature-picture of the marquis. "Oh madam!" observed the physician, "my prescriptions must be useless, if your ladyship is determined to keep before your eyes an object which, although deservedly dear to you, serves only to confirm the violence of your illness." The marchioness replied, "I have kept the picture, either in my bosom or my hand, ever since the death of my lamented lord; and thus I am determined to preserve it till I fortunately drop after him into the grave." (*Percy.*) *The perfection of Christ's love*:—The mother, wan and pale with incessant vigils by the bedside of a sick child; the fireman, maimed for life in bravely rescuing the inmates of a blazing house; the three hundred Spartans at Thermopylæ; Howard, dying of fever caught in dungeons where he was fulfilling his noble purpose of succouring the oppressed and remembering the forgotten; the Moravian missionaries, who voluntarily incarcerated themselves in an African leper-house (from which regress into the healthy world was impossible, and escape only to be effected through the gates of death) in order that they might preach the glad tidings to the lepers,—all these, and many other glorious instances of self-devotion, do but faintly shadow forth the love of Him who laid aside divine glory, and humbled himself to the death of the cross. (*W. Baxendale.*) *Christ's an unchanging love*:—A noble rolling river has been flowing on for six thousand years watering the fields and slaking the thirst of a

hundred generations, yet shows no signs of waste. The sun has melted the snows of so many winters, renewed the verdure of so many springs, painted the flowers of so many summers, and ripened the golden harvests of so many autumns, yet shines as brilliant as ever, his floods of light none the less full for centuries of boundless profusion. Yet these are but faint images of Christ's love. For when the judgment flames have licked up that flowing stream and the light of that glorious sun shall be quenched in darkness, His love shall flow on throughout eternity. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Love in the face of discouragement*:—I know a mother who has an idiot child. For it she gave up all society, almost everything, and devoted her whole life to it. "And now," said she, "for fourteen years I have tended it and loved it and it does not even know me." Amid all discouragements Christ's love is patient and unwearying. (*D. L. Moody.*) *The changeless love of Christ*:—Earthly love is a brief and penurious stream, which only flows in spring, with a long summer drought. The change from a burning desert, treeless, springless, drear, to green fields and blooming orchards in June, is slight in comparison with that from the desert of this world's affection to the garden of God, where there is perpetual, tropical luxuriance of blessed love. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Uncertain friendship*:—Henry the Eighth used to come up the Thames to Chelsea to Sir Thomas More's house, drop in to dinner, and walk afterwards in the garden, his arms about More's neck. More's son-in-law, Roper, records it with delight. But More knew just what all this was worth, and that his head would count with the king for nothing against a French city or citadel, say. It is not so with Christ. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." *The Divine love does not fail when man fails*:—Mr. Sloan said: "A father teaching his child about the unchanging piety and love of God, said: 'I knew a little boy who received a canary from a friend as a present. The bird seemed to fill that boy's heart. He was intensely fond of it, and every morning he was delighted to listen to its singing. One morning no note proceeded from the cage. The bird was standing panting upon its perch, its feathers all ruffled. The little boy sat upon his chair and sobbed as if his heart would break.' The lesson taught the little child was this—Do you think he loved the bird any less that morning when he could not sing? No, he loved it when it was joyfully singing on its perch, but he loved it that morning when it could not sing. When it sang it filled him with joy and delight, but when it was ill he loved it all the more though its condition caused him pain." So, too, God loved us at all times. *The changeless Friend*:—So long as there is blossom on the trees, and honey in the blossom, the bees will frequent them in crowds, and fill the place with music; but when the blossom is over, and the honey is gone, the bees too will disappear. The same happens in the world with men. In the abode of fortune and pleasure friends will be found in plenty; but when fortune flies, they fly along with it. For this reason, let good men be advised to fly to Christ crucified, who never forsakes, in their distress, those who truly seek Him. (*Gotthold.*) *The faithfulness of Jesus*:—Consider these words—I. IN THEIR RELATION TO THE APOSTLES. The words "having loved His own," are a brief but complete summary of the Saviour's conduct. He loved them with a love of pity when He saw their lost estate, and He called them out of it to be His disciples; touched with a feeling of their infirmities He loved them with a tender and prudent affection, and sought to train and educate them, that they might be good soldiers of His cross; He loved them with a love of complacency as He walked and talked with them and found solace in their company. Even when He rebuked them He loved. On Tabor or in Gethsemane He loved His own; alone or in the crowd, in life and in death. Our Saviour's faithfulness was—1. Most remarkable. He had selected persons who must have been but poor companions for one of so gigantic a mind and so large a heart. (1) He must have been greatly shocked at their worldliness. He was thinking of the baptism wherewith He was to be baptized, but they were disputing which should be the greatest. When He warned them of an evil leaven, they thought of the loaves. Earth-worms are miserable company for angels, moles but unhappy company for eagles, yet love made our great Master endure the society of His ignorant and carnal followers. (2) Worse was the apparent impossibility of lifting them out of that low condition; for though never man spake as He spake, how little did they understand! "Have I been so long time with you," &c. No teacher here could have had patience with such heavy intellects, but our Lord's love remained, notwithstanding. (3) When we love a person, we expect him to have some little sympathy in the great design and aim of our life; yet our Lord loved disciples who could not be brought to enter at all into

the spirit which governed Him. Had they dared, they would rather have thwarted than assisted Him in His self-sacrificing mission. Still, this could not prevent Him from loving them unto the end. (4) On one or two occasions certain of them were even guilty of impertinence. Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him. But after rebuking a temptation which was evidently Satanic, His affection to Peter remained unabated. (3) That was a stern trial, too, when at a later period "all the disciples forsook Him and fled." Carrying the text beyond its original position, Christ, who had loved His own, loved them to the end. 2. Christ proved His love—(1) By His continual companionship. You would not expect a master to find rest in the society of his scholars; and yet herein was love, that Jesus, passing by angels, and kings, and sages, chose for His companions unlettered men and women. (2) By being always ready to instruct them, and His love is shown as clearly in what He kept back from them as in what He revealed. How loving to dwell so often upon the simpler truths, and the more practical precepts; it was as though a senior wrangler should sit down in the family and teach boys and girls their alphabet day after day. (3) By rendering every kind of assistance. Whensoever they were in trouble, He was their willing and able friend—when the sea roared; when Peter's wife's mother was sick; when one of His dearest friends was dead and buried. (4) By comforting them when He foresaw that they would be cast down; especially was this true at the period before His passion—when one would have thought He might have sought for comfort, He was busy distributing it. (5) By constantly pleading for them. Ere the poison was injected by the old serpent, the antidote was at hand. "Satan hath desired," &c. (6) By washing their feet. II. IN THEIR RELATION TO ALL HIS SAINTS. We read that our Lord "Came unto His own," &c.—the word is neuter—his own things; but in this instance it is masculine—his own persons. A man may part with his own things; sell his own house, cattle, merchandise; but a man cannot part with his own when it relates to persons, his own child, wife, father. Our own relatives are real property, perpetual possession. Jesus has just such a property in His own people—they are for ever near of kin to Him. These He "loved to the end." The text opens three windows. 1. As to the past. He has loved His own people from of old; eternally. This everlasting love has a speciality about it. Our Lord has a general love of benevolence towards all His creatures; but He has a special place in His heart for His own peculiar ones. (1) Jesus loved His people with a foresight of what they would be. He knew that "His own" would fall in Adam; that they would be hard to reclaim and difficult to retain; and yet He loved His own over the head of all their sins. On their highest Tabors He loves them, but equally as well in their Gethsemanes; when they wander, and when they come back. (2) This love is more than a passion, it is a settled principle, not subject to changes like terrestrial things. (3) This love has been attested by many deeds. By the fact that He stood surety for us when the covenant was made, and entered into stipulations on our behalf that He would fulfil the broken law, and offer satisfaction to the justice of God. In the fulness of time he took upon Himself our nature, lived a life of blameless service, died a death into which all the weight of Divine vengeance for sin was compressed. Now that He lives exalted in the highest heaven, He is still His people's servant, interceding for them, representing them, preparing a place for them, and by His Spirit fetching them out from mankind, and preparing them for the place which He has prepared. 2. The second window looks out upon the present. "Which were in the world." It does not seem an extraordinary thing that Jesus should love His own who are in heaven. Well may Jesus love them, for there is much beauty in them. But Jesus loves you working men that have to work with so many bad fellows, you tradesmen who have to go in among many who shock you, you good work girls, who meet with so many tempters. He sees your imperfection, He knows what you have to struggle with, and He loves you notwithstanding all. Again, as the sparks fly upwards, so were we born to trouble. But Jesus loves His own which are in this dolorous world: this is the balm of our griefs. 3. The third window looks out to the future. "Unto the end." (1) To the utmost end of their unloveliness. Their sinfulness cannot travel so far but His love will travel beyond it; their unbelief even shall not be extended to so great a length but His faithfulness shall still be wider and broader than their unfaithfulness. (2) To the end of all their needs. They may need more than this world can hold, and all that heaven can give, but Jesus will go to the end of all their necessities, and even beyond them, for He is "able to save to the uttermost." (3) To the end of their lives. (4) To the end of His own life. Until the eternal God shall die, His love shall never depart from any one of His beloved.

Conclusion: If Jesus Christ thus loves to the end—1. How ought we to persevere in our love to Him. 2. Let us not indulge the wicked thought that He will forsake us. 3. What a misery it must be to be without such a Saviour! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **And supper being ended.**—The translation should probably be, "And it now becoming supper time." As a matter of fact the supper was not ended (vers. 12, 26); but they had already reclined, and were, as we say, ready for supper. (*Archdeacon Watkins.*) **Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands.**—*The great gift:*—A gift—I. FROM THE SOVEREIGN OF ALL. II. INCLUDING ALL THINGS. III. TO THE SAVIOUR OF ALL. (*S. S. Times.*) I. THE GIVER. II. THE GIFT. III. THE RECIPIENT. (*Ibid.*) **And that He was come from God and went to God.**—*Extremes in Christ's life:*—This sublime declaration is but the preface to what follows, and nothing more startling at first sight can be found in all literature. I. CHRIST POSSESSED ALL THINGS, and yet He washed His disciples' feet. What has the possession of boundless wealth to do with such menial service? We could imagine a Rothschild sweeping His own room, but would it occur to us to connect with that act, as a reason, the fact of his immense riches? The explanation lies in what this feet-washing meant—the pardon and sanctification of Christ's disciples through His atonement. To this "all things" were necessary, and the absence of one Divine prerogative would have marred the work. Christ required all wisdom, all justice, all power, all love, and all influence over the widest reach of human souls. II. CHRIST CAME FROM GOD, and yet He washed His disciples' feet—as wonderful a conjunction as the previous one. We could imagine an ambassador of the highest rank relieving his lacquey of some humble duty and discharging it himself—but we should hardly refer to his office for a reason. But Christ's mission was expressly to do what the feet-washing meant. His one motive for visiting this world was to cleanse and sanctify His disciples' souls. III. CHRIST WAS GOING TO GOD, and yet He washed His disciples' feet—an equally strange conjunction. We can imagine a sovereign, just before his return from some distant province, rendering some humble but kindly service to a peasant, but we should never dream of saying that he did this because he was going to his capital. But Christ went to heaven because He had done that which was symbolized by the feet-washing. He came for that purpose; that purpose being accomplished, there was no further reason for Him to stay. And in going He went to His rest and His reward. Lessons: 1. Christ's work is an individual work, and shows the value of individual souls. Christ had all things, He came, He went for every man's cleansing—for *mine*. 2. What is true of Christ is in a sense true of every disciple. God has given us all we have, time, talents, money, influence, &c.; we have come from God; we shall go to God—what for? The salvation of men. God has endowed us with ability for it, has sent us to do it, will hold us accountable for it at the great day. 3. The "knowledge" of all this should beget a due sense of the blessedness, dignity, and responsibility of Christian discipleship. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Christ's mission:*—I. ITS ORIGIN—"from God." II. ITS QUALIFICATIONS—"all things." III. ITS DESTINY—"to God." (*Ibid.*) **He riseth from supper.**—The minuteness with which every action of our Lord is related here is very striking. No less than seven distinct things are named—rising, laying aside garments, taking a towel, girding Himself, pouring water into a bason, washing and wiping. This very particularity stamps the whole transaction with reality, and is the natural language of an astonished and admiring eye-witness. St. John saw the whole transaction. (*Bp. Ryle.*) **He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet.**—*Jesus teaching humility:*—Christ taught humility by precept—"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" by metaphor, as in the parable of the Pharisee and Publican; by illustration, as when he set a little child in the midst; and, as here, by his own most blessed example. Note—I. HUMILITY IN ITS CHARACTERISTIC UNSELFISHNESS. Pride is essentially selfish; humility "seeketh not its own, but another's good." Where shall we find a more beautiful or touching example than that introduced by ver. 1? II. THE DEEPEST HUMILITY IS CONSISTENT WITH THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE. Many Christians regard full assurance of salvation as having a tendency to spiritual pride. They are afraid to say "Jesus is mine, and I am His," lest it should savour of presumption. There is a false assurance which founds itself upon feeling, or imagined revelations, rather than upon the testimony of the word of God, and which by its blatant self-assertion has tended to bring assurance into contempt. But where assurance is the result of a simple faith in the promises, it produces in the soul the fruits of genuine humility. Just when Jesus was at the

zenith of spiritual exaltation (ver. 3), He bowed Himself to His lowly task. III. TRUE HUMILITY EXPRESSES ITSELF NOT IN WORDS, BUT IN DEEDS. Our Lord uses no words of self-abasement. In majestic silence He proceeds with His lowly but loving task. There is a form of so-called humility which expends itself in words of idle self-depreciation. This never becomes so clamorous as when any humble service is to be rendered or any modest testimony borne. They are not presumptuous enough to make a public confession of Christ, to teach a Sabbath-school class, to visit a family in poverty, &c. It is easy to see that this is a thin veil for self-indulgence and pride. True humility expresses itself not in unfavourable comparisons of ourselves with others, but in whole-hearted devotion to the interests of others. This was the humility of Him who, "though He was in the form of God," &c. IV. THE SERVICE WHICH TRUE HUMILITY RENDERS IS NOT SPECTACULAR AND SCENIC, BUT UNOBTRUSIVE AND HELPFUL. The simple rite of hospitality observed by our Lord became the occasion of many a splendid pageant in later days. But let him who would follow our Lord's example not imagine that he can do so by a literal observance of a rite that, through change of customs, has lost its utility and therefore its significance. He now truly "washes the disciples' feet" whose own feet are swift to bear to them messages of kindness, and whose hands are ready for any humble service. V. THE PARTICULAR SERVICE RENDERED BY OUR LORD, THOUGH NOT SPECTACULAR, WAS SYMBOLIC of inward purification, and distinguishes between the first and radical purification which takes place once for all in regeneration, and that daily purging from the infirmities that cling to us as we pass through the world (ver. 10). As one coming up fresh from the bath needs only to wash off the dust that clings to his feet and does not affect the purity of his person, so the believer by the bath of his first regeneration is kept pure till he enters his Father's house on high, whilst a daily application of the Spirit in sanctification is needed to remove the impurities that come from daily contact with earth and earthly things. (*T. D. Witherspoon, D.D.*) *Jesus teaching humility*:—I. The DIRECT TEACHING contained in our Saviour's washing of the disciples' feet. That our relation to Christ is—1. Personal, as is also His relation to us. There is no such fact as a general relationship to Christ. We are either His personal followers, or personally estranged. There is no religion but personal religion. Christ knelt before each of the twelve in turn. 2. Cleansing. Christ came to save the world from sin. But only those cleansed by the blood receive eternal life. 3. Needs to be continually renewed. It is a daily relation. He pointed to his daily cleansing, the washing of the basin, in distinction from the bathing in the fountain. 4. Practical. Our service is to be—(1) Personal. We have no general ministry, either of clergy or laity. It is the personal work we do which builds up the kingdom of God. The lost are found one by one. All organization that amounts to anything is association in some form for hand-to-hand work. (2) Lowly. Jesus took the form of a servant Look upon Him as He kneels at thy feet. So humble thyself to serve. (3) With the basin and towel. We are to aid each other to be clean Christians. II. The INDIRECT TEACHING. 1. That the first act of discipleship is self-surrender (vers. 8, 9). We must do just as the Saviour says, or we can have no part with Him. We must waive all objections. The objection of Peter arose from tenderness of conscience. We may feel unworthy of the grace of God. But some say, "We need no cleansing; we are satisfied with our way of life." There is nothing for these but self-surrender. How can you help it, looking upon Jesus, kneeling and waiting before you? 2. The value of one soul in God's sight. Jesus felt a personal love for each, even for Judas! What a tender touch He put upon those feet, which no mere washing could cleanse! 3. That bathing precedes washing (ver. 10); the atonement, the baptism of the Spirit; pardon, sanctification. As Peter, having been bathed, needed not save to wash his feet, so Judas, not having been bathed, needed the cleansing of the fountain. (*The Monday Club.*) *Christ, the perfect pattern*:—"Knowing that He was come from God and went back to God"—He did that act. Do not you see that He was quite conscious of His dignity when He did it? He did not forget Himself; and that is put down there that you may know that the deepest act of humility is not inconsistent with dignity. He, knowing that He came from God, and that He was just about to go back to God, would do this, the humblest of all acts. He would show us before He went up to the throne of the universe what He is who is sitting on the throne; because if He had not done this who was with God from all eternity, dwelling with Him in unapproachable light, we should not have been able to think that there was such humility on the throne. But now we

shall know for ever and ever what He is that is sitting upon the throne. Let us learn another thing—what it is that goes to God. It is humility that goes to God as well as comes from God. We must be humble, then; we must go on humbling ourselves more and more to the very last, so that at the last, when we at last go, we shall go with nothing but humility—prepared to be just nothing before the throne. When we are nothing God gives us all, and God will not give us His all till we are nothing in our own estimation. There are two or three reflections, which shall close our subject. 1. The first is—let us write it upon our hearts—that our Christ in glory is as humble now, and will be as humble to all eternity, as He was in that supper-room before His disciples. He changeth not. 2. Another reflection is, that as the devil and his angels lost their heaven through their self-importance, through pride, we may lose our heaven as they did through pride. 3. The next reflection is, that there is a spurious grandeur of humility which we must avoid. We are reminded of this by Peter. When Peter's turn came to be washed, he said, O no, never, never! My Lord wash my feet? Never! How humble that seems; and yet it was not humility, but a spurious, affected grandeur of humility, in which there is no humility at all. No; I will tell you what humility is. Humility before God is exactly that simple willingness to be served which the babe has to be waited on by its mother. The baby does not object to it. The baby does not say, "I am nothing but a poor little baby." No; but it takes it for granted. Now, we must allow God to do with us whatever He will in the same artless, simple spirit. 4. Another thought—that Satan put something into Judas's heart that put him off from Christ and heaven. That is in the connection too. Judas was among the twelve, but Satan was putting something into his heart. What was it? The love of this present evil world, and the love of the means by which this present evil world can be enjoyed—the love of what he had in the bag, and the love of putting something more into the bag and increasing it by any means. The devil was putting that into his heart. (*J. Pulsford.*) *Humility illustrated:*—I. IN THE CAREER OF THE LORD. 1. Taking our nature (John i. 14; Rom. i. 3). 2. Assuming our infirmities (Matt. viii. 17; Heb. iv. 15). 3. Born in lowliness (Luke ii. 7, 12, 16). 4. Becoming a servant (Luke xxii. 27; Phil. ii. 6, 7). 5. Associating with the lowly (Matt. ix. 10; Luke xv. 1, 2). 6. Submitting to toil (Mark vi. 3; John iv. 6). 7. Enduring poverty (Matt. xvii. 27; Luke ix. 58). 8. Obeying the law (Matt. iii. 13–15; Gal. iv. 4). 9. Refusing honours (John v. 41; vi. 15). 10. Dying on the cross (Phil. ii. 8; Heb. xii. 2). II. IN THE CAREER OF BELIEVERS. 1. Abraham before the Lord (Gen xviii. 27, 30, 32). 2. Jacob before God (Gen. xxxii. 9, 10). 3. Moses in Midian (Exod. iii. 11; iv. 1, 10). 4. Joshua before Ai (Josh. vii. 6–9). 5. Gideon when appointed to save Israel (Judg. vi. 15). 6. David at the great offering (1 Chron. xxix. 14). 7. John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 14; John iii. 29, 30). 8. The Roman centurion (Matt. viii. 8). 9. Peter (Luke v. 8; John xiii. 6–8). 10. Paul (Acts xviii. 1–3; xx. 33, 34). Conclusion: Pauline commendation of humility (Phil. ii. 5–11). (*S. S. Times.*) *The importance of humility:*—St. Augustine makes humility bear to religion the same essential relation which, according to Demosthenes, action bears to eloquence. "As the Athenian orator," says he, "being asked, What is the first precept in oratory? answered, Action; and What the second? answered, Action; and What the third? answered, Action; so, if you ask me in regard to the precepts of the Christian religion, I answer, first, second, third, Humility." (*T. D. Witherspoon, D.D.*) *Christ washing the feet of His disciples:*—Christ appears here as a dramatical teacher. Every act is significant. The old prophets taught in this way. Jeremiah's potters vessel; Ezekiel's scales, knife, and razor, are amongst the numerous examples. Christ taught here—I. THAT TRUE GREATNESS CONSISTS IN MINISTERING TO THE GOOD OF INFERIORS. We learn from Luke xxii. 24, that there was a dispute as to who should be greatest, and that Evangelist records what our Lord *said*. John records what Christ *did*. This idea of greatness—1. Condemns the general conduct of mankind. The world regards men great who receive most service, and mix least with inferiors. 2. Agrees with the moral reason of mankind. The greatness of Christ, who made Himself of no reputation, and the greatness of Paul, is that which commends itself to the unsophisticated reason of the world. He who humbles himself to do good gets exalted in the estimation of universal conscience. Disinterestedness is the soul of true greatness. II. THAT SPIRITUAL CLEANSING IS THE GREAT WANT OF THE RACE (ver. 8). 1. That this is so appears from two facts. (1) Divine fellowship is essential to human happiness. In God's presence is fulness of joy, and nowhere else. (2) Spiritual purity is essential to

Divine fellowship. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Hence God's command, "Wash you and make you clean;" and man's prayer, "Purge me with hyssop," &c. 2. This cleansing is pre-eminently the work of Christ. "If *I* wash thee not," &c. His blood cleanseth from all sin. "Unto Him that loved us," &c. 3. It extends to the whole life of man (ver. 10). Though regenerated, a man is not perfect. Every day brings its defilements and requires its purifications. Conclusion: At the table were three types of character. 1. The perfectly clean—Christ. 2. The partially clean—the disciples. 3. The entirely unclean—Judas. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Washing the disciples' feet:*—I. IT IS THE QUALITY OF AN UNFETTERED SPIRIT. The possession of an unfettered spirit is the *gift* of humility, a possession which can be yours and mine only as we rid ourselves of those fetters with which society and business and fashions of the day would bind us, and go out in the strength of a loyal affection to Jesus Christ to walk in the footsteps of the Master, bind up the broken-hearted, to visit those who are in prison, to wash the disciples' feet, and thus by our very humility illustrate a strength and power for the manifestation of which the world is longing to-day, as never before, with a great longing. II. IN SUCH A CHRISTIAN HUMILITY THERE IS ALWAYS MAJESTIC POWER. There is a vast difference between muscular strength and moral strength. Atlas could carry the world upon his shoulders, but it required Christ to carry the world upon his heart. Go back into that valley of Elah in Old Testament times and see the difference between the strength of muscle and the strength of morals. Here comes the Philistine giant out from his camp. Behind him all are boasting of his power and of his prowess; in just a little Israel will be overthrown and the Philistine's god will be triumphant. And out from the camp of Israel comes that boy armed only with his sling and his five smooth stones. If you will follow the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will find that ever and always the strength of His life was a strength of moral purpose put over against the other strength that the world had to offer. III. THE WASTE OF A LIFE WHICH IS UNPOSSESSED OF THIS SPIRIT OF HUMILITY. This is a corollary from those last words of the text: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them;" because there is always great disaster which comes to an immortal soul when knowledge is not the spur which drives it. There is always something lost in a human life when that life knows more about Christ than it does for the sake of Christ. It is not that there may not be the manifestation of this lovely virtue or of that attractive trait apart from the spirit of humility; but there is a great waste in the life still, because it retains a possession which has not been transmuted into action, because it has not been entirely permeated by the spirit of love. You find a person, for example, who has been living far away among the hills, perhaps in a beautiful home, with everything that pertains to comfort and to luxury about him, but never having gone beyond the borders of the little town in which he has been dwelling. You have had the advantage of a larger acquaintance and of a larger fellowship, and as you speak with that circumscribed life you cannot help confessing to yourself that, although there is very much that is beautiful about it and within it, still there is a great lack there somewhere; there is a waste because that life has not gone out to see what there is to be seen in this world of ours. But just so soon as the Lord opened the eyes of Peter's impulsive soul, just so soon as He permitted him to look out upon vistas which he had never seen before, and upon a Divine landscape which had never before fallen beneath his keu, at that moment Peter called out in a great yearning and in a great soul-desire, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." (*Nehemiah Boynton.*) *Jesus washing His disciples' feet:*—Here is—I. MATTER FOR INQUIRY. Is there anything in the conduct of Christ now analogous to His washing Peter's feet when on earth? Yes. 1. When He watches over the temporal affairs of His people. When Jesus looks to your family troubles, and bears your household cares, saying unto you, "Cast all your care on Me for I care for you," is He not in effect doing for you what He did for Peter, caring for your lowest part, and minding the poor dust-stained body? 2. When He puts away from us our daily infirmities and sins. It is a great act of love when Christ once for all absolves the sinner, and puts him into the family of God; but what long suffering there is when the Saviour bears the follies of the recipient of so much mercy hour by hour, putting away the constant sin of the erring but yet beloved child. To blot out the whole of sin like a thick cloud, this is a great and matchless power, as well as grace; but to remove the mist of every morning and the damps of every night—this is condescension well imaged in the washing of Peter's feet. 3. When He cleanses our prayers. They

are the feet of our soul, since with them we climb to heaven and run after God. It is oftentimes easier to do a thing over at once anew than it is to patch up a work which has been badly done by others. There are His own prayers for me—I thank Him for them, but I cannot help also blessing Him that He should take my prayers, and put them into the censer, and offer them before His Father's face; for I am certain that before they can have been fit to offer they must have experienced a deal of washing. 4. When He makes our works acceptable. These may be compared to the soul's feet. It is by the feet that a man expresses his activity. We have heard of some one who made sugar out of old rags; but the manufacture cost more than the goods were worth; and this is something like our works. Jesus Christ makes sweetness out of the poor rags of our good works; they cost Him more in the manufacturing than ever the raw material could have been worth, or the finished works themselves are worth, except in His esteem. 5. When He is content to suffer in His people's sufferings. Not a pang shoots through you but Jesus knows and feels it. II. MATTER FOR ADMIRATION. When we consider—1. The freeness of the deed. "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" It is perfectly wonderful that He should, for we have scarcely desired the mercy. You do not find that Peter asked Christ to do it. No, it was unsolicited, unexpected. It is great goodness on Christ's part to hear our prayers when we really feel our need; but if Christ did no more for us than we ask Him to do, we should perish; for nine out of ten of the things which He gives us we never asked for, and three out of four of them we scarcely know that we want. Have there not been many nights on which you have gone to bed without any particular sense of guilt, and without any special intercession for cleansing? You have forgotten to ask, but He has never forgotten to give. You have risen in the morning; you were not aware that any special danger would come to you, and you did not pray for special protection, but yet He knew it; and unasked and unsought for He has kept you from danger. 2. The glory of the Person. Lord! Master! God! Dost thou wash my feet? He whom the angels worship takes a towel and girds Himself. What a stoop is here! 3. The lowliness of the office. "My feet." To wash my head, to purge my mind, to cleanse my hands and my heart, is very condescending; but He does a slave's work, takes the meanest part of me and washes that. 4. The unworthiness of the object of this washing. "My feet?" 5. The completeness of the washing. When things are washed by careless servants, they want washing again; but when they are washed by the loving hands of Jesus, they cannot be badly done. III. MATTER FOR GRATITUDE, that having once washed head and hands and feet with blood, He still doth daily wash my feet with water. IV. MATTER FOR IMITATION. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The teaching of the foot-washing*:—1. THE TYPE OF OUR LORD'S CONTINUOUS LOVE TO US. I. Christ still acts as the host of His people. How much the life of Christ with His people lay in intense familiarity with them! He began His ministry at a feast, and again and again we find Him eating with His disciples; and the last thing He did was to sit at supper with them. He still saith to His Church, "If any man open to Me," &c.; and His own figure for the opening of the new dispensation is "the marriage supper of the Lamb." Now Jesus is the host of His Church, providing the gospel supper and entertaining us right royally. He prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies. "He satisfies our mouth with good things," &c. And the Lord is a host who leaves nothing incomplete, and entertains us, not as paupers but as guests, as friends, as distinguished persons who shall not sit among mean men, but shall have their portion among princes. 2. Christ cares for our minor matters with a personal interest. That He should ease their weary hearts, enlighten their clouded brains, I can understand; but that He should wash their feet is wonderful. A little soil on their ankles; He will attend to that, and personally, too. He might have left them to wash one another's feet. Surely He had but to suggest it and they would have cheerfully waited on each other. Take your little things to Christ, those trials of which your heart says, "They are too trifling for prayer." Not so; the Lord loves us to trust Him thoroughly. 3. Christ provides refreshment for His people. What an intense pleasure it is in extremely hot countries to have the feet washed upon coming in after a weary walk. Our Lord washed His disciples' feet, not only because cleansing was desirable, but also for their pleasure and solace. He takes great pleasure in giving joy to His followers. When doth the Lord give us these refreshments? (1) Often after a journey—after a severe trial. (2) Sometimes before the trial, for these disciples were now about to enter upon a very rough road. (3) When we are in the house of God, when the Word has been preached, some joyful hymn borne us to

heaven; or, best of all, at the communion table. (4) In our own quiet chambers, and in the night watches. 4. Christ continues to guard the purity of His Church. From the occasion it is clear that He would have us seek the special purifying power of His presence during religious ordinances. We need our feet washed before we come to His table—"Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread," while we are at His table, for there is sin in our holiest things. When we come away from worship we have need to get alone, and cry, "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults." This frequent washing is—(1) Absolutely necessary. Ye that follow in His footsteps, walk with clean feet. His ministers especially need this or the people will never cry, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings." (2) Spiritual: no external form will suffice. Christ washed the feet of Judas with water. (3) Very readily given. II. THE MODEL OF HIS OWN LOVE IN HIS PEOPLE. We learn—1. That there will always be need of service in the Church, and always need of service in the particular direction of promoting purity. The apostles were twelve strong men, yet they could not do without a servant; and therefore their Lord supplied the vacant place. And now that the Lord is gone His Church still needs servants, and will never be so clean that it will have no need of foot-washing. 2. That we are not to advocate the abrogation of such service. The Stoic would say, "What need of washing a man's feet? If he needs it, let him wash them himself. The first law of nature is self-love. Let him mind his own business." That is anti-Christianity: but Christianity says, "I am willing that others should help me to be holy, and I am also willing to help others to the same end." Sometimes it is more humbling to have your own feet washed than to wash other people's, and hence sometimes our naughty pride says, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Yet it must be so, and pride must sit still like a child and be both washed and wiped. 3. That such service should be done very cheerfully. Nobody asked the Master to bring the basin: no one would have thought of such a thing: it was His own heart of love that made Him do it. Let us be also ready to perform any office for our brethren, however lowly. Covet humble work, and when you get it be content to continue in it. 4. That such service should be done thoroughly. How well our Lord took up the servant's place. Give your Lord zealous and earnest service; strip to your shirt sleeves, if need be. Do not attempt to play the fine gentleman; is it not far nobler to be a real Christian? (*Ibid.*) *Reminiscences of the foot-washing*:—In the Epistles of Peter, written many years after this, we find subtle traces of the impression it left upon his mind. There still seemed to rise before him the form of the King taking off His upper garment, tying a towel round His waist, and then, with marvellous self-abasement, washing the disciples' feet. Hence the intensely picturesque expression of His charge—"Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another, for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." Literally, "Tie on humility like a dress fastened with strings." It is plain that he understood the required imitation of what Christ did when washing the feet of His company, to consist not in copying the outward act, at the same time wearing an outward garment like that which He wore at the time, but in copying the spirit of the act and wearing humility itself. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Parody of the foot-washing*:—A great authority declares that "Peter lives to-day in the person of the Pope." Then he has changed his conviction on the present subject, if we can accept the Rev. Newman Hall's account of the ceremonies of "Maundy Thursday." "Thirteen persons personated the apostles. They were dressed in white flannel, and were seated on an elevated platform in the south transept, which had been arranged for the ceremony, with galleries of ascending seats for lady spectators, who came in the prescribed costume. Descending from his throne after the benediction, the Pope was divested of his gorgeous outer vestments, and appeared as if in a very large flannel dressing-gown, fastened with a cord round the waist; a towel of fine cloth, trimmed with lace, having been tied on him, he walked slowly to the nearest apostle, whose right foot, evidently well washed beforehand was already bare. The stocking had been previously cut so as, without any trouble or delay, to be removed sufficiently for the purpose at the precise moment. Everything was done to facilitate his Holiness in the arduous duty which now awaited him. The apostles were seated at such a convenient elevation that He was under no necessity of stooping. A sub-deacon on his right raised the apostle's foot, over the instep of which a second attendant poured a little water, which fell into a silver-gilt basin, held by a third; while a fourth, carrying thirteen towels in a silver basin, handed one of them to his Holiness, who passed it

over the foot, which he then kissed. Another officer in waiting was a bearer of nosegays, one of which he then handed to the Pope, who presented it to the apostle, together with two medals from a purse of crimson velvet fringed with gold, borne by the Papal treasurer. The rest were then similarly served; and the whole was done so expeditiously, that in a very few minutes the immense crowd were rushing off to be present at the next ceremony." So does the Pope fulfil what has been called the proudest of titles, "Servus servorum Dei." Not only at Rome, however, has this act of our Lord been regarded as the institution of a religious rite rather than the display of an example to be followed spiritually. Many humble Christian societies have adopted this view, and still we find that some devout people are earnest for it. Such worthies, in making the mere sign a resting-place of thought, remind us of the case feigned by an old British sage, of a belated and weary traveller, who, on coming up to an hostelry, ready to die for want of a night's lodging, took no notice of the inn, but "embraced the signpost." (*Ibid.*) *The strangeness of our Lord's procedure*:—To provide a guest with water to wash his feet is a common act of hospitality among the Hindoos. It is also considered a privilege and duty for disciples to wash the feet of any celebrated gooroo, or religious guide. But for a gooroo to wash the feet of his disciples would be diametrically opposed to a Hindoo's ideas of propriety. "Snppose," I said to my pundit, the other day, "a celebrated gooroo were to attempt to wash the feet of his disciples, would they allow it?" "Never," he replied; "if he were to make the attempt, they would refuse to allow him; would rush out of his presence; and would think he was gone mad. Such an idea is entirely opposed to the reverence which a disciple has for his teacher, and would not be tolerated for a moment. To permit it would bring reproach upon both teacher and disciple." With these ideas in his mind it is easy to understand how Peter should be startled and astonished when Jesus drew near to wash his feet. "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" Such an act had never been heard of; was contrary to the customs of the country; contrary to every idea of propriety; and calculated to bring reproach upon his teacher. (*J. L. Nye.*) **What I do thou knowest not now.**—*The inscrutable character of the Divine dispensations*:—I. THE CONDUCT OF GOD IS IN GENERAL CONCEALED FROM THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS PEOPLE. 1. It may be the result of necessity. The conduct of God will appear, on the least consideration, too vast and complicated ever to be comprehended by man. Not only is our knowledge limited in reference to nature, but in reference to many sublime truths of revelation. We know not what attainments the mind will make in its disembodied and exalted state, but we seem fully confident that in the present condition there is a limit to its discoveries. 2. It may be the result of design. That He could have stated the reason of chastisement when the rod was inflicted, that He could have made known His design when the suffering was felt, there can be no doubt. But it is intentionally concealed, that the discovery may add to our felicity in a world of greater purity and light and love. II. THERE IS A PERIOD WHEN THE CONDUCT AND PURPOSES OF GOD WILL BE FULLY AND SATISFACTORILY EXPLAINED. 1. The conduct of God may be partially disclosed in time. Time is necessary for the development of many things. The seed lies in the ground and seems to rot, but if we have patience to wait we shall see the germ, and at a subsequent period a tall and stately tree. Hence, that which once seemed useless and rotten becomes in process of time useful both in blossom and fruit—the one enchanting to the eye, and the other grateful to the palate. Now if it be requisite to wait that we may trace the opening beauties of nature, equally necessary is it to wait that we may trace the conduct of Providence. The singular and diversified history of Joseph may be cited as a proof of these observations. Permit me to observe, before I pass on, that we are not always required to wait so long for the developments of Divine Providence as in a moment of unbelief we are apt to imagine. Disclosures are sometimes speedily made and unexpectedly enjoyed. Peter had merely to wait the utterance of another sentence before he perceived the symbolical character of our Lord's conduct. But though, as an antidote to despondency and a stimulus to hope, the disclosure may be made, we are not warranted to look for it with unwavering certainty. 2. That it will be fully revealed in eternity. III. THIS CONCEALMENT OF THE CONDUCT OF GOD OUGHT NOT TO LEAD TO ANY DISCOURAGEMENT OR UNBELIEF IN THE MINDS OF HIS PEOPLE. Notice—1. The equity of the Divine government. In the administrations of His laws, and in the distribution of His favours, God appears in a twofold character—as a benefactor and a judge. In the former character, favours unmerited and unsought are graciously bestowed, and it is this that endears Him to the Christian, and entitles

Him to honour, homage, and praise. As a judge He never fails to do that which is right. 2. The parental character of the Divine discipline. (*The Evangelist.*) I. THE PROPOSITION. "What I do thou knowest not now." 1. As to the intent. God's people know the general end of His dealings with them—His own glory and their good; but the particulars they are not able to guess—as Joseph when his brethren sold him into Egypt (Gen. l. 20). 2. As to the extent and effect. We see things sometimes in their beginnings but not in their close; because of—(1) Their intricacy (Psa. lxxviii. 19; Rom. xi. 13; Isa. lv. 8–9; Job v. 9). (2) Our understandings, which at best are short-sighted, on account both of the dimness of natural reason and the imperfection of supernatural illumination. (3) A special Divine dispensation. God makes His ways dark to His servants—(*a*) Because they are not capable of or fit to receive a revelation of them (John xvi. 12; Heb. v. 12). (*b*) That their faith may be thereby strengthened, and their dependence on God encouraged (chap. xx. 19). (*c*) That God's sovereignty and liberty may be preserved (Deut. xxix. 29). (*d*) For their discipline—to correct or prevent some miscarriage in them, whether pride, security, or carnal confidence (2 Cor. xii. 7). II. THE QUALIFICATION. "Thou shalt know," &c. 1. The discovery. He will make known—(1) The justice of His ways, and show that He has done no more than equal (Jer. xii. 1; Habb. ii. 13; Ezek. xviii. 29). (2) Their truth, and manifest His faithfulness (Psa. lxxvii. 8; Josh. xxiii. 14). (3) Their efficacy, and so manifest His power (Psa. lxxviii. 19). (4) Their unchangeableness, and so show His constancy (Job xxiii. 13; James i. 17). (5) Their wisdom, and so justify them to all (Job xii. 6; 2 Cor. i. 25). (6) Their goodness, and so make known His kindness (Rom. viii.). 2. The manner of this discovery. (1) By illumination, so that we may see. (2) By experience, so that we may feel. 3. The time. (1) Perhaps in this life. Many Christians have left the world justifying God's proceedings. (2) Certainly in the life to come. "In Thy light we shall see light." (*T. Horton, D.D.*) "*What I do.*" That act of Christ's did seem strange, and Peter's bewilderment is not to be wondered at. Let us see how the Master dealt with it. I. "WHAT I DO." What a wealth of meaning is stored in these three words. No angel mind can grasp them. He is the great Doer; always doing. "My Father worketh," &c. There is nothing anywhere, or at any time, that He does not perform, permit, or control, in mind or matter, heaven or earth. II. "THOU KNOWEST NOT." Put the two pronouns side by side. "I" stands for the Deity, "thou" for the mortal. Oh, the folly and pride that criticises and objects to His providential rule! I could not worship a God whose work I could comprehend. How wicked to rebel because our poor capacity cannot gauge the Divine intention. If an architect were to ask you to explain the lines on which Chichester Cathedral is built as you were flashing by it in the express to Portsmouth, you would smile at his unreason, but you are moving across the field of God's matters more rapidly than that. You cannot pour the ocean into a pond, crowd the light of the sun into a lantern, compress the mind of an archangel into the brain of a schoolboy. Then, again, your affairs are mixed up with the rest of His matters, and what He does you know not, because you are only the smallest cog, and the scope of the machine is beyond your ken; because you are only one thread in the vast loom at which He is weaving, and the pattern and purpose cannot be scanned by mortal eyes. What, then, is the attitude we ought to take? One of implicit obedience and unflinching trust. Though we know not what He does we need never be at a loss to know what He would have us do. But if you set up a will of your own you must suffer. Loyally enter the train of His providence, make its movements yours, and you shall be carried safely to the terminus; but oppose it, and collision will come and eternal wreck—witness the cases of Pharaoh, Israel in the wilderness, Saul, Jerusalem. III. "THOU SHALT KNOW HEREAFTER." In Peter's case the revelation followed close upon the mystery. It often does. It did to Joseph in Egypt, Esther in Persia, Luther in Wartburg. But whether here or not heaven will be the land of revelations. Amongst the many mansions there will be the Interpreter's house, where we shall look upon the picture of life as it was, and read the translations too. "There shall be no night there." (*J. Jackson Wray.*) *Ignorance and knowledge:*—What we do not know does not lessen or impair the value of what we do know. (*H. H. Dobney.*) *Existing ignorance and approaching knowledge:*—I. THE EXISTING IGNORANCE OF THE GOOD. There is much that the best man does not know. 1. In nature. How little does the most scientific man know of the substances, lives, laws, operations, extent of the universe. How deeply did Newton feel his ignorance. 2. In moral government. The reasons for the introduction of sin, the suffering of

innocence, the prosperity of the wicked, the tardy march of Christianity, are wrapt in obscurity. 3. The Divine revelation. What Peter said of Paul's epistles we feel to be true of the whole book—difficulties we cannot remove, doctrines that transcend our intelligence. 4. In his own experience. Why should he be dealt with as he is? Why such alternations of joy and sorrow, friendship and bereavement, health and sickness? Why such conflicting elements in his nature? II. THE APPROACHING KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOOD. Christ's words imply that there is a hereafter, and that this hereafter will be a sphere of knowledge. 1. There will be sufficient time for knowing. What ages of study await us! 2. Sufficient facilities for knowing. All existing obstructions removed, and the immeasurable field of truth wide open under a never clouded or setting sun. (*Homilist.*) *Present ignorance and future illumination*:—We view the text as containing—I. A STATEMENT OF PRESENT IGNORANCE. We propose—1. To illustrate the fact of this present ignorance. God has been pleased to assist the human mind, by the gift of His own inspired word, and has imparted the influences of His Holy Spirit, by whose agency its meaning—which, to the carnal mind, is frequently obscure—is more fully unfolded. Yet, at the same time, there is a vast sphere over which, as yet, ignorance casts her shadow. "We know but in part," &c. For example: (1) The construction of your bodies; the constitution of your minds; the mode of their primeval union; of their present co-operation, and of their final separation—how much of mystery is here! (2) Angels. Their residence, occupations, enjoyments. (3) God, the trinity of persons in unity of essence, the perfections of His nature and the process by which He operates in the creation. (4) Providential dispensations. (5) The scheme of redemption. (6) Eternity. 2. To assign its reasons. (1) The limitation of our intellectual faculties, arising partly from their inherent constitution, and partly from their being now identified with material bodies. (2) The pollution of our moral nature. (3) The positive design of God, in order to continue our fitness for the ordinary associations and duties of life; to mature and to perfect the graces of the Christian character; to create and continue within us a vivid anticipation of the eventual possession of another and a better world. II. A PROMISE OF FUTURE ILLUMINATION. Observe that the future state—1. Is one of vast and expanded knowledge. (1) All obstructions will be removed. (2) Men are there to be brought into direct and immediate contact with objects, the very existence of which they now know only upon testimony and through faith. 2. The vast and expanded knowledge of the future state is identified with the highest interests of our being. (1) There is much of difficulty in studying, and oftentimes much of pain in acquisition, and its results. There is also much which directly tends to pollute. Ask the philosopher over his midnight lamp; the statesman amid the intricacies of his cabinet; the man of observation amid the buffeting and temptations of the world—one result will invariably be pronounced, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." (2) Now against all this the knowledge of the celestial state is associated—(*a*) With our holiness. Not that the knowledge of heaven is an efficient cause of purity; but it will be an instrument for preserving it. Possessing such a knowledge, with such objects from such a source, and from such causes, it is impossible for the inhabitants of heaven to fall. (*b*) With our happiness; for holiness is inseparable from happiness. And what must be the result of those contemplations which the heavenly world fully and absolutely reveals to our view of providence and of redemption? Conclusion: Cherish—1. Faith. 2. Desire. 3. Evangelical preparation. (*J. Parsons.*) *Rectified knowledge in the future state*:—It is very interesting to consider ourselves here as only in the childhood of our being, our full manhood being reserved for another and higher state of existence. When a man reviews the ideas, imaginations, and pursuits of his youth, he discovers a number of wild notions which he now would be ashamed to entertain, of false theories which a riper judgment has long ago exposed, and of worthless objects which have long ceased to attract his regards. He finds, moreover, that much which seemed inexplicable has become very plain, and that things at which he used to wonder present no longer any cause for surprise. Thus shalt it be with us hereafter. We shall look back upon riches, and honour, and property—things which now seem to us of great worth and importance—we shall look back upon them as so many toys with which it is wonderful we could ever have been pleased. Many of our present notions and opinions, though framed with care and maintained with pertinacity, will appear to us like the dreams and fancies of boyhood, which fade before the light of riper years; and the dispensations of Providence at which we now wonder, and beneath which we are too often impatient, will become as simple to us and as worthy of our gratitude as

the discipline and correction we have received from earthly parents, which, whilst we were young, may have appeared to us harsh and unaccountable, but of which in later days we see all the reasons and feel all the worth. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *At best our knowledge of God's designs is fragmentary:*—If we could know as much as we desire it would probably make us insane. We have seen gardeners pull down the awnings in their greenhouses. Plants may sometimes have too much sun, and so may we. (*T. Adams.*) *A clear view of life's mysteries:*—A traveller, as he passed through a large and thick wood, saw a part of a huge oak which appeared misshapen, and seemed to spoil the scenery. "If," said he, "I was the owner I would cut down that tree." But when he had ascended the hill and taken a full view of the forest this same tree appeared the most beautiful part of the landscape. One day we are to have clearer vision of life's mysteries. *The present obscure because unfinished:*—You go into the workshop of the artist who is framing a great structure. You see here a stone of a peculiar colour; there a stone of another colour; here one of this, and there one of that angle. You would not say to the artist, "You had better take this stone or that stone next;" you would submit to his superior wisdom. He sees the whole of the structure as it stands complete before his mind. What do you know of the whole plan? These few stones that you see can give you but the most imperfect conception of the cathedral in which they are to be placed. In God's providence I submit to the superior wisdom of the Great Architect. He takes from the earth one man and leaves another. We are amazed; we cannot understand it; we know not the plan that lies in God's mind. (*W. Hamma, D.D.*) *Hereafter, not now:*—Christ's "hereafter" has a large scope. In this case it might mean—1. Presently—as soon as He had taken His garments and was set down again (vers. 12–15). 2. The later life of the apostle—when the Holy Spirit had led him into all truth, and he began to see in this act an epitome of all Christ's life, work, and teaching. 3. That haven of everlasting repose, where every mystery shall be read aright in the sunshine of the Saviour's presence. Let us now apply the text to—I. CHRISTIAN ORDINANCES. 1. Which of us has not asked himself, in taking part in the services of the Church, What is the meaning, hope, use of this entering a particular building, kneeling at certain rails, hearing and uttering of sounds, eating bread, drinking wine, sprinkling of a little child with water? 2. We can answer these questions most satisfactorily in these words of Christ. The operation of the Holy Spirit is observed not in the agency, but in the effect. It is mere impatience to say, Because I cannot see which way the Spirit came or went, I will not believe. Or, because I cannot see the connection between this word of God and my soul—because I cannot understand how my poor voice can make its way into the Eternal Presence, &c.—therefore I will forsake the assembling of Christians together, and trust that grace, the only real thing, will come to me all the same in solitude. 3. We hope that the hereafter thus promised is the nearest of the three. If a man will earnestly set himself to use the ordinances of the gospel, we trust that he will be enabled very soon to know what Christ does in them. And certainly, if we never find any good from any of them, we have cause for anxiety and self-suspicion. Every service ought to send us home saying, Lord, it was good for us to be there; it has enabled me to hold converse with Thee, and to go on my way rejoicing. II. That which is true of ordinances is no less true of DOCTRINES. 1. There are many things which Christ teaches, and which the teaching of Christ presupposes as already communicated that we know not. We receive them; they lie on the surface of the intellect—unharmonized particulars—but they do not enter into our thoughts and feelings as truths grasped and realized. When we re-examine them they are each time as difficult as before, and we despair of ever fitting them into our plan of truth. There are some which we could wish away; the doctrines, *e.g.*, of grace and free-will, of the existence of evil, of the atonement, of the Spirit. 2. In regard to all this "hereafter" is nearer and a more distant. (1) The first sound of these difficulties is daunting, yet, when we look into them we see a ray of light soon. Few, if any, are created by the gospel. Most certainly the existence of evil had place before, and would have place without, the gospel. Each, when tried not by the intellect but by the heart, diminishes almost into nothing, and is qualified by such accompaniments, that practically its force is almost nothing, as regards piety and life. It may be a hard saying, "Whom He will He hardeneth;" but if along with that there stands the promise, "Ask, and ye shall have—If any man thirst, let Him come unto Me and drink," we see at once that the object of the doctrine is rather attraction than repulsion. (2) And what I know not now I shall know here-

after. Life is troubled and confused; its opportunities of Divine study are rare and brief, its distractions many, the illusions of its sight and thought powerful, the gaze of the intellect into God's heaven dim and unsteady. But eternity will be free from all these interruptions: and when God Himself, revealed in open vision, becomes the instructor, we shall advance apace in that science of sciences, which is "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." III. The text is no less true of PROVIDENCES. There are many things in the conduct of this world, whether in the affairs of empires or individuals, which are difficult to make consistent with the truth of a Divine Ruler. We make, some of us, too free a use of the word *mysterious* in our judgments upon Providence. There is nothing mysterious in the removal of a good man to his paradise, even though it leave a neighbourhood sad and a family fatherless, nor in any event which instructs the living or makes heaven more real to us, reflection easier, or repentance more resolved. The mysterious thing is, when evil is allowed to spread unchecked; when souls are lost in sin for which Christ died; when unprepared men are hurried to judgment without a moment for thought; when the Gospel of Christ seems to make so little progress. It is concerning these things that we have to say, "What I do," &c. And though we must not call affliction in its commoner forms a mystery, yet there is a sense in which even to it may be applied these words, and the Christian mourner, or watcher, or wrestler, with indwelling corruption, may be bidden to look up, and say, The time is at hand, for my Master tells me so, when I shall know why I was so buffeted and tempted. Even in the near hereafter I may be able to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; in the great boundless hereafter I shall certainly read all clearly, and be satisfied when I awake in His likeness." (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Present mysteries, future solutions*:—"God's providences," says the godly Flavel, "like the Hebrew letters, are often to be read backward." 1. Sense doubts, while faith trusts. 2. The one questions while the other obeys. 3. The one must reason out all mysteries, all God's ways, while the other can take them on trust. "Though no affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, afterwards," &c. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *The patient waiting and obedience of faith*:—The subject suggests—I. A CAUTION AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF HASTY DOGMATISM. 1. Respecting the Divine procedure. Peter was over hasty in judging Christ's action, for he was ignorant. Had he waited Christ would have made it clear. We, too, are incompetent to comprehend the Divine procedure. (1) When we consider the Doer it is not surprising that there should be much that is mysterious in His varied action in the universe. A man may do and say many things confounding to the intellect of his child; much more the infinite God. (2) No wonder that in a system so vast and complex there should be many things that appear to our limited view to conflict with Divine goodness, wisdom, and power; but the wise man will not conclude that the conflict is real; He will rather wait. Ignorance should be modest in its judgments. 2. Respecting the difficulties of Divine revelation. Because you fancy you see some contradictions in the Bible, or something opposed to science, do not rush to the conclusion that therefore the Bible is false. Wait! There may be a mistake somewhere outside the Bible. That which contradicts it may be mere hypothesis, or that in it which contradicts may be your own mistaken interpretation. A little more light may remove the difficulty. II. THAT WHATEVER DIFFICULTIES THERE MAY BE SURROUNDING OTHER THINGS, AND HOWEVER IGNORANT WE MAY BE RESPECTING THEM, THERE IS AT LEAST ONE THING PLAIN—THE PATH OF DUTY. Peter's duty was plain, it was to obey Christ. No matter whether he saw the reason or not. The Scriptures, if they do not resolve your difficulties, yet do light up the path in which you should walk. If they do not supply all desirable light for the head, they do supply all needful light for the feet. III. THAT OBEDIENCE IS THE CONDITION OF KNOWLEDGE. Christ did not impart knowledge, and then tell Peter to submit. Do what Christ enjoins and you will the better learn of Him. "If any man will do His will," &c. Patient acquiescence and trustful submission are the best guarantee of our knowledge of Divine things. The light becomes clearer and fuller as we follow it. Turn your back on it, and you shall go deeper and deeper into gloom. (*A. Bell, B.A.*) *The next life an interpreter of this*:—This life is like a bale of silk on a loom, that winds itself up as fast as it is woven. You do not know what the figure is until it has been taken off and unrolled; then you begin to see what it is. This life weaves; the other life reveals. No man that is doing these great things can tell that he is the cause of the effect. Nobody can tell what he has done. A man's real life is not in his body; it is that celestial life within himself that has no external exponent. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The unknown*

ways of love:—I. IN OUR LORD'S DOINGS THERE IS MUCH WHICH WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND. We may know the external part of what He does, but there is more in His actions than any of us can conceive. The work of Jesus is lower than thy fall, higher than thy desire. Even His acts of loving condescension we do not fully understand; how can we (vers. 3, 4)? 1. Was anything that Jesus did understood while He was doing it! He is born a babe in Bethlehem, but to the mass of mankind He was unknown. He lived the life of a mechanic's son; a life the most august in all human history, but "the world knew Him not." He came forward to preach; did they know who it was that spake as never man spake? or comprehend what He spake? At last He laid aside the life He had so strangely taken; who knew the reasons of His death upon the cross? He could say even to His own disciples, of all that He had done, "What I do thou knowest not now." 2. This is true too of every separate gift which our Lord's love has given to His people. You have been justified, but do you fully know the wondrous righteousness with which justification has endowed you? You are accepted in the beloved, but did any one of you ever realize the full sweetness of its meaning? You are one with Christ, and joint heirs with Him. He is betrothed unto you in an everlasting marriage, know you what all that means? 3. Our Lord is doing great things by way of preparing us for a higher state of existence. We know that they are being done, but we cannot as yet see their course and ultimate issues. The instrument does not comprehend the tuner; the tuner fetches harsh sounds from those disordered strings, but all those jarring notes are necessary to the harmonious condition which he is aiming to produce. If the discords were not discovered now, the music of the future would be marred. II. OUR WANT OF UNDERSTANDING DOES NOT PREVENT THE EFFICACY OF OUR LORD'S WORK. The Master washes just as clean whether Peter understands it or not. A mother is washing her little child's face: the child does not like the water, and it cries, but it is washed all the same; the mother waits not for the child to know what she is doing, but completes her work of love. So is the Lord often exercising Divine arts upon us, and we do not appreciate them; perhaps we even strive against them, but for all that He perseveres. Does the tree understand pruning, the land comprehend ploughing? yet pruning and ploughing produce their good results. The physician gives medicine which is unpalatable, and which causes the patient to feel worse; this the sufferer cannot understand, and therefore he draws unhappy conclusions; but the power of the medicine does not depend upon the patient's understanding. If a fool eats his dinner, it will satisfy his hunger as much as if he were a philosopher, and understood the processes of digestion. It is not necessary for a man to be learned in the nature of caloric in order to be warmed. A man may be ignorant of the laws of light, and yet be able to see; he may know nothing of accoustics, and yet be quick of hearing. A passenger who does not know a valve from a wheel, enters a carriage at the station, and he will be drawn to his journey's end by the engine as well as if he were learned in mechanics. It is the same in the spiritual world. We think it so essential that we should form a judgment of what the Lord is doing. It is better to trust, to submit, to obey, to love, than to know. Let the Lord alone; He is doing rightly enough, be sure of that. III. OUR NOT BEING ABLE TO KNOW WHAT THE LORD DOETH SHOULD NEVER SHAKE OUR CONFIDENCE IN HIM. Some things which the Lord has done bear upon their very forefront the impress of His love, but I hope you know enough of Him to be able to believe that where there are no traces of love apparent His love is as surely there. This washing of the feet was the act of the Lord Himself. Now, when the Master and Lord is the actor, who wants to raise a question or to suggest inquiry? Do you know Christ? Then you are sure that He will never act unkindly, unbecomingly, or unwisely. IV. OUR WANT OF UNDERSTANDING AS TO WHAT OUR LORD DOES GENERALLY SHOWS ITSELF MOST IN REFERENCE TO HIS PERSONAL DEALINGS WITH OURSELVES. We are too close home to see clearly. The looker-on sees more than the player. We generally form a better opinion of another than we do concerning ourselves. So we must not expect when Christ is personally dealing with us that we should be able to understand. Besides, if He be afflicting us we are generally in an unfavourable state of mind for forming a judgment. When a patient is under the knife he is a poor judge of the necessity of the operation or the skill of the surgeon. In after days, when the wound has healed, he will judge better. Judge nothing before the time. 1. I do not wonder that Peter could not understand, for it is always a hard thing for an active and energetic mind to see the wisdom of being compelled to do nothing. It is hard to be put on the shelf among the cracked crockery, while yet you feel you

could be useful if you had but strength to leave your chamber. 2. Then, what is worse, Peter not only cannot do anything, but must be waited on by his Master, whom he loved to serve. He would say, "Cannot I do it myself? I am not used to be waited on." It is very unpleasant to an active man to be dependent upon others. To stand in need of anxious prayers, and to arouse pitying thoughts, seems strange to those who have been accustomed to do rather than to suffer. We become inquisitive, but the Saviour says, "What I do thou knowest not now." 3. All the while there is in our mind a sense of insignificance and unworthiness, which makes our receipt of favours the more perplexing. "What," says Peter, "Shall I be washed by the Lord Jesus Christ?" So it seems to us unworthy sinners. 4. Yet, if our eyes are opened, the Lord's afflicting dealings are not so wonderfully mysterious after all, for we need purging and cleansing even as Peter needed foot-washing. 5. There was a needs be of fellowship. "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me." You cannot have fellowship with Christ except He does this or that for you, nay, especially except He tries you; for how shall you know the suffering Saviour except you suffer yourself? 6. There was a needs be yet again to learn the lesson of washing their brethren's feet by seeing the Lord wash theirs. No man can rightly wash another's feet till his own feet have been washed by his Saviour. V. UPON THIS POINT AND MANY OTHERS WE SHALL ONE DAY BE INFORMED. 1. That "hereafter" may be very soon. Peter knew within a few minutes what Jesus meant. A child is in an ill temper because there has been a rule made by the father and not explained, and so it thinks of some unkind motive on the father's part. In a minute or two after it understands it all, and has to eat its own words. 2. Peter understood his Master's washing His feet better after his sad fall and threefold denial. When he percived how sadly he needed washing, he would prize the token which his Lord had given him. At a certain point of your experience you will possibly discover the explanation of your present adversity. 3. After the Lord had said to him, "Feed My sheep," and "Feed My lambs," another method of explanation was open to him. Often does our work for Jesus unfold the work of Jesus. 4. Yonder in heaven, best of all, Peter understands, for he sings, "Unto Him that loved us," &c. All things will be clear when we once pass into the region of light. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *God's work in our behalf*:—I. GOD IS DOING SOMETHING FOR US. Every life is a little Bible—a revelation of God. Everything is from God. Life's meaning is God. II. WE KNOW NOT WHAT IT IS. We misinterpret the events of life—like Job's friends. It were better not to know. Yet we do "know in part"—have blind hints of the Divine meaning in our lives. III. WE SHALL KNOW HEREAFTER. The end explains all. "Face to face," "eye to eye." God, at last, will make plain all His providences. (*George Elliot.*) *Reasons for submission*:—I. THE SAVIOUR'S WISDOM. As St. Peter emphasises "Thou," our Lord lays stress upon "I." All My past intercourse should teach you to submit to what *I* think best for you in My wisdom (Isa. xxviii. 29). II. THE DISCIPLES IGNORANCE. Equally does our Lord emphasize "Thou." The ways of God baffle us, and that idle boast, "We shall soon lay bare the throne itself of the Eternal," is but the mere froth of human vanity. The ignorance of Joseph and Job of the reasons of their trials is illustrative of ours. III. THE PROMISED EXPLANATION. 1. It came soon in part (vers. 8–10, 13–17). 2. More fully at Pentecost. 3. Clearer still in heaven. 4. Completely at the Second Advent. (*Family Churchman.*) *The night-flowering cereus; or, the beauty of unfolding providences*:—"I was walking with Wilberforce in his verandah," says a friend, "watching for the opening of a night-flowering cereus. As we stood by in expectation, it suddenly burst wide open before us. "It reminds me," said he, as we admired its beauty, "of the dispensations of Divine Providence first breaking on the glorified eye, when they shall fully unfold to the view, and appear as beautiful as they are complete." **Thou shalt never wash My feet.**—*Washing the disciples' feet*:—Learn—1. That they who, like Peter, refuse to believe in or conform to requirements of the Master which they do not fully understand or sympathize with are in danger of getting where they have no part with Him. 2. That if we submit to His will we shall in due time understand the significance of His treatment. 3. It is good to be zealously desirous of abundant blessing, a generous supply of grace. But it is sometimes necessary also to "wait patiently for the Lord," to learn of Him, perchance slowly, and "one thing at a time." 4. That in the kingdom of Jesus Christ the crown-bearer is the feet-washer. 5 That our knowledge of Christian duty becomes a blessing in proportion as it is transmuted into practice. Sentimental admiration of humility and lowly helpfulness is one thing, being humble and helpful is another. 6. The passage

affords us, as Bruce has well shown, an excellent intimation of what constitutes the perfection of obedience. "It lies in letting the Lord change places with us, and, if it seem good to Him, humble Himself to be our servant. Our true humility is not to object to Christ's humiliation, but, on the contrary, to recognize its necessity in order to our deliverance from sin. They honour not God who deny the Incarnation and the redeeming death of the eternal Son as unworthy of Him. Rather do they doubly dishonour the Divine Being; first, by misconceiving wherein His glory lies, and, next, by ignoring their own need of redemption. The only genuine piety is that which owns man's moral defilement and leaves God to remove it in His own way." (*Boston Homilies.*) *The washing of Peter's feet:*—I. THE MIXTURE OF EVIL IN THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GOOD. Peter on the whole was a good man, and his language here expresses something that was really good, just that sense of Christ's greatness and his own unworthiness as appears in Luke v. 8. "Thy condescension overwhelms me." But associated with this is Peter's want of reflection, of ready acquiescence and his characteristic impulsiveness. He should have felt such unbounded confidence in Christ as to submit without resistance or reluctance. This shows the necessity—1. For self-scrutiny. "Who can understand his errors." 2. For Divine cleansing, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." 3. The advantages of death. With the good all imperfections are left this side of Jordan. Yonder is unmixed good. II. THE DANGER OF A RIGHT FEELING LEADING TO EVIL. Peter's humility was right, but it led him to oppose Christ. A sense of our own unworthiness and of God's greatness, right in itself, may lead to wrong results. 1. To the rejection of Christ's mediation. How can the Maker of the universe have sent His Son to die for this little world of rebellious worms. 2. To the rejection of God's personal providence. God is too great and man too little for such a thing. 3. To the rejection of Christian consolation. III. THE RAPIDITY WITH WHICH THE SOUL CAN PASS INTO OPPOSITE SPIRITUAL MOODS (vers. 7, 8). This power indicates—1. The greatness of human nature. We know of no other creature that can pass through such changes. All irrational creatures move in a rut, which they cannot leave. Man has power to defy time and space, to live in the future, and to revel in the distant. 2. The necessity for reflection. Without this men will ever be at the mercy of external influences. Thoughtless men of impulse are like feathers on the wind—the sport of circumstances. IV. THE DEPENDENCE OF PERFECTION IN CHARACTER UPON AN INCREASE OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE (vers. 7, 12–14). (*Homilist.*) *Christian purity:*—I. ITS NATURE. 1. The evil from which we are to be cleansed. Christ evidently had Judas's sin in view (vers. 2, 11). And in ver. 8 He manifestly implies that the sin of the betrayer was the sin into which they would fall unless purified by Him. This is the root and ground of every other sin. Every man has the Judas nature in him. Consider what that sin was. Avarice was only the last form which it assumed. Go deeper and we shall discover its spirit and essence in intensely carnal selfishness. Look at any form of this and you will see that its natural development is the Judas-sin—all things sold for its own gratification. Its laws of growth are all there. It shuts out Divine influences, creates unbelief, hardens the heart, and reaches its consummation in the sale of Christian principle. The world for eighteen centuries has cast stones at Judas, but the thoughtful Christian will be constrained almost to stand by his side and say, "Had it not been for God's grace, this tendency to sin in me would have led to that consummation, and I had sold the Christ too." This, then, is the evil from which we need cleansing. 2. Whence comes the purifying power? The answer to this we find expressed in the symbol. The highest stooping to the lowest, that He might purify them from sin. . . . Connect with that the words, "Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end," and you will reach the power in Christ which purifies the soul. This is the power which shatters the idols of the heart; which makes the life a sacrifice. In the hours of fiercest trial, only let us feel, "He became a servant for me," and this will bind the heart as with golden chains to Christ as its Master and Lord. II. ITS PERFECTION. How are we to be wholly cleansed from this dark temptation? Now, mark, they needed not a special purifying; but to let that power pervade their whole natures they needed to wash their feet. Two thoughts are involved here. 1. The purifying must pervade the lowest powers of life. The feet, as representing the least, lowest actions and energies of life, those which come into actual contact with the world. The most trifling outward act has a power to corrupt the spiritual life. One evil deed leaves its scar; one such impedes prayer, because the dark nature within you will find an outlet there. You are encircled by foes; leave no portal unguarded. You are surrounded by a torrent; leave no break in the dyke. 2. The purifying must advance

with advancing life. The feet again, as representing the progress of life. Past purification will leave the advanced life untouched. . . . If a man tries to live always on the power of the first grace given, he will fall. We must go to the Cross daily. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) **If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me.**—*Spiritual washing*:—I. BY THE LORD PERSONALLY. II. OF THE SINNER INDIVIDUALLY. III. FOR THE SUBMISSIVE EXCLUSIVELY. IV. FOR HIS SALVATION ETERNALLY. (*S. S. Times.*) *Spiritual washing*:—I. BY WHOM? II. IN WHAT? III. ON WHAT CONDITIONS? IV. WITH WHAT RESULTS? (*Ibid.*) *Spiritual bathing*:—Humboldt tells us that, after bathing among the noctilucæ in the phosphorescent water of the Pacific, his skin was luminous for hours after. In a spiritual sense is it not true that when we bathe, so to speak, mind and heart in the truths and influences of Christianity, allowing, seeking their appropriate effect upon us, the whole character shines with heaven-given light and beauty, that we can bear about with us into the common scenes and daily duties of life? But the means need to be repeatedly used if we would have the effect continued. Let then our devoutness be habitual. Let thought and love find their home in the "truth as it is in Jesus," and our profiting will appear unto all. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *The sine quâ non*:—I. THE GREAT OBJECT OF OUR DESIRE. 1. To have a part in Christ. (1) In the merit of His righteousness. (2) In His death. (3) In His resurrection. (4) In His ascension. (5) In His intercession. (6) In His kingdom. (7) In His second advent. 2. I hope most of us know what it is to have a part in Christ. But if we do, the blessed fact is altogether due to grace, and it could never have been so if we had not first been washed. If we do not then this is a blessing worthy of the utmost intensity of desire, and one which we must obtain or sink down to destruction, since to be without Christ is to be without hope. II. THE ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATION FOR OBTAINING AND ENJOYING A PART WITH CHRIST—being washed by Him. Then, the qualification is not one of merit on our part, but one of mercy on His. If He had said, "Except ye obtain a superior degree of holiness, ye have no part in Me," we might have despaired; but the very chief of sinners may find comfort in such a word as this. But what is meant by this washing? 1. No man has any part in Christ who does not receive the first all-essential washing in the precious blood, by which all sin is once and for ever put away. The moment a sinner believes in Jesus Christ, his iniquities are seen as laid on Christ the Substitute, and the believer himself is free from sin. But without faith in the atonement thou canst have no part in Christ. 2. There follows a second cleansing, viz., daily pardon for sin through faith in Jesus. As day by day we fall into sin, we are taught to pray each day, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us;" and there is provision made in Christ Jesus for this daily pardon, since besides being the Paschal Lamb, our Lord is the morning and evening Lamb for daily guilt. The priest of God, when consecrated first, was washed from head to foot, and so baptized into the service of the sanctuary; but each time he went to offer sacrifice he washed his feet and his hands in the brazen laver. No need to give the complete immersion on each occasion; but accidental defilement, incident to every-day life, had to be cleansed away, not to make the man a priest, but to keep him in proper condition for the discharge of his office. The leper, once purged under the law, was clean, and might go into the congregation of the Lord's house; yet as a clean man, he had the ordinary need to wash which was incidental to every Israelite. 3. Another thing included is the continual sanctification which faith in Jesus Christ carries on within by the Holy Spirit. If a man profess to be a Christian, and is not in his walk and conversation holier than other men, that man's profession is vain. If Jesus wash not your tongue, and cleanse away those angry, or idle, or filthy words; that hand, and render it impossible for it to perform a dishonest or unchaste act; that foot, and render it impossible it should carry you to the haunts of vice and criminal amusement, you have no part in Him. 4. The daily communion which the true Christian has with Christ. III. WHY THIS WASHING IS SO ESSENTIAL. Because of—1. The claims of Christ. Suppose a man shall say, "I have no need of washing," brethren, it is clear that he has no part in Christ, because Christ came on purpose to cleanse His people from their sins. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. You have no part in Christ, then, however much you applaud Him, unless you are washed by Him, for you have rejected that for which He lived and died. 2. Christ is Himself so infinitely pure that we must first be cleansed by Him before He can enter into fellowship with us. There is a fellowship with us as sinners which He graciously adopts, for He receiveth sinners and eateth with them; but into fellowship with His deep thoughts, His blessed purposes, and His Divine nature,

He brings no man till first He has washed him in His blood. 3. The blessings which are in Christ are so spiritual that till we are cleansed we cannot enjoy them. Who can see God but those who are first made pure in heart? Who can have peace with God but those who are justified by faith? 4. Man's nature is such that it is impossible for him to have part with Christ without washing. IV. SOME THINGS WHICH HAVE BEEN PUT FORWARD AS SUBSTITUTES FOR BEING WASHED BY JESUS CHRIST. 1. Peter had such love and admiration for his Master that he very humbly said, "Dost Thou wash my feet?" Humility will not save you. 2. Peter had performed distinguished service for his Master. Though any of us should possess tongues of men and of angels, and give our bodies to be burned, yet if Christ wash us not, we have no part in Him. 3. Peter had enjoyed very remarkable views of Christ's glory. I hear men boasting of the "coming glory"; but it is not as glorified that Jesus puts away sin. Though a man bathe day after day in the very light of the Millenium, yet if Jesus wash him not it profiteth him nothing. 4. Peter had walked the water once and found it marble beneath his feet. If thou hadst faith to remove mountains, yet if thou hadst not this washing, thou wouldst have no part in Christ. 5. Peter had received deep instruction! Ay, but though you possessed all knowledge, and could interpret all mysteries, yet if Jesus wash you not, you have no part in Him. 6. Peter was full of zealous enthusiasm, but the greatest imaginable zeal does not prove a man to have a part in Christ if he be not truly washed. V. LESSONS OF WISDOM. 1. Let no supposed humility keep any of you from believing in Jesus Christ. 2. As you must not let a supposed humility, so let no other kind of feeling keep you from Christ. 3. Remember what you are if you remain unwashed, and what you will be if you are washed. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The connection between a sinner having a part with Christ and being washed by Him*:—I. A SINNER HAVING PART WITH CHRIST. This includes—1. His being of Christ's mystical body through union with Him (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13 in contrast with 1 John v. 19; see 2 Cor. vi. 17). 2. His having communion with Christ in His saving benefits (1 John i. 3). II. A SINNER BEING WASHED BY CHRIST. 1. There is a filthiness in sin whereby the soul is polluted and defiled before the Lord (Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Jer. xliv. 4; Isa. iv. 4). This consists in its contrariety to the holiness of God (Exod. xv. 11). Hence—(1) It makes the sinner loathsome before God (Zech. xi. 8; Hab. i. 13; Psa. v. 4). (2) It fills the soul with shame before God (Ezek. xvi. 60, 61; Gen. iii. 10). 2. Christ has them all to wash who get part in Him (Rev. i. 5; 1 John i. 7). (1) There are two things in Christ's blood which make it cleansing. (*a*) An infinite value and dignity (Acts xx. 28). (*b*) An infinite energy and efficacy (Heb. x. 20). (2) In all washing there are two things to be distinguished. (*a*) The loosing of the filth of sin sticking to the soul—as pitch sticks to men's fingers (1 Cor. xv. 56). This is done in our justification. (*b*) Its removal from the soul—as water takes filth right away. This is done in sanctification (Heb. ix. 14; Rev. vii. 14). (3) This cleansing lies in three things. (*a*) The putting away of former loathsomeness, so that God can look on the soul with complacency (Rev. i. 5, 6). (*b*) The making of the soul fair and clean before God (Song of Solomon iv. 7). (*c*) The removal of legal shame. (4) Faith is the instrumental course of this cleansing (Acts xv. 9; Rom. iii. 25). III. THE INSEPARABLENESS OF THE TWO. 1. In respect of their subject. He that has the one has the other. 2. In respect of time. They are simultaneous. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Communion with the Saviour inseparable from holiness*:—Let us consider that purification, without which all our hope of an interest in Christ is vain. I. The CONDITION—"If I wash thee not." This reminds us that sin is of a defiling quality. Man may palliate the evil, but in the view of the Supreme Judge it is unspeakably vile and hateful. And when the sinner himself is convinced of sin he sees it in the same light. He "loathes himself for all his abominations." This enables us to determine what our Saviour means by washing us. As water removes defilement and restores to purity, so the influences of Divine grace deliver us from sin and make us truly holy. We do not indeed mean to intimate that real Christians are entirely freed from all sin here. Unmixed purity is the privilege of heaven. But let us remember, that though this work is completed in eternity, it is begun in time. II. The DREADFULNESS OF THE EXCLUSION—"Thou hast no part with Me." Hear how the apostle Paul speaks of a privilege from which you are excluded. "But what things were gain to me," &c. But you say, you do not thus value Him; you prefer a thousand objects to an interest in Him—and therefore to you there seems nothing so very dreadful in this threatening. But the question is—whether your judgment be a righteous one. A pearl is not the less precious

because the swine tramples it under foot. A toy is not more valuable than a title to an estate because an infant or an idiot may give it the preference. And the question also is, whether you will always remain in the same opinion. Will the day of judgment operate no change in your sentiments? Will not the approach of death alter your convictions? If our Saviour was an unimportant character, your exclusion from Him would not be so fatal—but the fact is, that everything you need is found in Him, and to be derived only from Him. No being in the universe can fill His place, and do for us what He is able to do. And therefore, if He will have nothing to do with us, our case is indeed miserable and hopeless. We are wanderers without a guide: dying patients without a remedy: exposed to the deluge, and have no ark. It matters not to whom else we belong. "Neither is there salvation in any other," &c. To have no communion with Him in whose favour is life; to hear Him say, I have a family, but you are no part of it—you are not a child, nor even a servant; to hear Him say, I have a plantation, but you are not in it, I have in reserve for my followers, thrones of glory, rivers of pleasure, fulness of joy—but as for you—you—have "neither part nor lot in the matter,"—if this be not dreadful, nothing can be dreadful. Especially when we add that there is but one alternative —If you have no part with Christ and His people, you must have your portion with hypocrites and unbelievers, with the devil and his angels! You have already fixed your destiny. III. The CERTAINTY OF THIS EXCLUSION. There are two ways of proving this. 1. By testimony. "If you receive the witness of man, the witness of God is greater." And, says not our Lord, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me"? "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." 2. Reasoning from principles. (1) Christ is pure and holy; His person, kingdom, joy, service are pure. If therefore we are not made pure, we have no likeness in Him. (2) If Christ is the head, and Christians are the body, let us remember that the head and the body partake of the same nature: and that if Christ be the vine, and Christians the branches, the vine and the branches partake of the very same qualities. (3) What intercourse can there be where nothing prevails but a contrariety of inclination and an opposition of interest? "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" (4) Without this renovation we should be wholly incapable of deriving happiness from our connection with Him. Our being for ever in His presence would only render us miserable. Wherever he may be placed, while he has sin in him, man has hell with him. Conclusion: 1. How exceedingly those misunderstand the gospel, and delude their own souls, who expect to be "made partakers of Christ," while they seek not to be sanctified by Him. "He was manifested to take away our sin." 2. We may congratulate those who are made free from sin. You have "an inheritance among them that are sanctified." You have part with Christ! you partake of His safety and His dignity. (1) Can you be poor? Having nothing, you possess all things. "For all things are yours," &c. (2) Can you be miserable? "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice." And if you have part with Him in His glory, can you be unwilling to share with Him in His reproach? If you are to "live with Him," cannot you "die with him"? (*W. Jay.*) **But is clean every whit; and ye are clean but not all; for He knew who should betray Him.**—The expressions used by the Evangelist with reference to the traitor show the development and progress of the treasonable thought. 1. He that was about to betray (chap. vi. 71). 2. He that should betray (chap. vi. 64). 3. He that is betraying (text). 4. He that betrayed (chap. xviii. 2; *cf.* Matt. xxvi. 48). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Clean every whit:*—These words teach two different and yet most closely connected truths. I. The completeness and abidingness of the Divine forgiveness. He who is washed is clean every whit. II. The second is, that after we have got this complete, abiding forgiveness, we still require, while we remain on earth, daily, hourly forgiveness; we still need to wash our feet. This accords with our daily experience; the emblem, as is always the case with Christ's figures, exactly accords with fact. But there is a more striking illustration in the book of Exodus. The Lord there tells Moses to consecrate Aaron and his sons as priests. In doing this their bodies were wholly washed with water. This was the consecration washing, and this was never to be repeated. But in the next chapter, Moses is commanded to make a laver, or large basin of brass, and put it between the brazen altar and the tabernacle, and fill it with pure water. In this the priests, who had been fully washed, once for all, were yet required to wash their feet and hands every time they entered the tabernacle. I believe the Lord referred to this when He uttered the words of this verse. It is as if He had said, "When you come as sinners,

and believe on Me, I wash you, bathe you, once for all, in My blood. I make you priests unto God; I perfect you for ever, in as far as concerns acceptance and approach to the Lord. But, like the typical priests, you will still require, so long as you sojourn and minister on earth, to wash your feet, to seek, and get, forgiveness for your daily, hourly errors and shortcomings." Such seems to be the import of the Lord's words. We cannot but feel that there is more intended here than the washing with water. We are lifted into a loftier region; we stand on high and holy ground, and are dealing with that blood of the Lamb of God wherewith He washed and sanctified His Church unto Himself, "Clean every whit." I fear that many never get full hold of this blessed truth; they never realize the difference between law and gospel. The law made nothing perfect; the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin for ever; it only procured a respite, a reprieve, "a renewal of the bill," as men of business would say. The blood which the Jewish high priest took into the holiest of all, and sprinkled there on the mercy-seat, only covered Israel's sin for a year; it had to be annually renewed. But the blood which Christ, our High Priest, has taken into the heavenly tabernacle, and sprinkled on the mercy-seat there, covers the sins of His believing people for ever and ever. There needs no more sacrifice for sin, for by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified; that is, those who are washed and set apart for God. Oh, it is blessed when this truth gets full possession of the heart and conscience! It brings in peace, assurance, hope, joy, holiness, humility. It makes our service one of freedom, gladness, light. But now comes the subordinate truth; the forgiven man still needs to wash his feet. We can easily understand this. God's forgiven people are still on earth; still in the flesh; and so liable to many sins and shortcomings. What are we to do? We have an advocate; we have a propitiation. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive," &c. This will keep up a close, intimate, happy fellowship with God (1 John i. 7). I suppose this is very much what is meant when it is said (Rev. vii. 14, 15). They had once been washed, and washed for ever; but then they continued all their days resorting to the fountain, to wash away the sin and infirmity of life and lip and heart. (*John Milne.*)

Know ye what I have done unto you?—*What:*—I. In its ETERNAL FORMS. II. In its INTRINSIC WORTH. III. In its EXEMPLARY FORCE. (*S. S. Times.*) *What Christ requires of His disciples:*—I. INTELLIGENCE—"Know ye." Sometimes the actions of men have no meaning: they are impulsive and purposeless. Sometimes they have a bad meaning: they have selfish and sensual aims. Sometimes they have a good meaning: they are benevolent and pure in their motives. Christ's actions always had a meaning, holy and beneficent, and it is the duty of His disciples to find it out. Two classes of professed Christians act wrongly in this respect. 1. Those who attach no meaning to Christ's works. 2. Those who attach a wrong meaning to them. What absurd and even blasphemous ideas are current about many of them! Let the real Christian, then, "prove all things." II. CONSISTENCY (ver. 14). There should be perfect harmony between what they profess to be and what they are. Creed and conduct should agree. The discrepancy between the two is the greatest crime and curse of Christendom. Christ denounces war, worldliness, selfishness, and subjection to the flesh, yet His followers practise them. III. CHRISTLINESS (ver. 15). To do in spirit as Christ did is to follow His example, and not the mere copying of the form. Were we to do all that Christ did we might still be out of harmony—aye, and in antagonism with His spirit. The way for a student artist to become like a great painter, is not to copy most accurately all the strokes and shadings of his model, but to catch the genius that inspired the master. Christ's Spirit is the genius of all works of moral beauty and excellence, and if we catch that, we shall be "fruitful unto all good works." IV. HAPPINESS (vers. 16, 17). 1. Christ desires the happiness of His disciples. Those who profess His name and are gloomy and discontented are not His. 2. The doing in love the things of His loving heart ensures true happiness. The labour of love is the music of life. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **Ye call Me Master and Lord.**—*Christ a Master:*—I. WE ALL URGENTLY NEED A GOOD MASTER FOR THE REGULATION AND CONTROL OF OUR LIVES. 1. Even in matters secular there is no such thing as absolute independence. We are the subjects of the sovereign, who in turn is subject to national law, private advisers, or public opinion. 2. But, especially, in matters spiritual. It is the misery of the ungodly, that they are subject to no law but that of their own folly and passions. What a mercy that we have been placed under the management of Him whose regulations form "the perfect law of liberty!" That man is the slave whose master is himself; and he alone is the freeman whose master is Christ. II. CHRIST IS OUR MASTER IN

THE TRUE AND STRICT SENSE OF THE TERM—not one who is to be saluted with the name, merely in a spirit of courtesy. His mastership is that of a sovereign, whom his subjects must obey, for whom they must fight, and to whom they must pay tribute (1 Cor. ix. 21). III. CHRIST HAS BEEN CONSTITUTED OUR MASTER BY THE DECREE OF HIS FATHER (Psa. ii. 6; Acts v. 31). So that the devout man's satisfaction is, that, when he does homage to Christ as His Lord, he does homage to the Father, as honouring His appointment (Phil. ii. 9–11). So far, then, is the worship of Christ from robbing of the Father of His honour, that it is an act which we honour both at once (chap. v. 19–23). IV. THE FATHER'S ORDINATION OF CHRIST TO BE OUR MASTER PROCEEDS ON A PRINCIPLE OF EQUITY, and is not an act of mere arbitrary sovereignty. The Father (Heb. i. 2; John i. 3) commissioned the Son, in His state of unincarnated glory, to create us, and in His state of incarnated mercy to redeem us (Rev. v. 12; 2 Cor. v. 14). Since Christ died to save our lives, these lives are most lawfully His, to be consecrated to His service; should we deny Him which service we shall be condemnable, not only for a want of gratitude, but a violation of the law of equity. V. CHRIST, AS OUR MASTER, IS ENTITLED TO, AND DEMANDS OF US, ABSOLUTE, UNIVERSAL OBEDIENCE; such as is commensurate with our entire being, and the whole economy of our lives, in our works, words, meditations; not only on the Sabbath, but on all days; not only at the stated hours of devotion, but in the management of business, &c.; as a citizen in your political conduct, and in your domestic relations, &c. (Col. iii. 17). Does this seem oppressive? Do you feel as if He should be satisfied with only a partial control, and act accordingly? Then—1. How foolish you are; as if there were any part of the economy of your being which could be safely entrusted to the management of yourself. 2. How corrupt you are; since it appears there is some part of your life which will not bear His inspection. 3. How ungrateful you are; grudging the subjection of any part of your life to Him who gave Himself from the manger to the cross for you! 4. How unjust you are; robbing the Redeemer of part of His pain-bought inheritance! If with purpose of heart you can coolly reason that there is one hour of life for the manner of spending which you are under no obligation to consult with Him—then all is wrong, you are still "in your sins." VI. CHRIST IS OPEN AND FREE TO THE APPLICATION OF ALL HIS SERVANTS FOR AID IN PERFORMING THE WORK WHICH HE PRESCRIBES THEM. How many masters act unreasonably and unjustly by their servants in this respect! They starve them so as to enfeeble them, and refuse to furnish them with proper implements for their work. How different the Christian's Master! All His commandments are reasonable; and to an unperverted disposition would be easy. And He looks at the subjective weakness and incapacity of our hearts, and sympathises with our infirmity, and communicates strength (2 Cor. xii. 9). VII. Perfect though Christ's rights be, and free and ample the help which He vouchsafes, so that all disobedience is without excuse, yet is CHRIST A MASTER MOST FORBEARING WITH THE FAULTS AND FAILURES OF HIS SERVANTS. Had we treated any other master as we have treated Him, long ere this we would have been dismissed from his service. A principal explanation of this forbearance is found in the circumstance that He was once a servant Himself (Heb. v. 8); and in our own nature, amid the same scenes of trial through which we pass. And although He stood the trial, yet He does not make this a reason for condemning His weak brethren. But rather, remembering the force of temptation, and how much fortitude it required of Himself to withstand it, He apologizes to Himself for their failures, and easily forgives them. VIII. AS A MASTER CHRIST REWARDS HIS SERVANTS WITH EXUBERANT LIBERALITY. As if He had done nothing for us as yet, at all, He encourages us to diligence and activity by the assurance of a "great recompense of reward." (*W. Anderson, LL.D.*) *The helpfulness of Christ as Master*:—Who teaches like Christ? By His Spirit He pours light into the soul, applies His word to the conscience, and draws the heart gently, yet powerfully, to faith, love, and holy obedience. Five minutes' instruction in Christ's school is worth more than ten thousand sermons. We have seen a child make a drawing from a picture set before him; and as the work grows under his pencil, he is delighted with his own performance, and does not perceive its many defects. The master looks at the work, and surprises the pupil by pointing out deficiencies hitherto unsuspected; he then takes the pencil into his hand, and by a bold touch here, and a stroke there, he produces a new effect; so that the pupil is at once astonished and humbled. Thus a touch or so from the Spirit of Jesus in the heart is more effectual than all the wisdom of the schools, and all the learning of the ancients. Let us inquire, Have we so learned Christ? Devout Mr. Herbert, when He mentioned the name of Christ, used

to add, "my Master"; and thus expresses himself concerning it in one of his poems: "How sweetly doth 'my Master' sound, 'my Master!' As ambergris leaves a rich scent unto the taster, so do these words a sweet content, an oriental fragrancy; 'my Master.'" (*J. M. Randall.*) *Christ our Master and Lord:*—"Who went about doing good." This is the shortest and noblest eulogium ever pronounced. I will not "give flattering titles unto man." Yet the practice is too common. But now, as to the Lord Jesus, whatever we say of Him that is noble and glorious, we say well, for so He is. Some of this good was mediatorial; some of it miraculous; some of it corporeal; some of it spiritual; and some of it exemplary—as here. I. THE TITLE. As the Master and the Lord of His people. They learn in His school and serve in His house. In both these titles the main idea is authority. He is Lord—1. By the claims of creation. As He is our Maker, He has an infinitely greater property in us than a creature can have. In Him we live, and move, and have our being. If, therefore, He were to call into His presence a monarch or a philosopher, and say, "Take that thine own is," what could either of them take? Not even his existence. 2. By the claims of redemption. "Ye are not your own." This gives Him a greater claim than even creation, for redemption delivers us from greater evils, advances us to greater blessings, and is accomplished by a much more expensive process than creation. 3. By their own choice and submission. Once He bare not rule over them; they were not called by His name. But He made them willing in the day of His power. And the glory of His dominion is here—that He does not govern only by external rule, but by internal influence. He illuminates our understanding, and displays to their view His loveliness. And thus we run after Him; for He draws with the cords of a man and with the bands of love. II. THE OBLIGATION. "If I am your Master and Lord"—1. You ought to renounce connection with every other; for "no man can serve two masters." But His dominion does not interfere with the relations subsisting between man and man. Your rendering unto God the things that are God's does not prevent your rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. But even this service is regulated by His authority too. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right in the Lord." He said, "Call no man master." Thus He releases His subjects from all authority as to conscience but His own. But said He also, "Be not ye called masters." There are those, who refuse dominion, who are ready enough to require it. 2. You ought to obey My commandments. There cannot be a better evidence of sincerity than this. "If ye love Me," &c. For a knowledge of His orders, you must repair to the Scriptures, and to these only. You must shun all that He forbids, and pursue all that He enjoins. 3. You ought to submit to My appointments. As He gives us our work, so He must determine when, and where, and how we shall labour and serve Him. "Here I am; let Him do what seemeth Him good." You must not, therefore, complain if He restrains you, tries you, bereaves you. He has a right to determine your connections, the bounds of your habitations, the way in which you are to glorify Him; and He never exercises this right but for your own welfare. Some at His bidding cross over land and sea; they also serve Him that wait, and they also serve that suffer. 4. You ought to imitate Me. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me." You see this specified here. 5. You should esteem all you have as Mine, and use it accordingly. "Occupy till I come." If you have no title to yourselves, how is it possible that you can have a title to anything that you now call your own? (1) Do you think that your time is your own, that you may lie as long in bed as you please, or that you may lounge as much in the day as you choose? You will soon appear before Him who has said, "Redeem the time." (2) Can you suppose that your tongues are your own? You will soon be in His presence who said, "For every idle word that men shall speak," &c. (3) Do you think that your substance is your own, that you may either hoard it or spend it as you like? You will soon be in His presence who has told you, "To do good and to communicate, forget not," &c. 6. You should be willing to partake with Me in all My estates. If you are to reign with Him hereafter you must suffer with Him now. 7. You may depend upon Me for all the advantages of the relation. "Ye shall receive the reward of your inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ." It is impossible for you to serve Him for nought. Conclusion: 1. Entertain proper apprehensions of Christ. He is not only a Saviour, but He is a Lord and Master. Is Christ divided? 2. Beware of hypocrisy and inconsistency. Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say? 3. Some have other lords; some love idols, and after them they will go. (*W. Jay.*) *The universality of Christ's Mastership*:—In the high-toned sanctities of our Christian worship, on the lower

plane of domestic life, with its secret cares, and silent griefs, and angry frets, Christ is our Lord. On the crested wave of business, with its glittering spray and argosies of wealth, and along its turbid and choking shallows, Christ is our Lord. In all the undress and innocent relaxations of life—on the heathery hills, or placid ocean, or in the crowded city—still Christ is our Lord. In the retreat of the counting-house or the perilous whirlpool of the public exchange, in the obscurest nook and corner of your life, Christ is your Master and Lord. You have chosen Him as such. Your faith, your profession, affirm Him as such, and He responds to that profession. He is Lord of your spirit, in what it thinks, and feels, and is; of your wealth, and time, and influence; of your pursuits, and pleasures, and possessions; of the most hidden, germinal, and unbetrayed proclivities of the soul; of the totalized aggregate man—Christ is "Lord of all." And you are His servants, put in trust with His goods, stewards of His wealth, factors in His household; and He, the Lord and Master, is even now on His return journey, to call each to his account, and to assign his position and award. But what a weight of responsibility does this assumption of the regal sovereignty of Christ entail upon its subjects! What a solemnity does it lend to the ongoings of human life, and what a tragic interest does it give to the dismission of each occupant from his trust! "What manner of persons," in view of all this, "ought ye to be?" (*John Burton.*) *The Christian a servant*:—Dr. Muhlenburg gave a beautiful illustration of obedience to his Master when he once took up a tray of dishes in St. Luke's Hospital and carried them down to the kitchen. Some one meeting him, and protesting against his doing such menial work, he quickly said, "What am I, but a waiter in the Lord's hotel?" **If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet.**—*The sign of the feet-washing*:—Let us look at this act—I. AS REQUIRING THE CROSS FOR ITS INTERPRETATION. Short as this evening was, it was the most memorable on which the sun ever went down, and the eve of the most memorable day that ever dawned. First came the feet-washing, then the holy supper, then the discourse, then the prayer. But all that passed within that ante-chamber of the passion had reference to the morrow. 1. "Thou shalt know hereafter" intimated that the mystery of the whole strange scene would be explained when the Servant of God, and the Minister of man's redemption, would reach the lowest point of His submission, and offer His final oblation of humility. "He riseth and laid aside His garments," &c.; even so He left the Father's bosom, and emptied Himself. "He poured water into a basin"—but this water is once again changed, not now into wine, but into blood—and washed His disciples' feet. 2. Notice some of the specific points of this exhibition. (1) It was voluntary service rendered in the consciousness of Divine power (ver. 3). To the ransom of His life He Himself freely gave. "I have power to lay down My life," &c. Had it not been so, His death could not have been redemption. (2) It was as our Lord that He bought us with His blood. "Ye call me," &c. The submission to death was a Divine victory over the cause of death. (3) The redeeming act is fully available only for "His own." The symbol did, indeed, teach that Christ washed away the sins of the race; that He made atonement for John and Judas alike. So effectual has been that washing that no one is condemned eternally for his original stain or contracted defilement, and baptism is the pledge of that. But as we look at our Great Servant going round with the basin, and washing each one, and saying, "Ye are clean, but not all"; when we hear Him telling Simon, "If I wash thee not," &c., we cannot help seeing that Christ may wash in vain, or man may refuse the benefit of His washing. We may hope that these are as few in comparison of the innumerable multitude as Judas in comparison of the eleven. But the saved are personally saved, and none have fellowship with Christ whose souls have not been cleansed in His blood. II. AS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE BELIEVERS' FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST, the bond of union between Christ and His cleansed people. 1. Our Minister in heaven makes provision for the forgiveness of our sins and the renewal of our nature. He came to give His life a ransom for many; He is gone to give His spirit for His people's redemption. Thus we are washed by pardon and the bestowal of the renewing Spirit. The two washings, distinguished as acts, are united in their effect; and He who "came by water and blood" makes both symbols one in those who have "part in Him." 2. Christ makes provision for the cleansing of that defilement which may be daily contracted by a renewed believer, "save to wash His feet." Two opposite perversions of this gracious act must be guarded against. (1) It gives us the perfect ideal of the Christian life; but it may be exhibited so as to throw many into despondency. Christ does not say more than

that He who is once washed needeth not that washing again. He does not go on to say, "Nor shall he who has lost his first washing ever be washed anew." Our heavenly Minister fainteth not, neither is weary. (2) But this saying must not be perverted in the interests of a nature only too tolerant of evil. It does not say that those whom Christ has once washed He will and must wash unto the end. Those who make it say so forget the terrible denunciation uttered on those who "sin that grace may abound." III. As our example. "If I, your Lord," &c. 1. The mind of Christ in His self-renunciation is the standard of the true Christian spirit. Between the Pattern and the imitators there is infinite disparity; but of the Spirit we are all commanded to partake. This was the solitary principle in Himself, that He or His apostles proposed for our imitation. To know no self apart from the will of God and the service of man is Christ's example and the perfection of the Christian spirit. 2. In some sense, also, He gives us here the pattern of our act as well as of our spirit. His service left no ministry incomplete, whether to our bodies or our souls. He chose here an emblem that was well adapted to illustrate those deeds which minister to our brethren's needs of every kind. Conclusion: Our Lord closes the scene by a warning and a benediction (ver. 17). (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *Great principles and small duties:*—A soul occupied with great ideas best performs small duties; the Divinest views of life penetrate most clearly into the merest emergencies. Let us apply this principle to—I. Intellectual culture. The ripest knowledge is best qualified to instruct the most complete ignorance. It is a mistake to suppose that the master, who is but a stage before the pupil, can, as well as another, show him the way. However accurately the recently initiated may give out his new stores, he will rigidly follow the method by which he made them his own, and will want that command of several paths of access to a truth which are given by a thorough survey of the whole field on which he stands. The instructor also needs to have a full perception of the internal contents of the truths he unfolds. The sense of proportion between the different parts and stages of a subject, the appreciation of every step at its true value, the foresight of the section that remains in its real magnitude and direction, are qualities so essential, that without them all instruction is but an insult to the learner's understanding. And in virtue of these it is that the most cultivated minds are the most patient, clear, progressive. Neglect and depreciation of intellectual minutiæ are characteristic of the ill-informed. And, above all, there is the indefinable power which a superior mind always puts forth on an inferior. In the task of instruction no amount of wisdom is superfluous, and even a child's elementary teaching would be best conducted by omniscience itself. II. Social life. It is an error to suppose that homely minds are the best administrators of small duties. How often the daily troubles prove too much for the generalship of feeble minds, and a petty and scrupulous anxiety in defending some almost invisible point of frugality, surrenders the greater unobserved! How often, too, a rough and unmellowed sagacity rules, indeed, but creates a constant friction. But where, in the presiding genius of a home, taste and sympathy unite, with what ease, mastery, and graceful disposition do the seeming trivialities of existence fall into order and drop a blessing as they take their place. This is realized, not by microscopic solicitude of spirit, but by comprehension of mind and enlargement of heart; by that breadth and nicety of moral view which discerns everything in due proportion, and, in avoiding an intense elaboration of trifles, has energy to spare for what is great; in short, by a perception akin to that of God, whose providing frugality is on an infinite scale, whose art colours a universe with beauty, and touches with its pencil the petals of a flower. A soul thus pure and large disowns the paltry rules of dignity, and will discharge many an office from which lesser beings would shrink as ignoble. Offices the most menial cease to be menial the moment they are wrought in love. III. High religious faith. In the management of daily disappointments and small vexations only a devout mind attains any real success. How wonderfully the mere insect cares that are ever on the wing in the noonday heat of life have power to sting even the giant minds around which they sport! It may be absurd and immoral to be teased by trifles; but while you remain in the dust it will annoy you, and there is no help for it but to retire into a higher and grassier region, where the sultry road is visible from afar. We must go in contemplation out of life, ere we can see how its troubles are lost, like evanescent waves, in the deeps of eternity and the immensity of God. How welcome to many a child of anxiety and toil to be transferred from the heat and din of the city to the midnight garden or mountain top.

And like refreshment does a high faith, with its infinite prospects, open to the worn and weary: no laborious travels are needed for the devout mind, for it carries within it Alpine heights and starlit skies, which it may reach at a moment's notice. IV. THE SERVICES OF BENEVOLENCE. The humblest form of this receives its most powerful motive from the sublimest truth—immortality. It might have been thought that no love would be so faithful as that which believed at the death-bed of a friend that the absolute farewell was drawing nigh. The vivid expectation of futurity, which has so often led the believer to ascetic contempt, would appear only consistent if it passed by in equal scorn the bodily miseries of others. But it is not so. In this, as in all other instances, truths the most divine are the greatest servitors of wants the most humiliating. The immortal element imparts a species of sanctity to the mortal: just as the worshipper feels that the very stones of the temple are sacred. Conclusion: Let us revere the great sentiments of religion not as an occasional solace to a weakly dignity, but as truths which penetrate the very heart of life's activity. Nothing less than the majesty of God and the powers of the world to come can maintain the peace and sanctity of our homes and hearts. (*J. Martineau, LL.D.*) *Christian service should be rendered lovingly*:—Preaching on this text, Mr. Finlayson, of Helmsdale, observed, "One way in which disciples wash one another's feet is by reproving one another. But the reproof must not be couched in angry words, so as to destroy the effect; nor in tame, so as to fail of effect. Just as in washing a brother's feet, you must not use boiling water to scald, nor frozen water to freeze them." *Christian service should be rendered constantly*:—Christian charity is too often like a large banknote which may be flourished on occasion to excite the wonder of bystanders, but which is never broken up into small change to meet every-day occasions. Little labours are the small change into which true charity is willing to be turned for life's common needs. Do not be content with merely discharging your charity by large professions of liberality, but prove it by those little deeds of pity and grace for which you may get no popular applause. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) **I have given you an example.**—*The example of Christ*:—Among those rules for his daily conduct which the pious, though visionary Lavater, suspended in his study, and seriously read every night and morning, the following is far from being the least important:—"I will not do nor design anything which I would omit if Jesus Christ were standing visibly before me, or which I suppose He would not perform if He were in my situation. I will, with the assistance of God, accustom myself to do everything in the name of Jesus Christ; and, as His disciple, to sigh every hour to God for the blessing of the Holy Ghost, and be always disposed to prayer." Happy the believer who acts in this manner! I. THAT IT IS OUR DUTY TO IMITATE THE EXAMPLE OF THE REDEEMER IS EASILY PROVED. 1. For what reason was the history of His life written? Not that it might gratify an idle curiosity; not that it might amuse us by its wonderful events, and produce a barren admiration; not that it might afford scenes on which we might carelessly gaze, and subjects on which we might coldly converse. They recorded the actions and the words of Jesus, that a living, lustrous, obligatory rule of conduct; that a visible commentary on God's law might be presented for our imitation; that a light, unerring as the pillar of fire and cloud that led the Israelites, might be given to us to conduct us through this wilderness to the promised land that is on high. 2. In your Scriptures you are constantly and unequivocally commanded to imitate the Redeemer. "Learn of Me"; "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me." "Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ" is the admonition of Paul (Phil. ii. 5). Do they exhort us to holiness? "As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pet. i. 15). Do they incite us to charity? "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us" (Eph. v. 2); "This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (chap. xv. 12). Would they arm us with patience? "We must consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest we be weary and faint in our minds" (Heb. xii. 3). Would they teach us to condescend to our neighbour for his benefit? "Let every one please his neighbour for his good to edification, for even Christ pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 2). Do they urge us to forgiveness? "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col. iii. 13). 3. The sacred vows that are upon us, the tender and solemn relations that we sustain to Jesus, enforce this duty. 4. A regard to the best interests of our fellow-men should induce us to follow the example of the holy Jesus. Oh! let us be careful not to alienate them: let us imitate Jesus, and then perhaps we will draw them to the Saviour, or if not, we

shall be "pure from their blood." 5. A regard to our own spiritual improvement and salvation should induce us to study and imitate the example of Jesus. There is no other example so comprehensive: from that wonderful union of greatness and humiliation. Other lives afford instruction to men in particular circumstances and relations; though they are burning and shining lights, they dissipate the gloom but for comparatively a short distance around them: but He, like the sun, is set in a higher orb, and with an everlasting and uncircumscribed light illumines the universe. Other lives may be excellent examples of some particular virtues: as Job, of patience; Moses, of meekness; Paul, of zeal. But in Jesus there is a beautiful and attractive harmony of all the virtues. Other examples present us with only a short period of time, reaching merely from the birth to the death of those who exhibit them. We are taught by Him not only when He tabernacled in flesh, but also when He first raised the hopes of fallen man: when He appeared to the patriarchs and prophets; when He comforted His martyrs, and cheered His children in every age; when He now sheds down into the souls of His followers joys unspeakable. Other examples communicate no quickening influence. Other examples are of persons who are not united to us by such endearing bonds as is Immanuel. Other examples bear the stamp of imperfection. Let us remember that a conformity in our internal principles of conduct forms the first step of this imitation. Hence we are exhorted by Paul to "have the same mind which Christ had" (Phil. ii. 5). We must, then, in order to imitate Jesus, be animated by the same Holy Spirit that He possessed. We must also receive the same systems of Divine truths, otherwise our obedience will spring from different motives. But in what particular instances must we take Jesus as our model, and conform ourselves to His example? 1. Imitate Him in His piety towards God. It was constant and unwearied. In no single instant did His heart cease to glow with affection to His Father. Ye who "did run well for a season," blush when you contemplate the steady path of Jesus, and return from your wanderings. His piety was zealous. He does not coldly and heartlessly engage in the duties of religion. His piety was attended with frequent prayer. 2. He is an example to us in His benevolence. This is exhibited in all His conduct, as it breathed in all its discourses. On the wings of charity He descended from heaven, and His whole life proved that He had lain from eternity in the bosom of everlasting love. 3. He is an example to us in His humility. Never were such endowments as He possessed; yet, with celestial wisdom, He never was assuming. 4. He is an example to us of superiority to the world. He might have enjoyed all that the world idolizes; His renunciation of it was voluntary. 5. He is an example to us in His patience and forgiveness. 6. He is an example to us in tolerance and forbearance. Though zealous, His zeal was never cruel and malignant; though perfectly innocent, He tenderly compassionated the errors and the follies of men. Though His censures were faithful, they were ever meek and gentle. (*H. Kollock, D.D.*) *Christ our example*:—God is set before us as our example in the Scriptures; but Christ, being man, subject to our infirmities and temptations, brings before us not merely Divine but human perfection as a model for our imitation. We should imitate Christ—I. IN HIS DEVOTION TO GOD. His constant—1. Reference to God's glory. 2. Confidence in His promise. 3. Obedience to His commands. 4. Submission to His will. 5. Fulfilment of all righteousness. II. IN HIS DISINTERESTED SERVICE TO MAN. He sought not His own. He went about doing good. Neither His own honour nor advantage was the end He pursued. Let your governing principle be what His was. III. IN HIS MANNER OF RESISTING TEMPTATION. 1. He never placed Himself in danger. He refused to tempt God. 2. He resisted the first suggestions of evil. 3. He appealed to the authority of the Scriptures, and used them as the sword of the Spirit. IV. IN HIS ENDURANCE OF INJURIES. Never was such ingratitude and scorn heaped on any other head. Yet—1. There was no resentfulness. He did good for evil, and prayed for those who shed His blood. 2. He did not threaten. In this there is a strong contrast between Him and many of the martyrs. V. IN HIS REBUKING OF SINNERS. 1. His censures were expressive of His hatred of sin. 2. It was impartial. 3. With authority. 4. Loving and tender, except where there was manifest hypocrisy. VI. IN HIS PUBLIC WORK. As a teacher He—1. Adapted His instruction to the state of His hearers. 2. He seized every occasion, and gave His lesson a special application. 3. He spoke as a witness. VII. IN HIS SUFFERINGS. 1. He did not manifest stoical indifference. 2. He was meek and resigned. 3. He looked to the glory which should follow. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Christ our example not our model*:—The two are different. You copy the outline of a model; you

imitate the spirit of an example. You might copy the life of Christ, and make Him a model in every act, and yet you might be not one whit more of a Christian than before. You might wash the feet of poor fishermen as He did, live a wandering life with nowhere to lay your head. You might go about teaching, and never use any words but His, never express a truth except in Bible language, have no home, and mix with publican's and harlots. Then Christ would be your model; and you would have copied His life like a picture, line for line, and shadow for shadow; and yet you might not be Christ-like. On the other hand, you might imitate Christ, get His spirit, breathe the atmosphere of thought He breathed, do not one single act which He did, but every act in His spirit. You might be rich, whereas He was poor; never teach, whereas He was teaching always; lead a life in all outward particulars the very opposite of His, and yet the spirit of His self-devotion might have saturated your whole being, and penetrated into the life of every act and the essence of every thought. Then Christ would have become your example, for we can only imitate that of which we have caught the spirit. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The perfection of Christ's example*:—The reference of all the world tells us that Christ's example was perfect. The admissions of enemies tell us; our own hearts and consciences tell us; but did you ever think how strange it is that these four little tracts, telling us such fragmentary stories, and of so brief a period of a life, in which there was a conspicuous absence of very many of the important circumstances of that life, should have been accepted by all the centuries, and by all sorts and conditions of men, women, and children, wise and foolish, learned and ignorant, bond and free, happy and sad, as an all-sufficient guide for them, and that these little stories should be felt by us all to contain an adequate guide and rule for our conduct? It is not enough to say, "Men's circumstances change, but the essentials of their duty are very few, and you can put them into two or three words and they will be enough." That is quite true, and we thank God for it. It is a great thing instead of a whole host of precepts to have got two or three fruitful principles. We have got the Divine example in human form, and the stimulus of His deeds, when pondered, opens out into majesty and greatness; and what a blessed thing it is instead of being handed over to a mere law—Do that and thou shalt live; Be this, and so forth—to be told, "Do as I do"; and still more blessed, "Do as I do, because I love you, and you love Me." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christ the supreme example*:—We were examining Guido's "Aurora" in the summerhouse of the Rospigliosi Palace, and as we sat behind the row of artists busily copying the celebrated painting, we could not help noticing how they differed from each other as well as from the immortal fresco. After a time we called the attention of our guide to the fact that each of the painters had a different colour for the horses, and that no two copies were at all alike. With an expressive gesture he replied, "Don't look at them! Look only at the original!" (*W. Baxendale.*) *Christ an all-round example*:—The character of our Lord was such that no one virtue had undue predominance. Take Peter, and there is a prominent feature peculiar to himself; one quality attracts you. Take John, and there is a lovely trait in his character which at once chains you, and his other graces are unobserved. But take the life of Jesus, and it shall perplex you to discover what virtue shines with purest radiance. His character is like the lovely countenance of a classic beauty, in which every single feature is so in exact harmony with all the rest, that when you have gazed upon it, you are struck with a sense of general beauty, but you do not remark upon the flashing eye, or chiselled nose, or coral lips; an undivided impression of harmony remains upon your mind. Such a character should each of us strive after—a mingling of perfections to make up one perfection; a combining of all the sweet spices to make up a rare perfume, such as only God's Holy Spirit Himself can make, but such as God accepts wherever He discovers it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The union in Christ of precept and example*:—If He recommended active benevolence He went about doing good; if He preached forgiveness of injuries He prayed for His murderers; if He inculcated self-denial, He voluntarily subjected Himself to penury, persecution, and death; if He prescribed piety towards God, He passed days and nights in prayer; if He enjoined resignation to the Divine will, He freely drank the cup which His Father gave to His lips. In these respects our Lord presented a marked contrast to the example, often pernicious, always imperfect of other teachers, and by exemplifying His own laws He has rendered no small service to virtue, since, in addition to His instructions, He has embodied a living pattern of that new cast and

description of character, of those original and distinctive excellencies, which He has prescribed to His followers. (*G. Chandler, LL.D.*) *Sceptical testimony to Christ's example*:—When Christ's pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever lived, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching upon this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy even for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than the endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life. (*J. S. Mill.*) *Christ's example gradually imitated*:—The Christian, in his striving after perfection, is like the sculptor Fiamingo with his image, of which the elder D'Israeli tells us. He kept polishing and polishing, till his friend exclaimed impatiently, "What perfection would you have?" "Alas!" was the answer, "the original I am labouring to come up to is in my head, but not yet in my hand." (*W. Baxendale.*) *Self-propagating power of example*:—Example is like the press: a thing done is the thought printed; it may be repeated if it cannot be recalled; it has gone forth with a self-propagating power, and may run to the ends of the earth, and descend from generation to generation. (*H. Melvill.*) *Influence of example*:—When in the Mexican war the troops were wavering, a general rose in his stirrups and dashed into the enemy's lines, shouting, "Men, follow!" They, seeing his courage and disposition, dashed on after him and gained the victory. What men want to rally them for God is an example to lead them. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The imitation of Christ*:—Man is observed to be a creature naturally given to imitation; examples have a great deal more influence on him than laws and precepts. This being the case, he is concerned to set before him the best examples. And because this is a thing wherein men generally fail, here the loving Jesus directs them to the worthiest object of their imitation! I. WHEREIN ARE WE TO IMITATE CHRIST. As there are some duties that the gospel commands us, which yet Christ was not capable of, as repentance, &c., so, likewise, there are some actions of Christ which it would be folly in us to endeavour to imitate. 1. Negatively. We are not to imitate Christ in—(1) Those actions which He did by His extraordinary and Divine power. The poets relate that Salmoneus strove to imitate Jove's thunder, and was slain with a real thunder-bolt. Such may be expected to be the recompense of our presumptious emulating the miraculous undertakings of Christ. And to these I may add those actions of His, which were arbitrary and absolute, as He was Lord of the world. (2) In His actions as Redeemer He both did and suffered many things thus, which were peculiar to Him, and above our imitation; and yet in some sense we are to make Him our pattern, even as to those. His nativity must be copied out in our spiritual birth; His cross bearing, crucifixion (Gal. ii. 20; vi. 14), death (Rom. vi. 8; Col. ii. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 11), sacrifice (Rom. xii. 1) by ours. He was buried, and we must (Rom. vi. 4) find a grave for our sins. He was raised and we must rise (Col. iii. 1; Rom. vi. 4). And, as Christ was exalted, so God exalts us in Him (Eph. ii. 6). (3) In some actions which He did in His peculiar state and condition, *e.g.*, we are not authorized by His example to choose a life of poverty; for we are not in the same circumstances with Him. (4) In those acts He did only to signify and teach some greater thing, as the feet-washing—*e.g.*, the apostles, it is true, washed one another's feet, in imitation of their Lord's example, yet this only the custom of that country. In this country it would only be apish imitation, and like those who wore sandals, preached on the house-tops, and saluted no man by the way, &c. 2. Positively. Imitate Christ in—(1) His humility and condescension. How this appears in His birth, subjection to His parents, trade, choice of companions, and object of ministry! And, as He was humble Himself, so he reproved pride and haughtiness of spirit in others (Matt. xviii. 2–4; Luke xxii. 24, &c.; Matt. xx. 27). And under Christ's humility I may reckon His obedience to the government He lived under (Matt. xvii. 27). "Render unto Cæsar," &c. And as Christ's whole life so His death was an amazing act of condescension (Phil. ii. 6–8). (2) In His self-denial and mortification. These He eminently showed in divers emergencies of His life; in despising the world's—(*a*) Honour and applause. He obscured even His Divinity itself for many years, and sometimes when He wrought miracles He would not let them take air (John viii. 50). (*b*) Riches (Matt. viii. 20). (*c*) Pleasures. (*d*) In His entire resigning Himself to God's will (John v. 30; vi. 38). (*e*) In that He was pleased to bear with the infirmities and frailties of men (Rom. xv. 1–3). (3) In His extensive love and exact justice towards men. I join these because he that acts charitably gives men their due, and he that acts justly proves kind. None

was a greater observer of honest dealing than our Lord (Matt. vii. 12; Luke vi. 21). And that He was also charitable, everything that He did was a proof (Acts x. 38). As He lived so He died a most compassionate lover of souls. Still He propounds Himself as a pattern to us. Being a loving Saviour, He calls on us to love one another (John xiii. 35). (4) In His religious and devout converse with God. In His love for and attendance at God's house. In His private converse with God (Luke vi. 12; xxii. 44; Heb. v. 7). His meditation, &c. In these things let our Lord be our pattern, leaving behind us the noise and business of the world. (5) In His patient and undaunted deportment under His extraordinary sufferings (Heb. xii. 1–3). (6) In His constant beating down of sin and vice, and His encouraging and promoting of holiness, by all that He said or did. Was there ever a more eminent reprover of sin than our Lord? II. THE REASONS WHY WE ARE TO IMITATE CHRIST. 1. Because His example is the exactest that we can follow. (1) Some examples of virtue are counterfeit. The Papists impiously take St. Francis to be the exact image of Christ. And you may read in their legends of other persons who were canonized for the prodigious holiness of their lives. But Christ's example is no fiction. (2) The examples of those saints that are true and real are very imperfect, and often mixed with sinful miscarriages, and therefore not the fittest to be followed by us. Christ alone is an unblemished pattern (2 Pet. ii. 22). (3) The examples of the best of men are only so far imitable by us, as they are conformable to the example of Christ (1 Cor. xi. 1). 2. It was the design of God in sending His Son into the world, that He should be an example to us. 3. This is the great character of Christianity, and the main thing whereby we are able to demonstrate ourselves to be true Christians (1 John ii. 6). 4. Christ's own command. 5. This is it which brings repute to Christianity, and renders it honourable and praiseworthy. 6. This is that which yields us solid comfort, and gives us certain hopes of eternal happiness. III. THE APPLICATION. 1. Ask yourselves seriously whether you have set Christ's example before you, and have endeavoured to imitate it. 2. Lament both in ourselves and others our neglect of taking Christ for our example 3. Let this grief and shame lead us to our duty. (1) Make use of Christ's example to repel the temptation that you are under. As when you are tempted to pride, think how humble a Saviour you had. When you are tempted to deal unjustly, consider how upright He was. When you find yourselves allured by pleasure allay your extravagant desires by calling to mind what a severe observer of temperance the Holy Jesus was. (2) Set this before you when you are to enterprise any virtuous action. 4. Often peruse the holy life and death of Jesus. 5. Be convinced of the matchless excellency and beauty of Christ. (*John Edwards, D.D.*) *Christ our example*:—There were in Greece certain fields called Palæstræ, where young men exercised themselves in wrestling. In these were set up statues of some valiant champions, that the young wrestlers might fix their eyes upon them and so be encouraged. Can we choose a better champion than Christ to eye and imitate. (*J. Trapp.*) *Imitation of Christ in sacrifice*:—Are you not trying to build your nests high, and to feather them with down? Are you not trying to provide for the future, so that you shall escape trouble and care? Has the idea entered into your mind that suffering is the baptism of holiness? that it brings you into the likeness of Christ, and that it is to be, not suffering for your own sake, but suffering that other men may be wiser and purer, and truer and juster? Is this the foundation upon which you are building your activity? Can we be saviours of the world, and none of us be willing to suffer, and all of us be fierce for vengeance? Can we be saviours of the world, and all of us carry the whip of justice, and none of us carry the sweet incense and perfume of love? Shall all pulpits, all papers, all Churches, all Christians of every name, clamour for justice, justice, justice, and not one speak of that crowned Sufferer who stood silent and meek, though the world thundered about Him and rolled in upon Him, and overwhelmed Him even unto death? Go! go! ye sons of Zebedee, that want to stand high, but do not want to take the cup or the baptism! But if any man would follow Christ, let him be silent in the presence of that most august spectacle of time—the Saviour crowned with thorns! (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The family likeness*:—A little boy had lost his sister. There was no portrait of her. It was before the days of photographs. He begged his parents to get a painter to make a picture of his sister. Remonstrance did not silence him, and finally he was sent to visit friends in Boston, and was told that he might see if he could find a painter who would undertake to make a picture of his sister. The friends humoured him, and took him to the studios of several artists; but they all shook their heads. At last one young artist said: "Come

with me, and see if you can find any faces that look like your sister's." He took the little boy to a large gallery of portraits. Soon one picture attracted the child's attention. "That's like her eyes," he said. Then another—"that's like her mouth." Another had "her hair," another "her forehead," and so on. The artist put all these features together, and succeeded in making a good portrait of the boy's sister. In the same way we can supply the likeness of Christ. We do not find all His portrait in any one person. But pick it out, feature by feature, among the different members of His family, and we can make it into one harmonious whole. (*New Testament Anecdotes.*) **If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them.**—*Knowing and doing*:—I. KNOWLEDGE. 1. In order to do anything, anywhere, we must know. This is so in the natural world. The laws of nature are determinate over her whole empire, and the triumphs of science are but the discoveries of occult law. It is so also in the moral universe. There law is supreme and intelligent, whether revealed in Scripture or written on the heart. This we must know to obey, for where there is no knowledge of it there is no transgression. There are some who think that religion is a thing of emotion, and has nothing to do with the intellect, and herein those old systems, which so long swayed the spirits of men, were essentially defective. Christianity appeals to the whole man. Ignorance is not the mother of devotion, but of squalor and crime. Christ came that whosoever believed in Him should not "walk in darkness," &c. 2. This knowledge must be clear and certain. A confused or contradictory or partial revelation would either bewilder us, drive us to despair, or paralyse our efforts. There must be a revelation—(1) Of God. (*a*) In His nature, that we may avoid impiety in our worship. (*b*) In His character, that we may grow up into His likeness. (*c*) In His will, that we may neither cumber ourselves with needless restrictions, nor indulge in unworthy compromises. (2) Of man. (*a*) In His capacity, that we may know that we are not overtasked. (*b*) In His fall, that we may taste the bitterness of the wormwood. (*c*) In His helplessness that we may be humbled from our pride, and driven to rely on the succours of another. (3) Of Christ, whose atonement is life from the dead. (4) Of immortality that we may feel the importance of our stewardship. 3. God has provided for this knowledge in—(1) The Bible. (2) The interpreting Spirit. (3) A living ministry. Ignorance, therefore, is not misfortune but guilt. II. OBEDIENCE, without which knowledge is an aggravation of transgression, and for the sake of which knowledge is given. This obedience—1. Is the essence of religion—"Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." 2. Is a test of affection towards Christ. "If ye love Me keep My commandments." 3. Is not meritorious, but simply dutiful. 4. Must have respect to the fixed rule of Divine law and the whole of it. We must not lower the standard of right either for fashion, affection, or persecution. 5. Must be whole-hearted. We must not pick and choose. 6. Must regard the spirit as well as the letter of the command. 7. Must have as its motive power not fear but love. 8. Must be constant; not strict on Sunday and lax during the week; not dependent on feelings or associations, but on principle. 9. Must endure to the end. III. HAPPINESS. The result in which this knowledge and obedience will issue. The satisfaction—1. Of understood and discharged duty. 2. Of God's consequent and manifested favour. 3. Of the hope of reward in heaven. (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*) *Knowing and doing*:—I. WE SHOULD STRIVE TO KNOW OUR DUTY. 1. What kind of knowledge? (1) Clear and distinct (1 Pet. iii. 15). (2) Scriptural (John v. 39; Isa. i. 12). (3) Effectual. (4) Universal (Psa. cxix. 6). (5) Growing (2 Pet. iii. 18). 2. What duties? (1) Toward God. (*a*) Repentance (Matt. iv. 17). (*b*) Faith (John xiv. 1). (*c*) Love (Matt. xxii. 37). (2) To man. (*a*) Love (Matt. v. 44). (*b*) Justice (Matt. vii. 12; xxii. 21). (*c*) Mercy (Luke vi. 36). (*d*) Humility (John xiii. 4-8). 3. Why should we know our duty. (1) Because the law and gospel were both written for this end (John xx. 31). (2) To know a duty is itself a duty commanded (1 Pet. iii. 18). (3) We can perform no duty without we first know it (Rom. x. i). 4. Labour then to know your duty. Consider—(1) Ignorance is the cause of all error (Matt. xxii. 29). (2) You have all means requisite for this knowledge in the Scriptures. (3) It is then your own fault if you know not how to serve God (Hos. xiii. 9). (4) Hence you will be inexcusable at the day of judgment, and have greater condemnation (John iii. 19). II. WE SHOULD DO WHAT WE KNOW. 1. How should we perform all the commands of Christ? (1) From such principles as Christ commands. (*a*) Love (Gal. v. 6). (*b*) A desire to please God (1 Thess. iv. 1). (2) In a right manner. (*a*) Understandingly (1 Cor. xiv. 15). (*b*) Willingly (Psa. cx. 3). (*c*) Cheerfully (Rom. xii. 8; Psa. xl. 8). (*d*) Believingly (Rom. xiv. 23; Heb. xiii. 6). (*e*) With all our

might (Eccles. ix. 10). (*f*) Humbly (James iv. 6), so as never to think we can do enough (Luke xvii. 10), nor merit anything (Gal. ii. 16), but that our best duties are full of infirmities (Isa. lxiv. 6). (3) To a right end—(*a*) Not for vain glory (Matt. vi. 1) or temporal interest; but—(*b*) for God's glory (Matt. v. 16; 1 Cor. x. 31), and in order to our own salvation (1 Cor. ix. 27). 2. Why should we perform all the commands of Christ? (1) This was His end in commanding them. (2) The only way whereby to manifest ourselves to be His disciples (chap. xiv. 15). (3) He deserves this after all He has done for us. (4) Our baptism and subsequent vows pledge us to this. III. THEY THAT DO GOD'S COMMANDS ARE HAPPY—1. In this life. (1) We shall not fear the curses of the law (Mal. ii. 2), nor the wrath of God (Psa. vii. 11. (2) Our consciences will be clear (2 Cor. i. 12). (3) Our souls will be kept in right order (Isa. lvii. 20, 21). (4) We shall have the assistance and communion of the Holy Ghost (John xvi. 7). (5) God will be present with us (Isa. xli. 10; xliii. 2). (6) He will direct us (Prov. iii. 6; Psa. xxv. 12). (7) Make all things work together for our good (Rom. viii. 28). (8) Discover His special love to us and ours to Him (1 John v. 3), and that we are His children (chap. i. 12). (9) Have a title to everlasting life (Matt. xix. 16, 17). 2. In the world to come. (1) In our freedom from pain (Rev. xxi. 4), and sin (Eph. v. 27). (2) In our company—saints, angels, God. (3) In our employments—perfect service, perfect praise. (4) In our privileges—admission to God's presence, sight of His glory, fruition of desire. (5) In our enjoyments. (*a*) Perfection of soul and body (Philip iii. 21; Heb. xii. 23). (*b*) The infinite love and favour of God. (*c*) All the pleasures that our natures are capable of (Psa. xvi. 11; xvii. 15), for ever (Matt. xxv. 46). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Knowing and doing*:—I. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE WHO KNOW. II. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE WHO KNOW AND DO. III. THE CULPABILITY OF THOSE WHO KNOW AND DO NOT. IV. THE DESTITUTION OF THOSE WHO KNOW NOT. (*S. S. Times.*) *The reciprocal relations and blessedness of knowing and doing*:—We must not think that we have then obtained to the right knowledge of the truth when we have broken through the outward shell of words and phrases that house it up; or when, by logical analysis, we have found out the dependencies and coherences of them one with another, or when, like stout champions of it, having well guarded it with the invincible strength of our demonstration, we dare stand out in the face of the world and challenge the field of all those who pretend to be our rivals. We have many grave and reverend idolaters that worship truth only in the image of their own wits; that could never adore it so much as they may seem to do, were it anything else but such a form of belief as their wandering speculations had at last met together in; were it not that they find their own image and superscription on it. There is a knowing of "the truth as it is in Jesus"—as it is in a Christ-like nature, as it is in that sweet, mild, humble, and loving spirit of Jesus, which spreads itself, like a morning sun, upon the souls of good men, full of light and life. There is an inward beauty, life and loveliness in Divine truth, which cannot be known but when it is digested into life and practice. (*John Smith, M.A.*) *Knowledge and practice necessary in religion*:—Two things make up religion, the knowledge and the practice of it; and the first is wholly in order to the second. God hath not revealed to us the knowledge of Himself and His will, merely for the improvement of our understanding, but for the bettering of our hearts and lives. Our Saviour, in the text, from a particular instance, settles this general conclusion. I. THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL AND OUR DUTY IS NECESSARY, IN ORDER TO THE PRACTICE OF IT. Rome teaches that "ignorance is the mother of devotion," and locks up from the people the great storehouse of Divine knowledge. In justification of this, it is pretended that knowledge is apt to puff men up, to make them disobedient, and heretical. For answer to this pretence, consider—1. That, unless this be the necessary effect of knowledge in religion, and of the free use of the Holy Scriptures, there is no force in this reason, for that which is useful ought not to be taken away, because it is liable to be abused. If it ought, then all knowledge ought to be suppressed; light, and liberty, and reason, yea, life itself ought to be taken away. But if the knowledge of religion is of its own nature pernicious, then the blame of all this would fall upon our Saviour for revealing, and upon His apostles for publishing, it in a known tongue to all mankind. 2. But this is only accidental and through men's abuse of it, for which the thing itself ought not to be taken away. If any man abuse the Holy Scriptures he does it at his peril. We must not hinder men from being Christians, to preserve them from being heretics, and put out men's eyes, for fear they should dispute their way with their guides. St. Paul (1 Cor. viii. 1) takes notice of this accidental inconvenience, but the remedy which he prescribes (1 Cor.

xiv.) is that the service of God be so performed as may be for the edification of the people; and that charity shall govern knowledge and help to make right use of it (1 Cor. xiv. 20). There is nothing in the Christian religion, but what is fit for every man to know, for it is all designed to promote holiness. Men, therefore, ought not to be debarred of it. 3. The proper effects of ignorance are equally pernicious, and much more certain than those which are accidentally occasioned by knowledge; for so far as a man is ignorant of his duty, it is impossible he should do it. He that hath the knowledge of religion may be a bad Christian; but he that is destitute of it can be none at all (Prov. xix. 2). Because nothing is religious that is not a reasonable service, and no service can be reasonable that is not directed by our understanding. The end of prayers, *e.g.*, is to testify of our own wants, and of our dependence upon God for supply; it is impossible, therefore, that any man should be said to pray who does not understand what he asks; and the saying over so many *pater nosters* by one that does not understand them is no more a prayer than the repeating over so many verses in Virgil. And if men must not be permitted to know so much as they can in religion, for fear they should grow troublesome, then the best way to maintain peace would be to let the people know nothing in religion, and to keep the priests as ignorant as the people, but then the mischief would be, that, out of a fondness to maintain peace in the Church, there would be no Church, nor no Christianity; which would be the same wise contrivance, as if a prince should destroy his subjects to keep his kingdom quiet. 4. If this reason be good, it is much stronger for withholding the Scriptures from the priests and the learned than from the people, for most of the famous heresies have their names from some learned man. The ancient fathers frequently prescribe to the people the constant and careful reading of the Scriptures as the surest antidote against the poison of dangerous errors. And if the word of God be so improper a means to this end, one would think that the teachings of men should be much less effectual; so that men must either be left in their ignorance, or they must be permitted to learn from the word of truth. 5. This danger was as great in the age of the apostles as now; and yet they took a quite contrary course. II. THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR DUTY, AND THE PRACTICE OF IT, MAY AND OFTEN ARE SEPARATED. Our Saviour, elsewhere, supposes that many know their Master's will, who do not do it; and He compares those that hear His sayings, and do them not, to a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. And St. James speaks of some who are "hearers of the word only, but not doers of it;" and for that reason fall short of happiness. There are three sorts of persons in whom the knowledge of religion is more remarkably separated from the practice of it. 1. The speculative Christian, who makes religion only a science, and studies it as a piece of learning. He hath no design to practise it, but he is loth to be ignorant of it, because the knowledge of it is a good ornament of conversation, and will serve for discourse and entertainment. And because he does not intend to practise it, he passeth over those things which are easy to be understood, and applies himself chiefly to the consideration of those which will afford matter of controversy. Of the same rank usually are the leaders of factions in religion, who, by endless disputes about things, commonly of no great moment, hinder themselves and others from minding the practice of the great and substantial duties of a good life. 2. The formal Christian, who takes up religion for a fashion. Such think they are very good Christians if they can give an account of the articles of their faith, profess their belief in God and Christ, and declare that they hope to be saved by Him, though they take no care to keep His commandments. These are they of whom our Saviour speaks in Luke vi. 46. 3. Hypocritical Christians, who make an interest of religion, and serve some worldly design by it (2 Tim. iii. 2). III. THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION IS THE ONLY WAY TO HAPPINESS. 1. The gospel makes the practice of religion a necessary condition of our happiness. Our Saviour, in His first sermon, where He repeats the promise of blessedness so often, makes no promise of it to the mere knowledge of religion, but to the habit and practice of Christian graces (Matt. vii. 22–24; Rom. ii. 13; James i. 22–26; Heb. xii. 14). 2. As God hath made the practice of religion a necessary condition of our happiness, so the very nature and reason of the thing make it a necessary qualification for it. It is necessary that we become like to God, in order to the enjoyment of Him; and nothing makes us like to God but the practice of holiness and goodness (1 John iii. 3). Conclusion: 1. The great end of all our knowledge in religion is to practice what we know (1 John ii. 3, 4). 2. Practice is the best way to increase and perfect our knowledge (John vii. 17). 3. Without the practice of religion our knowledge is vain. (*Abp. Tillotson.*) *All light good:*—It is very sad to fail in

duty from ignorance. And when that ignorance is very gross, the failure is generally so complete and so visible, that it is sure to meet with its appropriate punishment. The utter worthlessness into which men can sink who have never been taught any portion of the truth is a visible proof to us how much we owe to the light which has been shed over our own lives. Their condition clearly tells us what education does for us: what we gain from mere unassisted light. Mere light of intellect, without any direct consciousness of God or of Heaven, or of Christ, or of conscience, does a great and visible work. It sets a man free from many temptations, so that without making him, as far as we can see, at all a better man, it puts him in a better position. There are many gross sins which lose all their power over him, simply because other attractions are presented which are still more powerful. But this is not all, though this is much. Light of any kind invariably throws light upon duty, and if we know anything we are sure to have thereby a clearer knowledge of right from wrong. The mere awakening of the understanding must awaken the conscience in some degree. You cannot gain more intellectual power without also gaining moral light. Just as the coming of the daylight shows you the beauty of nature at the same moment that it shows you the position of surrounding objects, so, too, even the merest science must reveal in some slight degree the beauty of the Will of God. (*Bishop Temple.*) *Knowledge and obedience*:—I. KNOWLEDGE IS GOOD—1. In its nature. 2. In its contents. 3. It is an evil thing to be without it. II. OBEDIENCE IS BETTER. 1. More rare. 2. More difficult. 3. Implies a better disposition of heart. 4. Produces far better effects. III. HAPPINESS RESULTS FROM THEIR UNITED INFLUENCE. The real Christian is happy in—1. The real safety of his state. 2. In the approbation of conscience. 3. In the special favour of God. 4. In the earnest and hope of heaven. Learn—1. The character of a true Christian. 2. The wise ordination of the gospel. 3. The necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit. (*T. Kidd.*) *The comfort of duty*:—Rain falls on the Highland hills. Slipping down the bare sides, trickling along the roots of the heather, soaking through the bogs, past all obstacles, the waters make their way into the glen. They are not stopped there by the fallen trees, or the big boulders which impede their progress. On and on they traverse every barrier till they fall into the sea, out of which they came, and to which they ever tend. Thus, too, does comfort from doing that which duty demands meet with many an opposition, but it will surely sweep past them all, and shed into waiting hearts the consciousness that obligation fulfilled is associated with blessedness according to eternal law. (*D. G. Watt, M.A.*) *The blessedness of duty*:—Have you heard of that pious monk in the middle ages? He intensely desired to have one look at the Saviour's bodily form, one gaze on His blessed and holy countenance. And one day as he was praying and meditating in his cell, "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven," and raising his eyes he beheld in the cloud of light one like unto the Son of God. But just as he was goingt o fix his eyes on the celestial vision, the monastery bell rang calling him to his duty. What did he do? Did he postpone his duties and stop to feast his soul on the sacred sight? No; the little monk immediately started to his feet, went out of his cell, took his turn at the outer gate, distributed charity to the necessitous that flocked to the monastery for much-needed help. Having completed his task, he returned to his apartment, sorry to think he had missed the vision for which he had been praying all his monastic life through. But, to his astonishment, there shone the Shekinah brighter than ever, and in the glowing radiance he beheld One, no longer like unto the Son of God, but "like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle," and out of the ineffable Brightness came a voice, saying, "Hadst thou remained here to the neglect of duty I should have departed; but seeing thou preferrest duty to ease, come and see;" and thereupon He showed to the poor monk His hands and His feet. The conscientious Christian was filled with unspeakable delight, not unmixed with holy awe. You see the lesson: to taste the joy of religion you must perform its duties; to enter the inner court of sweet communion with God you must penetrate through the outer court of outward service. Through Judaism the world attained Christianity; and through duty shall we arrive at solid pleasure. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *The secret of a happy life*:—I. HAPPINESS IS NOT ONLY A PRIVILEGE BUT A DUTY, because—1. It adorns religion. Christians are a book which every one reads, and a happy face is a beautiful illustration in that book which is sure to attract the reader. 2. A happy mind is the cradle of all usefulness. Everyone does everything best when he is

happy. 3. We are to be like God, and our God is a happy God. 4. We are rehearsing our eternity, and that is a happy heaven. 5. An unhappy man wrongs the Father,—for what father is not grieved if his child is not happy? He wrongs the Son—for what has not the Son done to make us happy? He wrongs the Holy Ghost, the "Spirit of joy?" So unhappiness is not so much a weakness to be pitied as a sin to be condemned and overcome? II. WHAT, THEN, IS THE SECRET OF A HAPPY LIFE? To turn knowledge into practice, first to "know" and then to "do." But then is not happiness the cause of a good life? Yes, the two act and re-act for ever. I believe that Christ died for me, that my debt is paid, and I free. In that belief all happiness begins before I do a single work, and makes me do it? But then how is this consistent with our Lord's words, "Know" what? "Do" what? I know that Christ has borne my punishment, and that I am saved. What I am to do with that knowledge is to turn it into faith. I have the knowledge of salvation through faith, and my believing it is the doing. 1. I come, then, to the first principle of a happy life, that sense of freedom which springs from a sense of pardon. A man may be called a happy man; he may be a merry man; but how can he be really happy with unforgiven sins, with dark retrospects, and awful visions of the future scaring him. 2. What Christ appears to have had specially in His mind here—love and humility. It is pride which stands in the way of most persons' happiness. Personal pride—of beauty, or intellect, never getting what they expect from it, and therefore always mortified; pride of wealth and grandeur; spiritual pride. The man who has now chosen the lower ground will—(1) Always have Jesus at his side. He carries with him "the Light of Life." Therefore he walks in the sunshine. (2) Have a secret communion going on with God. (3) And walking with frequent converse with Him, we gradually take something of the mind of God, our judgment unites itself to God's judgment—our will to God's will—without which there never can be a happy life. Until that, all life is a conflict between man and God. (4) And so we arrive at a strange independence of this present world. We may have and enjoy human friendships; we are independent of them. And the trials and sorrows prove only evidences that we are the children of God; that our education is for home. (5) And every true child of God has some work which he is doing for Him. And work for God is happiness. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The good practitioner*:—I. KNOWLEDGE ALONE IN THE MYSTERIES OF RELIGION WILL NOT MAKE A MAN HAPPY (Matt. vii. 21; Luke vi. 46). His knowledge might make a man admired, but not blessed. I would not disparage knowledge: knowledge is the pilot to guide us in our obedience; if zeal be not according to knowledge, it is will-worship, the setting up an altar to an unknown God. Knowledge is the elder sister, but here the elder must serve the younger: knowledge may put us into the way of happiness, but it is only practice brings us thither. 1. Knowledge alone doth not make a man better, therefore it cannot make him happy; it informs, not transforms: a man may receive the truth in the light of it, not in the love of it (2 Thess. ii. 10; Rom. ii. 20). Knowledge alone makes men monsters in religion; they are all head but no feet (Col. ii. 6). A man may have knowledge and be neglective of his duty; and have a clear head, and a foul heart, as the sun may shine on a dirty way. 2. Knowledge alone will not save, therefore it will not make a man happy. Hell is full of learned heads. 3. Knowledge alone makes a man's case worse, therefore it cannot make him happy. (1) It takes away all excuse and apology (chap. xv. 22). (2) It adds to a man's torment (Luke xii. 47). If a king cause his proclamation to be published, the subject knows it, but obeys not, this doth the more incense the king against him. Better be ignorant than knowingly disobedient. 4. Use. Get knowledge, but do not rest in it (Eccles. i. 18). To know only to know is like one that knows certain countries by the map, and can discourse of them, but never travelled into them, nor tasted the sweet spices of those countries. So the gnostic in religion hath heard and read much of the beauty of holiness, but never travelled into religion, nor tasted how good the Lord is; what is it the better to have the Bible in our heads if not in our hearts? You do not call him an handicraftsman who doth not work in his trade: so it is improper to call him a Christian who hath knowledge, but no practice. II. IT IS THE PRACTICAL PART OF RELIGION MAKES A MAN HAPPY. 1. There must be practice, because it is only that which answers God's end in giving us His Word both written and preached (Levit. xviii. 4; Deut. xxvi. 16). If you speak to your children, it is not only that they may know your mind, but do it. God gives us His Word not only as a picture to look upon, but as a copy to write after. The master gives his servant a candle, not to gaze on, but to work by; and so David calls the Word of

God, not a lamp to his eyes, but a lantern to his feet. 2. It is only the practice of religion that makes a man happy. It appears by Scripture (James i. 25; Acts vii. 22, Matt. xxv. 34, 35, Rev. xxii. 12). By reason, happiness is not attainable but in the use of means; and the use of means implies practice (Phil. ii. 12). There can be no crown without running, no recompense without diligence. (1) If it be only the doing part of religion makes men happy, then it sharply reproves them who know much, yet do nothing. It is better to practice one truth than to know all. But why do so few come up to the practical part of religion? Surely it is—(*a*) For want of humility. (*b*) Want of faith (Isa. liii. 1). (*c*) The difficulty of it. It is easy to hear a truth, to make a profession of it; but to digest it into practice, men are loth to put themselves to too much trouble (Prov. xix. 15). But it costs many a sinner more labour in toiling about his lusts than it costs a saint in serving his God. (*d*) The world comes between and hinders. (2) It exhorts all to become practitioners in religion. Note the following: (*a*) Obedience is an evidence of sincerity (chap. x. 25). (*b*) Practice will both honour religion and propagate it. (*c*) Thus we show our love to Christ (chap. xiv. 21). (*d*) Without practice you will come short of them who have come short of heaven (Mark vi. 20). (*e*) What unspeakable comfort will obedience yield both in life and death. (*f*) What is the end of all God's administrations, promises, threatenings, but obedience (Deut. xi. 28). (*g*) Consider what a sin disobedience is, against reason (1 Cor. x. 22), against equity, against conscience (Mal. i. 6); against kindness, against nature, since every creature in its kind obeys God; against self-preservation (2 Thess. i. 7, 8). (*h*) The benefit of obedience (Psa. xix. 11). So saith the text. If this argument will not prevail, what will? (3) Some rules to help Christians in their obedience. Obedience must be—(*a*) Cordial (Deut. xxvi. 16; Rom. vi. 17). The heart is the seat of love, and it is love perfumes every duty. The heart makes service a freewill offering, else it is but a tax. (*b*) Extensive—it must reach to all God's commandments (1 Kings ix. 4; Luke i. 6). (*c*) Believing (Heb. xi. 6; Rom. xvi. 26). (*d*) Constant (Rev. ii. 26). Faith must lead the van, and perseverance must bring up the rear. (*T. Watson.*) *Religion essentially practical*:—The object of religion is conduct; and conduct is really, however men may overlay it with philosophical disquisitions, the simplest thing in the world as far as understanding is concerned: as regards doing, the hardest. Here is the difficulty—to *do* what we very well know ought to be done. This difficulty is great enough to satisfy the most voracious appetite for difficulties. It extends to rightness in the whole range of what we call conduct; in three-fourths, therefore, at the lowest computation, of human life. The only doubt is whether we ought not to make the range of conduct wider still, and say it is four-fifths of human life, or five-sixths. Now, certainly we need not go far about to prove that conduct is in a special manner the object of Bible religion (Isa. i. 16; 17, lvi. 1; Psa. iv. 5; xcvii. 10; l. 23; 2 Tim. ii. 19). But instantly there will be raised the objection that this is morality and not religion which, some people suppose is identical with speculative theology. Religion, however, means simply either a binding to righteousness, or else a serious attention to righteousness and dwelling upon it; the antithesis between ethical and religious is thus quite a false one. Ethical means practical, it relates to conduct passing into habit or disposition. Religious also means practical, only in a still higher degree: if we follow the intention of human thought and language in the use of the word, it is ethics heightened, enkindled, lit up by feeling. The passage from religion to morality is when to morality is applied emotion. And the true meaning of religion is thus, not simply morality, but morality touched by emotion. And this new elevation and inspiration of morality is well marked by the word "righteousness." Conduct is the word of common life, morality of philosophical disquisition, righteousness of religion. (*Matthew Arnold.*)

Vers. 18-30. **I speak not of you all.**—*A last appeal*:—I. A SOLEMN ANNOUNCEMENT. 1. The reason of it. (1) To indicate Christ's knowledge of the human heart, and to show that He had not been mistaken in Judas (ver. 18). Had it not been made it would have appeared as though Christ were not omniscient. (2) To direct the disciples' minds to an impressive fulfilment of Scripture (ver. 18). (3) To confirm the faith of the disciples in Himself (ver. 19). (4) To arrest, and if yet possible rescue, the soul of Judas. 2. The certainty of it (ver. 21). "Amen, amen." Had any other made the announcement it would have been rejected with scorn. 3. The effect of it. (1) It filled the Saviour with horror (ver. 21), just as He had been perturbed at Lazarus's grave (chap. xi. 33). (2) It plunged the disciples into con-

stornation and dismay (ver. 22). II. AN ANXIOUS QUESTION (ver. 25). 1. Moved by Peter, with characteristic impetuosity, who thought perhaps that John was in the secret, but he was equally ignorant. 2. Proposed by John—(1) With affection—leaning back till his head rested on Jesus's breast. (2) With reverence—"Lord." (3) With pity for Christ, who should suffer, and the disciple who should inflict so sad a fate. (4) With humility and self-examination—as if he dreaded it should be himself; and yet surely—(5) With conscious innocence—though Judas had the effrontery to ask, "Is it I?" III. AN EXPLICIT ANSWER (ver. 26). 1. Clearly given. 2. Defiantly accepted. 3. Strangely misunderstood (ver. 28). Lessons—1. Christ in His Church a searcher of hearts. 2. The possibility of sitting at Christ's table without being a true disciple, of enjoying religious ordinances without possessing grace, of falling from Christ so far as to lift the heel against Him. 3. Apostasies, though they do not affect Christ's position in the Church, are occasions of pain. 4. John-like spirits are most likely to obtain from Christ revelations of His grace and truth. 5. Christ loves those who hate Him; but he who will not be won by that love must eventually fall into the devil's grasp. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *A fourfold theme for thought:*—I. A SOLEMN TRUTH (ver. 18)—"I know whom I have chosen." Christ knows His disciples—the true and false—their works and their hearts—all they have been, are, and shall be. "He knew what was in man." Then—1. He does not require of us what will outmeasure our faculties. He loves us too much, and is too just for this. 2. The services that are not rendered Him from the heart are of no value in His sight. Formality and insincerity are worse than worthless. 3. Every one that names His name should depart from evil. II. A LAMENTABLE FACT. "He that eateth bread," &c. Judas was guilty of—1. The basest ingratitude. 2. The grossest avarice. 3. The most daring impiety. Such a fact as this shows—(1) Possibility that should lead us all to the most rigorous heart scrutiny. Here we see that a man may be in close contact with Christ and yet have no spiritual connection with Him. (2) That Christ coerces no man into His service. He leaves each to act for himself. III. A BENEFICENT WARNING (ver. 19). 1. Against a probable danger to the other disciples. Had the conduct of Judas broken suddenly on them, they might have received a moral shock which would have imperilled their faith. 2. For the purpose of fortifying their faith in the Messiah by the very means of the betrayal as foreannounced. IV. A GLORIOUS ASSURANCE (ver. 20). This shows that His faithful disciples were—1. Identified with Him. The treatment they receive is regarded as being rendered to Him. 2. As He was identified with the Father—(1) By official work. (2) By vital sympathy. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The history of Judas in relation to the Divine dealings:*—The history of Judas is but the record of a human life. He was a man like ourselves, subject therefore to temptation and struggle, and one with the freedom and responsibility which belong to us all. This will save us from fatalism, and in the face of many dark problems here is our safe starting-point. Learn that—I. MEN MAY FRUSTRATE CHRIST'S PURPOSES CONCERNING THEM. Christ gave Judas responsible work and a noble calling, and educated him for it all. But the training was worse than useless, the privileges were abused, and the sacred trust betrayed. Yet Christ would have had delight in Judas's wellbeing and success. But all was frustrated, and the bitter lament over Jerusalem had its reference to Judas. We all share this terrible power, and could we see how we have used it we should live much nearer to Him for the rest of our lives. II. THE MERCY OF GOD WHICH WOULD SAVE US MAY RUIN US. Judas had gifts: Christ employed them. His very position brought its dangers: Christ trusted him. Not indeed without warning him (chap. vi. 70, 71). And as the besetting sin was yielded to, and the downward course became more and more marked, where was Judas so likely to be kept from evil as in Christ's company? Accordingly he was retained at his post and was still trusted. Yet the mercy which would have saved ruined him. For, turning from the source of Goodness, he said, "Evil, be thou my good." Each of us may apply this principle. III. MAN'S SIN IS OVER-RULED TO DISPLAY THE DIVINE GOODNESS. Thomas doubted: We obtain an additional proof of Christ's resurrection. Judas betrayed: Jesus died. It did not require a Judas to save the world, or the hatred of the Sanhedrim to fulfil God's promises. Yet the sin of the world runs up into typical acts, and in a profoundly representative sense the sin of Judas was ours. This sin was over-ruled for God's glory and man's good. And through it all Judas was free, as is every sinner, as proved from common consent, conscience, and such words as "can," "ought," &c. Christ too is free and maketh the wrath of man to praise Him. IV. THE BEARING OF ALL THIS ON THE PRESENCE OF JUDAS'S IN THE CHURCH. Men may know not that they

are there: but Christ knows them. Each service in the upper room repeated. John is there, and it may be Judas, so is Christ. If so the love that spares is the love that would save. How must Christ have looked on Judas, yet he went out madly from that saving Presence. "And I saw there was a way to hell from the gate of heaven." Two apostles sinned grossly. Judas went out from the presence of Christ to meet the night; Peter, broken-hearted, to meet the dawn. Which will you follow? (*G. T. Keeble.*) *The sin and folly of the crime of Judas*:—Once, I think, there was great joy in a certain house in Kerioth, because there a child had just been born. I think this joy broke out in the name given to the child. Call him "Praise," that is, Judah. But the parents were not prophets; and years after this, Jesus said of him, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born!" This saying darkly intimates that the sin of Judas was unparalleled. "Esau for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." But Judas sold Christ! For a man to sell his soul for some passing paltry profit is enough to make him infamous. But Judas sold Christ! John Bunyan tells us that long after he loved Christ he was tempted for the space of a year to sell and part with the blessed Christ for the things of this life. The tempter, he says, "would intermix in such sort with all I did, that I could not eat my food, nor stoop to pick up a pin, nor chop a stick, without hearing this whisper—Sell Christ—sell Him for this—sell Him for that. Sell Him! sell Him!" But Judas actually sold Christ. You may have had some moment of spiritual delirium, when some one sinful gratification seemed to be so irresistible that your heart swore that you would have it, come what might; but God's hand snatched you back just in time, and His Spirit showed the truth in its light, and made you resolve not to buy bliss that was only for a moment, at the cost of bliss everlasting. The temptation was fearful; for it was to part with your portion in Christ. But the sin of Judas was that he sold Christ Himself. Sometimes men treat Christ with profanity, partly because they are steeped in ignorance; and all the while they are sinning the Intercessor's plea for them is "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Judas knew what he did. He had heard Christ say, "Before Abraham was, I am;" "I and My Father are one." He had witnessed His grand manifestations as King of the air, of the water, of the dead, of spirits; and yet Judas sold Christ! What did he sell Him for? The old German story reports that the astrologer Faustus sold his soul to the evil one for twenty-four years of earthly happiness. What was the bargain in this case? The auctioneer had tempting lists to show; what was it that tempted Judas? He sold his Lord for thirty somethings. What things? Thirty years of right over all the earth, with all the trees of the forests, all the fowls of the mountains, and the cattle upon a thousand hills? For thirty armies, or thirty fleets? Thirty stars? Thirty centuries of power to reign majestically on hell's burning throne? No, for thirty shillings, *i.e.*, £3 10s. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) **I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled.**—*Why did Christ choose Judas*:—Christ chose him for what he was, and what he might have been, not for what he became. Christ chooses men not for their attainments, but for their possibilities. Do you suppose Christ chooses men for their ability or their character? He chooses them that He may give them character and inspire new capacities within them. He chooses twelve men, and one was a traitor; the average of treachery in human life is usually higher than that. Moreover, the election of Christ does not fetter the free-will of a man. In a certain high and almost inscrutable sense it is true that it all happens "that it may be fulfilled;" for though the bad man may seem an accident he is not, but in some way fits into a Divine order. The wild wind roars through the troubled heaven, but somewhere there is a sail to catch it, so that all its fierceness is yoked to fairest uses, and transformed into a mysterious helpfulness. There are no accidents in the Divine order; the harvest of to-day is the fruitful child of the storm-weather of a century ago; it was all that it might be fulfilled. But whatever may be the ultimate issue of events, the will of man works freely within their circumference. Christ has chosen every living soul, and called him; yet few there are that shall be saved. You are as free to work evil in an apostleship as in a fisherman's boat. Nay more, if this man was so cursed and burdened with evil aptitudes, was it not an act of Divinest mercy to call to him an apostleship? There are some men who never would be Christians at all unless they were Christian ministers. They need the constraint of solemn responsibilities; the only chance of saving them is to set them to save others. And, looked at in this light of human experience, how Divine was that discernment which chose Judas, and gave him this unique opportunity of making his calling and election sure beneath

the very eyes of Jesus! For the evils which destroyed Judas had not ripened in him when Jesus called him. He came in the untainted freshness of faith, perhaps in the unbroken energy of youth. He had more than ordinary capacity, for at once he became the organiser of the little society, its steward, its financier, the custodian of its means. To paint him therefore in the light of the after event, as most painters have done, disfigured with the leer of low cunning, scowling with the meanness of baffled craft and delayed cupidity, is altogether false. He who paints Judas must put into his face the dying light of what was once noble enthusiasm—the shadowed eagerness of what was once heroic faith. He must paint a face full of the anguish of remembrance, the traces of perished nobility, the tragedy of overthrown ideals. In a word, we must remember Christ called him, and not in vain; Christ loved him, and not without cause; and howsoever dreadful the end may be, there was once a bright, a brilliant, and a beautiful beginning. (*W. J. Dawson.*) **He that eateth bread with Me**, is equivalent to "a professed friend," "an intimate acquaintance" —"a familiar friend," as the psalmist has it in the place referred to. To "lift up the heel," according to some is a figure borrowed from the practice of wrestlers in lifting up the foot, for the purpose of overthrowing an antagonist. The more probable account is, that the figure is that of a vicious horse or ox, receiving food from the hand of its owner, and yet lifting up the heel to give him a stroke which may be fatal to him. The meaning of the whole expression seems to be, "a highly favoured associate is prepared secretly to inflict on me a very severe injury." (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *Ingratitude*:—In considering this prophecy show—I. IN WHOM IT MAY BE SAID TO BE FULFILLED. 1. The Atheist. 2. The infidel. 3. The hypocrite. 4. The apostate. II. WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT. 1. That Christianity must be true. 2. That the falls of its professors afford no just argument against it. 3. That no man can tell what evil he may perpetrate, if Satan be permitted to assault him. 4. That God's conduct towards us is the very reverse of ours towards Him. (*C. Simeon, M.A.*) *The successive steps by which the traitor reached the climax of his guilt*:—The devil had already put it into his heart to betray the Lord (ver. 2). Wounded pride (Matt. xxvi. 14), Satanic influence (Luke xxii. 3), and the love of money—these were the great evils that lay at the root of his conduct. And yet, who can tell what struggles he must have gone through ere he brought himself to carry his resolution into effect? (*C. Ross.*) *Warnings as to the conduct of the traitor*:—1. And, first of all, do we not see here what a hateful, detestable thing hypocrisy, treachery is in the sight of God. Oh see, only see, the Lord of Glory troubled in spirit as He approaches the painful subject. And let us remember, that hypocrisy is equally offensive to Him still. 2. Further, do we not see here that sin—that hardness of heart is a gradual, a progressive thing? Judas did not reach the climax of his guilt by a single leap, but step by step. 3. But still further, may we not learn from this narrative, that though the hypocrite and the hardened sinner may for a long time escape detection, yet at last he shall be disclosed. The Lord may indeed, in His long-suffering, allow him to pass unknown, just to give him space and opportunity for repentance. 4. Finally, let the Lord's true-hearted ones seek John's place—leaning on the Master's bosom. What a contrast between John and Judas—John leaning on Jesus' breast, Judas proposing in his heart to betray Him! (*Ibid.*) **Jesus . . . was troubled in spirit and testified.**—I. CHRIST IN SADNESS (ver. 21). This was the distress—1. Of intense holiness in the presence of sin. The more holiness, the more sensitiveness to sin. Sometimes the optic nerve becomes so sensitive that a sunbeam will produce the greatest pain; and the auricular nerve so tender that the softest sound yields agony. And in some diseases a breath of air will throw the whole writhing frame into anguish. And so Judas sent a quiver through all the nerves of Christ's pure soul. 2. Of the highest benevolence in the presence of a lost soul. The more love a being has, the more he feels the sufferings of others. Christ's love was immeasurable, and He knew what a lost soul meant. We wonder not then that He was troubled as a lost soul stood before Him. II. THE DISCIPLES IN ANXIETY (ver. 22). Matthew and Mark tell us that they were exceeding sorrowful, and asked each, "Is it I?" The question implies two things. 1. Self-suspicion. Had they been certain of their incapability they would not have made such an appeal. None of them was confident of His impeccability. This self-suspicion is well founded in all souls, and is a help to our spiritual progress and safety. "Let him that thinketh he standeth." 2. A desire to know the worst. Cowards close their eyes on the worst, and delude themselves with the idea that all is right. It is to the spiritual interest of every man to know

the worst here and now, for here and now it can be rectified. "Search me, O God! and know my heart," &c. III. THE TRAITOR UNMASKED. 1. The means of his detection (ver. 26). 2. His domination by Satan (ver. 27). Before we read that Satan had put the wicked deed into his heart; now he took possession of his soul. 3. His defiance by Christ, "What thou doest," &c. "I defy thee to do thy worst. Do it and have done with it." 4. His lamentable doom (ver. 20). (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The Saviour's trouble*:—These verses describe the last scene between our Lord and Judas before the betrayal. They never met again, excepting in the garden. Within a short time both the Holy Master and the treacherous servant were dead. They will never meet again till the trumpet sounds. What an awful meeting will that be! Let us mark—I. WHAT TROUBLE OUR LORD WENT THROUGH FOR THE SAKE OF OUR SOULS. 1. Our Master's troubles are far beyond the conception of most people. The cross was only the completion of His sorrows (Isa. liii. 3). 2. But this trouble was an exceptional one—that of seeing an apostle becoming an apostate. Nothing is so hard to bear as ingratitude. "Sharper than a serpent's tooth is a thankless child." Absalom's rebellion was David's heaviest trouble, and Judas's Christ's. 3. Passages like these should make us see—(1) The amazing love of Christ to sinners. How many cups of sorrow He drained to the dregs in working out our salvation, beside the mighty cup of bearing our sins! (2) How little reason we have for complaining when friends fail us and men disappoint us. (3) The perfect suitableness of Christ to be our Saviour. He can sympathize with us. He has suffered Himself, and can feel for those who are ill-used and forsaken. II. THE POWER AND MALIGNITY OF OUR GREAT ENEMY, THE DEVIL. First he suggests: then he commands. First he knocks at the door and asks permission to come in: then, once admitted, he takes complete possession, and rules the whole inward man like a tyrant. Let us take heed that we are not "ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. ii. 11). He is still going to and fro in the earth, seeking whom he may devour. Our only safety lies in resisting him at the first. Strong as he is, he has no power to do us harm, if we cry to the stronger One and use the means which He has appointed (James iv. 7). Once let a man begin tampering with the devil, and he never knows how far he may fall. III. THE EXTREME HARDNESS WHICH COMES OVER THE HEART OF A BACKSLIDING PROFESSOR OF RELIGION. One might have thought that the sight of our Lord's trouble, and the solemn warning, "One of you shall betray Me," would have stirred the conscience of this unhappy man, or the words, "That thou doest, do quickly." But like one whose conscience was dead and buried, goes out to do his wicked work, and parts with his Lord for ever. The extent to which we may harden ourselves by resisting light and knowledge is one of the most fearful facts in our nature. We may become past feeling, like those whose limbs are mortified before they die. We may lose entirely all sense of fear, or shame, or remorse. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The sufferings of the soul of Jesus*:—What a spectacle! He who is inseparably united to the source of life and felicity, in sorrow; He who is the unfailing fountain of consolation to His children on earth, and of joy to the redeemed in heaven, in trouble and distress! We in vain look for external causes of this woe. Entering upon His last conflicts, He cries, "Now is My soul troubled." These inward sufferings of our Redeemer were no less necessary than His external woes; the anguish of His soul was as requisite as the tortures of His cross. 1. Sin had defiled our souls as well as our bodies: nay, the soul had been the first source of disobedience; in it the throne of sin and Satan was erected, while the body was used only as its instrument. When Jesus, therefore, appeared as surety to expiate for our offences, it was needful that the agonies of His soul should unite with the pains of His body, in order to pay down a full ransom for us. 2. Besides, one great end of His incarnation and death was, that He might set before us a perfect pattern of holy conduct, a complete example of every virtue; so that in every circumstance we might cast our eyes upon Him, and learn our duty. But this great end could never have been accomplished, had our Redeemer experienced no sorrows of the soul, had He been a stranger to inward troubles. 3. And, finally, had only the body of Jesus suffered, we should have been deprived of a large portion of that consolation and support which is now afforded us by remembering the events of His life. Every afflicted Christian has been comforted by recollecting, that "we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities," but one who "was in all points tempted as we are," and who will therefore sympathize with us in all our sorrows. The inward sorrows of men are, it is true, often criminal. Christ's sorrows were ever holy: for in their source they were pure; in their degree, they

did not transcend the measure which reason and religion required; and their effect never was to suspend His communion with His Father, to make Him pause in His laborious beneficence, or recoil from those sufferings which He was to undergo for our salvation. Under this trouble of spirit, Jesus has recourse to prayer. And how exalted is this testimony to the sublimity of the Redeemer's character, and the benefits of His mediatorial work: "I have glorified My name." In the incarnation of Immanuel, the wisdom and the faithfulness, and the love of God, had already been illustriously displayed. Yes, in these and in other modes the honour of the Divine name had been promoted by the Redeemer. But the voice from heaven added, "I will glorify it again," more remarkably by Thy death and the great effects of Thy sacrifice. And has not this been fully verified? Had we time to display the Divine glory, as manifested in the Cross, the Resurrection, the Ascension of Jesus; in the gift of the Holy Spirit; in the conversion of the Gentiles; you would instantly acknowledge that this declaration has been accomplished. Look upwards, and see how there especially in the Cross the name of God is glorified. 1. The Divine perfections are there displayed in a degree infinitely greater than they are elsewhere manifested. You admire the goodness which shines in nature and providence; but what is this to that love which induced the Father to give the Son of His bosom to undergo such agonies for your salvation? You shudder at that justice and holiness which are announced in the Scriptures, which are heard in the thunders and glitter in the lightnings on Sinai; but they are more manifested in the tremendous sacrifice of Immanuel. 2. It is there that those perfections, which appeared irreconcilable, beautifully and completely harmonize. Holiness is exalted, while grace triumphs. The rights of the Divine government are unimpaired, while the sinner is saved. 1. Careless and impenitent man, this subject should alarm thee! The woes which Jesus endured were suffered for the guilty. Refuse the gospel method of salvation, and thou sacrilegiously attemptest to rob God of His glory manifested in it. But wilt thou succeed? 2. Believer, in the anguish of Jesus, see the foundation of thy joy! He suffered that thou mightest triumph. 3. Communicants, approach the holy table. Contemplate the glories of God in the crucified Saviour. Retrace the mercy of your Redeemer. (*H. Kollock, D.D.*) *The practical uses of Christ's troubles:*—Away with the argument of philosophers who say that a wise man is not liable to be troubled. Let the soul of the Christian be troubled with fear lest others perish, with sorrow when others perish, with desire that others may not perish, with joy when others are saved from perishing, with fear lest we ourselves perish, with sorrow because we are absent from Christ. And let us not despair when we are troubled by the prospect of death, for Christ was troubled by it. Thus He cheers infirm members in His Body—the Church—by the voluntary example of His own infirmity; thus He encourages Christians, if they find themselves troubled by the defection of friends or the prospect of death. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*) *Judas, John, and Peter:*—I. THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS: OR SEPARATION FROM CHRIST. We speak of close corporations and sacred fellowships, but there are none so close, so sacred, as to shut out intruders. Curiously assorted guests sit down side by side at the same feast. The Son of Man did not exclude a traitor. 1. This treachery occasioned our Lord poignant sorrow. 2. Our Lord in love and mercy interposed between the traitor and his doom. 3. The interposition being ineffectual the traitor leaves Christ, Satan captures him, and he disappears in darkness. II. THE BLESSEDNESS OF JOHN; OR, KEPT IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST. It cannot be an accident that these accounts of John and Judas are left here side by side. We are to "look here upon this picture, and on that." The treachery of Judas going out into the night to serve *his* master is best understood when set over against the blessedness of John leaning on the breast and hearing the wisdom of *his* Master. Extremes meet. But John has no monopoly of his Master's love. It was offered to Judas and rejected. If the presence of a traitor into the glorious company of the apostles troubled the spirit of Christ, why should not his going forth be a relief? It was like the vanishing of a cloud. It was also prophetic, for at last the spirit of selfishness and evil and darkness shall be utterly and for ever cast forth from the Church of God. When Judas is gone John may enter fully into the Divine joy and life. III. THE DENIAL OF PETER: OR, TRUSTING TO OUR LOVE FOR CHRIST. The fall of such a man is inevitable. He has miscalculated his strength, and mistaken the true and only source from which comes the abiding love that makes one willing to leave all things. He thinks love a possession of his own, something that originates with and in himself. This delusion is so fatal, so sure to bring failure and disappointment, that, at all costs,

it must be dispelled. Peter was really believing in himself, in his own constancy and determination. The worthlessness of such a faith was very soon to be demonstrated. For that faith in himself he was to substitute a faith in One who was able to keep him. (*Monday Club.*) *The apostacy of Judas*:—This was the last of a series of fatal victories which Judas Iscariot won over the different means and checks which God had mercifully provided. From that time it seemed as if God would no more strive with him, either by His Providence of love or by the suggestions of His Spirit within. "Let him alone." There was no more check to his iniquity, and he proceeded rapidly in that downward course which was to issue in his irremediable destruction. Consider that series of the means of grace which Judas had resisted before he triumphed over this. I. JUDAS HAD BEEN ACQUAINTED WITH ALL THE REMARKABLE MIRACLES THAT JESUS CHRIST HAD WROUGHT TO MANIFEST THE TRUTH OF HIS MISSION. II. WHAT INSTRUCTION HAD JUDAS RECEIVED FROM HIS MASTER? III. THIS INSTRUCTION WAS SUSTAINED BY AN EXAMPLE OF UNPARALLELED LOVELINESS. IV. HE WAS FAVOURED WITH CONSTANT TOKENS OF KINDNESS. V. Being brought in connection with Jesus Christ must necessarily have induced him to EMPLOY HIMSELF FREQUENTLY IN THE VARIOUS RELIGIOUS EXERCISES THAT WOULD PROMOTE HIS CHRISTIAN TEMPER AND CHARACTER. VI. HE WAS CONTINUALLY ASSOCIATING WITH THE BEST PEOPLE UPON EARTH. VII. HE SAW THE REMARKABLE CHANGE PERFECTED BY THE MEANS OF GRACE AND RENDERED EFFECTUAL BY GRACE ITSELF—the joy and gratitude of the Syro-Phœnician woman whose strength of faith brought her great blessings, the change in the heart of the publican, the penitence of Mary Magdalene. VIII. HE WAS THE SUBJECT OF THE FEET-WASHING. IX. As the context tells us (*cf.* Luke xxii.), HE WAS CALLED TO THE TABLE OF THE LORD AT THE FIRST INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER. Thus all the most powerful means that imagination could devise failed in repressing the sin of Judas when once it had obtained the mastery. Conclusion: Perhaps when we are noticing the strength of sin in him, which overcame all the most powerful means of grace, there may be some who are ready to suppose that Judas was one selected above all others to manifest the power of depravity. Who is it that is thus prompt to condemn Judas? Who is the person that is not as singular an instance of depravity? Are not you now under the power of a reigning sin, you that thus condemn this wretched man? "Therefore thou art inexcusable," &c. Who are you that can say truly that you have never manifested such obduracy? I ask you to determine the question as before God whether you have not resisted and triumphed over means of grace as mighty as he overcame. Consider, then—1. That you are an inexcusable sinner. 2. That you need a Saviour and One has been provided. 3. Do not neglect to avail yourself of this provision by repentance and faith. (*Baptist Noel.*) *Jesus and the traitor*:—Consider these words—I. AS PREDICTING THE SIN OF JUDAS, which shows—1. That Christ suffered as no other human being ever suffered. Great as are the sorrows of men, they are generally unforeseen; more than half their weight therefore is removed. We are supported by hope even on the brink of misery: Jesus foresaw all His woes, and He knew them to be unavoidable. 2. That all hearts are open to the Son of God. It was not long since Judas had agreed with the chief priests. He was sure not to have betrayed himself; and the same secrecy was equally needful to his accomplices. Yet how vain all their precautions! The traitor hears his own purpose first exposed by the very Being whom he would betray! How then can you hope to impose on Christ and shun the eye of God? "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?" 3. That the most wicked actions of men unintentionally promote God's secret purposes of grace. He who foretold this crime could have prevented it. But the act foreseen was permitted and over-ruled for good. Shall we murmur, then, even at the most mysterious dispensation (Rom. viii. 28)? II. AS DESCRIBING THE AGGRAVATIONS OF THAT SIN. 1. It was the sin of treachery—a sin of that kind which is held in abhorrence even by fallen man. Nor is the case at all mended by urging that Judas was moved by self-interest and not by malice. The plea only adds detestable meanness to his character, where passion and revenge might have furnished (what men would call) a prouder excuse. And who is the traitor? Has he no name but Judas? Alas! his "name is Legion, for he is many." 2. It was treachery against the best of friends—"Me!" Is not the same Christ our Friend? Yet multitudes still prefer the silver to Christ. 3. It was the treachery of a highly privileged and confidential servant. "One of you!" For three years had the Pharisees been seeking for such an accomplice: but the multitude would not, the officers could not. These persecutors never dreamed of asking one of the apostles

—who would? when, to their great astonishment, he offers of his own accord! "Take heed lest there be in any of you such an evil heart of unbelief." III. As EXEMPLIFYING THE FEELINGS OF A HOLY MIND IN THE CONTEMPLATION OF SIN. Jesus "was troubled in spirit." Not because mortified by an unexpected discovery. He had known that these things would take place at least as long ago as when David penned the fifty-fifth Psalm (vers. 12–14). Nor because this treachery made His own fate certain; it could not be more so than His eternal purpose had already made it. No; He was troubled—1. At the present dishonour done to God and the gospel. It was a triumph to Satan, who thus "bruised His heel"; to all the ungodly—"Ah, so would we have it!" It is not passion or jealousy which calls forth from true Christians the reproof of sin. It is trouble of heart because God is dishonoured. Encourage this feeling. 2. At the approaching ruin of a sinner. He saw before him a soul which (before even His own death should be accomplished) would be "gone to its place." He still feels the same trouble for thee, O sinner! whosoever thou art. His holy children also feel the same cause for mournings—none but devils and sinners rejoice. (*J. Jowett, M.A.*) *Horror of treachery natural*:—Even in Pagan story the name of Ephialtes enjoyed a bad pre-eminence, and could not be mentioned without horror, whom no love of his country, no admiration of heroic valour, not the dear pledges of his friends, nor the threatened tyranny of a degrading foe, could withhold from such a deed of shame; but Persian gold, more sacred to that base mind than all of these, bribed him to guide the enemy over the mountain path, and surprise that devoted Spartan band. Sad indeed that in Christian annals it should have its more than parallel. (*C. J. Brown, M.A.*) **One of you shall betray Me.**—I. "You" WHOM I HAVE LOVED SO TENDERLY. II. "You" WHOM I HAVE TAUGHT SO PATIENTLY. III. "You" WHOM I HAVE SERVED SO FAITHFULLY. (*S. S. Times.*) *The conspicuousness of apostates*:—In the long line of the portraits of the Doges in the palace at Venice, one space is empty, and the semblance of a black curtain remains as a melancholy record of glory forfeited. Found guilty of treason, Marino Falieri was beheaded, and his image, as far as possible, blotted from remembrance. As we regarded the singular memorial we thought of Judas and Demas, and then, as we heard in spirit the Master's warning, "One of you shall betray Me," we asked within our soul the solemn question, "Lord, is it I?" Every one's eye rests longer on the one dark vacancy than upon any one of the fine portraits of the merchant monarchs; and so the apostates of the Church are far more frequently the theme of the world's talk than the thousands of good men and true who adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Hence the more need of care on the part of those of us whose portraits are publicly exhibited as saints, lest we should one day be painted out of the Church's gallery, and our persons only remembered as having been detestable hypocrites. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom.**—*Christ's special affection for St. John*:—You naturally ask, was there anything noticeable or distinguishing in the character of this much-favoured disciple? We answer, Christ's love is free. It must be so, for it is everlasting—it precedes the existence of its objects; and further, it must be so, for its objects are guilty and evil—they have nothing in them to attract, they have everything to repel. Christ's love has its cause, or reason, in Himself. Even our love is in some respects free. It cannot be bought; it cannot be forced; we cannot reason ourselves into it. But while love is thus in its nature free, yet, in examining the objects of it, we find that they possess some real or supposed qualities, which are the ground of this peculiar esteem. In our blindness we often fancy qualities which do not really exist; and so, on more intimate acquaintance, we are often disappointed. But the Lord cannot be thus mistaken; and so, when we find one distinguished from his companions as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," we infer that, through grace, He must have possessed some qualities which the others had not, or not in the same degree. What was it, then, in John, on whom the Lord's complacency rested? It was not any peculiarly high talent, for in this Paul was superior. It was not any peculiar aptitude for business and the conduct of affairs, for in this Peter seems to have excelled. It was for the qualities of the heart, rather than the head, that John was distinguished; and the secret of the Lord's peculiar delight in him is perhaps found in this: "I love them that love Me, and they who seek Me early shall find Me." John was a man of warmer, fervid temperament, as appears from the Lord calling him and his brother Boanages (sons of thunder); and this ardent heart was given wholly and abidingly to Christ. He came young to Christ, as appears from the long period that he outlived his Master. He came also early; for he was one of

the two who, in consequence of John Baptist's words, followed Jesus to His dwelling, and became His disciples. His deep, fervent love, unconsciously breaks forth in many ways. His love to Christ, as well as Christ's to him, appears in his place at the table—the nearest to Jesus. His love made him follow his Master to the judgment hall; made him linger at the cross when the others were gone; made him foremost in the race to the tomb, and first to believe the story told by the forsaken but orderly grave clothes. It was his love, quick sighted, that made him the first to recognize his Beloved on the shores of Tiberias, in the grey twilight of the dawning day. It was admiring love that made him close his gospel with the glowing words (John xxi. 25). It was panting, longing love that made him close his Apocalypse with the fervid prayer (Rev. xxii. 20). John's very faults show his love to Christ. . . . But further, John had a deeper, truer insight than the others into the Divine glory of Christ's person, and the spiritual nature of His work. The others begin with His earthly lineage and birth, and occupy themselves chiefly with His manhood. John begins with the eternal Godhead. The others dwell on the works of benevolence and power which crowded Christ's laborious days. John takes little note of these, but dwells rather on the glory of the grace and truth, and gathers up the words of life and power. John seems to have been among men what Mary was among women—he sat at Christ's feet, and heard His words. Hence his gospel is different from the others. While the other evangelists speak chiefly of Christ's dealings with the bodies of men, John dwells more on His dealings with men's souls. The Lord must have felt that John knew Him better, and appreciated Him more fully, than the others. We can conceive that, when Christ performed any act of higher import, or uttered any word of deeper meaning, His eye would unconsciously turn to John, and would be ever sure to meet John's loving, gleaming eye! (*John Milne.*) *Titled believers; the disciple whom Jesus loved:*—This was John's most notable title. As a servant of the Queen, having distinguished himself in the service of Her Majesty, becomes the lord of such and such a town, and he takes the name of the place as a name of honour, so John drops his own birth-given name, as it were, and takes this title instead of it—"that disciple whom Jesus loved." He wears it as a Knight of the Garter, or of the Golden Fleece, wears the mark of his sovereign's esteem. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A title that was better than a name:*—Lord Brooks was so proud of his friendship with Sir Philip Sidney, that he chose for his epitaph, "Here lies Sir Philip Sidney's friend." *Nearness to Jesus:*—I. Let us first, then, inquire HOW ARE WE TO ATTAIN THIS NEARNESS TO JESUS? 1. In the first place, by coming to Him. We are, naturally, at a distance from Him. 2. This nearness implies real sympathy of mind. What a sacred bond is sympathy! what a fountain of delight, of comfort, and of strength! In order that there may be sympathy, there must be three things—mutual knowledge one of another—harmony of moral taste—and aiming at the same end. The refined cannot sympathize with the polluted, the gentle cannot sympathize with the cruel hearted. He that delights in sin, on the other hand, cannot sympathize with him who seeks to advance in holiness, and to bring all around him to enjoy communion with God and Jesus. 3. Nearness to Jesus implies that we persevere in following Him. Nearness to Him does not depend upon one act. 4. The next idea is, that nearness to Jesus implies felt fellowship—real communion. Oh! it is not a dream. We have, I trust, very many of us, experienced it as a distinct and separate thing from the work of imagination. Felt fellowship—he who has experienced that is near to Jesus. 5. Pass on to notice the next thing implied in nearness to Jesus—love to Him. Love is the power that annihilates the distance between us. 6. Then it implies, also, that we have intercourse with His people—communion with His disciples. II. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THIS CONDITION. 1. In the first place, it is an honour—the highest honour—to come near to the Lord Jesus Christ, to be acquainted with Him, to walk with Him, to have fellowship with Him. That is the highest distinction that can be conferred upon man, for it implies that a man is raised to a kind of equality with the Supreme Being, that has condescended to become brother and saviour. The honour of being introduced to Jesus will last, and fill the mind with rest and tranquility. 2. We say, in the second place, it is a blessed privilege to be near to Jesus, because it assures us of His eternal love to us. The text says, "there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of the disciples whom Jesus loved." It was John himself that wrote it, and he knew the fact that Jesus loved him. The way then to be assured of the love of Jesus is to live near to Him. 3. Nearness to Jesus, in the third place, secures glorious shelter and protection from the evils which are in the world.

Keep near to thy Saviour, nestle, as it were, in the bosom of His promises; let His feathers cover thee, and His wings be over thee; go to Him in times of danger and trial. 4. Then there is another glorious privilege—the power that is transferred from Jesus to those who are near to Him. When we are near to Jesus, there is a current of sanctified influence passing, until those hearts of yours, once the abode of pollution, become as spotless temples. The soul that was in the thraldom of sin is released, and becomes cleansed and sanctified, and shall stand clean in the presence of the eternal God. This is not done at once, but by a continued influence which assimilates the soul to Jesus in purity, holiness, love, and heavenly mindedness, and makes it a type of Jesus. 5. Then there is another privilege—that there is a constant manifestation of fresh glory made to the mind in the Lord Jesus Christ. What an unworthy idea some people have of Jesus. It is only that of a beautiful image, as it were, drawn on canvas. But, to the believer, Jesus always manifests some new beauty in His face—some new glory in His nature. 6. You have another striking advantage of being near to Jesus—that of growing and increasing in your usefulness in the service of Jesus. There is a moral element of fitness required for the service of Jesus. 7. Then there is another great privilege and blessing—the mind and heart are weaned from earth in proportion as we live near to Jesus. We become conscious of being only strangers on the earth, of belonging to another world, as citizens of a more enduring city. (*T. Thomas.*)

The sacred breast:—Attention should be called to the different words (different in the original as well as in the English) used in the text to denote that part of our Lord's most Sacred Person: "bosom" in ver. 23, "breast" in ver. 25. Strictly speaking, the latter word alone denotes part of the person; the "bosom" is that part of the dress which covers the breast. Ancient dresses consisted of two pieces, a tight-fitting inner garment, and a shawl or outer wrapper thrown over it. And this shawl was so arranged as to fall in a large full fold over the breast, this full fold constituting the bosom or lap of the dress. This bosom or lap was sometimes used as a purse, to contain money or valuables; which explains that expression of our Lord, "Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom" (Luke vi. 38). And when a parent or nurse carried a young child, the child would more or less repose in this fold of the dress, which would be drawn over its head. The subject having been thus opened, we will speak to you first of the Bosom in which our Lord Himself lay from all eternity; secondly, of the moral attitude of His faithful and beloved ones, who "lean on His Bosom," or "lie on His Breast;" and lastly, of the glorified Breast of the risen and ascended Saviour. I. And, first, of THE BOSOM IN WHICH HE HIMSELF LAY FROM ALL ETERNITY, "before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (chap. i. 18). The earthly image chosen to convey the heavenly truth is drawn from the parental relationship upon earth, and from the loving services which human parents do for their children in the earliest and most dependent stage of existence. They fold them in their bosom; they carry them in their arms; according to that word of Moses (Num. xi. 12). This doctrine lights up Christian theology with bright and consolatory lights. First, the God of Christian men, as distinct from the God of the Deist and Unitarian, is not to be thought of as ever having dwelt apart or in solitude. And then, secondly, this doctrine of our Lord's eternal generation gives us such an assurance as we could not otherwise have of the tenderness and strength of God's love to ourselves. He who gave up for us, and who giveth to us, the Son of His love, to be "unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30), what may we not expect Him to do for us, to give to us; how can we suppose that He will withhold from us any good thing? O Lord and Heavenly Father, may we open our hearts to this fatherly love of Thine, in faith, in confidence, in filial love reciprocating it! II. THE MORAL ATTITUDE OF THOSE FAITHFUL AND BELOVED ONES WHO LEAN ON HIS BOSOM OR LIE ON HIS BREAST. It is said especially of St. John the Evangelist, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (chap. xx. 2; xxi. 7, 20). The expression has reference, as is well known, to the arrangement of the guests at an ancient supper. They did not sit round the table in our modern fashion, but reclined on broad couches, leaning on the left elbow, and helping themselves with the right hand. Each couch usually accommodated three guests, and the central place on it was the most distinguished. It was a privileged position, you will say, not granted even to all the Apostles; and therefore, in applying the passage, nothing can be founded upon it as to the spiritual

privileges of ordinary Christians. But I find a Messianic prophecy of Isaiah, which surely enlarges the purview of this privilege, showing it to be a privilege designed for all, and more especially for the weaker members of Christ's flock. "He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isa. xl. 11). Yes; "He shall carry them in His bosom." He Himself, we have seen, was carried from all eternity in the bosom of the Father. And our attitude and relation towards Him is to be that which He Himself bears to the Father. But now let us develop in particulars the moral attitude which it behoves us to have towards the Saviour, as pictorially represented in those words, "leaning on Jesus' bosom," "lying on Jesus' breast." (1) And first, he who leans on Jesus' bosom in a spiritual sense has a trustful repose in Him. Activity indeed must characterize the Christian life; and there is a blessedness and a healthfulness in work for God; but it must be a calm activity, without solicitude, without wearing anxiety, an activity which, while it works, knows also how to lean, and lie still, and to say, "the Lord will provide." "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God," &c. (Phil. iv. 6, 7). To taste this peace, at least in a measure, is to lean on Jesus' bosom, to lie on His breast. (2) Secondly; he who leans on Jesus' bosom in a spiritual sense has an assurance of the Saviour's nearness to him and love for him—a love which will cling to him to the end. Oh for an assurance, independent of the senses—the assurance of faith—that Christ is near to us at all times, more especially in public prayer, where two or three are gathered together in His name, and in the Sacred Supper, in which He makes every faithful recipient a partaker of His body and blood! (3) Thirdly; he who leans on Jesus' bosom in a spiritual sense cultivates St. John's type of character, a quiet contemplativeness, in which he may hear the whispers made by the Divine Master to the soul. The present is an age of activity, of material progress, of rapid movement. Under these circumstances it becomes more than ever necessary, as an antidote to the spirit of the times, that devotional retirement should be insisted upon as a condition of all healthy spiritual life. Let things drop ever and anon, even when the strain of work and worry is most severe, and lean back as it were on the bosom of thy Lord, and look up into His face, and seek from Him the guidance or the help or the comfort which thou needest, and, if thou doest this faithfully, thou shalt not fail to hear the whispers of His voice within. But how can those whispers be heard in the rapid whirl of business, in the tumult of affairs, without an inward silence and a hush in the soul? III. We are to speak, lastly, of THE GLORIFIED BREAST OF THE RISEN AND EXALTED SAVIOUR. In that magnificent vision of the glorified Son of Man at the opening of the Revelation. "Being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts" (so it is in the Revised Version) "with a golden girdle." Three points are observable in this part of the grand vision, which throughout is full of deep and edifying significance. (1) He appears "girded;" and to the angel of the Church of Ephesus He describes Himself as "walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (Rev. ii. 1). The girding and the walking are both expressive of the ceaseless activity of the exalted Saviour, an activity which shows itself not only in His intercession, but in His close inspections of the Churches as to their spiritual condition and progress. (2) He appears girded at the breasts, not at the loins; the golden cincture is swathed around Him high up the person, below the armpits. This is explained by what Josephus tells us about the girdle of the high priest, and the part of the person on which it was fastened. This girding at the breast, then, being the sacerdotal way of wearing the girdle, and obviously a more dignified, reposeful, and majestic way than merely tying it tight round the loins, as was done when men addressed themselves to secular and common work, indicates that He who wears the girdle thus is the "great high priest, that is passed into the heavens," there "to appear in the presence of God for us," and to give effect to His sacrifice by pleading it on our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary. But if by the position of the girdle the high priestly character of the wearer is indicated, why is it not also indicated by the materials, which here are all gold, whereas the curious or (embroidered) girdle of the ephod, though it had gold in it, yet was made also of "blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen?" This is to indicate the kingly character of Christ united with the priestly, He being not only a priest, but "a priest upon His throne," a priest exalted to universal government. (3) But what shall we say of this remarkable feature of the vision, that the Saviour appears

in it with the breast of a woman, not of a man? That there is a profound and beautiful significance in this trait, whatever be its significance, I make no manner of question. He was the Seed of the woman, not of the man, and, as being descended only from a mother, might be expected to show all that tender side of human character which woman more especially exemplifies. He has the breast of a woman, that is, the heart of a woman, in susceptibility to the sufferings of His people, and in sympathy with them, when they are called upon to suffer. (*E. M. Goldburn, D.D.*) *Leaning on Jesus' bosom*:—I. THE SIGNIFICANCY OF THIS ACT. Even with John the outward posture was only the symbol of the spiritual. It implies—1. Reconciliation to Christ. We are by nature estranged from God and Christ. Hence we stand guilty and condemned. But, impelled by wondrous love, Jesus has taken our place and borne our penalty. Now God can be just and the justifier of all who believe in Him. Those who have been thus reconciled lean on Jesus' bosom, and those only. Suppose a child to have disobeyed its mother's commands and cherished a rebellious spirit. Will that child with conscious guilt and angry feelings nestle on the mother's breast? But let temper subside and penitence arise, then it will hasten to the mother's knee, let the mother's forgiveness kiss away tears, and throw its arms round the mother's neck and lean on her bosom. 2. Confidence in Him. He is worthy of this, for He is infinitely wise, strong, good, and ought to be thoroughly trusted. But He is not. But those who lean on His bosom have no fear, and find everything they need. 3. Love for Him. He is worthy of our best affection. Do we not naturally admire beauty? "He is altogether lovely." Are we not always affected by lovingkindness? He has loved as with a love surpassing every other. Hatred separates, love unites. Those who love Christ are ever near His side. 4. Communion with Him—not merely saying prayers—but heart intercourse with Him everywhere. Silence leads to estrangement, exchange of confidences to love. So when there is little communion with Christ there is little love; but the soul whose fellowship with Him is constant will lay his head where John lay his. II. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THIS POSITION. Here is—1. Perfect safety. We are all exposed to danger as regards both body and soul. Most men are concerned about the safety of their bodies and money—then surely they should be about that of their souls. But where shall—(1) The unpardoned sinner, or (2) the backsliding saint find safety save here? "There is therefore now no condemnation," &c. "If God be for us, who can be against us." 2. Spiritual instruction. We are enfeebled by ignorance. Some of us think we know much about business, science, art, &c.; but we know little about God and Divine things. Where shall we look? The learned of our day only bewilder us, but we shall get all we want from the best Teacher, who is Himself the embodiment of truth; and those who trust Him most will be the best instructed, even as John learnt most of the betrayal. 3. Moral improvement. We are greatly influenced by our associates. Those who dwell in courts acquire a peculiar dignity, and those who live near Christ become Christ-like. 4. Rest and peace. There is a fearful amount of unrest in the world arising from a guilty conscience, loss of friends, wealth, &c.; but "in Christ Jesus the peace of God will keep our hearts and minds." (*J. Morgan.*) *Lying on Jesus' breast*:—I. THE STATE OF MIND AND HEART, ON EITHER SIDE, OF WHICH THIS ATTITUDE WAS THE EXPRESSION. 1. On the side of the disciple, it told—(1) Of a holy, unsuspecting, childlike trust, reliance on the Lord. Doubtless John was tried with many a painful foreboding for the future. Had any one asked, "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy head?" methinks he had been ready to answer, "Yea, I know it; hold thou thy peace." Too well he knows it. But just the more he will lean his head to-night on that Master's bosom and cast his care on this mighty, gracious One. (2) Of intense affection. It is heart drawing to heart in the hour of deep grief! (3) The two feelings, the reliance and the love were inseparably connected. It was a loving reliance; and it was a confiding affection. The "faith wrought by love;" and the love, "casting out fear," emboldened the faith. 2. It told of corresponding feelings on the side of the Master. (1) Confidence, trust, reposed by Christ in the disciple? Jesus suffers him to lean his head upon His bosom. Ah! this is not to be the traitor. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." (2) Intense affection. Not that Christ loved John with any higher love of benevolence than He did the other disciples. Plainly it is satisfaction, delight, complacency, in John that is spoken of in the appellation, and which came out divinely in the permission to lean his head upon His bosom. II. OUR TEXT ADMITS OF BEING TURNED TO EXTENSIVE USE, far beyond the case of John.

One disciple only could lean as did John, but we may now find that this is a privilege, accessible in the essence of it, even to as many as shall truly aspire after it. 1. The soul of this attitude, as on the disciple's side lay in trust in Jesus. Then have we the attitude still. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." Many years ago I was visiting a dying boy. He lay weary on his pillow, near his end. I scarce hoped to make him understand me—he was not six years of age. But thinking I might make an attempt, after short prayer, I said to him, "Charlie, you are resting your head on the pillow; try and rest on Jesus, as you are resting on the pillow." Next day his father told me that, on going up to the little crib several hours after my visit, and without making any reference to it, he said to him, "Are you resting on Jesus, dear?" He immediately answered, "Soft pillow." It was his only reply. Ah, that is it, unsuspecting reliance, "soft pillow"—He lying on Jesus' breast! (2) And have we not the love also, still. "My beloved is mine, and I am his"—faith and love hand in hand. "I will seek Him whom my soul loveth." 2. The leaning of disciples still is by His welcoming also, just as of old—reciprocating their feelings towards Him in a blessed corresponding confidence, and complacency in them. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them," &c. Perhaps, in a more special manner at the Lord's Supper, may the lying on the breast be known and realized. Yet this is not a privilege confined to any one ordinance or season. Assuredly the bosom, the heart, of Jesus is large enough to receive every weary head that is but truly offered to lean on it. "I heard the voice of Jesus say," &c. (*C. J. Brown, D.D.*) *¡Can we now lean on Jesus' bosom:*—What is it, at this day, to do this? I. To BRING OUR HEARTS INTO LIVING FEELING, CONTACT WITH THE HEART OF CHRIST. We speak of the breast of man, as being filled with noble or revengeful feelings; of a generous or an unfeeling bosom, because the heart has its seat in the breast; and as that, in the physical system, is the centre of animal life, the ever-welling up and distributing fountain of the vital currents, so when we would speak of the moral centre, the well-spring of moral emotions, we use the term heart, and say, his heart is right or wrong, generous or closed, renewed or unsanctified; hence, to lean upon the breast, the outer casement of the heart, is equivalent to saying, that the person leans upon the love and sympathy of that individual. Christ's love emanates from His heart, and hence he who rests upon His love rests upon His breast. The feeling of confidence in human affection is one of the most delicious emotions of which we are capable. In leaning upon the heart of Jesus, the Christian can have this confidence, to a degree impossible among men. His heart is an organ of infinite love. II. To LEAN UPON THE PLACE WHENCE HIS SYMPATHIES FLOW. There are daily trials, in which we seek not only succour but sympathy. None ever felt so deeply for the sorrows and sufferings of the world as Jesus, and now that He has ascended into heaven, He is still "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." And if we lean on Jesus' bosom, we shall always have His sympathies. III. To GET AN INTELLIGENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." A man may be a learned theologian without leaning upon Jesus' bosom; but no one can savingly understand Divine truth who does not bring his head in contact with Jesus' heart. There is a great difference between an intellectual, and an experimental, knowledge of Bible doctrines. The poor widow, the bed-ridden patient, often has a richer knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; than the learned minister or the boasting professor. All real knowledge of Jesus must come from Christ's heart, and through our heart. IV. To LEAN UPON THE PLACE WHENCE FLOWED HIS PRECIOUS BLOOD. It was from the spear-riven heart of Christ, that there gushed out blood and water; and in leaning upon Jesus' breast, therefore, we get close to the fountain opened for sin and all uncleanness. If we would feel the preciousness of that blood, we must lean upon the heart whence it flowed, and there learn the vastness of the love which gave it, the greatness of the sacrifice it involved, and the unspeakable richness of the grace it purchased. Conclusion: The bosom of Christ is a privileged place in times of—1. Adversity. The world may treat us coldly, friends may withdraw from us, riches may depart, but, if we can lean on Jesus' bosom, we care not. 2. Sickness. 3. Sorrow. 4. Death. (*Bp. Stevens.*) **One of His disciples whom Jesus loved.**—*The beloved disciple:*—I. JOHN'S CHARACTER. 1. Early piety. 2. The most remarkable trait, love, which was constantly evinced in his attendance on our Lord. He leaned on his Master's bosom in their hours of social enjoyment—"And in death they were not divided." He remained with Him till he saw Him expire. We must follow him to the cross. II. HOW DID HE ARRIVE

AT THIS? He explains this, "We love Him." Yes; there he learned the lessons of love on Jesus' bosom. III. HOW DID HE EXEMPLIFY AFTER HIS MASTER'S DECEASE? Read his Epistles. He led others to it (chap i.). Zeal for God and love for man; a burning fervour for God's cause and man's happiness—"What we have seen and heard we testify unto you." Love. IV. THE PARTICULAR DISTINCTIONS AND FAVOURS CONFERRED ON HIM BY CHRIST. Leans on His breast; Mount of Transfiguration; garden; and He consigns His holy virgin mother to his care; lived long; closed the canon of Scripture; was raised to glory. (*T. Summerfield, M.A.*) *A specially loved disciple* is—I. NEAR TO JESUS. II. INTIMATE WITH JESUS. III. HONOURED BY MEN. IV. HELPFUL TO MEN. (*S. S. Times.*) *Why Jesus loved John:*—We learn from the text the rightness of personal preferences—certain minds being more akin to other minds than others—but also that in the highest hearts this affinity will be determined by spiritual resemblances, not mere accidental agreeabilities, accomplishments, politenesses, or pleasant manners. Again, I imagine that the union had nothing to do with mental superiority; that might have been more admirable. John was lovable. Not talent, as in Paul's case, nor eloquence, nor amiability, drew Christ's spirit to him, but that large heart, which enabled him to believe because he felt, and hence to reveal that "God is love." It is very remarkable, however, that his love was a trained love. Once John was more zealous than affectionate. But he began by loving the human friend, by tending the mother as a son, by attachment to his brother James; and so through particular personal atachments he was trained to take in and comprehend the larger Divine love. I should say, then, that he was most lovable, because, having loved in their varied relationships "men whom he had seen," he was able to love "God whom he had not seen." He is most dear to the heart of Christ, who loves most, because he has most of God in him; and that love comes through missing none of the preparatory steps of affection given us as primer lessons. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) **Who is it?**—*Familiarity with Christ:*—Personal Christianity is an intimate connection with Christ. To be a true Christian is to be more familiar with Christ than with father, mother, &c. This familiarity involves—I. THE MOST AMAZING CONDESCENSION. Little magnates of earth deem it a great condescension to allow the humble and lowly to speak to them even at a distance. But here is the Author and Proprietor of the universe, the infinitely holy as well as the transcendently great, permitting this poor, frail, sinful man to lean on His bosom. Let this condescension—1. Inspire us with adoring gratitude. 2. Consume that pride which prompts man to keep the poor at a distance. II. THE SUBLIMEST PRIVILEGE. To be so closely allied to Christ as this is to be in the safest and most honourable position. What an honour to recline on the bosom of the King of kings. III. THE PROFOUNDEST REVERENCE. John addresses Christ as Lord. Familiarity with men, the proverb says, breeds contempt. We know it often breeds discontent. So imperfect are the best of men, that, as a rule, the more we know of them the less reverence we have. Not so with Christ. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **He it is to whom I shall give a sop.**—Literally, "the morsel." No incident of Oriental meals is more celebrated in Western narrative than the giving of the morsel, or sop, to a table-neighbour, as a mark of favour. It is said that the Shah of Persia, when in London some years ago, could not break himself entirely of the habit, but insisted on passing some morsels to the fine ladies near him, to the danger of their fine dresses; giving rise to the witticism which described the saving for the cat of the morsels left after the meal, by the French sentence, *Nous allons les garder pour le chat*—"We are going to save them for the *Shah*" (cat). But scarcely a traveller, and certainly no resident, in the East can escape this Oriental courtesy at meals. Since the dishes are generally either stews or cooked almost to pieces, the fingers can easily tear off a morsel. This is dipped in the sauce, thus becoming the sop, and is thrust directly into the favoured one's mouth. If the mouthful is large, the sauce or gravy is apt to run down the receiver's beard. The present writer has often received the sop at an Oriental meal, and cannot say that, considering the other customs, there is anything uncleanly or repulsive in it. A common mode, however, both of helping one's self and giving the sop to one's neighbour, is to take two pieces of bread, and take up the morsel between them, the pieces of bread serving as spoon, or knife and fork. The sop must, according to all Oriental rules, be considered as a mark of favour; and in Jesus' giving it to Judas, we must, unless we look farther below the surface than we have any light, see only love and goodwill. The giving of the sop, or morsel, seems to be an old Greek custom, as well as an Oriental one; but the

citations to sustain that position may be seen collected in Webster's Greek Testament. They are too numerous and voluminous to repeat here. The custom goes back to the time of Socrates, if not to that of Homer. (*S. S. Times.*) **He gave it to Judas.**—Christ was now standing at the door of the heart of His apostle. He was holding out to him the opportunity of repentance. Judas, however, was unwilling to open that door at the call of Christ, though he opened it to Satan, and so Satan entered into him. The devil had stood knocking at his heart by the temptation of money; and his yielding to the temptation unbarred the door of the sinner's heart, and made him an easy prey to the great tempter. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) *The dramatic interest of the act*:—There is perhaps a reason why this giving of a sop has an effect on our minds not unlike the knocking on the gate in "Macbeth," which succeeds the murder of Duncan. No words are spoken in either case. In this instance the effect is more startling, because the sign precedes rather than follows the crime. It produces a feeling of peculiar awfulness and solemnity. It is the casting of a die. We are made to feel, as De Quincey says of the device of the great poet, "that the human and Divine nature of love and mercy, spread through the hearts of all creatures, and seldom utterly withdrawn from man, is entirely gone, and that this fiendish nature has taken its place." By this sign and token we know that Satan has entered. It was not the Lord rejecting Judas, but Judas rejecting the Lord. (*Monday Club.*) *The final step*:—Remorse may disturb the slumbers of a man who is dabbling with his first experiences of wrong; and when the pleasure has been tasted and is gone, and nothing is left of the crime but the ruin which it has wrought, then, too, the furies take their seats upon the midnight pillow. But the meridian of evil is, for the most part, left unvexed; and when a man has chosen his road, he is left alone to follow it to the end. (*J. A. Froude.*) *Christianity not responsible for the words or deeds of its professors*:—We must distinguish Christian thoughts from the thoughts of Christians, and Christian deeds from the deeds of Christians; in short, we must discriminate between Christianity and Christians, because Christians are human and Christianity is Divine. It is, in fact, because of this very distinction that Christianity often suffers in the minds of those who note the unworthiness of Christians. Every fall of a Christian is an indication of the elevation of Christianity; and every indication of that elevation is a reason for our endeavour to reach it. To say that a man does not practice what he preaches is no necessary condemnation of his preaching, however much it condemns his practice. A drunkard has the right to preach temperance from the standpoint of intemperance. A slave to tobacco is not necessarily insincere because he advises abstinence from his masterful habit. "I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching," says Portia; but while that may reflect on the twenty, it is no reflection on the teaching. And so, when a Christian is derelict, that dereliction is not a fruit of his Christianity, but of his want of it. The defection of Christians cannot legitimately condemn the Church and Christianity; because Christianity and the Church first condemned the defection. Yet when a Church member or a minister turns out to be a defaulter, a blasphemer, an adulterer, the world often points its finger of scorn at the Christian profession, as if the culprit had learned the principles of deception from the pulpit, or had been instructed in defilement from the Sunday-school chair or desk. A shallower argument against the Christian profession than this it would be difficult to conceive. It is really the blaming of Christianity for another instance of the neglect of Christianity; it is charging a high ideal with the consequences of a low practice; it is criminating virtue because of the existence of vice; it is reproaching truth with the fact of falsehood. It is as if we were to reflect upon Jesus by pointing at Judas. The simple question at issue is, Is the Christian standard high or low, good or evil? If it be high, live for it—no matter who falls; if it be good, practice it—no matter who fails. If it be in itself low and evil, say so squarely. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *The timid encouraged to communion*:—Look in upon that humble chamber in Jerusalem. Whom do you see eating of the bread of life, and drinking of the cup of salvation? Are they not all men of like passions with ourselves? There are James and John, who, in their hasty zeal, would fain have called down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans. And there is Thomas—doubting Thomas. There, too, is Peter, who only a few hours afterward would curse and swear and cowardly deny his Lord. There, again, the Master is seen passing the bread and the cup to Andrew, and Philip, and Matthew, and Bartholomew, and the other James, who reverently drank, but who, when dangers and death encompassed Him

about, forsook Him and fled. And look once more. There, too, is Judas! The Saviour does not even pass *him* by. Now, I ask, what right has any one to declare that the Lord's Supper is something so sacred and awful, that none but perfectly good people must venture to receive it, when our Saviour Himself admitted such characters as these to the table which His goodness had spread? What reason is there in the plea which is so often urged by people that they are afraid to commune, because they have done so many wrong things in times past, or because they are apprehensive lest they may be led into evil in the future? Are they more uncharitable and vindicative by nature than James and John? Have they more serious and perplexing doubts than Thomas? Do they run a greater risk of apostacy than Peter? or of treason than Judas? Others acknowledge, if you press them very closely upon the subject, that they stay away from the Lord's table because of insincere communicants. But how clearly does the traitor's presence prove that no personal unworthiness on the part of others can excuse us from the performance of our duty. (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*) For some of them thought—I. The statement that he "had the bag" shows THE POSITION JUDAS OCCUPIED AMONG THE APOSTLES. He was no mean and inferior person. He was so far from being suspected, that he had the charge of the common store of money. Bullinger even thinks that he must have been a man remarkable for wisdom, prudence, economy, and faithfulness. II. The supposition of some that Jesus told Judas to "buy the things needed against the feast" shows clearly that OUR LORD DID NOT WORK MIRACLES IN ORDER TO PROCURE THE NECESSARIES required by Himself and His disciples. Christians must buy and sell like other people, and must manage their money affairs with prudence and economy. It also shows how little the disciples realized that their Master's death was close at hand. III. The supposition of others that Jesus told Judas to "give something to the poor" shows plainly what WAS OUR LORD'S CUSTOM IN THE MATTER OF ALMSGIVING. He sanctified and adorned the practice of caring for the poor by His own example. This passage and Gal. ii. 10 deserve careful consideration. It may be doubted whether the English Poor Law has not tended to shut up English almsgiving far more than is right before God. Conclusion: 1. Let us mark the snares which attend the possession and fingering of money. The man who has care of the money in our Lord's little company of followers is the very man who makes shipwreck of his soul for ever through the love of money. "Give me neither poverty nor riches" should be a Christian's frequent prayer. 2. The possession of money is evidently not in itself sinful and wicked. The Romish mendicant friars, and others who make a self-imposed poverty, are under a complete delusion. It is not the having, but the misusing, money which is sinful. (*Bp. Ryle.*)

Ver. 30. **He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.**—*Judas and the sop*:—The subject suggests—I. THE TWO-FOLD AND EVEN CONTRASTED SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SAME THING. 1. The giving of the sop meant one thing to John, viz., who was the betrayer? It does not seem to have been fully understood (ver. 28), but that was its meaning. To Judas it was meant as a mark of kindness. There was no inconsistency in this. It was done for a good reason. It consisted with Christ's affection for John, not to allow the suspicion of betrayal to rest upon him, and with His love for Judas to show him kindness. But why should Christ so act when He knew the result? Because He invariably acted as though results were unknown. He knew that He would raise Lazarus, yet He gave way to grief. He knew who believed not and who should betray Him, but that did not lead Him to slacken efforts on their behalf. 2. And so the same providence now may convey a varied meaning according to our feeling or position. We are more susceptible at one time than another. A song may make glad feelings in one and sad in another, according to the mood. Let each learn what God says aside to him. II. HOW MUCH MEANING MAY BE CONVEYED BY A LITTLE THING. In the very unobtrusiveness of the sop there was an element of power. It was better than if many words had been employed. The little friendly act was sufficient to flash the whole before His mind, and to discover the whole attitude of the Saviour. It was an intimation that it was not too late for repentance. Shortly before Christ put into a little service the great lesson of humility and serviceableness; shortly after He put great meaning into a look; and while sitting there He put meaning to all time into simple bread and wine. It needs only to have susceptible warm hearts to learn great lessons through little things. III. THE DISASTROUS EFFECT THAT MAY FOLLOW FROM THE REJECTION OF AN APPEAL. 1. During all his declension Judas had the

close attendance of Jesus, and therefore must have had every help toward a successful issue in his trial. And now a last appeal was about to be made. Would he say yes or no to the love of Christ. That was the turning-point in his, as in every man's, destiny. And he was so infatuated with evil as to say No. And so Satan, who had only previously put the thought in his heart, now entered him, and the Spirit of the Lord departed from him. But as soon as the act was performed, the enchantment was gone, and he hurried himself into eternity. 2. And so Christ is continually making appeals to us, in some sermon, book, mercy, worldly loss. If we do not yield there will come a last and decisive appeal, and if we reject that, despair. IV. How EXTERNAL NATURE REFLECTS AND MEETS STATES OF THE HUMAN SOUL. "It was night"—a congenial time for the deed of darkness. The children of darkness are dark within, and when Judas went out the dark thought of his mind was reflected there. Perhaps it was a relief to be away from the light, perhaps a suggestion of destiny. There is only outer darkness for those who "go out" from Christ. Let us accept Him now, from whose presence by and by we shall go no more out. (*R. Finlayson, B.A.*) *The sop and a dark deed*:—Notice—I. THE GROWTH AND STRENGTHENING OF EVIL AMID THE HOLIEST INFLUENCES. Judas lived within the circle of the Saviour's influence for three years. Eli was rebuked by Samuel for permitting his sons to commit sin on the threshold of the Temple, and —strange irony—Samuel's sons while doing priestly work walked in the same evil way. We may attend the sanctuary and listen to a mother's prayers for fifty years, and afterwards be lost. II. THE SAVIOUR'S GOODNESS BECOMES THE OCCASION OF GREAT EVIL. Judas was a worse man at the end of three years; while Christ's appreciation of Mary's offering, and His appeal to Judas, seemed to strengthen him in his purpose. So the presence of goodness, if not a blessing to us, is a withering curse. III. CHRIST'S GENEROUS TREATMENT OF THE SINNER. He saw the growth of evil in Judas, but it made no difference in His trust and love. At the last moment, there was one more attempt to touch the traitor's heart. "Friend," &c. The gift of the sop was a sign of love. What a wealth of persevering love is poured out on the most depraved! IV. THE DARK TERMINATION OF AN EVIL LIFE. Judas went out into the calm of that beautiful Syrian night, but is was a scene of blankness and tempest to him. Then came that deeper night of unavailing penitence and suicide. The path of sin always ends in night. It may be strewn with flowers or steeped in blood, but there is the same termination—the night of separation from God and communion with our own sins. (*Noel R. Hamer, M.A.*) *It was night*:—I. IN JERUSALEM. Only the pale shining of the passover moon lit the streets. The sieve was shaken, and the small soul of the money-lover dropped through out of honour into shame and gloom. II. IN HIS HEART. For Satan, the prince of darkness, in person was ruling there. Over him swept a wave of the "outer darkness" like a cloud from the bottomless pit. Suicide was just at hand. III. IN ALL THE VAST FUTURE. He was going "to his own place." (Job x. 22). We see at this vanishing moment that the man is lost while he is living, virtually in hell because the prince of hell is in his heart. And so we know that a soul can be damned even before it is dead. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Walking in the night*:—I. THE DARKNESS OF JUDAS'S CRIME. 1. The night has become intolerable to him now. 2. He was not always a traitor. 3. He may even have been brought into Christ's company that he might be saved. 4. But over all good his evil heart obtains supremacy. II. THE DARKNESS OF HIS REPENTANCE. 1. His conscience works up with the terror of night upon it, but without the accents of hope. 2. His repentance leads only to suicide—a further crime. III. THE DARKNESS OF HIS DOOM. "It had been better for that man, if he had never been born." (*J. H. Hargreaves.*) *The harmony of nature with our mental moods*:—We always like to have nature in sympathy with our sorrows and our joys; to have our moods of mind quite in accordance with our moods of seasons. Thus, if you and I are in distress, there is a sort of melancholy pleasure to find the sky gloomy with clouds; and when the shutter which tells our loss, and hides our mourning from the world and casts a shadow upon our home, lets in through the crevice the sunbeam, and we hear the happy crowd enjoying it outside, that intrusion seems quite an injury to our feelings. We take our moods of mind from those of nature, and this is a mystery, of course, which we cannot explain; but we have pleasure in finding that her moods are in accordance with ours, that she is bright when we are bright, that she is in sackcloth when we are sad. And so it is quite a relief to our feelings, just as it must have been to the Evangelists, to find "it was night." Such a deed could not have been done before the face of God's smiling sun. (*C. J. P. Eyre, M.A.*) *Moral seasons*:—There is

a moral night upon the soul of every sinful creature, just as there has been a day spring in the soul of every true believer. (*Ibid.*) **Now is the Son of man glorified.** *The triple glorification*:—I. THE GLORIFICATION OF THE SON OF MAN IN AND BY HIS SUFFERING. This language is strange here. It would not have been wonderful at Jordan or on the Mount of Transfiguration. Observe that it is as "the Son of Man" He is glorified, *i.e.*, His glory—1. As the perfect man was displayed in and by His sufferings. Man's excellence consists in entire conformity to God's will. Of this Christ was all through possessed, but more particularly when at the supreme moment to do God's will He died for man. 2. As the representative man, as typified by the vicarious sacrifice on the Day of Atonement, and by the "Kinsman Redeemer." How glorious this was. 3. As the God-man, as illustrated by the supernatural portents before and at the Crucifixion, which made the Centurion exclaim, "Surely this is the Son of God." 4. As the predicted man. At no period of His history were so many prophecies fulfilled. It is probable that the words suggest that there should be spectators: that there should not only be glory, but glorification. If so, Christ was glorified in His sufferings by the dying thief, God the Father, and the holy angels. Some expositors refer the words to the Lord's supper—a glorious display of His authority as the Legislator, and His love as the Saviour of the Church. II. THE GLORIFICATION OF GOD IN THE SON OF MAN SUFFERING. This is a strange declaration. We can understand how God is glorified in heaven, in the universe, in His government, and in multitudes of saved beings, but how in the sufferings of His Son? Now was "the hour and power of darkness." The words "in Him" explain the mystery. By men and devils God was dishonoured, but by Christ honoured. God was glorified in Christ's sufferings—1. Viewed in themselves, they glorify—(1) The Divine power which inflicted them and sustained the Sufferer. Never was sorrow like Christ's sorrow, but never was God's grace so abundant. Christ crucified is "the power of God." (2) The Divine wisdom. Christ's sufferings—(*a*) Effectually answer an important end—the eternal salvation of man. (*b*) By means different from any that created wisdom could have suggested. (3) The Divine justice (Rom. iii. 25, 26). (4) The Divine faithfulness in exactly fulfilling so many predictions. (5) The Divine benignity (chap. iii. 16). 2. Viewed in their results. (1) In the events themselves. The enemy of God is baffled, evil in the form of sin and suffering prevented, and good in the form of holiness and happiness produced. (2) In those events as the results of Christ's suffering—to bring such results out of such means. Satan's ruin rises out of his apparent triumph; life is the fruit of death; favour arises out of wrath, &c. III. THE GLORIFICATION BY GOD OF THE SON OF MAN, ON ACCOUNT OF HIS SUFFERINGS, IN CONSEQUENCE OF GOD BEING GLORIFIED BY HIM IN THEM. 1. God glorified the Son of Man—(1) Under His sufferings, which tested His power to bear and His disposition to obey, by sustaining Him amid them. (2) After His sufferings—"straightway," "It is finished," paradise, the resurrection, ascension, session, and the judgment to come. 2. God glorified the Son of Man in Himself. If God is glorified in Him He shall be glorified in God. 3. God's glorification of the Son of Man was the result and reward of God being glorified in and by the Son of Man's sufferings. Conclusion: The subject bids us—1. Rest with entire confidence on the finished work of Christ as the ground of our hope. 2. Imitate the Son of Man in glorifying God and in seeking thus to be glorified by God. 3. Co-operate, though at an infinite distance, with God in glorifying the Son of Man. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *God glorified in His Son*—showed what glory accrued from the sufferings of Christ. I. TO THE SON HIMSELF. 1. In completing His engagements with the Father. 2. In redeeming from death a ruined world. II. TO THE FATHER THROUGH THE SON. 1. In the display of all His perfections. 2. In the accomplishment of all His purposes. III. TO THE SON BY AND WITH THE FATHER. 1. In the testimonies borne to Him under His sufferings. 2. In the triumphant issue of them. 3. In the benefits conferred in consideration of them. (*C. Simeon, M.A.*) *God glorified in His Son*:—By—I. HIS OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAW. II. HIS TEACHING OF GOD'S WILL. III. HIS SUBMISSION TO GOD'S APPOINTMENTS. IV. HIS DEATH FOR GOD'S CHILDREN. (*S. S. Times.*) *The cross the glory of Christ and God*:—There is something very weird and awful in the brief note of time—"it was night." In immediate connection comes this singular burst of triumph—"Therefore." Now that that "spot in their feast of charity" had disappeared, the Master felt at ease; and, like some stream, out of the bed of which a black rock has been taken, His words flow more freely. How intensely real and human the narrative becomes when we see that Christ, too, felt the oppression of an uncongenial presence, and was relieved and glad at its

removal! The departure of the traitor evoked these words of triumph in another way. The match was lit that was to be applied to the train. He had gone out on his dark errand, and that brought the Cross within measurable distance of our Lord. What Judas went to do was the beginning of Christ's glorifying. I. THE SON OF MAN GLORIFIED IN HIS CROSS. 1. There is a double aspect under which our Lord regarded His sufferings. On the one hand we mark the innocent shrinking of His manhood. And yet, side by side with that, there is the reaching out almost with eagerness to bring the Cross nearer. Like the pellucid Rhine and the turbid Moselle, that flow side by side, so the shrinking and the desire were contemporaneous in Christ's mind. Here we have the triumphant anticipation rising to the surface, and conquering for a time the shrinking. 2. Why did Christ think of His Cross as a glorifying? The New Testament generally represents it as the lowest point of His degradation; John's Gospel always represents it as the highest point of His glory. And both are true; just as the zenith of our sky is the nadir for those on the other side of the world. The same fact which in one aspect sounds humiliating, in another is glorious. The Cross glorified Christ because—(1) It was the revelation of His heart. All His life long He had been trying to tell the world how much He loved it; but in His death it comes in a flood, and pours itself upon the world. For Him to be known was to be glorified. So pure and perfect was He, that revelation of His character and glorification of Himself were one and the same thing. We can fancy a mother in the anticipation of shame, and suffering, and death for the sake of some prodigal child, forgetting all, because all are absorbed in the one thought: "If I bear them, my poor, rebellious child will know at last how much I loved him." So Christ yearns to impart the knowledge of Himself to us because by that knowledge we may be won to His love and service. (2) It is His throne of saving power. Christ could not have spoken such words as these if He had simply thought of His death as a Plato or a John Howard might have thought of his, as being the close of his activity for the welfare of his fellows. If His death is His glorifying, it must be because in that death something is done which was not completed by the life, however fair; by the words, however wise and tender; by the works of power, however restorative and healing. Here is something more, viz., that His Cross is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He is glorified therein, not as a Socrates might be glorified by his calm and noble death; but because in that death He wrestled with and overcame our foes, and because, like the Jewish hero, dying, He pulled down the house which our tyrants had built, and overwhelmed them in its ruins. 3. And so there blend, in that last act, the two contradictory ideas of glory and shame; like some sky, all full of dark thunder-clouds, and yet between them the brightest blue and the blazing sunshine. In the Cross Death crowns Him the Prince of Life, and His Cross is His throne. "He endured the Cross, despising the shame;" and lo! the shame flashed up into the very brightness of glory, and the ignominy and the suffering became the jewels of His crown. II. GOD GLORIFIED IN THE SON OF MAN. The mystery deepens as we advance. That God shall be glorified in a man is not strange, but it is strange that the act in which He was glorified was the death of an innocent Man, and must imply—1. That God was in Christ, in some singular and eminent manner. If His whole human life and nature were the brightest manifestation of God, we can understand that the Cross was the highest point of the revelation of the Divine nature, and so was the glorifying of God in Him. But if we take any lower view of the relation between God and Christ, these words are a world too wide for the facts of the case. 2. That these sufferings bore no relation to the deserts of the person who endured them. If Christ, with His pure and perfect character, suffered so, then, if they have any bearing at all on the character of God, they cast a shadow rather than a light upon the Divine government. But if we can say, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself;" that His death was the death of Him whom God had appointed to live and die for us, and to bear our sins then, though deep mysteries come with the thought, still we can see that, in a very unique manner, God is glorified and exalted in His death. For, if the dying Christ be the son of God dying for us, then the Cross glorifies God, because it teaches us that the glory of the Divine character is the Divine love. If there be nothing Diviner in God than His giving of Himself to His creatures, then the Cross towers above all other revelations. And is it not so? Has it not scattered doubts that lay like mountains of ice upon man's heart? Has it not delivered men from the dreams of gods angry, capricious, vengeful, &c.? Has it not taught us that love is God, and God is love? III. THE SON OF MAN GLORIFIED IN THE FATHER. The mysteries

deepen as we advance. "If God be glorified in Him," &c. Do these words sound to you as if they expressed no more than the confidence of a good man, who, when he was dying, believed that he would be accepted of a loving Father, and would be at rest from his sufferings? 1. "In Himself." That is the obvious antithesis to the previous clause, a glorifying which consisted in a manifestation to the external universe, whereas this is a glorifying within the depths of the Divine nature. And the best commentary is: "Father! glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." We get a glimpse into the very centre of the brightness of God; and there, walking in that beneficent furnace, we see "One like unto the Son of Man." 2. This reception into the bosom of the Father is given to the Son of Man. The brother of us all, in His manhood, enters into that same glory, which, from the beginning, the Eternal Word had with God. 3. That glorifying is set forth as commencing immediately—"straightway." At the instant, then, that He said, "It is finished," and all that the Cross could do to glorify God was done, at that instant there began, with God's glorifying of the Son in Himself. It began in that Paradise into which we know that upon that day He entered. It was manifested to the world when He raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. It reached a still higher point when, ascending up on high, a dominion and a throne and a glory were given to Him. It shall rise to its highest manifestation before an assembled world, when He shall come in His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations. Conclusion: From that elevation He looks down ready to bless each poor creature here. And if we will but take Him as our Saviour, His all-prevalent prayer, presented within the veil for us, will certainly be fulfilled at last—"Father, I will that they also whom Thou has given Me," &c. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Three important facts in relation to Christ*:—I. A PAINFUL IMPRESSION REMOVED FROM HIS HEART. "Therefore when he was gone out"—1. An object of moral offence had been removed from His vision. It is never felt to be a pleasant thing to have in your social circle a corrupt man, especially if you know he has plotted against you. The exit of such a man is felt to be a relief. 2. An obstruction to the free utterance of His love had been removed from amongst His hearers. Parents and pastors have often things to say which they will not utter in the presence of a stranger or enemy. When the traitor was gone Christ's tongue was free. II. A GLORIOUS CONSUMMATION OF THE GREAT PURPOSE OF HIS LIFE. The expression "Son of Man" occurs sixty-six times. Not son of a tribe, nation, sect, or He would have had tribal, &c., peculiarities. He realized the Divine ideal of what man ought to be. 1. The true glory of a man is the realization of the Divine purpose in his life. The universe is glorious because it realizes the Divine purpose. The gospel is glorified when it transforms men into the image of God. 2. The man who thus realizes the Divine purpose glorifies God also. We see most of God's glory in his life who works out the Divine will in a God-like life. This is what Christ felt now. III. A TENDER CONSIDERATION FOR THE COMING TRIAL OF HIS DISCIPLES (ver. 33). 1. He informs them of that trial. A trial that would crush if it came unexpectedly may fall lightly when anticipated. 2. He informs them in the language of endearment. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Ver. 33. (See Dr. Maclaren's sermon on chap. vii. 33, 34). **Little Children.**—Needing—I. CARE. II. INSTRUCTION. III. GUIDANCE. IV. PROTECTION. (*S. S. Times.*) **Whither I go, ye cannot come . . . now.**—I. A picture of THE CHRISTIAN'S PRESENT CONDITION. II. A promise of THE CHRISTIAN'S FUTURE DEVELOPMENT. (*Ibid.*) *The conditions of being with Christ*:—Just as these friends of Christ, though they loved Him very truly, and understood Him a little, were a long way from being ready to follow Him, and needed the schooling of the Cross, and Olivet, and Pentecost, as well as the discipline of life and toil, before they were fully ripe for the harvest, so we, for the most part, have to pass through analogous training before we are prepared for the place which Christ has prepared for us. Certainly, so soon as a heart has trusted Christ, it is capable of entering where He is, and the real reason why the disciples could not come where He went was that they did not yet clearly know Him as the Divine Sacrifice for theirs and the world's sins, and, however much they believed in Him as Messiah, had not yet, nor could have, the knowledge on which they could found their trust in Him as their Saviour. But, while that is true, it is also true that each advance in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour will bring with it capacity to advance further into the heart of the far-off land, and to see more of the King in His beauty. So, as long as His friends were wrapped in such dark clouds of misconception and

error, as long as their Christian characters were so imperfect and incomplete as they were at the time of my text being spoken, they could not go thither and follow Him. But it was a diminishing impossibility, and day by day they approximated more and more to His likeness, because they understood Him more, and trusted Him more, and loved Him more, and grew towards Him, and, therefore, day by day became more and more able to enter into that kingdom. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 34. **A new commandment I give unto you.**—*The new commandment:*—I. WHY IS THIS CALLED NEW? 1. Negatively. Not as if it was not enjoined before (1 John ii. 7; 2 John v; Levit. xix. 18). 2. Positively. (1) Newly freed from the false glosses of the Jews (Matt. v. 43–44). (2) Newly infused into the heart as well as commanded. (3) Christ adds a new authority to it, and a new obligation on us. (4) Because it is so excellent (Psa. xxxii. 3). (5) It is to be performed according to a new pattern, viz., Christ's love to us. II. BY WHAT POWER DOES CHRIST LAY HIS COMMANDS UPON US? 1. As God (chap. xx. 28). 2. As King and head of the Church (Matt. xxviii. 18). III. WHAT LOVE IS IT WE SHOULD HAVE TO ONE ANOTHER? 1. Pray for one another (1 Tim. ii. 1). 2. Forgive one another (Matt. vi. 14). 3. Help one another. (1) In temporals (Matt. vii. 11). (2) In spirituals (Levit. xix. 17). 4. Sympathize with one another. (1) In prosperity (Rom. xii. 15). (2) In adversity. 5. Relieve one another's necessities. (1) In obedience to God (1 John iii. 17). (2) Proportionably to our estates (1 Cor. xvi. 2). (3) Humbly, not thinking to merit thereby (Luke xvii. 10). IV. How IS CHRIST'S LOVE TO US TO BE A PATTERN FOR OUR LOVE? 1. Negatively. (1) Not that we can suffer so much for others as He has done for us. (2) Nor do so much; for He has obtained the pardon of our sins (1 John ii. 2); peace with God (Rom. v. 1); heaven (chap. xiv. 2). 2. Positively. (1) Our love must proceed from the same principles. (*a*) Obedience. (*b*) Compassion. (2) In the same manner. (*a*) Readily (Tit. iii. 1; Psa. xl. 7, 8). (*b*) Sincerely.—(*c*) Effectually, in deeds as well as words (1 John iv. 18). (*d*) Humbly, thinking nothing too low for us to do for others (Philip. ii. 6–8). (*e*) Constantly (ver. 1). (3) To the same objects, His enemies (Rom. v. 8–10). (4) To the same ends. (*a*) God's glory (chap. xvii. 4; 1 Cor. x. 31). (*b*) Others' good (Acts x. 38). V. USE. Consider—1. Unless you love others you have no love for God (1 John iii. 17). 2. It is the fulfilling of all the law (Rom. xiii. 9). 3. No duty is accepted without it (1 Cor. xiii. 1–3). 4. It is the badge of a Christian (ver. 35). 5. It is an everlasting grace (1 Cor. xiii. 8, 13). 6. Christ will judge us according to this command (Matt. xxv. 45). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *The new commandment:*—It is new, because—I. FOUNDED ON A NEW RELATION. 1. Our relation to Christ. We are united to Him by faith, and receive from Him, as the branches from the vine, the life by which we live. 2. This new relation to Christ involves a new relation with each other. We are brethren, members of one family—"As many as received Him," &c. 3. On this new relation the new commandment is based. As the relationship of nature gives rise to natural affection, so this spiritual one begets love in accordance with itself. It is more than philanthropy, patriotism, party attachment, friendship, &c. It is love to those who love Christ and are beloved by Him: love to the Elder Brother in His brethren and ours. II. PRESENTED IN A NEW FORM—"*As* I have loved you." It must be the same in kind, although in a lesser degree; just as a drop from the ocean, or a ray from the sun, is the same as the fulness from which it comes. These conversations exhibit several characteristics which we ought to imitate. 1. Tender consideration for each others' needs. He thought of them more than He thought of Himself. 2. Humble ministration to the welfare of the brethren (vers. 4, 5). Christ's was not a sentimental, but a practical love. 3. Self-sacrifice for our sakes. "He gave Himself," not merely certain blessings, and not merely to teach and minister, but to die. "Greater love hath no man than this." "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." III. ENFORCED BY A NEW POWER. It is in this respect that the new covenant differs so widely from the old. The law enjoined the duty of loving our neighbour; but it had not sufficient motive power to carry the commandment into effect. Hence it remained a dead letter, and spoke only to condemn. But the new commandment is "The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and its word is with power. It is attended by the constraining influence of the Saviour's love. "We have not received the Spirit of fear," &c. As we contemplate this "great love," we become the subjects of a new emotion of admiration and gratitude. Above all, His Spirit writes the new commandment on the fleshy

tables of our hearts. IV. DESIGNED FOR A NEW PURPOSE (ver. 35). It is not only a law to be fulfilled; but its fulfilment is a distinction and evidence of our relation to Christ. 1. A peculiar distinction. Of old time, discipleship was known by dress, language, meat, and drinks, creeds, &c.; but our Lord declares that the distinct mark of His disciples shall be, beyond everything else, love like His own. 2. A certain distinction. For what is there more directly opposed to the sinfulness of the human heart? And what is the saving change, but one from selfishness to love? "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because," &c. 3. An influential distinction. For wherever it exists, men cannot but recognize us, and Christ in us, and be attracted to His love and service. (*B. Dale, M.A.*) *The new commandment*:—We all know the Ten Commandments, is there another besides? Yes, says—I. THE WORLD. "Thou shalt not be found out in breaking any of the ten." It acknowledges their excellence, breaks them, and strives to conceal that it has done so, wishing above all things to escape detection. This is the object which the bad part of the world pursues with all its cleverness and energy. II. THE CHURCH. It is remarkable that in the version of the Ten Commandments by the oldest of existing sects, the Samaritans, this is added, "Thou shalt build an altar on Mount Gerizim, and there thou shalt worship." And for commandments such as this, half the energies of Christendom have been spent, and spent in vain. III. CHRIST. "Love one another." We can imagine the surprise of the apostles, "What! are not the ten enough, or the two; may we not rest and be thankful in these?" True in these are the substance of all duty; but there is a craving in the human heart for something beyond mere duty, for a commandment which should be at once old and new—new with all the varying circumstances of time and thought and feeling, and which should give a new, fresh, undying impulse to its ten elder sisters. The ten older commandments were written on blocks of stone, as if to teach us that all great and good works were like that primæval granite of Sinai, more solid and enduring than all the other strata, cutting across all the secondary and artificial distinctions of mankind. As that granite block itself had been fused and wrought together by the central fire, so the Christian law of duty, in order to fully perform its work in the world, must have been warmed and fed at the source of a central fire of its own—love of God and love of man. And that central fire itself is kept alive by the consciousness that there has been in the world a love above all other love—the love of Christ. Learn the importance—1. Of personal kindness. 2. Systematic beneficence. 3. Making the most and the best of every one. (*Dean Stanley.*) *The new commandment*:—It is new because love—I. RENEWS US. II. MAKES US NEW CREATURES. III. MAKES US HEIRS OF A NEW COVENANT. IV. ENABLES US TO SING A NEW SONG. (*Bp. Christ. Wordsworth.*) *The new commandment*:—What are Christ's parting instructions to His Church? How are His followers to vanquish all the banded opposition of the world? Does He counsel them to amass wealth? to secure high offices? to acquire learning? to equip fleets and armies? to employ craft and intrigue? No, the first disciples were poor, destitute of learning, humble and despised, nor did they ever kill or wound a single human being. The power with which the Redeemer arms His Church is love. I. THE COMMANDMENT. 1. Love is the only badge by which the Church of Christ is known (ver. 35). Armies have their banners, and families their heraldry. In the days of Christ, Jews and Gentiles had their emblems—different sects and schools being distinguished by symbols and mottoes. At this day, churches called Christian glory in names, titles, orders, and parade. But there is only one badge of the true Church which will be recognized and honoured by "all men." "The banner over us is love." 2. Love is the only law by which a Church of Christ is to be governed. Church government!—how much pride, prejudice, ambition, selfishness, cruelty, have been sanctified by this phrase. A king dabbling with astronomy once said, Had I been present when God arranged the solar system, I could have made some important suggestions. So vain men have thought as to the Saviour's regulation of His Church, and they have sought to improve His system. As in the natural world the Creator secures order without monotony, by forming each particle of matter with its own peculiar properties, and throwing around all substances the law of gravitation; so in the Church, there are many members and diversities of gifts, &c., but the law of love binds all into one harmonious whole. If love reign in a church, it will almost supersede discipline. 3. When from the internal administration of the Church we turn to its outward enterprise, we find a mission entirely of love. It is this which makes the gospel the religion suited to all climes and ages.

4. It is love which is to secure the perpetuity, and final and universal triumph of the Church. Force, stratagem, heredity, prescriptive authority, are the foundations of earthly kingdoms. Christ founded His empire on love. 5. Love is the glory, the happiness, the perfection of the Church of Christ. It is greater than faith and hope, because it comprehends them both; for it "hopeth all things, believeth all things." We every day see loving hearts hoping against hope, and trusting in spite of the basest perfidiousness. Love, indeed, is the crowning flower in which all the Christian graces will expand and bloom in eternity. The highest heaven knows nothing more exalted and blessed than love. II. IN WHAT SENSE IS IT NEW. 1. In the new principle to which it appeals. It is not attachment to a human being for his natural excellencies, but complacency in the image of God reflected by him. "Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." 2. In its extent—embracing all who are the children of God. All other ties and relations are subordinated to this religion—this new spiritual affinity which rebinds us to Christ and to each other. Separated from God, men are walled off from each other by selfish and hostile distinctions. To repair these unnatural breaches, the "Son of God" became the "Son of man," that He might attract us all to God, and unite us all to one another by new and heavenly ties. 3. Its spirituality. It is love not only for the bodies, but for the souls of our brethren. How few really and practically recognize the soul. In Christ's teachings the soul is everything. He heeded neither the trappings of the prince nor the rags of the beggar. Beneath all, through all, He saw a soul whose dignity and worth transcend finite thought. The only charge which His enemies could ever prove against Him was, "This man receiveth sinners." And, catching His spirit, what a new passion inflamed the souls of His disciples. 4. Its comprehensiveness; for it embraces and renders superfluous all other commands. III. THE EXAMPLE BY WHICH IT IS ENFORCED—"As I have loved you." A love—1. How attentive! as considerate and assiduous as the love of a woman. 2. How confiding! "Having loved His own, which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Often had they been faithless. Yet He trusts them, opens His whole heart to them, and commits His cause to their keeping. 3. How condescending! Stooping to the most menial office of kindness and hospitality (vers. 4, 5). 4. How compassionate! He not only pronounces every sin, however aggravated, pardonable, if only against Himself, but He is ingenious in finding apologies for all the weaknesses, even for the baseness and treachery, of those whom He had trusted. 5. How disinterested! He entirely forgets Himself when His friends are in sorrow or danger. (*R. Fuller, D.D.*)

The new commandment:—These words fall strangely on our ears. A commandment to love! We have placed law and love in contrast, and have imagined affection to be below our reach. Yet Jesus enforces love. We are, therefore, reminded that love is within our own reach. Christ lays it upon us not as an ideal which we may admire, and which may exert some kind of influence on us, nor as a standard which we may attain to in heaven; but as a commandment. In what sense can it be called a new commandment? Surely in the old dispensation God commanded love. The newness of the law may be found in the prominent position which is given to it, and the standard set before us. The first fruit of the Spirit named in the list of graces is love. Christ especially singles out this affection as being illustrative of His own character, and giving most effectual testimony to Him. I. IN WHAT FORM MAY THIS NEW COMMANDMENT BE FULFILLED?—"As I have loved you." Study the love of Christ. His love showed itself—1. In a generous appreciation of the characters of those around Him. In that little group there existed the utmost differences. You find a publican like Matthew, a man with very dim perceptions like Philip; a determined and resolute doubter like Thomas; a boastful man like Peter, &c. These are men from whom we should be inclined to shrink, but Christ could appreciate them all. Be quick, like Christ, to see virtues, and slow to see faults. Generous appreciation will encourage public men to hold their position. It will encourage men of worth, who are retiring in disposition, to come to the front and bear their share of public duty. Unkind criticism will keep in the background men who can best serve the Church and commonwealth. This generous appreciation is a wonderful force to elevate society. Suspicion has a tendency to create what it suspects. If you suspect a lad of untruthfulness, you are tempting him to falsehood. If high estimates are formed of us by others, we are encouraged to rise to the estimate. 2. In patient endurance! "When reviled He reviled not again." We are to forbear one another and to forgive one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us. If we are

doing good work we cannot afford to be turned aside by any unkindness. God has overcome our evil with His good, and turned the hostile forces of our nature into helpful influences for His purposes. Thus seek to conquer the evil which you have to endure by good. It is the noblest of all triumphs. 3. In unselfish service. (1) In little deeds of kindness, of which sometimes the recipients shall know nothing, but which shall bring some fresh gladness and hope into their lives. (2) In words. What did God give you the power of speech for? Is it to hide your feelings? Love will die like a smothered fire if you give it no expression. (3) In looks. If your face is dull, sad, cross, to the extent of your influence you are saddening all that come within your circle. II. WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT OF SUCH CHRIST-LIKE LOVE? 1. That you can sympathise with God. On many sides of the Divine nature you cannot sympathise with Him. (1) With His mighty power, for you have not an arm like His. (2) With Divine wisdom. (3) With burning purity. (4) But you can sympathise with His love. You can feel for men as God feels for them. 2. That you will show your union with Christ (ver. 35). No Christian grace exercises so much influence on the thoughts of men. They are not able to appreciate Christian holiness, prayerfulness, zeal; but Christ-like love they can. 3. Such love will gladden your own life as well as the lives of others. There is perhaps no joy greater than that of loving. The bliss of the blessed God lies chiefly in His loving heart. (*C. B. Symes, B.A.*) *The new commandment*:—It was *new* because He had only then come to explain it; it was *new* because it could not have been conceived before His life exhibited its meaning; it was *new* because the love which He showed was something altogether beyond the power of man to have imagined for himself; and as in science we reckon him to be the discoverer of a new law, who rises above the guesses and glimpses of His predecessors, and establishes upon new ground, and in a manner which can never afterwards be questioned, some great principle which had been perhaps partly conceived before, so I think we may say, that the law of brotherly love, as illustrated by the example of the Lord, which stamps the great principle of selfishness as a vile and execrable principle, might be truly described as a new commandment which Christ gave to His disciples. (*Bp. H. Goodwin.*) *The new commandment and the old*:—Christ is our Lawgiver as well as our Saviour. And He made obedience to His laws the test and the manifestation of love to Him (chap. xiv. 15). The Church of Christ is in fact the spiritual Israel. Israel according to the flesh had their laws fitted for their place in God's purposes; we have ours adapted to our position also. And we may well be thankful when we compare the two codes together. Theirs, as necessary in a state of imperfection and bondage, was cumbrous and intricate. Of all the commands of the old law, none remain for us, but those which are based on the nature of God, and His attributes. And our new commandment comes to us, not sanctioned by lightnings and thunderings, &c. —but from the dying lips of our dearest Friend; it is prefaced by His deed of deep humiliation, is embosomed in His words of consolation and peace—is enforced by His own constraining example. A new commandment. And what is it which we are to hear from the lips of Divine wisdom, after such an announcement? Long had the world disobeyed His law written in the conscience; and then He defined that law, and wrote it on tables of stone, and set apart a people for Himself, among whom it might be observed. But that people had rejected Him, and disobeyed His laws. And now, what new commandment will He promulgate to His rebellious world? What, to the Gentile, sunk in moral degradation—what to the Jew, mocking Him with empty hypocrisy? Shall it not surpass in strictness and in terror all that have gone before? Shall it not be such as to awe the passions into submission to awaken the conscience into energy, to drive the sinner to repentance or to his doom? Nay! Can He, who invited to Him the weary and heavy laden, speak aught but words of gentleness and comfort? Had God's new revelation of His will been an increase in severity, would this Messenger have been sent to make it? A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. (*Dean Alford.*) *Christ's law of love*:—Look for a moment, by way of recall, at three or four characteristics of that love which Christ showed to His disciples. In the first place, love was the principle of His life. Some men are like Western farmers who have their one hundred and sixty acres, and put one hundred and fifty-nine and a half acres in hay and grain and grass for the cattle, and half an acre around the door is a garden and grass-plot, and a fraction of that the wife cultivates in flowers. So men give the larger part of their life to self or justice or righteousness or fair-dealing, and they cultivate a little plot with flowers which they call love (and generally they are

very like the Western farmers in that they leave the wife to raise all the flowers). Now, love was not thus a mere incident of Christ's life. It was the essence of His life. He lived for love. Love was the inspiration of His life. It was a wise love, not a mere sentiment, not a mere blind enthusiasm. It was well considered. He measured men and adapted His gifts to their capacities. Christ's love was not either a mere sentimental love. It was not a love that cannot bear to look upon suffering, or that intervenes to stop all suffering. It was not a love that could not rebuke and reprove. There was flash in the eyes of His love, and there was thunder, sometimes, in the tones of His love. He loved, too, with infinite patience and long-suffering. He loved not only with benevolence—that is, well-wishing to all men, and with pity—that is, with love to those that are in suffering, but with mercy—that is, love to those who do not deserve love. He loved when love and conscience seemed to antagonize each other. Impossible! do you say? Well, then, let us say frankly it is impossible to be a Christian. Impossible? Then impossible to follow Christ. Not human nature? No, it is not human nature. It is Divine nature: and that is the very object of Christianity—to confer upon all who will be the disciples of Christ a Divine nature, not a mere human nature; that they may be lifted up out of the plane of the human, and walk in the plane and atmosphere of the Divine ever more. (*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*) *The new commandment of love to one another*:—The commandment of love issued appropriately at the Feast of Love, and not long before the great Act of Love. For the love of Christ was no fine saying; it cost Him His life to say these words. It is difficult to grasp the meaning of this command, arising from the fact that words change their meaning. Love is, by conventional usage, appropriated to one species of human affection, which, in the commoner men, is most selfish. Nor is charity a perfect symbol of His meaning; for that is now identified with almsgiving. Benevolence or philanthropy, in derivation, come nearer to the idea; but yet you feel at once that these words are too tame and cold. We have no sufficient word. "As I have loved you:" that alone expounds it. Take—I. THE NOVELTY of the law—1. As a historical fact. Men before that had travelled, but the spectacle of a Paul crossing oceans not to conquer kingdoms, to hive up knowledge, to accumulate stores for self, but to give and to spend himself—was new in the history of the world. The celestial fire had touched the hearts of men and their hearts flamed; and it caught, and spread, and would not stop. Read the account given by Tertullian of the marvellous rapidity with which the Christians increased, and you are reminded of one of those vast armies of ants which move across a country in irresistible myriads, drowned by thousands in rivers, cut off by fire, consumed by men and beast, and yet fresh hordes succeeding interminably to supply their place. A new voice was heard; man longing to burst the false distinctions which had kept the best hearts from each other so long. And all this from Judæa—the narrowest, most intolerant nation on the face of the earth. 2. In extent. It was in literal words, an old Commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But the difference lay in extent in which the words were understood. By "neighbour," the Jew meant his countrymen; so that the rabbinical gloss was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy." And what the Gentile understood by the extent of the law of love, we may learn from their best and wisest, who thanked heaven that he was born a man, and not a brute—a Greek, and not a barbarian. But Christ said, "Love your enemies." And as a specimen of a neighbour he specially selected one of that nation whom every Jew had been taught to hate. And just as the application of electricity to the innumerable wants of human life and to new ends is reckoned a new discovery (though the fact has been familiar to the Indian child and applied for ages to his childish sports), so the extension of this grand principle of Love to all the possible cases and persons—even though the principle was applied long before in love to friends, country, and relations—is truly and properly "a new commandment." 3. In being made the central principle of a system. Never had obedience before been trusted to a principle, it had always been hedged round by a law. Now it was reserved for One to pierce down into the springs of human action, and to proclaim the simplicity of its machinery. "Love," said the apostle after Him—"Love is the fulfilling of the law." I may abstain from murder and theft, deterred by law and its penalties. But I may also rise into the Spirit of Charity; then I am free from the law; the law no more binds me, now that I love my neighbour, than the dyke built to keep in the sea at high tide restrains it when that sea has sunk to low watermark. II. THE SPIRIT OR MEASURE of the law—"As I have loved you." Broadly, the love of Christ was the spirit of giving all He had to give—

"Greater love hath no man than this," &c. "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." These words, meant as taunt, were really the noblest panegyric. How could He, having saved others? How can any keep what he gives? Love gives itself. The mother spends herself in giving life to her child; the soldier dies for his country; nay, even the artist produces nothing that will live, except so far as he has merged his very being in his work. That spirit of self-giving manifests itself in—1. Considerate kindness. Take three cases. (1) When He fed the people with bread, there was a tenderness which, not absorbed in His own great designs, provided for the satisfaction of the lowest wants. (2) "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." He did not grudge from duty the interval of relaxation. (3) "Woman, behold thy son!" In that hour of death-torture, He could think of her desolate state when He was gone, and with delicate, thoughtful attention provide for her well-being. There are people who would do great acts; but because they wait for great opportunities, life passes and the acts of love are not done at all. Observe, this considerateness of Christ was shown in little things. And life is made up of infinitesimals. And these trifles prepared for larger deeds. The one who will be found in trial capable of great acts of love is ever the one who is always doing considerate small ones. 2. It was never foiled by the unworthiness of those on whom it had once been bestowed. There was everything to shake His trust in humanity. As we mix in life there comes disappointment, and the danger is a reaction of desolating and universal mistrust. The only preservation from this withering of the heart is love. The strength of affection is a proof, not of the worthiness of the object, but of the largeness of the soul which loves. The might of a river depends not on the quality of the soil through which it passes, but on the inexhaustibleness and depth of the spring from which it proceeds. The greater minds cleave to the smaller with more force than the other to it. Love trusts on—expects better things. And more, it is this trusting love that makes men what they are trusted to be, so realizing itself. When the crews of the fleet of Britain knew that they were expected to do their duty, they did their duty. And it is on this principle that Christ wins the hearts of His redeemed. He trusted the doubting Thomas; and Thomas arose with a faith worthy "of his Lord and his God." He would not suffer even the lie of Peter to shake His conviction that Peter might love him yet; and Peter answered nobly to that sublime forgiveness. Therefore, come what may, hold fast to love. Learn not to love merely, but to love as He loved. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Love one another*:—A little girl, three or four years old, learned the Bible text, "Love one another." "What does love one another mean?" asked her next eldest sister, in honest doubt as to the meaning. "Why, I must love you and you must love me; and I'm one and you're another" was the answer. Who can improve on that? (*J. L. Nye.*) *The winning power of love*:—Alexander the Great, being asked how he had been able at so early an age and in so short a period to conquer such vast regions, and establish so great a name, replied, "I used my enemies so well that I compelled them to be my friends; and I treated my friends with such constant regard that they became unalterably attached to me." *The victorious power of love*:—A lady brought a little ragged orphan girl to her house for a playmate for her three daughters. But the little thing would venture no further than the lobby, where she sat crying as if her heart would break. The lady said to her daughters there was one secret of four letters she thought would win the little one. The eldest girl tried her doll, the second her new muff, but still the little stranger kept on weeping. At length the youngest sister ran into the lobby, sat down beside her, began to weep with her, and then put her arms about her neck and kissed her, till at last she easily got her into the room; and then it was found that the secret was love. (*Clerical Library.*) *Love the cure for coldness*:—One of the common complaints in our day, in Christian societies, is this, "There is no love among us." Sometimes the complaint is uttered in holy sorrow. But sometimes it only means, "I am not getting my just share of love from others; the place feels cold around me." If this is what the complaint means, the remedy is that the complainer should love till he warms up the whole neighbourhood. I am to love when I am not loved. I am to love when I am suspected. I am to love when men are trying to discover what selfish feeling moves me, or what my price is. I am to love those who do not care for my love. I am to love even when I have indignation. I am to love as the sun shines—its beams going forth on all sides without asking for an object, and "there is nothing hid from the heat thereof;" the love I show being the love of God in me. *The eleventh commandment*:—I. ITS PRINCIPLE. We are to have love like that of

Christ. 1. In one sense this is impossible. "Measure the waters in the hollow of thine hand; mete out heaven with a span," &c.—these are measurable things, but the love of Christ is measureless. To love like Paul—like John—would be a lofty aim, but who can love like Christ? 2. He asks not that our love should equal, but resemble His; not that it should be of the same strength, but of the same kind. A pearl of dew will not hold the sun, but it may hold a sparkle of its light. A child, by the sea, trying to catch the waves, cannot hold the ocean in a tiny shell, but he may hold a drop of the ocean water. "There is an ocean of love in My heart," says Christ, "let a drop of that ocean be received into yours." 3. Divine love, therefore, is but another name for that Divine life which animates all the disciples. None need despair of his ability to obey his Lord's will, for Christ gives the love which He commands, and you need only ask in order to have (Eph. iii. 14-19). II. THE MODE OF ACTION it prescribes. If we love as Christ loves—1. We shall be ready to love others before they love us. If He had waited until we loved Him, where should we now have been? "Herein is love, not that we loved Him, but that He loved us." His love explains His death, but what can explain His love? Sublime as it is, our love must acknowledge no lower law. 2. Our love will be a practical thing. Some are in danger of becoming mere religious sentimentalists. They feel much, but do little. They are ready for sympathy, but not for sacrifice. They are the sensitive plants of the Church, and not fruit-bearing trees of righteousness. This fine sensibility, cherished for its own sake, and having no outforce in deeds for the good of others, both weakens the soul and itself. "Abiding alone," it is but soft effeminacy or weak indulgence; luxury, not love. Christ has not said, "By love feel for one another," merely; but "By love serve one another." Let us interpret His law by His life. His love speaks to us through a glorious deed; then our love, like His, must speak through action. His love found expression through a sacrifice; then ours must express itself through sacrifice. His love was displayed when "He bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows;" then, "bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Redemption was His own personal act. Then our love is not to have a mere representative utterance. 3. Our love will be humble. All love is lowly. You often see a loving purpose kept in check by a haughty will, and the ice of pride seal the river of love. You have seen the father and son proudly stand apart. Each yearns to fling himself into the other's embrace, but pride forbids the younger to confess his fault, and the elder his sorrowful tenderness. But where love lives in its strength it will be stronger than death. It will come down, cast aside state and ceremony, submit to a thousand indignities, stoop to save, and "stand at the door and knock." If you would know what humility can do, study redeeming love, and though Christ sits enthroned on the riches of the universe His heart is still unchanged. Like the sunshine that falls with magical flicker on pearl and ruby, lance and armour, in the royal hall—yet overflows the shepherd's home, and quivers through the grating of the prisoner's cell—floods the noblest scenes with day, yet makes a joy for the insect—so does the Saviour's love, not deterred by our unworthiness, come down to teach and bless the meanest and the lowliest life in the new creation. 4. Our love must be bountiful. Love can never do enough for its object. When you were lost, "unsearchable riches" were poured forth as the price of your redemption. When you were found, what was the language of the Heart of Hearts? "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him," &c. When, therefore, your heart is disposed to give a brother disciple but a scanty and penurious affection remember "Freely ye have received, freely give." 5. We shall breathe a spirit of gentleness and patience towards the erring or offending members of the Christian brotherhood. The effects flowing from the violation of this principle might fill a library with sad histories. 6. We shall love all the disciples. Christ is not now speaking of His universal love, but of His peculiar and discriminating love to those who have accepted Him, and who are already partakers of His life. He loves them, as you love your child none the less because it is now only learning to read, or just beginning, with many a fall, to totter along alone. He loves all His disciples, and all are His disciples, who, however they differ in other respects, unite in the sentiment, "for us to live is Christ." 7. Our love will last for ever. Whom He loves He always loves. This is an inference from His nature. III. ITS NOVELTY. It is a new commandment—1. As it enjoins love after a new model. Love had always been commanded, but never before had it been so exemplified. 2. As it is addressed to a peculiar class of God's subjects, and is a law for the new creation alone. The old commandments were given to the world,

this new commandment to the Church. 3. As it arose out of a new necessity, and was intended to be the distinguishing sign of Christ's disciples. To prevent confusion, and secure a defined place in society, each office and every class has its peculiar sign. "As every lord giveth a certain livery to his servants, charity is the very livery of Christ. Our Saviour, which is the Lord above all lords, would have His servants known by their badge, which is love" (Latimer). 4. As it has a new impressiveness—an affecting power all its own. The old commandments had a power to alarm; this, when truly understood, has a power to subdue; they smote the conscience, this captivates the heart. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *The eleventh commandment:*—The little town of Anworth was the home and the pride of that sweet soul, Rutherford, the Covenanter. One Saturday evening, so the story runs, his household were gathered together for their usual cotter's Saturday night's devotions, when an alarm was heard at the outer door. A stranger sought admission. He was welcomed with true hospitality, and took his place in the circle of those who were then answering the varied questions in the Catechism. It so chanced that the question, "How many commandments are there?" came to this newcomer, as the one to which he was to make reply, and instantly he answered, "Eleven." "What!" said Rutherford; "a man so experienced in life as you seem to be, and so educated in the law and the Scripture of God, not to know that there are but ten commandments!" The stranger answered, "'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.'" Startled by the answer, Rutherford proceeded with his service. The next morning before the hour of service, he walked from his humble manse along that pathway which is still spoken of as "Rutherford's Walk," towards the little church. It was early in the day, and he scarcely expected to meet any one in the path; but over in the wood he heard the voice of some one in supplication. The moment he listened he recognized the stranger's tone. He sought him out, and demanded to know who he was. The stranger answered, "My name is Usher." He was the Archbishop and Primate of all Ireland. Having heard much of the piety of the Presbyterian Rutherford, he had, in this secret way, sought his society that he might judge for himself. Their hearts flowed together in the common devotion which they both felt toward the Lord Jesus, their Master; and when the hour of service came, together the Covenanter and the prelate walked to the little Anworth church, and Usher of Ireland preached to the Covenanters of Scotland on the new commandment, that "ye love one another." His presence there, his welcome there, his spirit and his words, were expositions of the truth of that which the Lord gave as the summing up of His own life. (*S. H. Tyng, D.D.*) *Brotherly love* (Sermon to Children):—Brotherly love should show itself—I. In KINDNESS to each other. Love will have to get outlet. If I do not see brotherly-kindness, I conclude that there is not brotherly-love. 1. There will be kind words. In most families there are many unkind, scolding, fault-finding, angry, irritating, coarse, uncourteous words. Not to speak of kindness, there is sometimes scarcely common civility. There is a rudeness—demanding things of each other—driving each other out of the way, &c., when, if a request were made politely, it would be so much better. I like to see children in a kindly way bidding each other "Good night," and again, greeting each other when they meet in the morning. All this would change the whole face of many a family circle. Though you may say it is but words, it would soon tell on everything else. And do not tell tales. A "tell-tale" is an ugly character (Lev. xix. 16; Prov. xxvi. 20, 22). Did you ever notice an echo? If you fire a gun, or sing, or whistle, or shout, or whisper, you get exactly what you give. And so it has passed into a proverb, "Kind words awaken kind echoes." 2. There will be kind looks. You know how much there is in a look—a displeased, angry, sulky, scornful, off-taking look. How they can vex and do a world of mischief! But if looks can do evil, they can also do good. There are kind, encouraging, comforting, winning looks. And just as "kind words produce kind echoes," so kind looks call forth a return in kind. You must have noticed what an effect the look you gave has sometimes had on a dog. In the case of an infant, how you can, without difficulty, make him either laugh or cry merely by a look. That tells what a look can do for good or evil. Others will look at you just as you look at them. You have looked into a mirror, and seen reflected there your own face. As you looked pleased or cross, so did it. Just so is it in a family. 3. There will be kind deeds. I have heard of a mother who was in the habit of asking her children, each night before they went to bed, what they had done that day to make others happy. It would be well for the members of each family to ask themselves that. How

many little services of love you might render without being asked. Now, if you love each other you will pray for each other. This is one of the greatest of all kindnesses, as it is one of the most tender of all bonds, and will be likely to lead to all the rest. II. In SYMPATHY for each other. To "sympathise" is to feel for, or rather with one. I have heard of a girl who, after having lost a little brother, went back to school; and I have this account of her from one of her companions: "All the time she studied her lesson, she hid her face in her book and cried. I felt so sorry that I laid my face on the same book and cried with her. Then she looked up, and put her arms around my neck; but I do not know why she said I had done her so much good." It was the power of sympathy. When there is any trial, be it light or heavy, pressing on another's mind there is nothing you can give to be compared to sympathy. It is wonderful the effect of even inquiring for the sick one. I am sometimes amazed, in asking children about a little brother or sister who has been ill, when they say they "don't know!" Why do they not know? Had they lost their tongue, or had they not rather lost their heart? When your brother has got up in his class; when he has carried off a prize; when he has got some present; when his birthday has come round; when he is raised up from a sick bed—give him your hearty sympathy. III. In SELF-DENIAL. Selfishness is the great cause of unhappiness in many homes. Where children are unselfish they must agree—they cannot fail to be happy. But the reverse meets us on every hand in most painful and humbling ways. I once offered a friend a copy of a little book for his three children. But, no. He said, "I must have three or none, otherwise there will be no satisfying them." I am not sure but they had even to be all of the same colour. Two of these books were thus very much thrown away. Now, it should not be so. IV. In FORBEARANCE and PATIENCE. "Love suffereth long," &c. In every family there is much to annoy. But love enables one to bear a great deal, and keeps the wheels running smoothly. Especially is it the part of the elder members of the family to bear with the younger, as it is the duty of the younger to pay deference to the elder. You have got some unkind, rude, impudent thing said or done to you. Your first impulse is to pay the evil-doer back in his own coin. Do you ask, "What should I do?" I say, Bear it. Try to be like God—"slow to wrath." Some one gives the advice to "count ten before you speak," when you are angry. Even in the worst case, "a soft answer turneth away wrath." There is a saying, "He begins the fight who strikes the second blow." That is true of the tongue as well as of the hand. V. In FORGIVENESS. A mother can forgive when none else can because she loves. God can forgive when none else can, because He loves. And if we love like Him we shall forgive like Him. To be unforgiving, whether young or old, is one of the worst characters that could be given to one. (*J. H. Wilson, M.A.*) *The social principles of Christianity* (1):—In what sense is this a new commandment? This epithet distinguishes it from—1. The Mosaic code. The law of Moses was mainly an embodiment of justice. It admitted the cultivation of mutual love, and even enjoined it. But this was not its salient characteristic. Whereas the gospel is pre-eminently and characteristically a law of love. Again, the love which Judaism recognized was inferior in quality. A Jew behoved to love his neighbour as himself. A Christian must love his brother so as to sacrifice himself if need be. 2. From all common worldly affection. There are—(1) Instinctive affections, such as the parental, filial, &c. (2) Elective affections, such as those of friendship, patriotism, &c. (3) But none of these afford the highest exhibition, development, and gratification of man's social nature. In a manner far to surpass them Christian love is to be cherished. Christ has introduced among men an altogether new principle of social existence. This social aspect of the gospel will be fully displayed in heaven. Meanwhile it is intended to show itself in churches. The singularity of this affection will better appear if we consider a few of its distinctive features. Consider—I. ITS SPIRITUAL BASIS. It is not founded upon any natural relationship or sentiment, but upon a common participation in the benefits of Christ's redemption. Observe—1. How this circumstance connects us with the same loving Lord. 2. How it supposes in each of us the same spiritual experience. 3. How it guarantees in each and all the same elements of a pure and estimable character. 4. How it furnishes the prospect of our being united together in perfect blessedness for ever and ever. Is there any other love which has such a profound and solemn basis as this? II. ITS DISINTERESTED PURITY. III. ITS DEVOTED FERVOUR. It should lead us, if need be, to die for our brethren, after the example of Christ. IV. ITS PRACTICAL PURPOSES. 1. It supposes times of persecu-

tion and trial, and then it is serviceable to encourage and comfort us. 2. It relates to the exigencies of our spiritual cultivation, and is intended to supply the means of instruction and guidance. 3. It glances at the work which we are to do for Christ in the world, and it ensures strength, co-operation, and success. Apply specially to Church members. The Church ought to be the happiest circle of our acquaintance. Do we observe the new commandment? The way to promote it is to love Christ more. Thus to act is most important for the sake of our piety, our peace, and our usefulness. (*T. G. Horton.*)

Ver. 35. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples.—*The social principles of Christianity* (2):—How seldom is this test of true discipleship to Christ appealed to. We look for orthodoxy of sentiment, moral character, denominational zeal, attention to ordinances, but we are apt to overlook the one great criterion laid down in the text. Quite in harmony with this verse is 1 John iii. 14. Consider—I. THE NATURE OF THIS LOVE. It consists mainly of two elements, an admiration of the peculiar spiritual character of God's saints, and a deep personal sympathy with them in their struggles and temptations. To these elements may sometimes be added a high sense of gratitude to them if they have been made instrumental in conveying light, grace, and comfort to our minds, and a hearty desire of pure benevolence to do them good and be helpers of their joy. It will be borne in mind that the objects of this love are Christian believers, simply as such. Now—II. HOW DOES SUCH AN AFFECTION EVINCE OUR DISCIPLESHIP TO CHRIST? 1. Because He commands it; therefore not to cherish it is to disobey Him, and prove that we do not love Him. 2. Because the character of the saints is the very one which we are striving to acquire if we are followers of Christ; and therefore we cannot help but admire it. 3. As Christians we are called to pass through the same tribulations and trials as they have; therefore we are constrained to sympathy with them according to that fundamental law of human nature—"A fellow-feeling makes the whole world kin." 4. Gratitude for spiritual mercies is only possible to those who have ceased to be carnally-minded: while, again, to receive spiritual mercies through the medium of a fellow-believer must attach us specially to him, on the common principle of human gratitude. 5. To love God's people so as to be willing to go through great sacrifices for them, must surely be impossible to the worldly mind, because it is at enmity with God and cannot honestly seek the good of those who are born of Him. If, therefore, any man loves us as Christian disciples, the inference must be that he is a disciple and has ceased to stand connected with our enemies, III. CONSIDER THIS AFFECTION AS A STANDING PROOF OF OUR DISCIPLESHIP. 1. Nothing else, without this, can prove a man to be a child of God. He that is destitute of this love, whatever else he possesses, abideth in death. 2. Where this exists, nothing else need be looked for. Conclusions: 1. As a professed believer test your sincerity by this principle: Do you love the followers of Jesus? 2. Judge of your growth or declension in grace by your waxing or waning love to the brethren. 3. Prepare for greater usefulness by seeking more of this love to the people of God. 4. Appeal to the unconverted and inquiring. We want you amongst us only if you can love us; and we want you to love us only because you and we together have learned to love the Saviour. (*Ibid.*) *The badge of true Christians*:—I. CHRIST WOULD HAVE EVERY CHRISTIAN KNOWN TO BE A DISCIPLE. And this cannot be otherwise. The fire of grace will ever show itself both by smoke and light. But wherein must we show ourselves disciples of Christ? In five things. 1. The disciples were called by Christ's voice, and depended on His mouth for instruction and direction. So must we be made disciples by the word of Christ. But if thou carest not for the preaching of the Word, or canst content thyself in thy ignorance, or with some confused knowledge, thou showest thou art no disciple. 2. The disciples being called, denied themselves, left all for Christ, and acknowledged no master but Him alone (Matt. iv. 22; xxiii. 8, 10). If thou likewise be a disciple thou must renounce all other masters and all employments which will not stand with Christianity. 3. The disciples were called to be near attendants of Christ and perform all His commandments (chap. viii. 31; xv. 14, 15). 4. The disciples were glad of Christ's presence, and when He was absent their hearts were full of sorrow. If thou art a disciple thy soul rejoiceth in the presence of Christ, in His ordinances, in the directions and consolations of His Spirit. 5. The disciples had commission and commandment to make other disciples, accordingly were diligent in their callings, spending themselves in doing good to others. Dost thou gain others to Christ and form thine own course to His? II. CHRIST WOULD HAVE ALL KNOW

HIS DISCIPLES BY THIS BADGE OF LOVE (1 John ii. 10). 1. What is this true Christian love? (1) The act—love; it is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22). No natural man is capable of it, nor any but such as are entered into God's school (1 Thess. iv. 9). (2) The object of it is good men, and all good men (Eph. i. 15), even the poorest and meanest, without accepting of persons; it must not offend one of the little ones. (3) The bond of this love is goodness. Christian love loves not only in the truth, but for the truth (2 John i. 2). (4) The rule of this love is according to Christ (ver. 34). Thus—(*a*) He loved us first, before we loved Him. (*b*) When we were enemies. (*c*) Not for His benefit, but ours. (*d*) To make us better. 1. Constantly, even to the end. 2. This is a badge of a true Christian man. And that for these reasons—(1) It is a note of God's child, or one that is born of God (1 John iv. 7, 8; iii. 14). (2) It is a note of the Spirit's presence, who dwells nowhere but in the heart of a sound Christian. (3) A lively and inseparable fruit of living faith is a badge of a true Christian, but true love of the brethren is such a fruit of living faith (Gal. v. 6). (4) A note of a true member of the Church is a badge of a true Christian, but it is a note of a true member of the Church when the lion and lamb feed together, &c. (Isa. xi. 7, 8), that is, when a man brought into the kingdom of Christ putteth off his fierce, lionish, and poisonful affection, and is now become tame and tractable as a lamb of Christ's fold, or as a child resembles his heavenly Father, who is loving and merciful. (*T. Taylor.*) *The badge of discipleship:*—Love was to be the grand distinctive sign which hence on through all the ages was to denote, distinguish, and define the followers of Jesus from all other guilds, schools, creeds, and combinations under heaven. The Pharisee was known by his broad phylactery, the Sadducee was known by his contempt for ritual and his ostentatious contrast to the rival sect. The priests and scribes were marked out by their peculiar robes; the Roman, by his toga, or the eagle on his helmet according as he was citizen or soldier. To-day the Brahmin is known by the mystic character cut upon his breast and brow, and the Mahometan by his headgear. The soldier's red, the sailor's blue, the cleric's black—by this, that, and the other sign, classes, creeds, professions, preferences, races, are distinguished the wide world over. Some time ago there was quite a warm burst of indignation from our Scottish fellow-countrymen because the distinctive plaids and colours of the tartan, which denote the difference between the Campbell, the Mackintosh, and Macgregor, were in peril. Well, to those who are Israelites indeed, those who are enlisted under the banner of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, those who are faithful followers of Jesus, and bend a loyal knee to Him of the Crown of Thorns—to these Jesus says, "I institute a new order. In it neither star, ribbon, medal, stripe, nor outward garb, mark, or colour shall find place; but you shall wear a token by which all men shall take knowledge of you that you belong to Me, 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.'" (*J. Jackson Wray.*) *The criterion of discipleship:*—Love is—I. A SIMPLE TEST. Had it been the adoption of a certain set of beliefs, or conformity to certain rites, it would have been too complicated to be of easy application or practical use; but here how simple—"He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen," &c. II. AN INFALLIBLE TEST. Other tests, even the best, are of doubtful accuracy; the application may lead to wrong conclusions. But this is infallible, and will determine the destiny of all men at the last day (Matt. xxv.). III. A SOLEMN TEST. If we apply it to the Christians of this age and country, where men hate, cheat, and fight each other, how few will prove genuine disciples! Could all men stand it the world would be a paradise. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The proof of discipleship:*—The marks of a true disciple of any master are—I. BELIEF in his master's words. II. ATTACHMENT to his master's person. III. OBEDIENCE to his master's precepts. IV. IMITATION of his master's example. Obedience and imitation may be summed up in one word—love. If we love Christ we shall believe, obey, and imitate Him; and we must show that love by loving one another. (*J. R. Bailey.*)

Vers. 36-38. **Lord, whither goest Thou?**—*Unlawful curiosity:*—It is a common fault among us to be more inquisitive concerning things secret, which belong to God only, than concerning things revealed, which belong to us and to our children—more desirous to have our curiosity gratified, than our conscience directed—to know what is done in heaven, than what we ought to do to get thither. It is easy to observe it in the conversation of Christians, how soon a discourse of what is plain and edifying is dropped, and no more is said of it; the subject is exhausted; while a matter of doubtful disputation runs into an endless strife of words. (*M. Henry.*)

Peter's curiosity and presumption:—I. HIS CURIOSITY. The question was occasioned by ver. 33; and as soon as our Saviour paused, Peter suddenly makes the inquiry. 1. Here is something which we know not how entirely to censure. The imperfections of good men betray their excellences. We see Peter's love to his Lord, and concern for His presence. When Elijah was going to be taken up, Elisha followed him. When Jonathan and David were about to separate, they fell upon each other's neck and wept. When, at Miletus, "Paul kneeled down and prayed with the brethren, they all wept sore." But think of Christ! What a Benefactor, what a Master was He! Could Peter then view His removal with indifference? 2. But if our Saviour blames Peter, Peter was blameworthy. He was a little too curious—a fault by no means uncommon. For how many are more anxious to know secret things than to improve the things revealed. We are all fonder of speculation than practice. Whereas, we ought to remember, that, in a state where we have so much to do, and so little time to do it in, we should secure ourselves from all superfluous engagements. 3. Our Saviour, therefore, never encouraged this principle. When a man asked Him, "Lord, are there few that shall be saved?" He did not even notice the trifler: He said unto them, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." So here He shows His judgment of the inquiry by eluding it. But though He does not gratify, He instructs. In two senses, Peter was to follow Him, in due time—(1) To glory. It was what our Lord prayed for, and what He promised (chap. xvii. 24). So we are to be for ever with the Lord. He has gone to prepare a place for us. But for every thing there is a season. He could not follow Him now. Though our Saviour's hour was come, Peter's was not; though the Master had finished the work given Him to do, the servant had scarcely begun his—and "we are all immortal till our work is done." Christians are sometimes impatient, but this is wrong. "The best frame we can be in is to be ready to go, and willing to stay." The eagerness is not only wrong, but useless. What would it avail the husbandman to fret? Would this bring harvest the sooner? He cannot reap in May, the order of nature forbids it. There is also an order in grace. Why cannot you follow Him now? You have an aged mother to support, or an infant charge to rear, or an institution of charity to found, or to exemplify religion in your practice, or to recommend it by your sufferings. (2) To the cross. But he could not follow Him now, because he had not sufficient faith and resolution to suffer. This shows us that our Lord's dealings with His people are founded not only in kindness, but in wisdom and prudence. He adapts the burden to the shoulder, or fits the shoulder to the burden. "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof—and what is better, sufficient for it too will be the grace. II. HIS PRESUMPTION (vers. 37, 38). Ah, Peter, this is sooner said than done. Life is not so easily parted with. You trembled upon the water; be not so confident now. Note—1. The crime was heinous. To deny his Master was unfaithfulness: his Friend, perfidy: his Benefactor, ingratitude: his Redeemer, impiety. This, too, was the conduct of one who had been called from a low condition in life to the high honour of apostleship—of one who had seen His miracles, &c. Three aggravations are here mentioned. (1) He was warned—he could not plead ignorance. (2) The sin was immediately committed. Things soon wear off from the mind; but here was no time for forgetfulness. (3) It was repeated, "thrice." A man may be surprised and overtaken in a fault; but, the moment after, reflection may return; and he may flee. But Peter, after his first offence, renews it again—and again—and each time waxes worse and worse. (2) The lessons: 1. The foreknowledge of our Saviour. 2. What reason have we to exclaim, with David, "Lord, what is man!" Survey him under the greatest advantages and obligations. There is nothing too vile for us to fall into, if we are left of Him who alone can keep us from falling. 3. How little we are acquainted with ourselves. Peter spoke according to his feelings. But sincerity is not constancy. There is a goodness, compared to the morning cloud and early dew, that soon passeth away. Peter did not consider the difference between an impulse and a principle; between an hour of ease and a moment of trial. Hazael's case is a strong one; but it will apply, in various degrees, to ourselves. God only knows how much of our innocency has been owing to principle, or the absence of temptation; or what we should have been in conditions the reverse of those which have sheltered our weakness. 4. The most confident are the most exposed; and the most humble the most safe. "When I am weak, then I am most strong." "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." Conclusion: We do not wonder at this sad revolution in Peter. He is proud and self-sufficient. "Pride goes before destruction," &c. I never saw a professor of

religion full of confidence in himself, and speaking censoriously of others, but who fell into some gross crime, or into some great calamity. (*W. Jay.*) *Not now, but afterwards* :—1. Children will have everything now: "afterwards" is a word that plagues them. As life advances we become more intimately acquainted with the word, and come to like it. We know that yesterday has gone beyond recall, and that to-morrow is coming and always available. 2. This is the second time the same thing has been said, on this same occasion, to the same man, and both times in a Master's tone, delivered with a brother's heart and voice (ver. 7). So this child-man was constantly put back and told to wait till the clock struck, and the hour had come when he should have the keener vision, the more sensitive heart, the more receptive spirit and understanding mind. This was the training that Peter needed. He was a man who wanted everything done instantaneously. The Lord knowing this said the most vexing words, "Not now." We want it too, and when we are mad with impatience He says it quietly and sovereignly; but adds "afterwards" in the same tone, for Christ lived in to-morrow. I. LOOK AT THIS IN THE DIRECTION OF—1. Revelation. We cannot follow any great doctrine in all the range of its thoughts and in all the possibilities of its issues. Who can explain the atonement? We begin in the right spirit when we begin in the spirit of waiting. I need the cross; I accept it, but cannot tell the measure of the oblation or its efficacy. But afterwards there will be a higher school, additional facilities, then I shall know. 2. The mysteries of daily providence. "Thou canst not follow Me"—not from one locality to another, but in thought, purpose, and sovereign decree. Who can keep pace with the Great Walker? I halt, stagger, fall, half rise again, and am down before I can straighten myself; I cannot follow except in the dim far distance now, but afterward. Our strange constitution, individuality, sufferings, are heavy burdens. Explanation would help us to bear them. Why should I wear this chain? be encompassed by this cloud? The answer is "not now, but afterward." "No chastening, for the present seemeth joyous," &c. II. THERE CANNOT BE AN AFTERWARD OF REVELATION UNLESS THERE IS A NOW OF OBEDIENCE. 1. The "now" is not evacuated of all meaning. To obey in the darkness is the great thing. Were I to say, "I will trust God in the seventh trouble because He has delivered me in six," it would be historically true and full of solace, but no indication of growth in grace. But he has grown in grace who says, "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him." 2. Obedience now is revelation afterward. He that doeth the will shall know of the doctrine. We do not know the joy which is laid up for us in complete obedience to the words, "Stand still and see the salvation of God." The next piece of knowledge comes easily. Were the child to be compelled to overleap seven years of the process of education, he would be overcome. What he has to do is to read the next line, and then to turn over the next page. What we as Christian students have to do is to keep to the present truth, do the next duty, and then the revelation will steal upon us without the violence of haste and the unrest of surprise. We cannot tell how the light grows, so in mental illumination and spiritual culture. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The "now" and "then" of following Christ* :—The first words spoken to Peter were "Follow Me"; almost the last were "Thou canst not follow Me now." After a long attachment to the Saviour it was a hard word. There is, however, always a "staying hand" in life as well as a "beckoning." The pillar of cloud moves and halts. I. THE NEGATIVE PRESENT. When had it been that Simon could not go with his Master? He had accompanied Him to Bethany when seeking rest after tumult and turmoil; to the Mount of Transfiguration when Jesus was pre-glorified. Now he may not follow Him. Nor was this strange. The high priest only could enter the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, and Peter might not understand, but we do, that the great Day of Atonement had dawned. On to the cross, into the tomb, within the veil, only Jesus must go. Yet by this access to God was given. And now into the crucified life, as dead with Christ to the world; into the risen life, as new creatures in Him, we may follow Jesus; but further than this we may not go now; into the ascension life we are forbidden to enter at present, but we shall be permitted afterwards. II. THE POSITIVE FUTURE. It was in the human life Jesus commanded Peter to follow Him, saying He would make them "fishers of men." They were to observe His modes of action and drink of His Spirit. And so with us. But is it not rather into the higher risen life that He bids us follow Him—the life of pardon, peace, sanctity, and spiritual power? And to this He is "the Way"; and by following that Way we shall reach the "afterwards" of His presence and glory (1 John iii. 2). (*I. Watts.*) **Why cannot I follow Thee now?**—1. *Why*, indeed? There could be

no doubt of his sincerity and attachment to his Master. I cannot believe that our Lord merely referred to the time for Peter's departure. Further, Peter did follow Christ so far as he could without dying; for there was still a considerable portion of ground to be traversed by those sacred feet. There lay before Him the way of sorrows, crowned with the cross on Calvary. Up to that point Simon Peter might have followed Christ, although he did not. Our Lord was referring to this first, though His words may have reached on to the glory that was at last to be revealed. The time was already come when His disciples were to be scattered and to leave Him alone. And knowing this, He says, "Whither I go," &c. And it is equally true that this same Simon Peter did follow the Lord Jesus Christ afterwards in the same sense in which he was now precluded from following Him. 2. As we ask Peter's question, we are led to consider our own experience. Is it not true that there sometimes seems to rise up in the very path of our inclinations and spiritual aspirations a strange, indescribable barrier—an inexorable "cannot"—that seems to bar the way to further progress? It is wise to ask this question, for if it be honestly put, the Holy Spirit of God will sooner or later show us what gives strength to this cruel and pitiless "cannot." Why could not Simon follow Jesus then? Because—I. HE THOUGHT HE COULD. "I will lay down my life for Thy sake." There is nothing more common amongst Christians than the admission of our frailty and weakness. But what a great difference there is between making orthodox admissions and having a real consciousness of our own helplessness and dependence on a higher power. Sometimes, feeling ourselves to be a little weaker than we should be, we are ashamed of our infirmity. And sometimes, taught by many disasters, we entertain serious apprehensions about ourselves; but it is wonderful how self-confidence rebounds from the most distressing humiliations. We are quite determined to be more careful in the future. But how slow we are to abandon all confidence in the flesh! And it is not until we have learnt our helpless dependence that we can hope to follow Jesus. For flesh and blood can no more participate in the fellowship of Jesus' sufferings than they can inherit the kingdom of God. But Simon Peter was a man of strong determination; and such characters find it very hard to renounce all confidence in their moral vigour. It seemed incredible that he should turn his back upon his Master, and we can scarcely bring ourselves to believe that we could condescend to the sin, which subsequently we commit; and then by and by we learn our weakness amidst bitter tears, as Simon Peter did. II. HE WAS AT THIS TIME WALKING BY SIGHT RATHER THAN BY FAITH. We do not reach the life of real faith till we are fully conscious of our own helplessness. How can we really trust Christ unless we have thoroughly learnt to distrust ourselves? Peter, walking by sight, his firmness was greatly dependent upon outward circumstances. As long as he saw Christ performing prodigies, or greeted by hosannas, it appeared easy to follow Him; but when all His glory seemed departed, his courage forsook him. Ah! how many of us are fair-weather sailors! and how few in their daily life by faith possess themselves of God. III. HE WAS WALKING IN THE FLESH RATHER THAN IN THE SPIRIT. This same Peter, only a few weeks afterwards, when baptized with the Holy Ghost, stood before the rulers of his country with unblanched countenance, for that Master whom He denied. And for us also that Spirit is given. This qualification for following Jesus is closely connected with the other. They represent the two sides of a healthy spiritual experience. Faith on our side brings us into contact with the Divine, and puts the soul in the attitude of reception; the gift of the Holy Ghost on God's side brings the Divine into contact with us, and fills us according to our capacity. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? But, if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit;" and Paul's charge against the Galatians is that, having begun in the Spirit, they had gone on to be made perfect in the flesh. Is not this where many of us lose our capacity to follow Christ? The energies of the flesh may be never so strong and well-intentioned, but they cannot take the place of the powers of the Holy Ghost; and there is a point beyond which they cannot go in disposing us to follow Christ. IV. BECAUSE HE WAS OUT OF SYMPATHY WITH CHRIST'S MIND. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" Christ was meditating on the Father's will, while Simon Peter "savoured of the things that be of men." And if we are to follow Jesus we must rise into the inner circle of His fellowship, and see things from His point of view. It is not by saying, "I will follow Thee" that we succeed in following Him. It is by bringing our hearts into full harmony with His Divine will. And the first step towards accepting the Divine will is taken when we repose our full confidence in it. Jesus Christ was at this

moment fulfilling in His own experience the language of the Psalm, "Lo! I come to do Thy will." Peter, on the other hand, preferred to trust to his own will. He had day-dreams of material aggrandisement, and political power, so that he had no room for the fellowship of the mind of Jesus Christ. And when Jesus began to open up His own purposes to him, he shrank from them with aversion. Now, here is our lesson. You, who seek after popularity, who are wishing to be on good terms with the world, how can you follow Jesus until you are in sympathy with Him and with His aims? "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." V. HE WAS INWARDLY CLINGING ALL THE WHILE TO A BESETTING SIN—self-assertion, or self-confidence, mingled with not a little worldly pride. We see this evil habit of soul exhibiting itself in his attempt to dissuade his Master from facing the Cross; and in his conduct at the supper-table. How many of you are kept back from following Jesus now by some cherished sin? Conclusion: Perhaps some of you are asking, "Can we not go to heaven without all this?" We are not discussing the minimum qualification for heaven. What it is God only knows. We are talking of following Jesus, and that is far more to the purpose. I have no desire to solve the problem. Here is a consideration which is very profitable: How much spiritual benefit is it possible for a man to get out of his religion? (*W. Hay Aitken, M.A.*) *The withheld completions of life*:—St. Peter felt dimly that the life of Jesus was opening into something so large that all which had gone before would be seen to have been only the vestibule and preparation for what was yet to come. And just then, when his expectation was keenest, and his love most eager, an iron curtain fell across his view. The completion was withheld. And that is what is always happening. It would be intolerable to us if we could not trace tendencies in our life. If everything stood still, or only moved round in a circle, it would be a dreary and a dreadful thing to live. But we rejoice in life because it seems to be carrying us somewhere. We bear with incompleteness, because of the completion which is prophesied and hoped for. But it is the delay or barrier that distresses us. The tendency that is not allowed to reach the fulfilment, which alone gave it value, seems a mockery. You watch your plant growing, and see its wonderful building of the woody fibre, its twining of the strong roots, its busy life-blood hurrying along its veins. Some morning the deep-red flower is blazing full-blown on the stem, and all is plain. The completion has justified the process. But suppose the plant to have been all the time conscious of the coming flower, and yet to have felt itself held back from blossoming, would it not be a very puzzled and impatient and unhappy little plant? Now, there are certain conditions which are to all good life just what the flower is to the plant. There are certain fine results of feeling which are the true and recognized results of the best ways of living. But when the life, conscious of the character in itself out of which these conditions ought to come, finds that it pauses on the brink of its completion and cannot blossom, then come impatient questionings and doubts. I. LET US TAKE SOME INSTANCES DRAWN FROM DAILY LIFE. Suppose we have some one devoted to the good of others. A poor obscure woman in a sick room giving her days and nights, health and strength, to some poor invalid; or a great brilliant man out in the world neglecting his personal interests in the desire that some of the lagging causes of God may be helped forward. Now such a life has its legitimate completion. The natural flower which should crown that life is men's gratitude. Perhaps in ringing cheers, perhaps only in the silent pressure of the hand. The man who does no good expects no thanks. The selfish life feels and shows the unnaturalness if men make a mistake and lavish their gratitude upon it. It is as if men tied the glorious flower on to the top of a wooden post. And now suppose that the gratitude does not come. Is there no disappointment; no sense of a withheld completion? "What does it mean?" you ask with wonder, even with impatience. And in answer to your question there are two things to be said. 1. That such a suspension of the legitimate result, shows a condition of disorder. The natural result of your self-devotion has not come because the state of things in which you live is unnatural. That must be recognized. If you let your surprise appear, men will misunderstand you, and cry, "Oh, after all, then, you were not unselfish." But they are wrong; you did not work for thanks. When the thanks do not come it is not your loss; it is the deranged state of things that troubles you. When Jesus wept over Jerusalem, did He not feel its ingratitude? But was it not the disturbed world, where such ingratitude was possible, which lay at the bottom of His grief? When your child is ungrateful to you, is it the neglect of yourself, or the demoralized home, that saddens you? It is the violation of a deep, true instinct. 2. But because any state of things is unnatural, it does

not prove that there can come out of it no blessing. So it is here. The service that a man does to his fellow-men does not bring down their gratitude. What then? The withholding of the legitimate completion of his service may throw him back upon the nature of the act itself, and compel him to find his satisfaction there. That has been the support of many a despised reformer and misunderstood friend. The essence of any act is more and finer than its consequences are. Because Christ was "despised and rejected of men," we are able to see more clearly how truly He was His Father's "well-beloved Son." II. AS WE COME INTO THE REGIONS OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE THIS TRUTH BECOMES MORE STRIKING, and often much more puzzling. 1. Look, *e.g.*, at the connection of duty and happiness. Happiness is the natural flower of duty. The good man ought to be a thoroughly bright and joyous man. To disbelieve this would be to bow down at the footstool of a devil or a chance, and which of these would be the most terrible master who can say? With this conviction strong in us we come to some good man's life, and that life is all gloomy. Duty is done day after day, but done in utter dreariness; good without gladness, shocking and perplexing our deep certainty that to be good and to be glad belong together. To such we want to bring the two before-mentioned considerations. To recognize that it is unnatural, and so to struggle against it, and yet, while it must last, to get what blessing we can out of it, by letting it drive us down deeper, for our joy and comfort, into the very act and fact of doing righteousness. The plant ought to come to flower, but if it fails it is still a plant. The duty should open into joy, but it may still be duty; still hold the duty. Do righteousness and forget happiness, and so it is most likely that happiness will come. This will help a man to be hopeful without impatience, and patient without despair. 2. But take another case. There are promises in the Bible which declare that dedication to God shall bring communion with God. "Draw near to Me, and I will draw near to you." And yet sometimes the man does give himself to God, and the promise seems to fail; and the man given to God trembles when he hears other men talk of the joy of Divine communion, because no such ever comes to him. Once more, to such a soul there are the same two messages to bring. Never, no matter how long such exclusion from the presence of God may seem to last, make up your mind to it that it is right; never cease to expect that you will be admitted to all the joy of your Father's felt love. And seek even more deeply the satisfaction which is in your consecration itself; and that you may find it, consecrate yourself more and more completely. There are two great anxieties which I do feel for such souls. One is, lest you should give up expecting that privilege of communion which is certainly yours in possibility, and must certainly be yours some day in possession. The other is, lest, since the consecration has not brought you the communion, you should think that the consecration is unreal, and so lose the power to be blessed by it, and the impulse to increase it. Multitudes of saints would tell you how in their hindered lives God kept them true to such experience as they had attained; and so it was that, by and by, either before or after the great enlightenment of death, the hindrance melted away, and they now "follow the Lamb withersoever He goeth." 3. Among Christ's promises there is none that is dearer to one class of minds than this. "If any man wills to do My will, he shall know of the doctrine," &c. Such souls have not found that the thousand curious questions of theology were answered, and all the mystery rolled away out of the sky of truth. Christ did not promise that. But they have found what He did promise: that, coming near to Him in obedience, they have been made sure of the true divinity that was in Him and in the teachings that He gave. Everywhere the flower of obedience is intelligence. Obey a man with cordial loyalty and you will understand him. And now, are there any of us from whom that completion seems to have been withheld? They must be sure, first, that they are right: that they have not really come to an essential faith that the doctrine of Jesus is divine. They must be sure, again, that their will to serve Christ has been indeed true. And what then? Sure of all this, still the darkness and the doubts remain. Then they must come to the two principles; they must say, "This is unnatural. I will not rest until my service of Christ completes itself in the knowledge of Christ; and yet all the time while I am waiting I will find joy in the service of Him, however dimly I may apprehend Him." (*Phillips Brooks, D.D.*) *Readiness for death*:—The most natural explanation of Christ's words to one who knew Him as intimately as Peter did was that, while shrinking from no danger Himself, He would not involve His followers in that danger. But Christ's meaning was that the time had not come for Peter to die. Had Peter known this he would still have desired thus to follow Christ; but in

reality he was not ready. Desiring to die and readiness for death are two different things. I. THERE WAS A WORK YET TO BE DONE IN PETER. 1. His knowledge of Christ and of Divine things needed to be increased. He knew a great deal, being Divinely taught, but he had yet to learn that Christ must suffer and enter into His glory. Our Lord had indeed spoken of this, but nothing short of the event itself could teach the full truth. There was the teaching, too, supplied by the Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost. Compare what Peter knew in later years with what he knew now, and you see the reason for our Lord's words. Here, then, is one of the reasons why God keeps us here. We are to learn Christ as He can be learnt nowhere else, by experiencing His wonderful love and almighty grace. What will not men endure to become acquainted with man or nature? Shall we complain then because we are called for a season to endure hardships that we may know Christ. 2. His character needed chastening and strengthening. He was weaker morally than he thought himself. "I will lay down," &c. "Wilt thou?" &c. Life was a furnace by means of which the baser parts of his character were removed, and the truer and nobler made manifest. Peter went to heaven a better man than he would have done had he followed Christ now. There is no explanation of human life satisfactory but this. Once accepted the axe is laid at the root of all impatience and disgust. II. THERE WAS A WORK YET TO BE DONE BY PETER. 1. Indeed the work done in Peter was with a view to that to be done by him. To regard our knowledge and experience only as a fitting us for heaven is only selfishness. Christ taught that both were for the sake of others. They could only follow Him as they gave themselves for their fellow-men, as He did. Doubtless Peter soon understood this, and acquiesced in the "afterwards." 2. Our work here is a preparation for the life hereafter. That will be no state of inactivity, and by serving Christ here in our inward and outward life we are to learn how to work for Him in heaven. (*H. S. Toms.*) *Speech and action*:—1. Peter meant what he said, but he did not measure the meaning of his words. Sometimes our words are bigger than we are, and all exaggeration is weakness. Peter spoke out of his passion, not out of his reason, and the only passion that endures is reason-on-fire. If he had said less, he would have done more. The strongest man has only so much energy, and if that be spent in wild speech, it will not be spent in well-directed actions. Hear a man talk much about the poor, and the probability is he is not going to do much for the poor. How to spend our limited amount of energy to the greatest effect ought to be the inquiry of every earnest man. We want more Bible reading, deeper devotion—the strengthening of our inner life—and then the expenditure will be with ease, and be a great beneficence. 2. Thunder frightens people; the light is welcome to all, and how quietly it comes. "Let your light so shine," &c. I quote this passage because there is a danger lest this doctrine of action, as opposed to speech, should be perverted. Persons excuse themselves from saying anything about their religion, and say that they seek the shade. Don't believe them. The shade is never difficult to find. To talk about humility is not to practice it. Action and speech must go together. Love the shade, certainly; but remember that God made the light, and that everything does not grow in the shade, and don't undervalue the light. Are you sure that you are honest in professing to love the shade? Is it not when some one asks you to do something that you don't like that you become so modest? Christ wants speech and action, open conduct, that everybody, if needful, can see and estimate. There are times when the shadow will be right welcome; but let the light make the shade. 3. Peter's boast is one of the expressions which outdo themselves by their own bigness. Beware of outdoing yourself by your own words. There are men whose geese are all swans, and their swans eagles. Christ demands that our words be weighed and directed to His Cross and service. He asks no man to lay down his life, in this tragical sense, on a manufactured occasion—that will come by and by as a practical necessity. There are many who are ready to do some tremendous thing for us when we don't want anything tremendous done. A dying master told his old slave that he had arranged in his will that he (the slave) was to be buried in the family grave: to which he made reply, "Ten dollars would suit Cato better." We cannot live on tragedies—give us bread and water. "My mother, sir!" says the wild youth, "I would walk fifty miles on burning metal for her!" But his mother wants no filial piety so tragical as that; but she would like him home a little earlier at night. Don't say that you would lay down your life for her—lay down your glass, your pipe, your cards; lay down something as an instalment. "My pastor! sir, I would die for him!" No, no; he wants nothing so tragic, all he wants is for you to take a

sitting, come in time, and pay your subscription occasionally. 4. Peter's boast was a broken sentence. Christ only could complete it, and did. "I have power to take it again." To serve friends after death, as well as in it, was reserved for Him alone. Therefore economize life. You can serve others better by living than by dying—even Christ. "I beseech you therefore . . . . present your bodies a living sacrifice." And if we live for Christ we shall certainly die for Him. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *We must watch our weak points:*—A great commander was engaged in besieging a strongly fortified city. After a while he concentrated his forces at a point where the fortifications were stronger than at any other, and at two p.m., under a bright sun and a clear sky, ordered an assault. When expostulated with by an under officer, the commander replied: "At this point such a general is in command. At this hour of the day he is invariably accustomed to retire for a long sleep. When informed of our approach he will deny the fact, and send a messenger for information. Before the messenger returns we shall gain possession of the fortress." The facts turned out exactly as predicted. "Yonder weak point," said the commander, "is held by General ——. There is no use in attempting to surprise him; he is never for a moment off his guard." (*A. Mahan, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XIV.

VERS. 1–4. **Let not your heart be troubled.**—This clause is the true heading to the whole consolatory discourse, for it flows on in one channel of love and ends at last with the words, "Be of good cheer." *Let not your heart be troubled:*—We may well feel glad that God's people of old were men of like passions with ourselves. It is not the will of God that His people should "be troubled" in heart; hence these blessed words. I. LET US TASTE OF THE BITTER WATERS. 1. Jesus was to die. It had finally dawned on them that they were to be left like sheep without a shepherd, and they were inconsolable. 2. He was to be betrayed by one of their own number. This pierced the hearts of the faithful. Of this bitter water the faithful at this hour are also made to drink. Reputed ministers under the banner of "advanced thought" make war upon those eternal truths for which confessors contended and martyrs bled, and the saints in past ages have been sustained in their dying hours. 3. Peter's denial was to cause another pang to the faithful. II. LET US DRINK OF THE SWEET WATERS, TO REFRESH US. Our Master indicates the true means of comfort under every sort of disquietude. 1. "Believe" not only My doctrine but in Me—a personal, living, ever-present, omnipotent Saviour. 2. Though He was going from them, He was only going to His Father's house. 3. A great many would follow Him to the Father's house. 4. "I go to prepare a place for you," not only "many mansions" for our spirits, but an ultimate place of our risen bodies. We are apt to entertain cloudy ideas of the ultimate inheritance of the saints. Christ went away in body—not as a disembodied spirit, but as One who had eaten with His disciples, and whose body had been handled by them. His body needed a place. 5. The promise of His sure return—"If I go," &c. 6. And then He will "receive" us. It will be—(1) A courtly reception. (2) A marriage reception. 7. He will place us eternally where He is that we may be with Him. Can we not now, once for all, dismiss every fear in prospect of the endless bliss reserved for us? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Let not your hearts be troubled:*—The disciples had been like lambs carried in the bosom of a loving shepherd. They were now about to be left by Him, and would be among the wolves and the terrors of the snowstorm. Frequently after conversion God, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, gives a period of repose; but for all of us there will come a time of trouble. Albeit that bark so lately launched upon a glassy sea has all her streamers flying, and rejoices in a favourable wind, let her captain remember that the sea is treacherous and that the stoutest vessel may find it more than difficult to outride a hurricane. But without due trial where would be our experience, and without the experience where increase of faith and triumph of love? We have each—1. A share of home trials. 2. Trials arising from the Church of God. In the best-ordered Church it must needs be that offences come. 3. Worst of all are soul troubles. Note that the advice of the text is—I. TIMELY

AND WISE. There is no need to say, "Let not your heart be troubled," when you are not in affliction. When all things go well with you, you will need, "Let not your heart be exalted." Now, it is the easiest thing in times of difficulty to let the heart be troubled, to give up and drift with the stream. Our Lord bids us pluck up heart, and here is the wisdom of His advice, namely—1. That a troubled heart will not help us in our difficulties or out of them. In time of drought lamentations have never brought showers. A man whose business was declining never multiplied his customers by unbelief. It is a dark night, but the darkness of your heart will not light a candle for you. 2. A doubting, fretful spirit takes from us the joys we have. You have not all you could wish, but you have still more than you deserve, and far more than some others; health perhaps, God certainly. There are flowers that bloom in winter if we have but grace to see them. 3. A troubled heart makes that which is bad worse. It magnifies, aggravates, caricatures. Unbelief makes out our difficulties to be most gigantic, and then it leads us to suppose that never soul had such difficulties before. But think of Baxter, Calvin, the martyrs, St. Paul, Christ. 4. A troubled heart is most dishonourable to God. It makes the Christian suspect eternal faithfulness and to doubt unchangeable love. Is this a little thing? The mischief of the Christian Church at large is a want of holy confidence in God. When once an army is demoralized by a want of spirit and the soldier assured that he cannot win the day, then the conclusion is that every man had better take care of himself and fly. But as long as we do not lose heart we have not lost the day. II. PRACTICABLE. "Let not your heart be troubled." "Oh," says somebody, "that's easy to say but hard to do." Here's a man who has fallen into a deep ditch, and you say to him, "Don't be troubled about it." "Ah," says he, "that's very pretty for you that are standing up there, but how am I to be at ease while up to my neck in mire?" But if Jesus says it our heart need not be troubled. 1. He indicates that our resort must be to faith. If in thy worst times thou wouldst keep thy head above water, the swimming belt must be faith. In the olden times how were men kept from perishing but by faith (Heb. xi.)? There is nothing which it cannot do, but what can you do if you do not trust your God? and surely it ought not to be difficult for a child to believe his father. 2. The Saviour goes on to say, "You believe in God"; exercise that same faith with regard to the case in hand. The case in hand was this—could they rest upon One who was about to be crucified? "You have believed God about other things, exercise that same faith about this." You have believed God concerning pardon, believe God about the child, the wife, the money. 3. It ought to be a great deal easier for us to live above heart trouble than it was to the apostles. (1) You have experience. (2) You have received the Holy Spirit. (3) You have the whole of Scripture, which they had not. III. PRECIOUS. Remember that the loving advice—1. Came from Jesus. The mother says to the child, "Do not cry, child; be patient." That sounds very differently from what it would have done if the schoolmaster or a stranger had spoken. His own face was towards the Cross, He was about to be troubled as never man was troubled. It is as if He wanted to monopolize all tears. 2. It points to Jesus. If you want comfort you must hear Jesus say, "Believe also in Me." No place for a child's aching head like its mother's bosom. No shadow of a great rock in this weary land like our Saviour's love consciously overshadowing us. 3. It speaks of Jesus. "In My Father's house," &c. Jesus is here seen in action. Think of all He said and did, and what He is doing for us now. 4. It hints that we are to be with Jesus for ever. "An hour with my God," says the hymn, "will make up for it all." So it will; but what will an eternity with our God be? (*Ibid.*) *Trouble not*:—The words are —I. NOT SENTIMENTAL. They are not spoken by one who wishes to silence sorrow by superficial kindliness. Christ does not say we are to disarm ourselves of prudence and energy; but He does say where all these work torture and misery you are faithless. There is a Providence that goes before you. Your Heavenly Father knoweth what things you have need of. There is more than sorrow in this world. Sin is here, but even over it we triumph by a salvation which makes a redeemed life the most glorious life of all. From the lips of Christ this is a reasonable comfort, because He is able to make all grace abound towards us, and because sorrow goes forth as His angel to make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. II. NOT EXHAUSTIBLE. This comfort is not exhaustible in time; nor can you exhaust its adaptation to the variety and speciality of personal sorrow. Does not Christ know your sorrow? We could gain no true comfort if Christ were merely a figure in history. If Christ had not risen the words are

exhaustible. But Christ Himself has said, "I am He that liveth," &c. The value even of an earthly friend is in the inexhaustibility of sympathy. But at the best human friendship is shallow, but it is different with Christ's. His passeth knowledge. He who changes not and abideth always says, "Let not your heart be troubled." III. NOT LIMITABLE. These are words of consolation for all the brothers and sisters of Jesus. 1. No little community has any special privilege of excommunicating, nor has any large one. 2. All through the ranges of experience, as well as through all the ages of time, Christ bids us take these words of comfort. First of all they should be applied to the heaviest sorrows. Here at Christ's Cross the most burdened may find release. IV. NOT ALONE TEMPORAL. They do not simply relate to this time-world or to our human and spiritual experiences here. Christ was comforting men concerning the rest that remaineth. And the spirit of man had never been so comforted before. He knew that hearts like ours would grasp every promise concerning the blessed dead. So these words should be taken up into the highest sphere to comfort us concerning those who sleep in Jesus that we sorrow not as those without hope, remembering that the risen Christ went back whence He came, to prepare a place for us. V. NOT ALONE RETROSPECTIVE. Christ does not say, "Do not trouble about past sins, they are forgiven you." No. He looks forward and comforts them in relation to their earthly future here and their home hereafter. And yet what did He see in the near perspective for many of them? On the edge of the horizon stand their crosses in the grey light of to-morrow. "The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." Still He says, "Do not trouble." Let us take Christ at His word as they did. (*W. M. Statham.*) *Christ's cure for trouble*:—I. THE SORE OF THE WORLD IS TROUBLE AND ITS CURE IS FAITH. The seat of trouble is not in anything outside of us. It is the passions. Work, wakefulness, losses, bereavements, life's burdens and battles are not troubles. They are discipline. While the passions are in right and healthful play all these things may befall a man, and yet he may be wholly untroubled. On the other hand, a man may be surrounded by all that can minister to his comfort and dignity, and yet be troubled. In the latter case the man's passions are tossed about as the sea is when a tempest is on it; in the other case, they are serene as the lake in the fastnesses of a mountain. 1. The cause of all our trouble is the want of harmony between our wills and God's will. Let them accord, and then nothing in heaven or earth or hell can trouble us. But when we beat ourselves against the barriers erected by Omnipotence for our safety and good, then there is trouble. 2. Our trouble arises from our want of faith in the rightfulness and paramount authority of God's law. Men would not fight against God's law of morals if they could perceive that the law is perfectly good and right. Men have an impression that the law of God is a kind of Procrustes' bed, cutting long men short and stretching short men long for arbitrary reasons, and not that every regulation is for man's sake and that of other creatures. And because men do not believe that the law of God is good they do not believe it is paramount. The origin of the trouble of every heart from the beginning is to be found in this failure of faith in God. It was so with Adam and Eve. There was no trouble while they trusted their Heavenly Father. You cannot seduce a man into wrong-doing until you shake his faith in God. It is this fundamental principle of which Jesus seems to have thought. This seems to me to mean two things—(1) That belief in God is necessary to belief in Jesus. Jesus, then, is something more than a mere extraordinary specimen of humanity. (2) Simple belief in God has never cured trouble. It might have kept all trouble from the human heart if originally persevered in. But after sin had come into the world something else was necessary. And for this we can appeal to every man's experience. Do you not often feel that you would be freer and happier if God would throw His laws away, or still better, cease to exist? The fact is, that until we came to distinguish between creatures and children, our belief in God can produce no agreeable feelings toward Him. (*a*) We must have some distinct evidence o :His loving us. Of such love Jesus is the Demonstration. Belief in Jesus is beli ef in God incarnating Himself; putting Himself thus into most complete sympathy with us, making us feel that if any disasters should happen to us He would be the Person who most should feel it. This breaks down the opposition of our hearts to God. (*b*) Jesus declares Himself the Governor of the world. Providence is in the hands of my Brother. He manages the universe for the purposes of the atonement. Why should my heart be troubled? Is not the King of eternity my Friend? (3) Christ is my Leader

through all places, narrow and dark and frightful, or large and wealthy and seductive. If I believe this and yield my heart to it, how my troubles disappear! Without Jesus, my heart is like the Galilean lake, night-bound and storm-lashed; when He says "Peace," there is a great calm. II. THEN FROM HIMSELF AS FROM A CENTRE HE SWEEPS THE UNIVERSE OF SPACE AND DURATION, AND FOLDS IT ALL DOWN UPON EVERY TRUSTING HEART AS A MEASURELESS BENEDICTION. 1. "In My Father's house are many mansions." How this takes the vagueness out of our ideas of God! How our recently constructed scientific instruments enlarge and deepen this saying of Jesus! It is to be noticed that our intellects gravitate toward a common centre. There, in that centre, we seem to feel must be the chief place of God. There is an unhealthy fear of God which is not humble reverence. Men dread to think of Him. In our catechisms we put Him just as far away from our children as we can. Jesus does no such thing. God is a Person. He has a house and a household. He makes homes for His children. Why, then, should I be troubled that I am to die? My removal will be like the progress of a prince from castle to castle of his father's dominions. In each I shall find new work and new delights. 2. One of the phases of man's unbelief is that he does not seem to have space and time enough to carry forward to completion the grand projects of his intellect. But if you will believe in Jesus, this trouble shall disappear. In the boundless field of the universe, in the perpetual cycles of eternity, you shall find space and time enough to do all that you desire now or may desire hereafter. 3. Another thing Jesus utters to be a heart-cure: "If it were not so, I would have told you." He will not only correct our thoughts of God, He will not let us have a false hope. Those men loved Him, and in some blind way had believed in Him. He knew that they had aspirations higher than the Temple and wider than the spangled tent that spread all night above the Holy Land. He would not go away and leave them cherishing a fond delusion. He would tell them if the things they hoped were an idle dream. In this there ought to be a happy lesson for every earnest heart. There is a gloomy infidelity in us which says of happiest things that they are "too good to be true." If you have any hope for eternity, and Jesus Christ has not contradicted it, you may reasonably indulge it. See what a field that flings open to us. This is comforting, but grandly vague. 4. He goes further and tells us that He departs in order to "prepare a place for us." This meets another phase of trouble. Our wills conflict with the will of God because we never feel at home totally suited in our surroundings on earth. Think how much is necessary for perfect comfort. There must be a suitable physique, agreeable in all the particulars of size, beauty, and health. There must be perfectly-fitting clothes; a collar too tight, a boot too small breaks one's comfort. Then our house must be in everything complete; nay, it must be an elastic house, expanding or shrinking to our wants at different times. When the residence is complete, there is the absence of the beloved or the presence of an unpleasant neighbourhood. It is not an unamiable discontentedness in human nature which makes us dissatisfied or unsatisfied: it is the inability of this present world, with all its resources, to fill the soul; and this argues the soul's greatness. Jesus says, "I go to prepare a place for you." He knows what is in us and what we need about us. He is putting all His resources to the work of fitting up for us mansions in the spiritual world. Our place will be complete. How that abates our troubles! There shall be nothing wanting in the place when Jesus pronounces it ready. 5. "Ready?" Then when it is ready we must go to it. There is to be a removal. But still there is something to try one in any change of residence, but Christ says, "I will come for you and take you," and that "unto Myself." *(C. F. Deems, LL.D.)* *Trouble and its cordial:*—I. GOD'S MOST FAITHFUL SERVANTS ARE SUBJECT TO TROUBLES OF HEART. 1. What troubles? (1) Inward, arising from—(*a*) Sin (Psa. li. 4–8). (*b*) Corruption (Rom. vii. 24). (2) Outward, which are—(*a*) Spiritual: Christ's absence. (*b*) Temporal: outward afflictions (Lam. i. 4). 2. The reason. (1) Weakness of faith. (2) Imperfection of other graces. II. FAITH IN GOD AND CHRIST IS THE BEST CORDIAL TO A TROUBLED HEART. 1. It is the surest and most infallible (Matt. xi. 28). 2. The strongest (Isa. lix. 1). 3. The pleasantest (1 Pet. i. 8). 4. The readiest (Psa. xlvi. 1). 5. The most suitable (Isa. xliii. 2, 3). 6. The most constant (Heb. xiii. 5). 7. The most universal. III. APPLY THIS to—1. Temporal troubles. Art thou troubled with—(1) Poverty? (*a*) Faith is the best riches (James ii. 5). (*b*) It will turn thy very poverty into a blessing (Rom. viii. 28). (2) Disgrace? (*a*) By faith thou mayest see the emptiness of honour (Psa. xlii. 11). (*b*) Faith will procure thee honour

(Heb. i. 14; 1 Sam ii. 30). (3) Sickness and pains? By faith—(*a*) Thou mayest see God's love in them (Heb. xii. 6). (*b*) Thou mayest get good by them (Psa. cxix. 71). (*c*) Thou mayest receive more comfort in them than in health. (4) Losses and crosses? (*a*) Faith will show thee from whence they came (Job i. 21). (*b*) Why (Heb. xii. 10). (*c*) And so turn them to thy gain (2 Cor. iv. 17). (5) Fears of death? Faith will show thee—(*a*) That the sting is out (1 Cor. xv. 55). (*b*) That death is but the entrance of life. (*c*) And so turn thy fears into hopes (Phil. i. 23). 2. In spiritual troubles. Art thou troubled—(1) For thy sins? (*a*) God is merciful (Psa. ciii. 8; Isa. xliii. 25). (*b*) Christ is all-sufficient (1 John ii. 1). (2) With thy lusts? (*a*) God is almighty. (*b*) Christ will send His Spirit (chap. xvi. 7). (*c*) Faith conquers them (1 John v. 4). (3) With desertions? If thou believest—(*a*) God will never forsake thee wholly (John xiii. 1; Heb. xiii. 5). (*b*) Christ will pray that thy faith fail not (Luke xxii. 31, 32). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Christ's word to the troubled*:—This is a discourse showing the disciple his refuge from trouble. The refuge—I. Of FAITH. "Believe in God: believe also in Me," &c. Three grand truths are at the basis of Christianity: God, Christ, Immortality. They are the antidotes to atheism, the helplessness of guilt, and the hopelessness of death. II. Of LOVE. A personal relation to Christ, He is the way of God to man and of man to God; the truth, about all the soul needs to know and which natural theology fails to answer; and the life, eternal and blissful. III. Of HOPE. Here was a personal bereavement. He was about to withdraw, and the loss was the more inconsolable because He was the object of faith and love. But He compensates this loss by the promise of the Holy Ghost, through whom they should do greater works, by whom God is manifest in the believer, &c., and who should abide with them for ever. And He promises that He will personally intercede for believers above, while the Spirit intercedes in them below. And so He who goes away actually does not leave them orphans, but comes to them, dwells in them, manifests Himself to them, and is seen by them. And so this part of the discourse ends as it began, with peace. Peace—1. For the mind harrassed with doubt, by establishing the certainties of faith. 2. For the heart harassed with unsatisfied cravings, by establishing it upon God. (*A. T. Pierson, D.D.*) *Christ's remedy for a troubled heart*:—I. THE TROUBLED HEART. Trouble in estate is bad, but heart trouble is worst. The mariner cares not for the howling tempest, but matters are serious when the sea gains entrance. Causes. 1. Unpardoned sin. (1) We cannot ignore it. (2) Dare not excuse it. (3) Are unable to expiate it. 2. Separation from beloved friends. (1) By absence; (2) by death. 3. Persecution. 4. Disappointed hopes. So the disciples have trials. Sometimes from a clear sky the thunder peals; from richest verdure the venomous serpent hisses. II. THE QUIET HEART. 1. We acknowledge the authority of the decalogue; but our Lord's command is equally binding. 2. This is the purpose of God. Every apparent discord leads up to the final harmony. 3. The quiet heart is the best learner, worker, warrior. 4. The quiet heart is a mirror of heaven. III. HOW CAN THE TROUBLED HEART BE MADE INTO THE QUIET HEART. 1. The old belief in God. The Jews had fallen into polytheism, but the captivity cured them. Christ points to the old well of comfort—a firm belief in one ever-living God. (1) God will smite all wrong. (2) He will bring forth the righteous as the sun. 2. The new belief in Christ. Inferentially a proof of Christ's Divinity. (1) As the great atoning Substitute. There is nothing in the new philosophy to calm the troubled heart. (2) As our sympathizing Brother and High Priest. (3) As alive for ever more. (4) As our Representative and Forerunner—"I go to prepare a place," &c. We need not shrink from "Worlds unknown." He has made them well known; "brought life and immortality to light," and will come again and receive us unto Himself. (*W. Anderson, LL.D.*) *Christ comforting*:—There was some good in the disciples' trouble. 1. There was natural trouble at the departure of such a friend. For we are flesh, not steel; and in that sense, Christ was troubled Himself to show the truth of His manhood. Nay, trouble is the seasoning of all heavenly comforts; there were no comforts if there were no trouble; and therefore this natural trouble was not disallowed by Christ. 2. There was likewise something spiritually good in this trouble. They loved their Master, who they saw was going away. They were right in this principle, that all comfort depends on the presence of Christ. For as all heavenly light, and heat, and influence come from the sun, so all heavenly comforts must come to us from Christ's presence. Their error was in tying all comfort to a bodily presence; as if it were necessary for the sun to come down and abide upon the earth, to bestow its heat and influence. I. THE BEST CHRISTIANS ARE SUBJECT TO BE TROUBLED MORE THAN

SHOULD BE. Christ was troubled, but His trouble was like the shaking of clear water in a crystal glass. There was no mud in the bottom. But our trouble is of another kind, and apt to be inordinate (1 Sam. i. 13; Isa. xxxviii. 14; Psa. lxxvii. 3; Jonah ii. 2). 1. God permits us to be troubled—(1) For conformity to our Head. (2) That we may be known to ourselves; that we may discern where our weakness lieth, and so be better instructed to seek Him in whom our strength lieth. (3) For the preventing of spiritual sins. (4) In regard of others, that we may be pitiful. 2. But how shall we know that our hearts are more troubled than they should be? We may sin in being overmuch troubled at things for which it is a sin not to be troubled. If they had not been at all affected with the absence of Christ, it had been a sin, and no less than stupidity; yet it was their sin to be overmuch troubled. A trouble is sinful when it hinders us in duties; or from duty, when the soul is like an instrument out of tune, or a limb out of joint. Naturally, affections should be helps to duty, they being the winds that carry the soul on, and the spiritual wings of the soul. But then they must be regulated and ordered at the command of a spiritual understanding. Now, besides the hurt that is in such affections themselves, Satan loves to fish in these troubled waters (Eph. iv. 26). That was Saul's case (1 Sam. xvi. 23). 3. We should not yield to excess of trouble. And the reasons are: (1) We wrong our ownselves. We make actions difficult unto us. The wheels of the soul are thereby taken off (Neh. viii. 10). (2) We do dishonour to God, mistaking His goodness, murmuring at His providence, wronging His graciousness and nursing a rebellious pride. (3) We dishonour Christ, and the love of God in Christ; for it is as if we had not in Him a sufficient remedy for that great malady. (4) Christ hath forbidden it, "Let not," &c. II. THE WAYS WHEREBY WE MUST LABOUR TO COMFORT OUR HEARTS. 1. There must be a due search into the heart of the grounds of our trouble; for often Christians are troubled, they cannot tell wherefore; as children that will complain they know not why. See if there be not some Achan in the camp. 2. And when you have found out your sin give it vent by confession of it to God, and in some cases to others. 3. And when we have done so, consider what promises, and comforts, in that Word of God are fitted to that condition. And therefore we ought to be skilful in the Word of God, that we may store up comforts beforehand. 4. When we have these promises, let us labour to understand them thoroughly, and then to digest them in our affections, and so make them our own, and then to walk in the strength and comfort of them. 5. Labour likewise to have them fresh in memory. It is a great defect of Christians that they forget their consolation (Heb. xii. 5). 6. Labour to keep unspotted consciences. 7. And because there can be no more comfort than there is care of duty, therefore, together with innocency, let us be careful of all duties in all our several relations. 8. But above all let us labour for a spirit of faith. "You believe in God," &c. How doth faith in Christ ease the soul in trouble? (1) It banishes troubles, and brings in comfort, because it is an emptying grace. It empties us of ourselves, and so makes us cleave to another, and thereby becomes a grace of union. It makes us one with the fountain of comfort, and by its repeated acts derives fresh comfort. (2) It establishes the heart. (3) It stirs up such graces as comfort the soul, as hope in all good things promised. "In My Father's house are many mansions." (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *Christ comforting the disciples*:—I. THE HEROIC ATTITUDE CHRIST ASSUMES. He had just dismissed Judas, knew what was transpiring outside, and what would follow. And yet He sat amongst His disciples perfectly composed, and was able to counsel deliberate composure in the prospect of affliction. This was not from any insensibility to pain, nor superiority to it (chaps. xi. 33; xii. 27; xiii. 21). It was a wonderful manifestation of spiritual strength, and as an example was more forcible than even His counsel for the production of a like spirit. II. THE HEROIC SPIRIT CHRIST COMMANDS HIS DISCIPLES TO CULTIVATE. They were in a grievous plight. They had been drawn into fellowship with Christ. He had led them step by step, and they had learned to lean upon Him utterly. And now He was about to be taken from them by a cruel death, and leave them exposed to persecution for His sake. An hour ago there had been a strife among them which of them should be greatest. How vain all these ambitions seemed now! And yet our Lord counsels calmness. Then—1. It is possible to overmaster trouble, however hard the lot in life may be. 2. It is important to overmaster it; a troubled heart is our agitated medium and cannot see things clearly, and our enfeebled agent impotent to do them adequately. III. THE SECRET OF A HEROIC SPIRIT WHICH CHRIST COMMUNICATED TO THEM. 1. Faith in God. The Old Testament saints found in this a panacea for all their cares. "Thou wilt keep Him in perfect peace," &c.

There were resources in Omnipotence which they felt to be equal to all human exigency (Isa. xxvi. 3, 4). Something of this the disciples knew. 2. Our Lord argues from the Father to Himself, and particularly recommends them to have such faith in Him as they have in God. 3. The advantage of this twofold trust. Although the disciples had a certain faith in God, it left them far from satisfied with it. Hence Philip's request. God was more or less remote from and incomprehensible to them; but Christ brought them near. "He that hath seen Me," &c. This sufficed. (*W. Roberts.*) *Grounds of comfort*:—I. HEAVEN IS SURE (vers. 2, 3). II. THERE IS A CERTAIN WAY TO HEAVEN (vers. 4–11). III. CHRIST'S WORK DOES NOT CEASE WITH CHRIST'S DEPARTURE (vers. 12–14). IV. THE HELP OF THE SPIRIT IS VOUCHSAFED in the absence of Christ (vers. 15–17). V. CHRIST'S ABSENCE IS ONLY TEMPORARY (vers. 18–24). VI. THE SPIRIT WILL TEACH THE DISCIPLES, and supply their want of understanding when left alone (vers. 25, 26). VII. THE LEGACY OF PEACE to cheer in the Master's absence (ver. 27). (*Prof. Hengstenburg.*) *Sources of Christian comfort*:—There is a class of words the meaning of which is known to all, and without consulting a dictionary most people know what the word "trouble" means. The man who should attempt to construct a theory of life and leave trouble out of the account would be no philosopher. How to deal with it, and not how to ignore it, becomes the great problem. From both ancients and moderns proposals of alleviation and help are forthcoming. But He who boldly cries, "Let not your heart be troubled" must possess infallible antidotes. What are they? Faith and Hope directed to their proper objects. We propose, then, to examine—I. THE GROUNDS ON WHICH CHRIST SOLICITS OUR FAITH. Relief comes by belief. To be able in some overpowering grief to throw the weight of one's care upon another and to trust wholly in that other's help is an eminently satisfying process; while the trustless soul is without the least gleam of comfort. In these times of daring denial and of timid doubt it is well to be reminded that in the great crises of life—poverty, bereavement, affliction—denial is mockery and doubt is impotence, and that only an honest and hearty belief will secure sufficient solace. Christ solicits our faith on the ground of—1. A prior acknowledgment of the Divine. "Ye believe in God." Christ desires nothing contrary to already existing and inborn Godward conceptions of the soul, but merely that we enlarge those conceptions so as to include Him. 2. The defectiveness of our belief apart from Him. "Ye believe in God;" yes, but that is inadequate, it needs supplementing. The most anxious moments of humanity have been spent in searchings after such a view of God as would enable man to approach Him without dread. Humanity's great longing has waited until Christ for its complete satisfaction. He has extracted from the thought of God all that is calculated to give pain and introduced everything calculated to give comfort. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." 3. His personality. Trust must repose on a person to be trust at all. Christian apologists often begin with the proofs of superhuman skill and power, and so lead up to the central object of Christian faith. But Christ asked for immediate trust in Himself, for with that would come a hearty belief in all He said and did. II. THE MOTIVES BY WHICH HE ENCOURAGES OUR HOPE. By "two immutable things," Christ intends us to have "strong consolation." Hope is as important a contribution to comfort as faith; the two together, exercised rightly, never fail. Without a future what is the present worth? An English nobleman once asked himself why there should be a future existence, and answered, "Because, on any other hypothesis, the world would be a piece of magnificent nonsense." 1. Christ, implying human immortality, reveals heaven. He bids the troubled be comforted by directing their hope to the positive existence of an absolutely untroubled state. Heaven is rendered attractive to us as much by its exemptions as by its possessions (Rev. xxi. 4). Christ does present also a positive view. Heaven is a home. "In My Father's house!" A house is not necessarily a home, but a father's house always is, or ought to be. A happy earthly home is the nearest approach to an adequate conception of the life of heaven. "My Father's house" is a happier home than the happiest of earthly ones. 2. Hope is encouraged by the variety of heavenly enjoyments. "Many mansions," many methods of enjoyment, various fields of occupation, unexhausted resources of interest and pleasure. An endless uniformity of type would be fatal to perfect happiness. 3. Hope is further encouraged by Christ's guarantee of its realization. "If it were not so I would have told you," &c. What security this! He could not countenance a delusion. Conclusion: We read of a Roman army, when eagerly engaged in battle with their country's enemies, being unconscious of an earthquake which made the ground beneath their feet to tremble; and so will a high faith in God and

Christ, and a holy hope of immortality and heaven, cause the true Christian to be insensible to the tossings to and fro of the life that now is. (*W. Brooks.*) *The Christian not afraid of unseen dangers*:—General Sherman is reported to have said: "One difference between General Grant and myself is this: I am not afraid of dangers that I can see, but he is not afraid of dangers that he cannot see." Any good soldier of Jesus Christ has a right to absolute confidence as he goes forward, even in the dark. For the Saviour says to him, Whatever comes, "Let not your heart be troubled." *Men seem unwilling to be without trouble*:—Men do not avail themselves of the riches of God's grace. They love to nurse their cares, and seem as uneasy without some fret as an old friar would be without his hair girdle. They are commanded to cast their cares upon the Lord; but, even when they attempt it, they do not fail to catch them up again, and think it meritorious to walk burdened. They take God's ticket to heaven, and then put their baggage on their shoulders, and tramp, tramp, the whole way there afoot. *Christ will relieve our troubles*:—I heard of a man who was walking along the high road, with a pack on his back: he was growing weary, and was, therefore, glad when a gentleman came along in a chaise, and asked him to take a seat with him. The gentleman noticed that he kept his pack strapped to his shoulders, and so he said, "Why do you not put your pack down?" "Why, sir," said the traveller, "I did not venture to intrude. It was very kind of you to take me up, and I could not expect you to carry my pack as well." "Why," said his friend, "do you not see that whether your pack is on your back, or off your back, I have to carry it?" My hearer, it is so with your trouble: whether you care, or do not care, it is the Lord who must care for you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The consolation of the gospel unique*:—In this I say the gospel differs sharply from the most cultivated pagan thought of the age in which it appeared in the world. When Seneca is trying to console a lady who is suffering agonies of mind under a severe bereavement, he can only suggest to her that she had better try as soon as possible to forget her trouble. She has, he says, good examples around her in the birds and in the beasts. They too love their relations, but after a momentary spasm when they lose them they take life easily again; and in doing this they show man an example which he would do well to imitate. As if the mental pain which means to man so much more than to the beast, precisely because he is man and not beast, could be conjured out of him by a philosophy which talks incessantly of his dignity and can only make him comfortable, if at all, at the cost of forgetting it! (*Canon Liddon.*) *Religion has many comforts*:—Why should you carry troubles and sorrows unhealed? There is no bodily wound for which some herb doth not grow, and heavenly plants are more medicinal. Bind up your hearts in them, and they shall give you not only healing, but leave with you the perfume of the blessed gardens where they grew. Thus it may be that sorrows shall turn to riches; for heart troubles, in God's husbandry, are not wounds, but the putting in of the spade before the planting of seeds. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Glimpses of our heavenly home*:—I. THE TROUBLE IN THE HEART OF THE DISCIPLES. The trouble—1. Of agonized ignorance and blank bewilderment. Long before, Jesus had dropped hints of a mysterious journey that He had to take. As the time went on, He spoke of it more frequently, and in terms more and more darkly suggestive of horror. This had not seemed to trouble their heart at first; they regarded His language as metaphorical. Probably they had the impression that first some great battle had to be fought, or some unknown trial to be gone through; that would last three days. So just before, Peter asks, "Whither goest thou?" 2. Of bereaved love. "Do I love the Lord, or no?" was not a question in any heart there. Jesus had poured upon them all the very essence of kindness, and had received them into the very sanctuary of His heart. Naturally, it was this mighty love that made bereavement of its object so intolerable. Christ had not yet left them; but love may feel a bereavement before it is bereaved. 3. From the thought of having no share in the last passion of their Lord. "Why cannot I follow Thee now?" Love said then, as love says now, "Give me some work to do; some cross to carry; some block to lay my head upon." It is impossible to stand idly by while Christ gives and suffers all. II. THE ANTIDOTE. 1. A peculiar, most tranquillizing revelation of the heaven to which He is going—"a place." Along with other elements of comfort, our nature needs this. We have been told that this is a doctrine of Materialism, and that heaven is in character rather than in condition. This is only a half-truth, and we want the whole. "Heaven is principle," said Confucius; but a house to live in must be built of something besides principle. Heaven is for the complete man, body and soul; and a body asks for a place.

Understanding that heaven is at least a place, we are ready to ask a thousand questions about it as such; and one of the first will be, "Where is it in the map of the universe?" In times not a few has this been made a question of astronomy, and to suggest the possibility of some central heaven amongst the stars. Well, the inquiry must start from our own solar system. This, with its circle of at least 5,000,000,000 miles in diameter, is but a speck in the creation. Its stars burn and roll round the sun, their centre. The sun, carrying all these his satellites with him, is moving round another centre, with its system; that, about another; that, about another; and where is the fixed ultimate centre round which all the other centres are wheeling and moving? The only One who could have settled this question was silent about it. He says nothing of its whereabouts, of its beauty, of its music, except in signs that are manifestly but hieroglyphic. He knew that the most exact precision of statement and the most dazzling magic of description would leave the greatest as well as the least of mortals as much in the dark as ever. Therefore Christ, aiming at our spiritual profit rather than at our scientific enlightenment, leaves for future solution all problems that have only to do with place. 2. That the heavenly place is His home and theirs. He has just addressed them in the language of family affection as His "little children." With this word of love still in the air, He proceeds to speak of heaven as "My Father's house." A little child looks upon his father's house as his own, and so would Christ have us look upon heaven. Even on earth, a father's house is his child's home; and the dearest place to the best man, woman, child, is home. "Home, sweet home." Earth is one of My Father's battle-fields, farms, foundries, factories, roads that He travels on; but heaven is our "Father's house," and therefore the home of all His family. 3. That in that home are many mansions, *i.e.*, settled abodes; the same word as in ver. 23. Emphasis resting on the idea of permanence. Jesus was speaking to the sad thoughts then stirring in the hearts of His mourners on account of the shortness of the time they had spent with Him, and which seemed, in the review, only like a dream. "What does this lack to make it perfect?" asked an old Roman of his companion, as they were together looking on some imperial show; and the answer was, "Permanence." "Permanence adds bliss to bliss." In the word "many," He spoke to the thoughts of the company. When one of the disciples, on the notice of His near departure, asked if he might go with Him, the virtual answer was "No." This refusal to the "one" was a blow to "the many." If the happiness of going with the Lord is not to be given even to Peter, what is to become of the many? We had all expected that we should go with Him into His kingdom. If these happy dreams of ours are all to melt into misery, why were we not informed of this before? Before now, on some festive day, when a man has asked his friends to his house, he has been forced to ask only a few, because, though his heart was large enough for many, his house was not. Before now, in the straits of some war, some iron captain has spared the lives of only a few prisoners, simply on the ground of lacking room to accommodate the many. God has room in His purpose, in His heart, in His house, for all His captives. By the miracle of His grace He first changes all His captives into children, then welcomes them all home. No limitation is suggested by the indefinite plural, "many." "Many" simply stands for all the children, "a great multitude which no man can number," "and yet there is room!" 4. That He is going "to prepare a place" for them. While man is asleep in the night, the sun goes before him, that he may prepare the day for him to wake in. Thus he prepares light for him to see by, power for him to work with, and the spirit of gladness. So does Christ prepare heaven for the heirs of heaven. There can be no heaven without the revelation of God, and there can be no revelation of God without Christ. He prepares heaven for them, not only by preparing their right to the place, but by preparing their fitness for it. "Why cannot I go with Thee now?" asked Peter; and the saying, "I go to prepare a place for you," is an answer to this "Why?" Christ was going to prepare a place for them; first, by His Cross; next, by the Spirit, who would change their hearts and train their natures for the rank they would inherit, as well as for the work they had to do. 5. That He would come again, and receive them unto Himself. Dying may be regarded as a mode in which Christ comes for His people, one by one. Death is not coming; death is not a person, only a door, to which Christ, the sovereign Lord who has at His girdle the keys of death and the unseen state, comes. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) **Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.**—*Belief in Christ*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO BELIEVE? Faith includes two things. 1. The submission of the reason to all Christ has revealed. 2. The trust of the heart in all He has promised.

Both of these are difficult duties. To receive as true what we cannot understand, on God's testimony is declared to be irrational. But remember that faith is rational, and that the testimony of God is informing. To trust that we shall be pardoned, saved, preserved, is equally difficult for unbelieving hearts. II. THE OBJECT OF FAITH IS CHRIST—*i.e.*, the things to which we are to assent are truths concerning Christ, and these things in which we are to trust are His promises. This is the only form in which we can exercise faith in God. If we believe not God, as seen, how can we believe in Him as not seen. III. WHAT ARE WE TO BELIEVE CONCERNING CHRIST, AND WHAT ARE THE PROMISES WHICH WE ARE TO TRUST? 1. We must believe that He is the Way, *i.e.*, that He brings us to God. We are separated from God—(1) By our ignorance. Christ brings us near to God as an object of knowledge. He is the Logos or Revealer. He is God in our nature. (2) By our guilt. Christ brings us near to God by reconciliation through His blood. He atones for our sins. Through Him we are able to draw near to God with hope of acceptance. (3) By our enmity. Christ, by revealing the knowledge of God, and reconciling us to Him, removes our enmity. 2. That He is the Truth, *i.e.*—(1) That He is real; the true God; true Prophet, Priest, King. (2) That in Him is all truth and excellence. 3. That He is the Life—the source of universal, intellectual, spiritual and eternal life. It is not we that live, but Christ that lives in us. IV. WHAT PROMISES ARE WE TO TRUST TO? The promises of the Spirit. 1. That His presence is permanent and internal. 2. That He will reveal Christ. 3. That He will be our Paraclete. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*)

Believe also in Me:—1. It might have been urged that the disciples are addressed by our Lord as already believing, not in God only, but in Himself. But the Bible, and He who speaks therein, is truer to nature and experience than many who profess to interpret it. Are there not many in Christian Churches needing still the voice which shall say, Believer, believe; Christian, come to Christ; disciple of three or of thirty years, still, as for the first time, behold Him! 2. There are those, even among Christian people who confide to us, in the tone of sincere and humble regret—"I cannot see why a Saviour was needed. If I, being evil, know how to forgive, how much more shall a Father in heaven accept the first sigh and bestow the unpurchased grace? Is it not enough if I believe in God my Father? Why must I be encumbered with a revelation of sacrifice which rather repels me than reassures? I believe in God—why must I believe also in Christ?" Let us endeavour to answer this question. I. Now, some one might say, Look at the saints of the Old Testament. What grace, of reverence, of affiance, of holy aspiration, was lacking in the patriarch Abraham, or to the poet-king of the Psalms? Christ was not manifested when those thoughts of eternal fulness glowed and throbbed in the big heart of David. We venture to dispute the very fact taken for granted. Abraham, "saw Christ's day," and walked in the light of it. David was reared amidst promises which made Christ a household word in Israel, and sacrifices which brought to the very senses the need and hope of propitiation. II. Or you might speak of men who, in this century, have not only led good lives, but have had pious feelings, and done beneficent works, without realizing what we should call the fulness of the Christian faith—avowed Unitarians, *e.g.* But it is only truth to remember that men thus dispensing with Christ are yet unspeakably indebted to Him. The very idea of God as our Father comes from His revelation. III. Still, you might say, having made this great revelation, may not Christ Himself disappear? Having taught that God is our Father, must He remain in sight to confuse or divide our allegiance? Believing in God by Christ's help, why go on further to believe in Christ? Now, it is an obvious answer, and surely a just one. We cannot take Christ by halves. If Christ said one thing from God, He said all things: we must look to see what He said, and not, after catching one isolated word, presume to declare that one word all. IV. Observe, too, how the particular truth received, no less than the accompanying doctrines objected to, runs up into matters which we can neither dispute as facts, nor yet, apart from God, settle. Sin—you see it, you feel it; all religions pre-suppose it. Evidently sin has made a great rent and breach in God's work. Listen to this new Teacher, crying in the hearing of the dislocated and disorganized creation, "When ye pray, say, Our Father." Yes, we say, something within tells me that I had a Father once—but long, long have I lost Him. Tell me the processes by which it has been recovered—the marvellous mystery of restored sonship and reawakened love. Shall we accept the bare fact, and ask nothing as to the proofs and the instrumentalities? Shall we let Christ say, "God is your Father," and never question Him once as to anything further? They who believe the mighty intelligence must hearken what the same

Lord has to say concerning it. May it be, perhaps, that there was that in the Divine holiness which made sin a fatal bar to man's acceptance, except on some condition which God only can perform? Shall we dare, we the guilty and helpless ones, to say that, with nothing but poor human tears and cries and paltry efforts, the stain of sin can be wiped out? Shall we dare to repose upon a feeble human analogy, and rest the whole weight of eternity upon the impulses and instincts (not always, even here, prevailing) of family love and parental tenderness? What if there lurked in the background of Deity an obstacle which Calvary alone could take away? It was, no doubt, with special reference to His sacrifice and its consequences that Christ spoke of His disciples, in the text, as having (in some sense) still to believe. They knew Him for the Messiah; what they had still to learn, still to believe in, was the death as itself the life. It is, indeed, the crucial test of faith. He who believes in Christ's atonement believes Christ; believes that He came from God, and came with a message. V. But, although we thus stand upon the dignity of the Cross as a mystery, we do find, as a matter of experience, that no man dispenses with it without being a definite loser in some feature of the Christian character. 1. There is often a feeble sense of the sinfulness of sin. A man cannot really see Himself a sinner, and not cry out for a Saviour. 2. There is often a want of true tenderness towards sinners. Benevolence there may be; but the discovery of unworthiness in the object of the philanthropy is often the death-blow of charity. Or, again, there may be an easiness of good nature ready enough to see excuses: there will not be that unique combination, which was in the cross itself, and which is in the true family of the Crucified—tenderness towards the sinner, with displeasure against the sin. VI. God, in arranging that we should receive this greatest of His gifts—reconciliation through His Son—has given a charm and pathos to the gospel which it could not otherwise have possessed. What possession do you not value tenfold if it is yours through love? That book, that trinket, why is it dear to you? It was the keepsake of a loving friend. And do you not think that God was appealing, perhaps, to some such instinct of your nature, when He would not only send word to you that you were pardoned, but bid you to receive the blessing through the willing self-gift of One who, sharing every emotion of God's love for the self-ruined one, came Himself to plead, and at last to die, because thus He could effectually "roll away the great stone" sin, move the obdurate, and win back the lost? Conclusion: Try the charge, "Believe also in me." Lean your whole weight of guilt, of sin, of weakness, of sorrow, upon Jesus Christ and Him crucified. See whether, in proportion as you trust Christ more, you become not, in yourself, happier, holier, stronger, gentler. Thus, in time, you shall have a witness within. You life shall be one echo to the sweet persuasive expostulation, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in Me." (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Faith in God one with faith in Christ*:—We get a more true and appropriate meaning if we keep both clauses in the imperative, "Believe in God, believe also in me." I. CHRIST HERE POINTS TO HIMSELF AS THE OBJECT OF PRECISELY THE SAME RELIGIOUS TRUST WHICH IS TO BE GIVEN TO GOD. 1. It is only our familiarity with these words that blinds us to their wonderfulness. Try to hear them for the first time, and to remember the circumstances. Here is a man amongst a handful of friends, within four-and-twenty hours of a shameful death, that to all appearance was the annihilation of all His claims and hopes. And He says, "Trust in God, and trust in Me!" 2. What is it that Christ offers us? A very low and inadequate interpretation is, "Believe that God is, that I am." But it is scarcely less so to suppose that the mere assent of the understanding to His teaching is all that Christ is asking for. Faith grasps not a doctrine, but a heart. The trust which Christ requires is entire committal to Him in all my relations and for all my needs. 3. Further, note that this believing in Him is precisely the same thing which He bids us render to God. The two clauses in the original bring out that idea even more vividly—"Believe in God, in Me also believe." And so He here proposes Himself as the worthy and adequate recipient of all that makes up religion in its deepest sense. That tone is the uniform characteristic of our Lord's teaching. What did He think of Himself Who stood up before the world, and with arms outstretched, like that great white Christ in Thorwaldsen's lovely statue, said to all the troop of languid and burdened ones crowding at His feet:—"Come unto Me all ye that are weary," &c. That surely is a Divine prerogative. What did He think of Himself Who said, "All men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father"? You cannot eliminate the fact that Christ claimed as His own the emotions of the heart, to which only God has a right and which only God can satisfy. 4. We have to take that into account

if we would estimate the character of Jesus Christ as a teacher and as a man. What separates Him from all other teachers is not the clearness or the tenderness with which He reiterated the truths about the Father's love, and morality and goodness; but the peculiarity of His call to the world is, "Believe in Me." And if He said that, why, then, one of two things. Either He was wrong, and then He was a crazy enthusiast, only acquitted of blasphemy because convicted of insanity; or else He was "God, manifest in the flesh." II. FAITH IN CHRIST AND FAITH IN GOD ARE NOT TWO, BUT ONE. These two clauses on the surface present juxtaposition. Looked at more closely they present interpretation and identity. 1. What is the underlying truth that is here? How comes it that these two objects blend into one, like two figures in a stereoscope? (1) This, that Jesus Christ Himself Divine, is the Divine Revealer of God. There is no real knowledge of the real God outside of Jesus. He showing us a Father, has brought a God to our hearts that we can love, and of whom we can be sure. Very significant is it that Christianity alone puts the very heart of religion in the act of trust. Other religions put it in dread worship, service, and the like. (2) On the other hand, the truth that underlies this is that Jesus is Divine. The light shines through a window, but the light and the glass that make it visible have nothing in common with one another. The Godhead shines through Christ, but He is not a mere transparent medium. It is Himself that He is showing us when He is showing us God. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." And because He is Himself Divine and the Divine Revealer, therefore the faith that grasps Him is inseparably one with the faith that grasps God. Men could look upon a Moses, an Isaiah, or a Paul, and in them recognize the irradiation of the Divinity that imparted itself through them, but the medium was forgotten in proportion as that which it revealed was behind. You cannot forget Christ in order to see God more clearly, but to behold Him is to behold God. 2. And if that be true, these two things follow. (1) One is that all imperfect revelation of God is prophetic of and leads up towards the perfect revelation in Jesus Christ (Heb. i. 1–3). And in like manner all the imperfect faith that, laying hold of other fragmentary means of knowing God, has tremulously tried to trust Him, finds its climax and consummate flower in the full-blossomed faith that lays hold upon Jesus Christ. (2) That without faith in Christ such faith in God as is possible is feeble, incomplete, and will not long last. Historically a pure theism is all but impotent. There is only one example of it on a large scale in the world, and that is a kind of bastard Christianity—Mohammedanism; and we all know what good that is as a religion. The God that men know outside of Jesus Christ is a poor, nebulous thing; an idea, not a reality. It has little power to restrain. It has less power to inspire and impel. It has still less to comfort; it has least of all to satisfy the heart. III. THIS TRUST IN CHRIST IS THE SECRET OF A QUIET HEART. 1. It is no use saying to men, "Let not your hearts be troubled," unless you finish the verse. The state of man is like that of some of those sunny islands in southern seas, around which there often rave the wildest cyclones, and which carry in their bosoms, beneath all their riotous luxuriance of verdant beauty, hidden fires, which ever and anon shake the solid earth and spread destruction. And where is the "rest" to come from? All other defences are weak and poor. We have heard about "pills against earthquakes." That is what the comforts which the world supplies may fairly be likened to. Unless we trust we are, and shall be, "troubled." 2. If we trust we may be quiet. To cast a burden off myself on other's shoulders is always a rest. But trust in Jesus Christ brings infinitude on my side. Submission is repose. When we cease to kick against the pricks they cease to stick and wound us. Trust opens the heart, like the windows of the Ark, tossing upon the black and fatal flood, for the entrance of the peaceful dove with the olive branch in its mouth. But "the wicked is like the troubled sea which cannot rest." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Faith in God*:—1. Why should it have been needful to give such a command as this to any intelligent person? In one sense all men believe in God. We acknowledge and recognize a power which passes all control, measurement, or thought. We recognize an authority to which we are responsible. As the moral nature is cultivated, we recognize a moral order in the universe, a law of righteousness, and therefore a Law-giver and a Judge. In the time of calamity or death all men call upon God. Why, then, teach men to believe in God, and command it? and especially the disciples who had been trained under the ancient system. 2. Of course the answer is that belief may be real and yet wholly ineffective. You see the vapour issuing from the kettle and disappearing through the air. It is steam-power, but not enough to drive the train. You step upon the beach and find the little

puddles of water, but there is not enough to float the boat and keep alive the fish. So belief may be real in the mind and yet be entirely insufficient for any useful and inspiring purpose. The master would have us carry our belief in God to a point where it shall involve every spiritual force within us. Believe to the roots of your nature; with all your strength and life: and your heart shall not be troubled. What is it thus to believe in God? It is to affirm—I. His ABSOLUTE ORIGINAL PERSONALITY OF EXISTENCE. And yet this it is not easy for us to do. If we search into our thoughts we shall find very often that He is to us rather a force without affection, intelligence, and life. So multitudes of men conceive of God, and scientific investigation often comes in to encourage this tendency of thought. On the other hand, the Scripture everywhere manifests to us God as a person. Our own personal constitution reflects and demonstrates that personality. As impossible as that the clod of the valley should generate a human soul, as that the blossoming branch of the tree should bring forth living intelligence; so impossible is it that personality in you and me should come from impersonal forces and mechanical laws. We see the indications of it in His works, where intelligent contrivances present themselves to us in the adjustment of force to force, in the relations of one object to another; and in Christ, who said, "I and My Father are one." And this is to be affirmed, with all energy of conviction, and intensity of feeling, as the absolute and everlasting truth. II. His PRESENCE WITH US in every hour and every place. Amazing! Yes, God is amazing in every attribute. The soul is amazing because it has something of God within it. Even natural theology affirms this; for it would imply Divine imperfection if God were not everywhere. The recognition of a moral order in the universe implies that; for otherwise the administration of that order would be necessarily imperfect. The constitution of the universe implies that, since otherwise there would be parts of the universe self-supporting and independent of God. His omnipresence shines throughout the whole Scriptures. There are times in spiritual experience when we feel it. But you say, We do not see Him! Do we see the air, magnetism, the productive force in nature, music, fragrance, the voice of a friend? We see the result. III. His CHARACTER OF PERFECT HOLINESS AND PERFECT TENDERNESS. Undoubtedly there is much to perplex us in the prevalence of sin, and the long delay of punishment. These facts disturb our impression of the Divine holiness. And yet we do not doubt the sun when for a time obscured by cloud. The holiness of God must be recognized by any one who would for a moment feel safe in the universe. If God were otherwise than holy, what could restrain any arbitrary exercise of His power? He could not properly be worshipped except He were holy. Worship mere power, and it demoralizes and demonizes. Worship intellect, and it degrades the moral nature. Worship can only be offered to absolute and sovereign purity of character; and that must be God's character, or else let every harp on high be silent and every heart on earth be dumb. God's holiness shines upon us through His law in our own reason and conscience and in the person of Christ. But then, with this holiness is united tenderness; and it is that which it seems harder still to recognize, for we associate with absolute justice absolute sovereignty rather than absolute tenderness: and yet there is in His Word the declaration of His tenderness. There is a reflection of that tenderness in our own hearts. Whence did these tender loves within us spring? It is idle to say they are transmitted. From whence did they come to our parents? We see them illustrated most perfectly in Christ, whose mission it was to so reveal the Father that we might not be afraid of His holiness. IV. AFFECTIONATE SOLICITUDE FOR EVERY ONE WHO SEEKS HIM. And this is the most difficult. He is so infinite and we are so weak. Yet even here we find instruction from those who are nearest to Him in spirit and character. We get our clearest view of it from Christ, again, always so welcoming to all who sought Him, so tender towards those who trusted and loved Him. Conclusion: If thus we believe in God, then—1. There is peace for us and in us. We shall no more be afraid of any real harm while we are affiliated with God in spirit. 2. There is power, the power which sent forth the disciples on their errands of love. 3. Creation reveals its mystery of majesty and loveliness to us, and redemption its higher glories both of majesty and beauty. 4. We anticipate the promises and the provisions of grace. 5. We are assured of the victory of righteousness in the world. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) *Belief in God emotional as well as intellectual*:—Truth that touches a man not merely through a cold perception, but through some warm feeling, is the kind of truth the Scripture teaches to constitute belief. It may be intellectually conceived, but no moral nor social truth is ever presented so as to be believed, unless it be presented in such a way as to carry sympathy

and feeling with it; and that is not the case with all kinds of truth. Physical, scientific truths, do not touch the feelings, and do not need to. Arithmetic deals with truths that have no relation directly except with the understanding. They never come with desire, sorrow, pity, or emotion of any sort. But all truths that relate to dispositions in men, to moral duties—they never stop with the understanding, but touch the feeling as well. A man cannot be said to believe a moral truth unless he believes it so that it carries some emotion with it. And, in this respect, it makes a great difference what a man believes. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Belief in God based on the knowledge of His character*:—A banknote is tendered to me—it is a promise to pay, but by whom? The Oriental Bank Corporation. I should not have it; that institution has lost its character. I could not trust it. Another note is handed to me; this bears the name of the Bank of England. Ah! that is a different matter. I know that bank has a name for solvency and stability. So, without any hesitation, I take the note just for what it stands. I do not ask for any discount off its amount, as I might if there was a shade of suspicion attaching to its name. I just take it for what it appears on its face to be worth, so confident am I that it will be paid to the full in the sterling coin of the realm. So a knowledge of the character of God will lead us to be fully persuaded "that what He hath promised He will be able also to perform." (*John K. Shaw.*) *Belief in God inextinguishable*:—Whatever men may scientifically agree to believe in, there is in men of noble nature something which science can neither illumine nor darken. When Tyndall was walking among the clouds during a sunset upon the Alps his companion said to him, "can you behold such a sublime scene as this and not feel that there is a God?" "Oh," said he, "I feel it. I feel it as much as any man can feel it; and I rejoice in it, if you do not tell me I can prove it." The moment you undertake to bring the evidence with which he dealt with matter to the ineffable and the hereafter, then, he says, "I am agnostic. I don't know. It isn't true;" but the moment you leave the mind under the gracious influence of such a scene it rises above the sphere of doubt or proof, and he says, "I accept it." (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Belief in God encouraging*:—When menaced by Indian war and domestic rebellion, when distrustful of those around him, and apprehensive of disgrace at court, Columbus sank for a time into complete despondency. In this hour of gloom, when abandoned to despair, he heard in the night a voice addressing him in words of comfort, "O man of little faith! why art thou cast down? Fear nothing, I will provide for thee. The seven years of the term of gold are not expired; in that, and in all other things, I will take care of thee." (*Washington Irving.*) *Belief in God should inspire confidence*:—In a small town there lived the widow of a preacher, a God-fearing woman, who in days of trouble used to say to her children and friends, "Fear not, God lives." Her trials were sometimes great, but she strove to bear all with cheerfulness and patience. One day her difficulty was greater than she could bear, and she sat down with a feeling of hopelessness, and allowed her tears to flow unchecked. Her little son saw her weeping; he put his little hand in hers, and said, while he looked into her face sorrowfully, "Mother, is God dead?" "No, my son," she said, taking him on her lap. "I thank thee for thy question. He ever liveth; He is near to help in all trouble; He will help us." She wiped away her tears and continued her work. She sought and found help in Jesus. (*Der Glaubensbote.*) *Belief in God stimulating*:—The late Professor Agassiz once said to a friend, "I will frankly tell you that my experience in prolonged scientific investigations convinces me that a belief in God—a God who is behind and within the chaos of vanishing points of human knowledge—adds a wonderful stimulus to the man who attempts to penetrate into the regions of the unknown. Of myself, I may say that I never make the preparations for penetrating into some small province of nature hitherto undiscovered without breathing a prayer to the Being who hides His secrets from me only to allure me graciously on to the unfolding of them." *The revealing power of faith*:—Christian faith is like a grand cathedral with divinely pictured windows. Standing without you see no glory, nor can possibly imagine any; standing within, every ray of light reveals a harmony of unspeakable splendour. (*Bp. Porteous.*) *Believing in Jesus is laying hold of Him*:—A vessel is wrecked: one after another of her crew is swept away, and disappears. As she heaves to and fro, it seems as if every moment she would break up, and send her shivering passengers down into the deep. There is the cabin-boy, thinking of his mother and his home, and praying, though scarcely hoping to be saved, when a plank floats past. Eagerly he lays hold of it, rests his whole weight upon it; and, while others perish, he is safe. That describes you. As you are just about to go

down, the plank floats along, comes near you—within reach, within arm's-length. That plank is Christ. Lay hold of Him, rest yourself upon Him. He can bear your whole weight—the whole weight of your sins, which would have sunk you to perdition—the whole weight of your soul. Try Him; and, like a sailor who tried Him, you'll be able joyfully to say even in dying, "The plank bears, the plank bears!" (*J. H. Wilson.*) *Believing is looking to Jesus*:—Believing on Jesus is looking to Him for salvation. You see that poor widow with a young family, weeping as if her heart would break. When I ask her what ails her, she tells me she is behind with her rent, and her landlord threatens to turn her to the door, unless she can pay her debt, and find security for the next six months. So I tell her to dry her tears, and do her best to work for her children, and just look to me for her rent. How full of joy she is all at once! How cheerfully she works! and, though she has not a penny laid past for the term, she has no fear; and when asked, Why? she says, "I am looking to him, for he bade me; and I know he will not fail me. What he promised is just as sure as if I had it in my hand." Now, believing on Jesus is something like this. If I might so speak, it is the heart's look to Jesus—a single glance, indeed, at first, and yet a constant looking to Him ever after (*Ibid.*) *Believing is trusting in Jesus*:—There is a boy whose father was buried yesterday. To-day he is wearing his father's gold watch. Some wicked lads are trying to take it from him. He is struggling to keep it; but they are too strong for him. He is just about to lose it, when I come up, and say, "Give it to me, my boy, and I'll keep it safe for you." For a moment he looks at me with doubtful eye; but as I say to him, "Trust me!" and he sees that I am earnest and sincere, he hands it over to me, and I prevent him from being robbed. That is just what the apostle Paul says of himself. He had, as you have, something far more precious than a gold watch—an immortal soul; and he was afraid of losing it: he could not keep it himself. Jesus said, "Give it to Me," and he gave it to Him; and then you hear him saying rejoicingly, "I know whom I have believed" (which is the same thing as whom I have trusted), "and am persuaded that He will keep that which I have committed to Him against that day." (*Ibid.*) *The comfort of believing in 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 away 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." *Untroubled faith*:—What the Caliph Omar is reported to have written to Amru, his general commanding in Egypt, has a grand moral. If those books contradicted the Koran, they were false, and ought to be destroyed. If they agreed with the Koran, they were of no use, and might well be spared. One book was enough for Mohammedans. So, when Sir Walter Scott lay dying, he said to his son-in-law one day, "Lockhart, read to me." "What book shall it be?" said Lockhart. "Why do you ask? there is but one," said Scott. Now, if this Book itself were in danger of being destroyed, and I might have only one chapter out of it, I rather think it would be this which Scott asked to be read to him. Probably no single chapter is read so much to the dying, over the dead. It was the Speaker who was about to die. His hearers were about to be launched into a life-long service, and their last necessity was absolute, child-like faith. I. LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED. Certainly they were troubled. And they had reason to be. Many times over Judas betrays his Lord, and hangs himself. Many times over Peter denies his Lord and repents. Many times over the Lord Himself is crucified, and buried, rises and goes away and comes again unseen. It is the same old story always; and always with the old refrain: "Let not your heart be troubled." 1. To-day, as related to heathen peoples and religions, the Judas Iscariot of Christianity is Christendom itself. At first, Christianity had behind it only the incomparable personality and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. If Christendom were only Christian really, how much longer would China probably be Confucian? or India Brahmanic? These are painful questions. But let not your heart be troubled. Inside of Christendom I see another betrayal of Christianity, which also is very painful. We behold a Christian civilization, incontestably and immensely superior to any heathen pattern. By and by this Christian civilization forgets its Christian parentage; or denies it, and claims for itself another pedigree. Scholarly men analyze and compare the great historic religions, allowing little pre-eminence to Christianity. Then after a while the conclusion is reached that we

really need no religion at all, only science. Take your sop, Judas, and be gone. As for the eleven, let not their hearts be troubled. 2. Peter's denial of the Lord also repeats itself. Scandals and offences are sure to come. Good men are tempted, stumble and fall. Let not your heart be troubled. Peter denied his Master with an oath. Whole communions apostatize. Verily, powers of darkness are busy; and the night is long. But let not your heart be troubled. The morning cometh. Peter repented. 3. As for what Christ said about going away and coming again, changing the economy from flesh to spirit, from sight to faith, it seems strange to us that His apostles should have been so staggered by it. Those apostles, for three years had been under marvellous tuition; and we wonder they got so little out of it. The day of Pentecost had not yet come. By and by men will be looking back and wondering that we so poorly understood the gospel, overlaying it, some of us with ritual, others with dogma. We have much to be ashamed of. But let not your heart be troubled. More Pentecosts than one have come already. And more are yet to come. II. BELIEVE IN GOD. 1. Commanded belief implies always the possibility of honest unbelief. Such unbelief has increased greatly of late. Partly, it seems like a reaction against outward authority, and traditional opinions, or against a superstitious theism. Partly it is sheer science, clear-eyed and dispassionate, unable to help multiplying second causes. 2. I have no fear of any very long reign of Atheism. In the poor, apathetic Orient, there may be morality enough to conserve society, with little or no religion, as in China. But not in Europe and America, full of vitality, greedy, rich and restless. With us, irreligion to-day is immorality to-morrow, and after that the deluge. 3. Much of what passes for belief in God is mere scholastic assent to the proposition that God exists. Or the attributes most emphasized are those pertaining rather to the Divine essence. What we need is a vivid sense of the personality of God. He must come very close, and be very real, to us, in our whole experience of life. Mankind must be His offspring; and human history, from first to last, the working out of His own eternal and righteous purposes. "We are but two," said Abu Bakr to Mohammed as they were flying, hunted, from Mecca to Medina. "Nay," answered Mohammed, "we are three; God is with us." And so belief in God is not mere assent, nor mere conviction, but absolute personal trust, submission, and service. 4. You and I know very well what troubles us in thinking of God—sin. But if He had no hatred of sin, how much worse it would be for us. We might be in the power of evil spirits stronger than we are, from whose hideous tyranny we should feel it a mercy to be delivered over to the righteous judgment of a pure and holy God. You say you are afraid of God. But what human imagination can picture the horrors of a universe given over to the rioting of evil unrestrained? Thank God for His holiness. Though He slay us, we had better trust in Him. III. BELIEVE ALSO IN ME. 1. In me, not as a second rival object of trust, but as God manifest in the flesh, rounded out and historic. This takes us back into bewildering depths. Sin is a tremendous mystery. But for sin, however, we might never have known, in this world, the sublime Triunity of God. Triunity, as we have to study it, is the whole Godhead, dealing with the problem of moral evil. 2. "Believe also in Me." The work of atonement is done, was done centuries ago in time, ages ago in eternity. God in Christ now stands pledged to the forgiveness of sin on the condition of repentance. 3. "Believe also in Me." Human history is God's judgment day. Nations are rising and falling. Human history is also God's day of grace. The kingdom began in an upper chamber. From then till now the kingdom has steadily advanced. The steady progress of Christianity has no parallel in the history of any other religion. The problem demands solution. And only one is possible. But for the magnetism of the felt divinity of Christ, Christianity could not have started at all as it did, or continued as it has. It stands to-day the old solid bulwark of liberty and order against license and chaos. (*R. D. Hitchcock, D.D.*)

In My Father's house are many mansions.—*The Father's house*:—I. CHRIST SITS AND DISCOVERS HEAVEN TO US. 1. Its nature. His home. "This is not your rest." 2. Its extent. "Many mansions." "Yet there is room." 3. Its reality. "If it were not so I would have told you." Christ knew it—came from it—went to it. Stephen saw its open door and its glory when his breath was being beaten out of his body. II. CHRIST ASCENDS AND PREPARES HEAVEN FOR US. "I go to prepare a place for you." He prepares heaven for us—1. By making it accessible. The angel with the flaming sword no longer guards the tree of life, and the veil of the Temple no longer hinders man's approach to God. 2. By gathering its people. Heaven becomes richer to us as Christians die. It is daily more home-like. 3. By supply-

ing its blessings. Who knows so well as He the kind of heaven that will meet our needs? Yes, and He prepares it all. III. CHRIST RETURNS AND ENTERS HEAVEN WITH US. "If I go," &c. This applies to—1. All the journey of life. "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest." 2. All the labours of life. "Go ye into all the world and preach, &c. . . . and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." 3. All the trials of life. "When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee," &c. 4. The close of life. He is there with the dying saint. IV. CHRIST ABIDES AND BECOMES HEAVEN TO US. "That where I am there ye may be also." This was Paul's idea of heaven—having a desire to depart and to be with Christ. (*W. H. Burton.*) *My Father's house*:—The very term changed the whole character and aspect of Hades. The invisible became visible in the form of the most benign and beautiful of all the institutions that lend charm and joy to life. My Father's house! then for the first time men dared to think of death as a going home. It seems a vast, awful world, this invisible which stretches out to the infinite all round us; the trembling soul may well shudder as it goes forth to meet its destiny. But the thought "My Father's house," dissipates all dread. Be it what it may, and where it may, this vast unknown, it is filled with that nameless benediction, a Father's presence and lit with the light of a Father's smile. It is this sense of a loving Presence, meeting us at life's outer gate, and bringing us into a bright home full of light and beauty and living joy, which, for the Christian, has so utterly dissipated the terror; and this made death seem to St. Francis a sister to take him by the hand and conduct him home. It is the activity, the animation, the joyful tasks, the abounding interest, of the life of the invisible world unveiled by Christ, which is the characteristic revelation of the gospel. It is not a world of shades, but a world of sons in strong immortal forms, instinct with energy, rich in faculty, busy with the tasks that occupy the angels; a world glad with work and bright with song. (*J. B. Brown, B.A.*) *My Father's house magnificent*:—A New Zealand chief who visited England was remarkable for the deep spirituality of his mind and his constant delight in the word of God. One day he was taken to see a beautiful mansion near London. The gentleman who took him expected to see him greatly astonished and charmed with its magnificence, but it seemed to excite little or no admiration in his mind. Wondering how this could be, he began to point out to him its grandeur. Tamahana heard all silently, then, looking round, said, "My Father's house is finer than this." "Your father's house!" thought the gentleman, who knew that his father's home was but a poor mud cottage. But Tamahana went on to speak in his own touching strain of the "many mansions" of the redeemed. (*W. Baxendale.*) *Entering the Father's house*:—It was the quaint saying of a dying man, who exclaimed: "I have no fear of going home. God's finger is on the latch, and I am ready for Him to open the door. It is but the entrance to my Father's house." *The house of many mansions*:—From these words we learn—I. The MAGNITUDE of heaven. Christ's going away would naturally seem to them pure loss. Death, as a natural event, always seems so. But Christ says death is not a closing so much as an opening—not a going away so much as a coming home. It is the passing of a pilgrim from one mansion to another, from the winter to the summer residence, from one of the outlying provinces up nearer the central home. This is not a chance expression, far less a mere figure of speech. There are many others. "The third heavens"; Christ has "passed through all heavens"; "heaven, even the heaven of heavens," a place evidently of inconceivable grandeur, for even that cannot contain the infinite presence of God. This idea of immense capacity is a real relief from some of the more popular conceptions of the future life, as that of a temple, &c. The population of this world is something tremendous. It has been yielding immense numbers to heaven in every age. Thus "a great multitude which no man can number," has been passing, and will pass, in ceaseless procession. And we cannot help wondering how they are all to be provided for! II. Out of the idea of vastness arises that of an endless VARIETY. The variety existing in God's works here is one of the principal charms of the natural world. So as there are "many mansions," the adorning of them will be very various. One will not be as another. We do not go to heaven to lose our natural tastes, our sinless preferences, but rather to have all these gratified in a far higher degree. Otherwise heaven would be plainer, poorer, and less interesting than earth. And unless our own nature were pressed down into some kind of mechanical exactness and shape, weariness would ensue. There would be a sighing for the lost seasons of the earth, its withered flowers, its light and shade, its many countries, and its encircling seas. But no! There will

be places, pursuits, and enjoyments for all. III. Then, lest this vastness and variety should seem too large to our thought, we have also in these words a sweet assurance as to the HOMELINESS of heaven. IV. REALITY. "If it were not so, I would have told you." This life in itself is shadowy enough. We speak of "long days," and of "long years." But when the awakened immortal soul looks at those spaces of time in the light of its own eternity, how short and shadowy they seem! In those times we feel that everything depends on the reality and permanence of the future life! No man who has not long been untrue to himself and to his God can be pleased with the thought of annihilation. But who can tell him firmly where lies the realm of life, or whether anywhere? He asks philosophy, and she answers, "I see something like it, but I cannot surely tell. It may be land or it may be cloud." He asks his own reason, and the instincts of his heart, and they answer "yes" to-day and "no" to-morrow, according to the mood, and the aspects of outward life. Then, turning to Jesus Christ, he asks by his sorrow, by his hopes, by all the struggling instincts that will not die, by that upward look in which the soul is "seeking a city with foundations," whether such a city is builded —whether such a life is secure. And the answer is here. Conclusion: The love of heaven has been derided by some as a selfish passion. No doubt heaven *may* be represented and desired by the mind as a place of escape from conflict, of mere ignoble rest. But if we take it just as it is projected to our view in the Scriptures —in its relations to earthly labour, and suffering, and desire; and as the place where our higher toils and nobler enjoyments shall begin—then the desire of heaven is the noblest and purest passion we cherish. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *Many mansions:*—Sorrow needs simple words for its consolation; and simple words are the best clothing for the largest truths. Note in these words—I. THE "FATHER'S HOUSE," AND ITS AMPLE ROOM. There is only one other occasion in which our Lord used this expression: "Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise." Its courts, its many chambers, its ample porches, with room for thronging worshippers, represented in some poor way the wide sweep and space of that higher house. 1. How sweet and familiar this conception of heaven! (1) There is something awful, even to the best souls, in the thought even of the glories beyond. But how it is all softened when we say, "My Father's house." Most of us have left behind us the sweet security which used to be ours when we lived as children in a father's house here. But we may all look forward to the renewal, in far nobler form, of these early days, where the shyest and timidest child shall feel at ease and secure. (2) And consider how this conception suggests answers to so many of our questions about the relationship of the inmates to one another. Are they to dwell isolated in their several mansions? Surely if He be the Father, and Heaven be His house, the relation of the redeemed to one another must have in it more than all the sweet familiarity and unrestrained frankness which subsists in the families of earth. (3) But, further, this great and tender name has its deepest meaning in a spiritual state of which the essential elements are the loving manifestation of God as Father, the perfect consciousness of sonship, the happy union of all the children in one great family, and the derivation of all their blessedness from their elder Brother. 2. The ample room in this great house. (1) There was room where Christ went for eleven poor men. But Christ's prescient eye looked down the ages, and some glow of satisfaction flitted across His sorrow as He saw from afar the result of the impending travail of His soul in the multitudes by whom God's heavenly house should yet be filled. Perhaps that upper room, like the most of the roof-chambers in Jewish houses, was open to the skies, and whilst He spoke the innumerable lights that blaze in that clear heaven shone down upon them, and He may have pointed to these as He spoke. Ah! brethren, if we could only widen our measurement of the walls of the New Jerusalem to that of the "golden rod which the man, that is, the angel" applied to it, we should understand how much bigger it is than any of these poor communities on earth. If we would lay to heart, as we ought to do, the deep meaning of that indefinite "many" in my text it would rebuke our narrowness. (2) That one word may also be used to heighten our own confidence as to our own poor selves. A chamber in the great temple waits for each of us, and the question is, Shall we occupy it or shall we not? The old rabbis said that, however many the throngs of worshippers who came up to Jerusalem at the Passover, the streets and the courts were never crowded. And so it is with that great city. There are throngs, but no crowds. Each finds a place in the ample sweep of the Father's house, like some of the great palaces that barbaric Eastern kings used to build, in whose courts armies might encamp, and the chambers of which

were counted by the thousand. (3) There is only another occasion in this Gospel in which the word here translated "mansions" is employed—"We will come and make our abode with Him." Our mansion is in God; God's dwelling-place is in us. When prodigal children go away from the father's house sometimes a heart-broken parent will keep the boy's room just as it used to be when he was young and pure, and will hope and weary through long days for him to come back and occupy it again. God is keeping a room for you in His house; do you see that you fill it. II. THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST'S REVELATION FOR OUR NEEDS. "If it were not so, I would have told you." 1. He sets Himself forward in very august fashion as being the Revealer and the Opener of that house for us. There is a singular tone about all our Lord's few references to the future—a tone of decisiveness. He stands like one on a mountain-top, looking down into the valleys beyond, and telling His comrades in the plain behind Him what He sees. He speaks of that unseen world always as one who had been in it, and who was reporting experiences, and not giving forth opinions. Very remarkable, therefore, is it that with this tone there should be such reticence in Christ's references to the future. But my text suggests to us that we have got as much as we need, and, for the rest, if we needed to have heard it, He would have told us. Let the gaps remain. The gaps are part of the revelation, and we know enough for faith and hope. 2. May we not widen the application of that thought to other matters? In times like the present, of doubt and unrest, it is a great piece of Christian wisdom to recognize the limitations of our knowledge and the sufficiency of the fragments that we have. What do we get a revelation for? To solve theological puzzles and dogmatic difficulties; to inflate us with the pride of *quasi*-omniscience: or to present to us God in Christ for faith, for love, for obedience, for imitation? Surely the latter, and for such purposes we have enough. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Many mansions:*—I. HEAVEN IS GOD'S HOUSE. 1. God is infinite (Psa. cxlvii. 5). 2. Therefore, not comprehended, or included anywhere (Isa. lxvi. 1). 3. But is present everywhere (Psa. cxxxix. 7). 4. But yet in some places unveils Himself, and discovers His glory more than in others. 5. Where God is pleased to reveal Himself most, is called His house. He has a twofold house. (1) A house of grace. (*a*) The Church in general (Mark iii. 35). (*b*) A believer's heart in particular (Isa. lvii. 15; Rev. iii. 20). (2) A house of glory, where He manifests most clearly the glory (1 Cor. xiii. 12) of His power, goodness, mercy, wisdom. 6. Hence, observe that they who come to heaven—(1) Dwell with God, and so with the fountain of light (Psa. civ. 2), life (Psa. xxxvi. 9), love, joy (Psa. xvi. 11). (2) And so are secure from enemies. (3) And enjoy true happiness (Psa. xvi. 11; xvii. 15). II. IT IS CHRIST'S FATHER'S HOUSE. And this adds great comfort; for—1. We may be sure of entertainment, though not for our own, yet for Christ's sake. 2. We shall dwell with Christ (ver. 3). 3. In Christ: it is our Father's house too (chap. xx. 17). III. THESE MANSIONS ARE CONVENIENT AND SUITABLE—1. For our natures and capacities (2 Pet. i. 4). 2. For our wants and necessities: being—(1) Void of all troubles—(*a*) Spiritual: as of the sense of God's displeasure (Ezek. xvi. 42); doubts about our estate; Satan's temptations (1 Pet. v. 8); the delusions of this world; our own corruptions (Eph. v. 27; Heb. iv. 10). (*b*) Temporal (Rev. vii. 17); for here is no want in our estates (Psa. xxxiv. 9; lxxxiv. 11), no crosses in our enjoyments, no disgrace upon our names (Psa. cxix. 39), no sickness in our bodies (Mark xii. 25), no cares in our minds (Matt. xiii. 22; Phil. iv. 6), no death (Rev. xxi. 4). 2. Furnished with all delightsome furniture. (1) For our souls. (*a*) Our understandings. (*b*) Our wills and affections (Psa. xvi. 11). (2) For our bodies (Phil. iii. 21), robes (Rev. vi. 11), crowns (James i. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 8), thrones (Luke xxii. 30), banquets (Isa. xxv. 6; Rom. xiv. 17; Rev. vii. 17), the most pleasing objects (1 Cor. xiii. 12), the most celestial melodies (Rev. iv. 8–11). 3. They are everlasting (Matt. xxv. 46; Rom. vi. 23; 2 Cor. v. 1). IV. IN HEAVEN THERE ARE MANY MANSIONS. 1. What is the purport of this expression? Not distinct cells, but—(1) That there is room enough for many. (2) That many shall be saved (Rev. vii. 9; James ii. 5); but not irrespectively (1 Cor. i. 26–28). 2. Whether in these mansions will there be degrees of glory? (1) Negatively. All shall be alike in respect of—(*a*) Their freedom from evil (Rev xxi. 4). (*b*) God's love. (*c*) Duration. (*d*) Their capacities, *i.e.*, every one shall enjoy as much as he is capable of (Psa. xvi. 11). (2) Positively. One will be more capable, and so enjoy more than another. This appears—(*a*) From Scripture (1 Cor. xv. 41, 42; Matt. xix. 28). (*b*) There are degrees of torments in hell (Luke xii. 47, 48; Matt. xi. 21, 22; Rom. ii. 9). (*c*) There are degrees of angelical glory (1 Thess. iv. 16;

Jude 9). (*d*) There are degrees of grace and good works here (Rom. ii. 6; 2 Cor. v. 10; Luke xix. 16–18). 3. There are many mansions. Then—(1) Despair not of room for you there. (2) Labour to have one of them. There are degrees in glory—then strive to be eminent in grace that you may be eminent in glory (Matt. xv. 28). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *The heavenly home*:—The text is suggested of—I. PERMANENCE. 1. "All things change, and we with them." The earth and sun and stars are moving from their old forms into new, but their slow, stern cycles seem to us changeless when we think of ourselves. Let any one who has advanced but a short way in life look round. Old times are away, old interests, old aims: the haunts, the friends, the faces of our youth, where are they? Gone, or so changed that we dare not think to recall them. And we are changing within. If we could keep up the life and freshness there it would be less sad. There is compensation for this, if we will seek it. If we have a home in God through Christ, it brings in something better than youthful brightness. But here, too, there is frequently change. The anchor of our hope seems to lose its hold, our sense of pardon and peace may be broken, and the face of God, if seen at all, may look dim and distant. 2. It is from such changes that the promise of Christ carries us to a fixed place of abode. The permanence of the dwelling shall ensure permanence in all that belongs to the dwellers in it. There must be, indeed, the change of progress: it is the permanence not of death but of life; and so the changes of decay, of loss, of bereavement, of the unretiring past, these are gone with the last great change, which ends the perishing and opens the eternal. There shall be no wavering of faith, no waning of hope, no chill of love. Here, change at every step leaves some lost good behind it; there change shall take all its good things forward into fuller possession, and thus become a growing performance. The way to be sure of a permanent home is to keep fast hold of Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. II. EXTENT. Our present life is related to it as that of childhood to manhood. Let us think of the dwelling of the child, where it looks from its little window on the few houses or fields which make up its world, and then let us compare it with what the man knows of his present world-residence, when he has surveyed with his eye or his mind the breadth of the earth with its oceans and lands that stretch over continents by Alps and Andes. There enter at the wicket-gate Christiana and also the children, many Ready-to-halts and Feeble-minds, and far-off pilgrims, for whom we can find no names, but who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Infants are carried through the door sleeping; and it is not for us to say by what far-off rays in dark nights, by what doubtful paths amid many imperfections, hearts have been yearning to this home. The notices of Rahab and Ruth, of Ittai and Naaman, of the wise men of the East, and the Greeks who came up to the Passover, of the Ethiopian eunuch and the devout Cornelius, are hints for the enlargement of our hopes about many who had the same yearning in their hearts, though they did not see the walls of any earthly Jerusalem. And, if we believe the Bible, there are long eras to run, when the flow shall be toward God more than it ever has been away from Him. And then there is to be a gathering together of *all* things in Christ, and the holy angels have relations to Him which will give them their share in His home. When we think of this, how the extent of the heavenly world grows! and the discoveries of science may help us to extend our hopes. III. VARIETY. In all God's works the many means the manifold. IV. UNITY. These abodes of the future, manifold as they are, have walls around, and an over-arching roof, which make them one house, and that house a home. The chambers of a house have their communication with one another, and the heavenly world, wide as it is, shall have a unity of fellowship. In the present world the children of God are far apart, separated by the emergencies of life, by death, by misunderstandings and prejudices, by chills of heart and jealousies; and they rear their many little mansions, forgetful of the one house. The word of the Saviour promises a reversal of this long, sad history. Conclusion: 1. Something is needed to secure all this, and our Lord teaches us to carry to the thought of heaven a filial heart. It is "the Father's" house. This is needed to make it a home in any sense; needed to give the heart rest either on earth or in heaven. Men who inquire into the facts and laws of the world, and find no God in it, have made themselves homeless. Men who have found human affection, but no God beneath it, have found only the shadow of a home. It is to teach us this that God has made a father's love the bond of a true human household. If it were possible to enter heaven and find no Father there, heaven would be the grave of hope. 2. Our Lord has taught us to connect heaven with the thought of Himself—"My" Father's

house. Heaven is the house of Christ's Father. (1) It is as when a palace has been raised with all its rooms and their furniture complete, but it is dark or dimly seen by lights carried from place to place. The sun arises, and by the central dome the light is poured into all the corridors and chambers, and by the windows there are prospects over hill and valley and river. Christ is the sun of this house. (2) If we think of its mansions, and wonder where the final resting-place shall be, it is where Christ takes up His dwelling, "that they may be with Me where I am." (3) If we think of its extent and variety, our imagination might be bewildered, and our soul chilled by boundless fields of knowledge, which stir the intellect and famish the heart; but where He is, knowledge becomes the wisdom of love—the daylight softened; and a heart beats in the universe which throbs to its remotest and minutest fibre; for "in Him is life, and the life is the light of men." (4) If we think of heaven in its unity of fellowship, it is in Him that it is maintained and felt. "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me," &c. (5) And if we think of a Father in heaven, it is Christ who has revealed Him. "No man hath seen God at any time," &c. (6) But beyond all this, it is Christ's Father's house because He alone is the way and the door to it. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *Home in heaven:*—I. A DESCRIPTION OF HEAVEN. 1. A house, not a tent, put up to-day, and taken down to morrow; but the home we come to at the end of all our travels; fitted up for rest, security and enjoyment. 2. God's own house. Not merely the place where His people are to dwell, but the place where He Himself dwells, and enjoys His unutterable happiness and rest. It is not simply, "the kingdom"—it is "the palace of the great King." What, therefore, we may ask, may we not expect in heaven? We do not go there as strangers or foreigners; we go to the richest house in the universe as the children of the owner of it. The very best things it can afford will be ours. The astonished prodigal had the best provisions, and the best robe, brought forth for him, when he got home. 3. A house with "many mansions" in it, large, spacious, having many rooms, fitted up for the reception of many guests. II. AN ASSURANCE OF ITS TRUTH. 1. Here is greatness. He speaks of heaven as none other: like One who had been familiar with it. 2. Here, too, is His love; "If it were not so, He would have told them." They had left all to follow Him, with some earthly expectations, perhaps, but yet chiefly in the expectation of a future recompense. III. THE END OF OUR LORD'S DEPARTURE TO THE HEAVEN HE HAS BEEN DESCRIBING. And here is love again. Had we been asked what He was going to heaven for, we should have said—To get away from this evil world; to enter into His joy, &c. But He says, No; "I go there to prepare a place for you." He left His Father's house for us; He now returns to it for us. By this we must understand, not His creating heaven for us, or enlarging or adorning it, but removing out of the way all things which would prevent our entering into it. He goes there to prove our title to it; to show, in His wounded hands and pierced side, that He has paid for us its stipulated price. He goes to claim it on our behalf; to take possession of it in our name and stead. Hence He is said to have entered it as our Forerunner. IV. THE WAY IN WHICH CHRIST WILL PUT US IN POSSESSION OF THE HEAVEN HE HAS PREPARED FOR US. "He will send death to us," you may say, "to summon us to His kingdom." No: "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." It does not satisfy Him to snatch us from destruction, to open heaven for us, to bring us into the way to it, to make us meet for it; He will come Himself, and take us to it. And when we are there, He will not say—"There is the door of My Father's house open for you; you may now enter in;" He will not leave angels to welcome us, or our holy ministers and friends, who have gone before, to receive us; He Himself will come like a parent to his door to receive there his long expected and beloved child. He seems to regard this as the very summit of the heavenly happiness. And so every real believer feels that nothing higher can be promised him, than that he should "be ever with his Lord." (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *Heaven the Christian's home:*—It is impossible wholly to estimate the value of the gospel. It is not only that it brings the knowledge of salvation to us; but it makes revelations that no other book on earth ever made with reference to a future state of existence. I. You find in the text, then, first, the idea of COMFORT. You will remark that it was Christ's intention, by this description of heaven, to administer comfort to the disciples. Then mark the consolations of religion, and the consolatory hope of heaven, belong to a certain class—to those that believe in God and believe also in Christ. But now, what is the comfort that the idea of a father's house, or home, conveys to the mind? First of all, Christ speaks of His Father's house, and there-

fore we call it our Father's house—just because he says, "My Father and your Father, my God and your God." Of all the ideas of comfort that we can form, "home" conveys the sweetest. 1. Now the first thing that strikes us here is a wonder certainly—but it is the truth—that we shall feel perfectly at home in our Father's house. When we think of our own weakness and sinfulness here, and then think of the glory of God, the glory of Christ, the glory of angels, and the glory of the spirits of just men made perfect, it requires no slight effort of mind to fancy that we shall be at home there: but we shall. 2. To constitute a home there must be familiarity and confidence. We can talk with the folks at home with a confidence that we cannot use towards strangers. Now imagine yourself in familiar conversation, in love, with patriarchs, and with prophets, and with Christ Himself—for He will be there. It requires an elevation of faith and confidence, and spirituality of mind. 3. But, of course, this supposes another thing with regard to home—that it is all love there. Here we are strangers—it may be, perhaps, surrounded by enemies; there all is love. Evil tempers, crabbed dispositions, restless fretfulness, that even some good men manifest, will not be there. There will be perfect love; and every one will wear a cheerful countenance; and it will be a glorious home. Well, that is what you are to think about; that is what it will be. Don't let your hearts be troubled. If troubles come, think of your home, as a stranger does who has long journeyed, and not had a very comfortable berth to rest in at night. II. In the second place, we have the idea of PERMANENCE. There is a permanence about heaven that we can well understand, if we cannot fully comprehend. 1. The first thing is this, that when we get there nobody can turn us out again. 2. Then you will further observe, that as to this permanence, there will be ample sources of joy for us throughout eternity. III. The third idea in our text is PREPARATION. Observe it is prepared for us, and the preparation is made by Christ Himself. And you will notice that preparation made for us testifies to the kindness and love of Him who prepares it. 1. Now whilst this shows the love of Christ to His people, the simple fact of His going to prepare a place for us you see involves too His knowledge of our love to Him. It is really as though He had said, "Heaven won't be a complete home to Me till you are there, and I am sure it will not be to you till I am there; we must be together." 2. But, moreover, this preparation shows the adaptation of our present state to that home that He is gone to prepare for us. "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who hath also given us the earnest of the Spirit." IV. But in the next place we have the idea of RECEPTION. "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." You immediately catch the idea of home here. The reception one will meet with from wife and children is one of the delightful anticipations of returning home. The moment the spirit is out of the body the first object on which it will fix its sight is Christ, with smiles on His face and glory on His brow. For, mark you, Christ would not trust the safety of one of His redeemed spirits in the hands of all the angels of heaven. He will be there Himself to take care of it. We do not know what death is: He does. Observe, there is a twofold reception which Christ will give us—first, that which we may call our personal reception in heaven; and next that public, glorious reception that He will give us at the last great day, when He shall come a second time without sin unto salvation. V. Now, in the last place, here is CERTAINTY. "If it were not so, I would have told you." 1. Christ is already there in possession. 2. Next, Christ says He would have told us if there had been no heaven. Further, our hopes of heaven should guard us against two evils that we are subject to. The first is that which Christ has set before you. Don't be unduly troubled about earthly things. Then, on the other hand, do not be too delighted with earthly things. (*J. Carter.*) *Heaven—home:*—Some one asked a Scotchman if he was on his way to heaven. "Why, man," he said, "I live there." He was only a pilgrim here. Heaven was his home. (*D. L. Moody.*) *Heaven—home:*—Death came unexpectedly to a man of wealth, as it almost always does; and he sent out for his lawyer to draw his will. He went on willing away his property; and when he came to his wife and child, he said he wanted his wife and child to have the home. The little child didn't understand what death was. She was standing near, and she said, "Papa, have you got a home in that land you are going to?" The arrow reached that heart; but it was too late. He saw his mistake. He had got no home beyond the grave. *Heaven—home:*—"Home"—oh, how sweet is that word! What beautiful and tender associations cluster thick around it! Compared with it, house, mansion, palace, are cold, heartless terms. But "home!" that word quickens the

pulse, warms the heart, stirs the soul to its depths, makes age feel young again, rouses apathy into energy, sustains the sailor in his midnight watch, inspires the soldier with courage on the field of battle, and imparts patient endurance to the worn-down sons of toil. The thought of it has proved a sevenfold shield to virtue: the very name of it has been a spell to call back the wanderer from the paths of vice. And far away, where myrtles bloom and palm-trees wave, and the ocean sleeps upon coral strands, to the exile's fond fancy it clothes the naked rock, or stormy shore, or barren moor, or wild highland mountain, with charms he weeps to think of, and longs once more to see. Grace sanctifies these lovely affections, and imparts a sacredness to the homes of earth by making them types of heaven. As a home the believer delights to think of it. Thus, when lately bending over a dying saint, and expressing our sorrow to see him lay so low, with the radiant countenance rather of one who had just left heaven than of one about to enter it, he raised and clasped his hands, and exclaimed in ecstasy, "I am going home." (*T. Guthrie.*) *Heaven, our home*:—In our last dreadful war the Federals and the Confederates were encamped on opposite sides of the Rappahannock, and one morning the brass band of the Northern troops played the national air, and all the Northern troops cheered and cheered. Then, on the opposite side of the Rappahannock, the brass band of the Confederates played "My Maryland" and "Dixie," and then all the Southern troops cheered and cheered. But after a while one of the bands struck up "Home, Sweet Home," and the band on the opposite side of the river took up the strain, and when the tune was done the Confederates and the Federals all together united, as the tears rolled down their cheeks, in one great "Huzza! huzza!" Well, my friends, heaven comes very near to-day. It is only a stream that divides us—the narrow stream of death; and the voices there and the voices here seem to commingle, and we join trumpets and hosannahs and hallelujahs, and the chorus of the united song of earth and heaven is, "Home, Sweet Home." (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *A good home to go to*:—Mr. Mead, an aged Christian, when asked how he did, answered, "I am going home as fast as I can, as every honest man ought to do when his day's work is over, and I bless God I have a good home to go to." *Nearing home*:—It was stormy from shore to shore, without a single fair day. But the place to which we were going was my home; there was my family; there was my church; there were my friends, who were as dear to me as my own life. And I lay perfectly happy in the midst of sickness and nausea. All that the boat could do to me could not keep down the exultation and joy which rose up in me. For every single hour was carrying me nearer and nearer to the spot where was all that I loved in the world. It was deep, dark midnight when we ran into Halifax. I could see nothing. Yet the moment we came into still water I rose from my berth and got up on deck. And as I sat near the smoke-stack while they were unloading the cargo, upon the wharf I saw the shadow of a person, apparently, going backward and forward near me. At last the thought occurred to me, "Am I watched?" Just then the person addressed me, saying, "Is this Mr. Beecher?" "It is," I replied. "I have a telegram for you from your wife." I had not realized that I had struck the continent where my family were. There, in the middle of the night, and in darkness, the intelligence that I had a telegram from home—I cannot tell you what a thrill it sent through me! We are all sailing home; and by and by, when we are not thinking of it, some shadowy thing (men call it death), at midnight, will pass by, and will call us by name, and will say, "I have a message for you from home; God waits for you." Are they worthy of anything but pity who are not able to bear the hardships of the voyage? It will not be long before you, and I, and every one of us will hear the messenger sent to bring us back to heaven. It is pleasant to me to think that we are wanted there. I am thankful to think that God loves in such a way that He yearns for me—yes, a great deal more than I do for Him. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Diverted from thoughts of home*:—Why do we not go home? Why are we like a silly child, that when his father sends him forth, and bids him hie him home again, every flower that he meets with in the field, every sign he sees in the street, every companion that meets him in the way, stops him, and hinders him from repairing to his father? So it is with us for the most part: every trifle, every profit, every bauble, every matter of pleasure, every delight, is enough to divert and turn aside our thoughts from death, from home, from heaven, from our God; and we are taken up and lose ourselves, I know not where. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *Heaven*:—I. THE UNIVERSAL HEAVEN OF THE GOOD—"Father's house." It is a scene of—1. Family life. It is the "Father's house." (1) It is

a large family. "An innumerable company of angels," "thrones, principalities," &c. (2) A holy family. All are pure, free from selfishness, from error and sin. (3) A harmonious family. Though mixed and of vast gradations they are all united in thought, sympathy, and aim. (4) An undying family. (5) An ever-increasing family. 2. Undoubted reality. "If it were not so, I would have told you." It is no poet's dream, no fictitious realm. (1) He is too intelligent to be mistaken. He knows every part of the universe. (2) He is too truthful to misrepresent. In Him there is no motive to deceive. (3) He is too kind to delude. II. THE SPECIAL HEAVEN OF CHRIST'S DISCIPLES. "I go to prepare a place for you." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The holy habitation of heaven*:—I. HEAVEN IS THE HOUSE OF OUR FATHER, AND UNITES ALL THE ASSOCIATIONS OF FILIAL HAPPINESS AND REVERENT DEVOTION. The relationship of family is supposed by the scheme of our redemption. Sin is alienating; but we are made nigh by the blood of Christ, and our consequent fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. A child-like title and a child-like temper are the results: "Now are we the sons of God," and home is the abode of children. Touching are the thoughts of home: what is the home of heaven? 1. Quiet and repose. We are wanderers on earth. "Without are fightings, within are fears." But soon shall we toil no more. The days of our mourning shall be ended. We shall come to our Father's house in peace. 2. Confidence. Look at the home-born child. When danger threatens, home is the bulwark: when affliction weeps, this is the asylum. It is this assuredness which is the secret of all earthly satisfaction and peace. Yet is it not always to be cherished, it may not be invariably justified. Suspicion coils like a serpent about each flower of existence; or, like a lurking poison, taints all its springs. But with what strictest security does all the happiness of heaven rise on our view! Nothing maketh a lie. Thieves do not break through and steal. There is no more death. 3. Concord. Nevertheless a house may be divided against itself. But the inhabitants of that house are "made perfect in one." They have one heart. They see eye to eye. If we too much forget to ask each other while here below, "Have we not all one Father?"—the remembrance of that truth will ever be vivid and efficacious in our "Father's house." 4. Sympathy. 5. Improvement. This is the true sphere of education. But during our moral state, however matured our powers and enlarged our attainments, we "speak as a child," &c. In heaven we "shall put away childish things." In that light we shall see light. 6. Content and happiness. 7. But it is not only our Father's house in the associations of a home, it is the consecrated receptacle of His worship. And these ideas are not incompatible. For, to the Christian's perception and taste, what can make heaven more delightful, in addition to its illustration as a home, than that this home shall be devoted, with the family which fills it, to the high praises of our Father in heaven? The votary is the child! The child is the votary! Pilgrim never touched more reverently the dreadful shrine: son never more joyously bounded upon the paternal threshold. With this double intention, of resting in a home and of ministering in a sanctuary, he exclaims: "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." II. IN THIS HOUSE OF HOME AND TEMPLE THERE ARE MANY MANSIONS. And thus are we taught that the greatest amplitude consists with the strictest unity, that though the mansions are numerous the house is one. And thus, also, we learn that there is no monotony in that blessed state. There is order in the harmony of difference, and the distribution of the mansions completes the identity of the house. Meditating, then, on this multiform glory, what do we ascertain of the blessed immortals? 1. The immensity of their number. Heaven once suffered a vast depopulation. The influence of the catastrophe we cannot determine. There was a strange vacancy amidst those groves: untrodden paths and ungathered fruits. But that heaven might not always remain thus diminished, it was arranged that beings who had themselves lapsed, and whom a most stupendous salvation should rescue from all their guilt and rebelliousness and ruin, should constitute an incomputable augmentation over the deficiency and loss. There was a wonder in heaven. Meek and humble, there bent before the Divine Majesty a solitary human spirit. It sung, but it was a lonely song. It gazed, but its eye rested upon nothing like itself. Up from this world another and another sprung. He the solitary was set in a family. The question of preponderance, in the number of the saved over that of the lost, might now be properly argued. (1) The proportion of infant death, the certainty of infant salvation, furnish us with most pleasant grounds on which to rest the argument. (2) The design of punishment comprehends warning, and we may presume without irreverence, this purpose

being revealed, that the good of the majority is sought, and that they who perish form a very inferior proportion to those who are saved. (3) There are certain implications concerning these ratios which we cannot overlook. Sometimes they are equal. "Five of them were wise and five were foolish." In other instances there is an encouraging difference. Two of the servants, among three, are "good and faithful:" the third alone is "wicked and unprofitable." Still higher is placed that relative state: "the wedding is furnished with guests," all duly apparelled and royally approved, and only one is without the qualifying badge. (4) Christianity, as the reign of grace, asserts its purpose and pledges its supremacy. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Shall sin predominate and proclaim more victims than this grace can enumerate subjects? (5) Models of prayer are instituted for us. "Let all the people praise Thee." "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." These anticipations are, then, assured possibilities: we are taught to seek them with believing expectation. (6) A glorious sequel to our earth's dark history is foretold. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ." 2. The inequality of their glory. Where there are rewards, there must be differences. They suppose adaptation and adjustment to every form and habit of excellence. "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly," &c. This man has been like a continued sigh and aspiration and panting after holiness. That man, truly sincere, has pursued a far less devoted course. These could not enjoy the same portion. Nor is there a supposeable alternative, save that all were forcibly, mechanically, conformed to one standard. There would be, then, a necessity to lower as well as to raise, to repress as well as to expand. The first process would be unjust, however the second might be gracious. The speed of a zealous life would give no advantage in the immortal race. Yet if these inequalities exist, some think they must engender envy. Is it necessarily thus even in this imperfect state of ours? Charity envieth not, &c. In heaven nothing is loved but holiness, and the highest holiness is loved the most. 3. The diversity of their character. The modifications of the regenerated soul are not fewer and less notable than those of the soul unrenewed. And who does not rejoice in this difference of mental powers and habits, this diversity of gifts and graces, during the earthly exhibition? In heaven our nature has not perished: our being is only fulfilled. All of it is brought out and glorified. What pleasure to search through these "many mansions" and to find every form of worth and might, every species of intellectual activity and spiritual perfection, all endlessly, as actually, variegated, multiplied, and combined! 4. The transition of their employment. One investigation, uncheckered and unrelieved, strains the mind. One enjoyment, unvaried, and undiverted, cloys. The glorified spirit may, therefore, not only find its mansion, but be free of the many mansions. Thus may it renew its youth and recreate its immortality. Now shall it offer praise. It bends in adoring contemplation. It sees the King in His beauty. It exercises itself in the research of wonder and mystery. It cultivates communion with all other heavenly spirits. What may not angels, who have ministered to the heirs of salvation, tell of their knowledge and their experience? What saints are there, and we shall recognize them. And are we not then to be still more filled with the love of God, more delineated with the image of Christ, more imbued with love for all saints? and then each effort brings its repose. "They rest not," and in that ceaselessness of activity is their rest. 5. The regularity of their arrangement. In this "great house," every "vessel," all "sanctified and meet for the Master's use," has its valuation and its function. There is the mansion—(1) Of the patriarchs, their thoughts still full of sacrifice. (2) Of the prophets, singing still as in their choir! (3) Of the apostles, pointing still to the atoning Lamb! (4) Of the martyrs, as new baptised from the flames! (5) Of faithful ministers, discriminating among the throng those who are their glory and their crown! (6) Of pious parents, their solicitudes fulfilled and their prayers answered in the conversion of their offspring! (7) Of self-sacrificing missionaries, as on set thrones, surrounded by their converts. "Yet there is room." But there is in these orders nothing repulsive, arrogant, or humiliating; all is one; one happy family! 6. The series of their progression. The tendencies and yearnings of the human mind are towards an indefinite life and advancement. These keep us restless and dissatisfied while we are in our sins: these excite us to follow on to know the Lord, when we receive the grace of God. If there was a point in our existence beyond which we could learn nothing further and enjoy nothing more, that would be the limit of well-being. Our misery, instead of being lessened by what

we had acquired, would be unspeakably aggravated. It would be like an ascent to some everlasting hill to gaze for first and for last our full of the glorious land, not then to die amidst the rapture, but to be doomed to life beneath the sudden fall of an endless night. The stretch for these progressions is the duration of eternity! (*R. W. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Variety in heaven*:—A mother was standing by the dying bed of her little child. She tried to lead the child's thoughts to heaven, and told her of how the city was of pure gold, of dazzling brightness. But the little one shuddered, and cried that the light would hurt her eyes. Then the mother told her of the choirs of angels, and the songs before the throne, and the child answered that the noise would make her head ache. At last the mother took the moaning child to her breast, and as she nestled there, she said, "if heaven is like this, I am ready to go there." For some there will be an existence of dazzling brightness, an existence full of grandeur and glory, like the sound of a mighty anthem; others, those who loved much, shall find, like St. John, their greatest joy in resting on the bosom of their Lord. (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *Recognition in heaven*:—Not long ago I stood by the death-bed of a little girl. Every fibre of her body and soul recoiled from the thought of death. "Don't let me die," she said; "don't let me die. Hold me fast. Oh, I can't go." "Jenny," I said, "you have two brothers in the other world, and there are thousands of tender-hearted people over there who will love you and take care of you." But she cried out again despairingly, "Don't let me go; they are strangers over there." But even as she was pleading her little hands relaxed their clinging hold from my waist and lifted themselves eagerly aloft. Her face was turned upwards; but it was her eyes that told the story. They were filled with the light of Divine recognition. They saw something plainly that we could not see; and they grew brighter and brighter. "Mamma," she said, "mamma, they are not strangers; I'm not afraid." Her form relapsed upon the pillows, and she was gone. (*Helen Williams.*) *Not dead, but gone home*:—We lament for the dead, because we ourselves dread death. The physical instinct, wisely given for the preservation of life, is controlled but not destroyed by faith. Afflicted believers, your sorrows are only the discomforts of a journey, each stage of which, however rough the road and wild the weather, brings you nearer home. The darkness is only that of the tunnel through which you are hurrying, and the speck of light at the end is nearing and brightening as you speed onward to the eternal sunshine. Our Lord speaks of heaven as home—"My Father's house." What a contrast to the gorgeous imagery employed by servants is this sublimely simple familiarity of the Son! Inspired men are overawed by the distant vision of the celestial city, with its pearly gates and streets of gold; as if a poor cottager, after visiting a royal palace, tried to describe the unimagined splendours of a place which members of the royal family simply knew as home. This was in harmony with His high claims of Deity! The disciples were not to be troubled on His account. Although betrayed, condemned, crucified, He was going home. They were not to be troubled for Him; and because of their intimate union with Him, they were not to be troubled for themselves. If heaven is Christ's home, it is ours also. We are "joint heirs with Jesus Christ." What hallowed associations are suggested by the word! Love makes home. 1. Home promises rest. There the wearied limbs or wearied brain repose after the day's toil. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; they rest from their labours." 2. Home suggests fidelity. We may suspect deceit and treachery outside, but we can cast off all reserve, all distrust at home. 3. Home suggests sympathy. There may be enmity outside, avowed or concealed, and even friends may sometimes prove forgetful, selfish, and unkind; but true home is the palace of love, "where hearts are of each other sure." But the purest of earthly homes are but faint types of that above. There every heart is wholly true to every other, being wholly true to God. 4. It is a permanent home; mansions, not movable tents, but an enduring habitation. "We know that when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved we have a building of God." How unlike the uncertainty of earthly things! The lake, reflecting from its unruffled surface the sky and stars, may, in one short hour, be wild with storms. The stream, which oft refreshed us, suddenly becomes dry. The fairest flowers droop even as we gaze on them. The loveliest homes are quickly broken up. No locks and bolts can shut out sickness and death. 5. And there is abundance of supply. There are "many mansions." The Father's house is large enough for all His children—vast as His own heart. 6. Number implies variety. The mansions are not uniform, though all are perfect. They are prepared for dwellers of varied

capacity—for children and young men, for babes in Christ and for those of full age. 7. These hopes are not visionary. "If it were not so, I would have told you." The disciples had forsaken all to follow Him. They loved their Lord, and knew He loved them. Could such love perish? They expected a kingdom; and as it was not to be earthly, it must be heavenly. Would Christ allow them to serve Him as they did, on false expectations? He did contradict their expectation of a temporal kingdom—would He not have contradicted this heavenly hope had it also been unfounded? O believer, your hope is no idle dream! That city does glow with splendour. "If it were not so, I would have told you." St. Paul says, "We are of good courage, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord" (R.V.). Death is only the migration of the soul from the fleshly tabernacle to the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We will not weep for them as dead. Is it death to reach home after the toilsome journey, to wear the crown after the fierce fight, to serve in the presence of the King, where there is fulness of joy? The funeral was only that of frailty, sorrow, and sin. A Christian in that coffin, in that grave? No! he is at home in the Father's house. (*N. Hall.*) *Room for all saved sinners in heaven:*—There was a poor man who had been a long while burdened in spirit. One night he dreamed that he stood at the gates of heaven, longing to enter; but he dare not, and could not, for sin had shut him out. At length he saw approaching the pearly gates a company of men who came on singing, dressed in white robes. So he stepped up to one of them, and said, "Who are you?" And they replied, "We are the goodly fellowship of the prophets." He said, "Alas! I cannot enter with you." And he watched them until they had passed the gates, and he heard outside the voice of song as they were received with welcome. Cast down and troubled, he watched until he saw another company approach, and they came with music and rejoicing. He said to them, "Who are you?" and they replied, "We are the noble army of martyrs." He said, "I cannot go with you; and when he heard the shouts a second time ascending from within the gates, his heart was heavy within him at the thought that it was not possible for him to enter there. Then came a third company, and he detected in the van the apostles, and after them there came mighty preachers and confessors of the Word. He said in his heart, "Alas! I cannot go with you, for I am no preacher, and I have done nothing for my Master." His heart was ready to break, for they entered and were lost to his sight; and he heard the triumphant acclamations as the Master said, "Well done, enter into the joy of your Lord." But as he waited, he saw a greater company approaching. He marked in the fore-front Saul of Tarsus, Mary Magdalene, the thief that died upon the cross; and they came streaming on. So he said to one of them, "Who are ye?" And they replied, "We are a company of sinners whom no man can number, saved by blood, through the rich, free, sovereign grace of God." Indeed, all the companies might have said the same, and the dream would have been more complete. But as this poor man, with the tears in his eyes, heard this word, he said, "Thank God, I can go with you, for I am a sinner like you, and like you I will trust in the merit of Him that died on Calvary." So he joined their ranks, and was about to enter, but he said in his heart, "When we come there shall be no songs; they will admit us, but it will be in silence, for we bring no honour to God; we have done nothing for Him." But to his surprise the acclaim was louder, the music was more melodious, and the shouts of acclamation were louder far, while they said, "Here are they who come to complete the number of the host whom Jesus bought with blood." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The parting consolation:*—Let us consider—I. THE TRUTH DECLARED. Consider the Father's house—1. In its majesty and greatness. It is the abode of the great King; where He holds His court, surrounded by all the angels and sons of light. 2. In the right which our Lord here supposes we have to it. But how shall guilty and polluted man hope for admission there? His right is, it is Christ's Father's house. We go there by the invitation of the Lord of glory; we go there by the bidding of Him who is the Heir. "Ye are Christ's." "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Him." 3. In the vastness of its dimensions. Christ, who will "bring many sons into glory," hath for these sons many prepared and furnished mansions. Christ's mansions, like Christ's heart, will be found to be full and large, and ready to embrace every humble, penitent and believing soul. 4. In its everlastingness. "Hitherto ye have dwelt in tabernacles; then ye shall enter into the everlasting mansions," into "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 5. In its unfailing certainty. "If it were not so, I would have told

you." II. THE PURPOSE AVOWED. To "prepare a place." Were not those bright walls built before the birth of time? Did not the turrets of those everlasting mansions glitter before the first sun rose upon the hills? Yes, but these mansions were prepared for men who knew no sin. Our Lord says, "I am going, so that when these seats are sprinkled with My sacrificial blood, and when your hearts are sprinkled with that blood too, He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified, being all one, may sit down together, and I go to keep possession, to preserve the place in continual readiness for your arrival." III. THE ASSURANCE GIVEN. "I will come again," &c. See how large and full is the love of Christ. After having shown us the house, and opened the house, and prepared the house, will He then leave us to ourselves to come afterwards? No; He says—"I will come and fetch you. Will forsake the companionship of these immortals that now surround Me, 'and I will come and receive you unto Myself.'" IV. THE CONSUMMATION TO BE ATTAINED. "That where I am, there ye may be also." (*D. Moore, M.A.*) **If it were not so, I would have told you.**—*Christ's appeal to His disciples' confidence*:—We are eager for certainty, for reality. In the hour of a bitter loss the heart refuses fictitious comfort, for sorrow makes men wonderfully real. I. CHRIST ANNOUNCES HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE FACTS. These are remarkable words in many aspects, but particularly so in that they imply a full knowledge of the secrets of another world. It was just the truth we should suppose a good, loving, tender God would be anxious to make known to the myriads of His children who were treading every hour the sad pathway of death. II. CHRIST APPEALS TO HIS KNOWN CHARACTER. He knew that the disciples to whom He spoke could not point to any incident in His intercourse with them which would justify a doubt of His perfect truthfulness. Further, Christ was not only truthful, but He was too good to deceive them. It is possible for a man to be sternly, rigidly true, and yet not be good in the large sense of that word. We have known men who would scorn to utter a lie or to draw a false picture, but they were not kind, gentle, compassionate, sympathizing men. III. CHRIST SEEKS THE CONFIDENCE OF HIS DISCIPLES. If I speak to any doubter who has long struggled in the midst of perplexities, these words are for you. Could He deceive any soul, however humble, on a matter of such supreme importance? (*W. Braden.*) *The silence of Scripture*:—1. A familiar proverb says "Speech is silvern, but silence is golden." Thoughts are often best expressed by silent acts than words. A grasp of the hand, a glance of the eye may stir us more than a trumpet peal. Christ *looked* at Peter. 2. Written revelation has its necessary limitations. Only essential truths are given. Much is left to inference. But silence is a source of pain and in no subject more than the future life. I. LET US SEE THIS RETICENCE OF SCRIPTURE AS CARRIED INTO OTHER TRUTHS. 1. God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. We can deny neither; history proves both. For their reconciliation we must wait. 2. The Resurrection. Reason is staggered and asks, "How are the dead raised?" We cannot explain the process. But God's power is adequate. The darkness is not with God but with us. 3. The proofs of the existence of a personal God. The Bible simply assumes His existence. But we know that our watch must have had a maker. This we believe without referring to our ignorance of him. There must have been a Maker of the eye, whether we know Him or not. II. FROM THIS THEME WE LEARN HOW TO INTERPRET GOD'S SILENCE. 1. It is God's glory to conceal a matter. 2. Secret things belong to Him; things revealed to us and to our children. 3. We are to walk by faith not by sight. 4. We are indeed to dig and toil for truth, yet ever remember that there are depths we cannot now fathom. 5. All true science is humble, and the language of our faith should be, "Even so, Father, for so seemeth it good in Thy sight." (*D. Murdoch, D.D.*) *Inferences from the silence of Christ*:—This is an appeal of Christ to His own truthfulness and love. He could not allow His disciples to remain victims of delusion. He had often wounded them by telling painful truths, and had their expectation of an immortal life been a mistaken one, He would most certainly have contradicted it. Our text, then, enunciates a grand principle. Christ made it a main part of His work to expose Jewish error. Whenever, therefore, He refrained from contradicting any deeply rooted belief, we have an argument for its truth. Apply this to—I. THE DOCTRINE OF OUR LORD'S DEITY. Christ was worshipped over and over again during His earthly ministry. We know that Peter (Acts x. 26) and the angel (Rev. xxii. 9) shrunk from such homage; but Jesus never did. When His enemies accused Him of making Himself equal with God He did not repel the charge. Meek and lowly as He was, He accepted all the worship men offered. Had He not been Divine would He not have told us? II. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT. This the destructive criticism of our time denies. Now remember that to the Jews were "committed the oracles of God," and they were conspicuously faithful to their trust. But Christ never questioned the purity and integrity of the ancient scriptures. He held them in the deepest reverence, referred to all classes of facts recorded in them, set His seal to minor incidents, encouraged the people to search them, declared that they could not be broken, and that not one jot or tittle should fail. What a gulf between Christ's criticism and that of the modern school! Had the latter been correct, how is it that He, "the Truth," did not tell the world so? We need not fear, therefore, any of the lower or higher criticism of our day. III. THE PERPETUITY OF THE SABBATH LAW. That the weekly Day of Rest was not a mere Jewish institution is proved from its position in the Decalogue, and from the design of God in appointing it. And had it been abrogated, or if it was to have no place in the Christian code of ethics, would not Jesus have told us? He often had to deal with the question of Sabbath observance, and to correct the rabbinical interpretations of the Fourth Commandment; but never did He drop a single word to countenance the idea that the Sabbath law was not to remain in force. On the contrary, He claimed to be Lord of the Sabbath. He found the Sabbath a standing Divine ordinance, and left it such only freshened with the dew of His blessing. IV. MAN'S HOPE OF IMMORTALITY. Thoughtful men in every age have cherished this. Socrates held the doctrine, but admitted that a good deal could be said against it. In the oldest scriptures we find deep yearnings, and over against them hopes very distinct and definite (Job xiv. 14, 15; xix. 25–27). We learn from what our Lord said to the Sadducees, that the doctrine was from the beginning part of the faith of God's ancient people; and one of the purposes for which He came was to tell men that this was a reasonable hope. In the text He assumed that the disciples cherished it, and in words of deepest tenderness tells them that they are right. (*C. Jerden, LL.B.*) *Man's hope of immortality uncontradicted by God:*—I. OUR POSITION TO GOD IS SIMILAR TO THAT IN WHICH THE DISCIPLES STOOD TO CHRIST—we are looking to Him for the fulfilment of hopes which reach beyond our present life. 1. It cannot be questioned that there is a deep and wide testimony in man's nature to the existence of a God and of a future life. (1) There is a dim token of a nature which seeks more than earth, in the manner in which earthly things are often pursued. The world cannot fill man's soul, because it is greater than the world. The magnet in his heart can never rest till it points to its pole-star. (2) In his thirst for truth, in his faith in it, in his search after it as single and sovereign, there is a token of man's origin and destiny. (3) We all know men who have aims, more or less exalted, for which they are ready to give time and labour and endless anxiety without even any hope that they themselves shall see the result. In this stretch of man's soul beyond self there is a look of his nature beyond earthly limits. (4) We can perceive the same in the conception men have of an ideal of perfection, in their struggle to realize it, and in their deep lamentation over the imperfect and impure around them. The only sphere in which this yearning can be realized is immortality. (5) It is discerned in all the religions which man has made for himself. We can see also, that, as religions rise in their perception of moral excellence, they become clear on this question. We have a right to say, further, that this hope is one of its greatest living forces. No one can read these parting words of Christ or the utterances of such men as Paul and John, without seeing that, wherever their religion goes, the conviction of an immortality goes with it as an all-pervading thought. Its martyrdoms and its missionary efforts are everywhere based upon it. It remains yet to be shown that any view of man, as possessed of a mere earthly life, will lead to the suffering and labour which the gospel has called forth in the cause of humanity. I know that it is the fashion of some to speak of the hope of immortality as selfish. But it is surely worthy of consideration, that the religion which of all others is most disinterested in its morality, which founds its motives on love, is that one also which looks most clearly and steadily into an eternal life, and that its central act is a sacrifice unto death, which becomes the spring and birth of numberless immortalities. 2. If in these hopes and aspirations men were deceived, and were appealing to the Author of their being, so widely and so constantly, for the fulfilment of what He never intends to bestow, then—in some distinct way or other—by some voice from heaven, or some prevailing voice of reason in their own hearts—we might justly conclude that He would act on this principle—"If it were not so, I would have told you." II. THE SAME CONSIDERATIONS WHICH WOULD HAVE LED CHRIST TO UNDECEIVE HIS DISCIPLES, HAD THEY BEEN IN ERROR, APPLY TO GOD IN HIS POSITION TO US. 1.

Those which lie in God's own character. (1) His truthfulness. A genuine nature will shun not merely active falsehood, but silent connivance with it. (2) His justice. It would have impelled Christ to undeceive His disciples, had He known their hopes to be vain. For these hopes they were exposing themselves to hardship and scorn, and were ready to suffer a cruel and untimely death. It was right that the terms should be before them, and that Christ should not accept their services and sufferings on a false presumption. If Divine equity can have the law of the universe move on amid a perpetual delusion, and be subserved by it, then God's justice is something else than the image of it which He has formed within us. (3) His goodness. If this life were indeed all, would not that goodness bring man's wishes within the circle of his brief existence, and not suffer him to tantalize himself with the lights and shadows, the hopes and fears, of an eternity which shall never dawn! 2. Those which lie in the relation which exists between God and His human creatures. (1) That of Teacher. Christ had led His disciples to look to Him for instruction in all the great interests of life. He would have convinced them that the desire was unreasonable, or He would have carefully guarded against exciting it. (2) A higher relation is the drawing out of the heart's affections. Christ's words and conduct bound the disciples to Him irrevocably. Now, let us suppose for an instant, that, by some strange arrangement, immortality was for Him but not for them. Then the love had failed, not on the part of earth but heaven—not the mortal friend but the immortal Master would have been guilty of cold forgetfulness. And, if He meant never to meet its desire, would He not be allowing a love to spring up in the human heart, stronger and truer than His own, for man's would be perpetually struggling to overpass death, while God's would coldly yield to it? (3) This relation of affection rises into the higher one of fellowship. The bond between Christ and His disciples, of mutual converse and appeal, finds its counterpart in the bond between God and many souls of men in this world. It is as strong a necessity—it is a stronger—for some men to speak to God, than it is for others to speak to their fellow-creatures. Whence has come this spontaneous recourse to prayer, which withstands all arguments? If it is not God's heart meeting man, it is man's heart meeting God, and seeking a fellowship with his Maker, which cannot but be of His Maker's prompting. And when, in the trust and joy of this fellowship, the soul looks forward to its continuance, can we believe that God would permit it, in this, to be for ever deceived? Conclusion: Note—1. That God has contradicted this hope in the lower creatures, that is, He has not suffered it to spring up. 2. He has contradicted prevalent falsities in human nature in various ways. Apart from supernatural utterance, there is the progress of reason, the growth of conscience, the rise of the soul's highest life, which make superstitions and immoralities that have covered whole ages and nations to pine and die. In these ways He tells man what is false; but here it is in proportion as the soul grows and sin dies, that this hope increases, and it is strongest when we find our highest intuitions answered in the light and life of God. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) **I go to prepare a place for you.**—*The Forerunner*:—1. What Divine simplicity and depth are in these words! The emblem is homely, the thing meant is transcendent. 2. Not less wonderful is the blending of majesty and lowliness. The office which He takes upon Himself is that of an inferior and a servant. And yet the discharge of it, in the present case, implies His authority over every corner of the universe. 3. Nor can we fail to notice the blending of another pair of opposites, His certainty of His impending death, and His certainty, notwithstanding and thereby, of His continual work and His final return. I. THE DEPARTURE. Our Lord's going away from that little group was a journey in two stages. Calvary was the first; Olivet was the second. He means by the phrase the whole continuous process. 1. He prepares a place for us by His death. The High Priest of old once a year was privileged to pass into the holiest, because he bore in his hand the blood of the sacrifice. But in our New Testament system the path into the holiest is made possible for every foot, because Jesus has died. And as the communion upon earth, so the perfecting of the communion in the heavens. Old legends tell us of magic gates that resisted all attempts to force them, but upon which, if one drop of a certain blood fell, they flew open. And so, by His death, Christ has opened the gates and made the heaven of perfect purity a dwelling-place for sinful men. 2. He prepares a place for us by His entrance into and His dwelling in the heavenly places. (1) If Christ had not ascended, would there have been "a place" at all? He has gone with a human body, which must be somewhere. And we may even say that His ascending up on high has made a place where His servants are. (2)

But apart from that we may see that Christ's presence in the heavens is needful to make heaven a heaven for poor human souls. It is from Him and through Him that there come to men, whether on earth or in the heavens, all that they know, all that they hope, all that they enjoy of the wisdom, love, beauty, peace, power, which flow from God. The very glories of all that lies beyond the veil would have an aspect appalling and bewildering to us, unless our Brother were there. Like some poor savages brought into a great city, or rustics into the presence of a king and his court, what should we do unless we saw standing there our Kinsman, to whom we can turn, and who makes it possible for us to feel that that is home? 3. Not only did He go to prepare a place, but He is continuously preparing it for us all through the ages. We have to think of a double form of the work of Christ. (1) Past in His earthly life, and present in His exaltation. (2) Present with and in us here, and for us there. (3) In the heavens—His priestly intercession and His preparing a place for us. II. THE RETURN. The purpose of our Lord's departure, as set forth by Himself here, guarantees for us His coming back again. He who went away as the Forerunner has not done His work until He comes back, and, as Guide, leads those for whom He had prepared the place to the place which He had prepared for them. That return, like the departure, may be considered as in two stages—1. The main meaning is that final and personal coming which stands at the end of history. And He will come as He went, a visible Manhood, only throned amongst the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. This return ought to be the prominent subject of Christian aspiration and desire. We have a double witness to bear. One half stretches backwards to the Cross and proclaims "Christ has come"; the other reaches onwards to the Throne and proclaims "Christ will come." 2. But Scripture knows of many comings of the Lord preliminary to, and in principle one with, His second coming. For nations, all great crises of their history are "comings of the Lord," the Judge. And in reference to individuals, we see in each single death a true coming of the Lord. Beyond all secondary causes, deeper than disease or accident, lies the loving will of Him who is the Lord of life and of death. Death stands amidst the ranks of the "ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation." Whensoever a Christian man lies down to die, Christ says, "Come!" and he comes. How that thought should hallow the death chamber as with the print of the Master's feet! How it should quiet our hearts and dry our tears! With Him for our companion the lonely road will not be dreary. The dying martyr beneath the city wall lifted up his face to the heavens and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" It was the echo of the Master's promise: "I will come again and receive you to Myself." III. THE PERFECTED UNION. The departure and the return are stages in the process, which is perfected by complete union—"that where I am there ye may be also." Christ is Heaven. To be with Him is to behold His glory. And to behold His glory, as John tells us in his epistle, is to be like Him. So Christ's presence means the communication to us of all the lustre of His radiance, of all the whiteness of His purity, of all the depth of His blessedness, and of a share in His wondrous dominion. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

The prepared place:—There are two remarkable things about Christ's statement. 1. That the Master should prepare for the servant. But this is in keeping with Christ's whole method. 2. That the Divine Christ should ever have occasion to prepare anything. Can He who fills eternity have anything to arrange for His servants? The answer is, that Christ accommodates Himself to our way of thinking. There are some things which the Master only can do. We can do one hundred and fifty little things, and double that, and get the notion that we can do anything. But go and prepare summer! You have seen half a hundred: try and make the fifty-first! If the servant cannot prepare the summer, how can he prepare heaven? The text gives three comforting and inspiring views of the Christian's position and destiny—I. HE IS THE OBJECT OF CHRIST'S ZEALOUS AND TENDER CARE "For you;" and Paul catching his Master's tone said, "All things are yours." Yet we hang our heads and cry as though we had nothing unless we could lace our fingers round it, not knowing that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Wherever you find Christ you find Him working for His people. There is a beautiful necessity of love about this arrangement. For if He were to fail here—in training and sanctifying the Church—He would fail altogether. What if He has made countless millions of stars? Can they talk to Him? If He does not get us—poor, broken things—right into His heaven He has failed. This is the one work He set Himself to do. II. CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE ETERNALLY HIS JOY. As for these heavens, He will one day dismiss them. He makes some things

for the time being; but when we read of the place prepared for believers we have the idea of never-ending fellowship. All true life is in the heart. Love alone is immortal. God is love. Love it is which binds Christ and Christians. If we love Him we shall be with Him for ever. III. Seeing that all this is so, THE CHRISTIAN IS ENTITLED TO LOOK AT THE PRESENT THROUGH THE FUTURE. The Christian is not to be troubled, because in His Father's house are many mansions. When you are weary of the present, look forward into the future. Conclusion: If Christ is gone to prepare a place for us, then.—1. The place will be worthy of Himself. Send a poor creature, and the place will be prepared according to the capacity and resources of the messenger? What kind of place will He prepare, who has all things at command? 2. Christ is waiting for His guests. Bad man! God has prepared nothing for you. There is a place—but it was prepared, not for you, but for the devil and his angels. That is the only place He has to put you in. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Christ preparing a place for us*:—I. WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO HEAVEN BY NATURE (Eph. ii. 3). II. NEITHER CAN WE HAVE RIGHT BUT BY CHRIST (Acts iv. 12). III. THIS TITLE CHRIST PURCHASED FOR US BY HIS DEATH (Matt xx. 28; Ruth iii. 9, 12, iv. 1). IV. Having purchased it, HE GOES TO TAKE POSSESSION OF IT, AND HAVE IT SURRENDERED TO HIM FOR OUR USE. (Heb. vi. 20). V. Having taken possession of it in our names, HE PREPARES IT. 1. By getting us actually admitted or entitled to it; pleading (1 John ii. 1)—(1) That our sins are pardoned (Isa. liii. 5, 6). (2) Our persons justified (2 Cor. v. 21). (3) Our lusts subdued (Rom. vi. 14). 2. By preparing us for it, by—(1) Enlightening our minds (chap. iii. 3). (2) Rectifying our wills. 3. Regulating our affections. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Christ gone to prepare a place for us*:—In the days before the railway showered its sparks upon the darkness of the wilderness, people put out on foot, or in slow cumbrous waggons, from our Eastern homes, and in the wild thickets of the far West sought to clear for their families a home. Ofttimes leaving their tender little ones in the New England village, with blanket, and gun, and axe, they dared the forest, terrible with bear's bark, and panther's scream, and the war-whoop cry of scalping savages. After awhile the trees were felled, and the underbush was burned, and the farm was cleared, and the house was built. Then word came back here, saying that everything was ready. The family would get into the waggon and start on at a slow pace for a very long journey. After awhile, some evening tide, the shout of recognition was heard, and by the fire of the great black log the newly-arrived would recount the exciting experiences of the way. Well, my friends, we are all about to become emigrants to a far country. This is no place for us to stay. Our Older Brother, Jesus, Him of the scarred brow and the blistered feet, has gone ahead to build our mansion and to clear the way for us, and He sends a letter back, saying He has it all ready; and I break the seal of that letter and read to you these words: "I go to prepare a place for you." I might put it in another shape. A young man resolves to build a home for himself. He has pledged himself in one of the purest of earthly attachments. He toils no more for himself than for the one who will share with him the results of his industrious accumulation. After awhile the fortune is made, the house is built, the right hands are joined, the blessing is invoked, the joy is consummated. So Jesus, the lover of our souls, has been toiling to make a place for us. He is fitting up our mansion. He is gathering around it everything that can possibly enchant the soul, and after awhile he will say: "It is all ready now," and He will reach down His hand and take up to His fair residence "the Church, which is the Lamb's wife." "I go to prepare a place for you." (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *Christ gone to prepare a place for us*:—I was visiting a friend some years ago, who had just built a new house. It was beautiful, useful. He took me upstairs. It had wardrobes, toilet-glasses, books, and paintings. It was furnished grandly. And the father turned to me, and said, "This room is for our daughter. She is in Europe, she does not know we are arranging it. Her mother and I have fixed up everything we could think of for her. As soon as the house is fully finished, we are going to Europe to bring her back; and we are going to bring her upstairs, and open the door, and say, 'Daughter, this is yours.'" And I thought of the joy it would give her, and I thought, how kind these parents are! Just then I turned away and thought, That is what Jesus is doing for me. He says He is going away to prepare a place for me: he will come again, and receive me unto Himself. Then I thought, This father and mother are rich: but they have not all treasures, there are a great many things they do not know how to get. But Jesus, who is furnishing my mansion in glory, has everything. He has undertaken to furnish a place for me, and I shall be with Him for

ever. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Heaven adapted to us by Christ*:—In the works of God I know nothing more beautiful than the perfect skill with which He suits His creatures to their condition. He gives wings to birds, fins to the fish, sails to the thistle-seed, a lamp to light the glowworm, great roots to moor the majestic cedar, and to the aspiring ivy a thousand hands to climb the wall. Nor is the wisdom thus conspicuous in nature less remarkable and adorable as exhibited in the arrangements of the Kingdom of Grace. He forms a holy people for a holy state. He fits heaven for the redeemed, and the redeemed for heaven. (*J. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Christ preparing heaven for the believer*:—It was customary for travellers in those old days to send some of their party on in advance to find lodging and make arrangements for them in some great city. Many a time one or other of the disciples had been sent before His face into every place whither He Himself should come. Christ here takes that office on Himself. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **If I go . . . I will come again and receive you unto Myself.**—*Christ's coming and our future fellowship with Him*:—I. THE DEATH OF A BELIEVER IS CHRIST'S COMING. At death their Saviour comes to fetch them away from this strange land; and thus—1. To rescue them from its numerous snares. 2. To deliver them from its multiplied sorrows. These are often owing—(1) To the conduct of its inhabitants. By far the greater part live in open rebellion against God. (2) To the influence of worldly things on the mind. (3) To the strength of sin that dwelleth in us. (4) The temptations of Satan. 3. And He will thus show—(1) The strength of His affection. (2) The tenderness of His sympathy. II. HOW TO REGARD THE FUTURE BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS. It is for them to be with Christ. (chap. xvii. 24). In that blessed land will the Saviour have all His followers dwell, because—1. They are united to Him (Heb. ii. 14, 15). 2. They bear His image. They now seek and pray to resemble Him. (1) In humility and meekness. (2) In purity of heart and life. (3) In uprightness and sincerity. 3. They delight in fellowship with Him. And as they are formed to this heavenly temper, now so in glory they will be received to this unspeakable felicity. They will there enjoy it—(1) Without suspicion. How often, through the strength of unbelief, does this find an entrance into the pious mind! (2) Without interruption. Here it is indeed enjoyed, but how transient the season of enjoyment. (3) Without end. There bliss will be no longer measured, as here, by days, or months, or years. 4. They may then be made perfect—(1) As a body. The Church is the body of Christ. It is a whole body, and not one of its members will be lost or overlooked in the great assembly of the whole. (2) As a family. (*J. Dorrington.*) *Jesus comes*:—"He drew very near," solemnly uttered a youthful believer within a few hours of death. "Who drew near?" anxiously inquired a friend who was present, fearful to hear her pronounce the word "death." "Jesus," she replied, with an unutterable earnestness of expression. "I felt just now as if He stood close beside me." Soon after she was asked by her sister if she would like her to pray with her. She gladly assented. But while she prayed the countenance of the dying one changed, the expression of supplication was succeeded by one of adoring contemplation—it would have been rapture but for its perfect calm. A kind of glow suffused her features, then faded gradually away, and before that prayer was ended she was gone. Her "amen" to it was her first hallelujah in heaven. Jesus had "come again" and received her unto Himself. (*New Testament Anecdotes.*) *Christ will come again*:—A minister once entered an almshouse of which an aged couple were the inmates. Beside a little round table sat the husband, and as he was very deaf his visitor shouted in his ear, "Well, Wisby, what are you doing?" "Waiting, sir." "For what?" "For the appearing of my Lord." "And what makes you wish for His appearing?" "Because I expect great things then." *The saint's best days to come*:—A young girl of fifteen, a bright, laughter loving girl, was suddenly cast upon a bed of suffering. Completely paralysed on one side and nearly blind, she heard the family doctor say to her friends, who surrounded her, "She has seen her best days, poor child!" "Oh no, doctor," she exclaimed, "my best days are yet to come, when I see the King in His beauty." *Death brings Christ and the soul together*:—A very affecting account is given of the death of Williams of Wern. He had lost his wife some time before, and he and his daughter were dying together in different rooms of the same house. As he said to her one day, "We appear to be running, with contending footsteps, to be first at the goal." They spent much time in talking together of death and heaven, and being "absent from the body, and present with the Lord." Every morning as soon as he was up found him by the bedside of his daughter. "Well, Eliza, how are you this morn-

ing?" "Very weak, father." "Ah!" said he, "we are both on the race-course. Which of us, do you think, will get to the end first?" "Oh, I shall, father." "Perhaps," he said, "it is best that it should be so, for I am more able to bear the blow. But do you long to see the end of the journey?" "Oh, from my heart!" she replied. "But why?" "Because I shall see many of my old friends, and my mother: and above all, I shall see Jesus." "Ah well, then," he said, "tell them I am coming! Tell them I am coming!" She died first. He followed shortly after, in the fifty-ninth year of his age. *With Christ—heaven:*—A little negro-boy, when on his death-bed, was visited by a missionary, to whom he spoke of the happiness he felt, and the longing desire he had to be with Jesus. "I am going to heaven soon; and then I shall see Jesus, and be with Him for ever," said the little fellow. "But," rejoined the missionary, "if Jesus were to leave heaven, what would you do?" "I would follow him," replied the boy. "But suppose," said the missionary, "Jesus went to hell: what would you do then?" In an instant, with an intelligent look and a smile on his countenance, he replied, "Ah, massa! there is no hell where Jesus is." (*S. M. Haughton.*) *Christ the supreme attraction of heaven:*—Have you heard of the poor Chinaman in London? Walking along the streets of the metropolis in the fog and the drizzling rain, he was well-nigh breaking his heart with longing for his native land. One day, however, the sun rose brighter than usual, drove the clouds before him, and lifted the fog. Thereupon the little Chinaman cheered up amazingly. "Why, what is the matter with you to-day? what is the cause of your rejoicing?" asked an acquaintance. "What is the cause indeed," replied the poor foreigner in broken English, pointing with his finger to the sky. "Don't you see there? that is China's sun?" and with the word he was dancing on the pavement like a delighted school-boy. Everything else was strange to him—the streets, the inhabitants, the sceneries, and even the stars. The only thing he beheld in England that he had seen at home was the sun; and he felt comforted under the face of the same sun. Thus, when we go to eternity, things will appear very strange—the city with its golden streets, the inhabitants with palms in their hands, the sceneries "ever decked in living green." But the same Sun shines there as here, and under its shining we shall feel all fear and tremor depart. The Sun of earth is the Sun of heaven, the Sun of Cardiff is the Sun of the New Jerusalem. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *Acquaintances in heaven:*—"When I was a boy," said a minister, "I thought of heaven as a great shining city, with vast walls and domes and spires, and with nobody in it except white tenuous angels, who were strangers to me. By and by my little brother died, and I thought of a great city with walls, and domes, and spires, and a flock of cold, unknown angels, and one little fellow that I was acquainted with. He was the only one I knew at that time. Then another brother died, and there were two that I knew. Then my acquaintances began to die, and the flock continually grew; but it was not until I had sent one of my little children to his grandparent—God—that I began to think I had a little in myself. A second went, a third went, a fourth went; and by that time I had so many acquaintances in heaven that I did not see any more walls and domes and spires. I began to think of the residents of the Celestial city; and now there are so many of my acquaintances gone there that it sometimes seems to me that I know more in heaven than I do on earth."

Vers. 4–6. **Whither I go ye know.**—*The interpellation of Thomas:*—Observe—I. THAT A MAN MAY, IN SPIRITUAL THINGS, KNOW MORE THAN HE IS CONSCIOUS OF KNOWING. "Ye know," "We know not." It may be said that our Lord is only attributing a certain knowledge with a view to stirring up His disciples to think so that they may come to know distinctly, just as we say to a child, "You know if you would only think." But here the fact stands that Thomas did not know, and yet Christ said he did. So a man may know, and yet not know that he knows. What was it that the apostles actually knew? They knew Christ—very imperfectly, but they did know Him. Thomas's "Lord," the same word that He used subsequently, in an association that leaves no room to doubt its signification, shows us this. Now Christ was the Way; and therefore in knowing Christ, he knew the Way, although he did not know Him as the Way. And more than this. Thomas and the rest were practically *walking* in the right way in believing in Christ. But not understanding that Christ was the Way, they did not understand that they were in the right way. Whence it follows that a man may be actually in the right way before he is quite conscious of it. This must be so; for being conscious of a thing means coming to

a distinct consciousness of it as an existing fact. Then it must exist as a fact prior to consciousness. The time that may elapse between a man being in a certain condition and becoming conscious of it may vary according to circumstances. II. THAT TO KNOW CHRIST IS TO BE IN THE RIGHT WAY. "I am the Way." Christ had just told them of the Father's house, and they were naturally anxious to know the way. But notice how He modifies the aspect of future blessedness. He now speaks of the Father Himself. For it is the Father's presence that makes home—not a house built by the Father, however much the Father's love may have been lavished on it for His children's sake. To this Father Christ is the Way, and how His subsequent conversation shows. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (Eph. ii. 18; Heb. x. 19, 20). There is no direct access for man to God. Christ is the way to God, and the way to God is the way to Heaven. And he who knows Christ, however imperfectly, is in the right way. III. THOSE WHO REALLY KNOW CHRIST AS THE WAY WILL SOON LEARN THAT HE IS MUCH MORE TO THEM THAN THE WAY ONLY. Christ adds the ample appendix, "and the Truth and the Life." These three lead on, the one to the other. Religion begins in practical conformity to a Divine "way," and so comes down to the level of the simplest and the feeblest. But when a man has walked some time in the Divine way, he begins to desire a fuller understanding of the reasons of the way. Then Christ comes as the Truth, disclosing the grounds on which religious duty rests, satisfying thus the speculative, as He formerly did the practical, faculty. Finally Christ reveals Himself as the Life. Then it is seen that religion is more than practice and knowledge, it is the communication of vital powers, of the powers of the life of God, of power to become the child of God; and that this new vitality in turn prompts to pious practice, and capacitates for spiritual perception. (*W. Roberts.*) *Christ's farewell:*—It serves—I. TO EXERCISE FAITH IN CHRIST. 1. In His omniscience. For He knows—(1) Whither He goes (ver. 5). (2) When He goes (ver. 5). (3) For what purpose (vers. 7–15): to send the Comforter, &c. 2. In His truthfulness (ver. 7). For—(1) Jesus went to His Father. (2) He sent the Comforter. (3) The Comforter has fulfilled His mission. II. FOR CONSOLATION WHEN WE FEEL THE PANG OF SEPARATION. For.—1. Christ is omniscient. He alone knows—(1) Whither we go. (2) When we are to go. (3) Why we go. 2. Christ is truthful. Therefore we are certain that we go—(1) To the Father. (2) At the hour appointed by Him. (3) Because it is expedient and necessary for our own faith in God's omnipotent love and our sense of dependence on Him. (*Pastor Fricke.*) *The way, unknown and yet well known:*—When you say to a man, "You know the way," you mean "Come." And in these words there lie a veiled invitation, and the assurance that they, though separated, might still find the road to the Father's house, and so be with Him still. Observe—I. THE DISCIPLES' UNCONSCIOUS KNOWLEDGE. 1. Christ says: "Ye know the way and the goal." Thomas ventures flatly to contradict Him. Was Jesus right? or Thomas? or both? The fact is, they had heard plenty in the past as to where Christ was going. It had made some kind of lodgement in their heads, and, in that sense, they did know. It is this unused and unconscious knowledge of theirs to which Christ appeals. 2. The dialogue is an instance of what is true about us all, that we have in our possession truths given to us by Jesus Christ, the whole sweep and bearing of which we do not dream of yet. Time and circumstances and some sore agony of spirit are needed in order to make us realize the riches that we possess; and the practice of far more patient, honest, profound meditation is needed, in order that we may understand the things that are given to us of God. The life-belts lie unnoticed on the cabin shelf as long as the weather keeps fine, but when the ship strikes people take to them. 3. All our knowledge is ignorance. And ignorance that confesses itself to Him is in the way of becoming knowledge. And we are meant to carry all our inadequate and superficial realizations of His truths into His presence, that, from Him, we may gain deeper knowledge, and a more joyous certitude in His inexhaustible truths. II. OUR LORD'S GREAT SELF-REVELATION WHICH MEETS THIS UNCONSCIOUS KNOWLEDGE. Of these three great words, the Way, the Truth, the Life, we are to regard the second and the third as explanatory of the first. 1. Note, then, as belonging to all three of these clauses that remarkable "I am." We show the Way, Christ is it. We speak truth, Christ is it. Parents impart life, which they have received, Christ is life. He separates Himself from all men by that representation which He made when Calvary was within arm's length. What did He think about Himself, and what should we think of Him? 2. And note that He here sets forth His unique relation to the truth as being one ground on which He is the Way to God. (1) He is the Truth in reference

to the Divine nature. It is not only His speech that teaches us, but Himself that shows us God. There is all the difference between talking about God and showing Him. Men reveal God by their words; Christ reveals Him by Himself and the facts of His life. 2. He is the Truth, inasmuch as, in His life, men find the foundation truths of a moral and spiritual sort. "Whatsoever things are true," &c., He is these. 3. He is the Way because He is the Life. Dead men cannot walk a road. It is no use making a path if it starts from a cemetery. And Christ taught that men apart from Him are dead, and that the only life that they can have by which they can be knit to God is the Divine life which was in Himself. He is the Life—and, paradox of mystery and yet fact which is the very heart and centre of His gospel, His only way of giving His life to us is by giving up His physical life for us. 4. And what about people that never heard of Him. Ah! Christ has other ways of working than through His historical manifestation, He is "that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." But for us to whom this Book has come, the law of my text rigidly applies. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." It is either—take Christ for the Way, or wander in the wilderness and forget your Father; take Christ for the Truth, or be given over to the insufficiencies of mere natural, political, and intellectual truths, and the shows and illusions of time and sense; take Christ for your life, or remain in your deadness separate from God. III. THE DISCIPLES' IGNORANCE AND THE NEW VISION WHICH DISPELS IT. "If ye had known Me ye should have known My Father also," &c. Our Lord accepts for the moment Thomas' standpoint. He supplements His former allegation of their knowledge with the admission of the ignorance which went with it as its shadow, and tells them that they did not know what they thought they knew so well, after so many years of companionship—even Himself. The proof that they did not is that they did not know the Father as revealed in Him, nor Him as revealing the Father. If they missed that, they missed everything. 1. The lesson for us is that the true test of the completeness and worth of our knowledge of Christ lies in its being knowledge of God the Father, brought near to us by Him. This saying puts a finger on the radical deficiency of all merely humanitarian views of Christ's person. If you know anything about Jesus Christ rightly, this is what you know about Him, that in Him you see God. The knowledge of Christ which stops with the martyr, and the teacher and the brother, is knowledge so partial that even He cannot venture to call it other than ignorance. 2. And then our Lord passes on to another thought, the new vision which at the moment being granted to this unconscious ignorance that was passing into conscious knowledge. "From henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him." We must give that "from henceforth," a somewhat literal interpretation, and apply it to the whole series of utterances and deeds of which the words of our text are but a portion. It is the dying Christ that reveals the living God. Conclusion: So He is your way to God. See that you seek the Father by Him alone. He is your truth; enrich yourselves by all the communicated treasures that you have already received in Him. He is your Life; cleave to Him, that the quick spirit that was in Him may pass into you and make you victors over all deaths, temporal and eternal. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Knowledge unconsciously possessed*:—A man may have grace and yet not know it; yea, he may think He hath it not, as we seek for the keys that are in our pocket: or think that we have lost a jewel that we have locked up in a chest; yea, as the butcher looketh for the candle that sticketh in his hat. (*J. Trapp.*)

Ver. 6. **Jesus said unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.**—*Brief expositions*:—The way of a holy conversation; the truth of a heavenly doctrine; the life of a bliss everlasting (*Leo*). The way to beginners, the truth to the progressing (chap. viii. 32), the life to the perfect (*Ferus*). I am the Way, leading to the truth; I am the Truth, promising life; I am the Life, which I give (*St. Augustine*). I am the Way and the Life; the way on earth, the life in heaven: I am He, to whom you go; I am He, by whom you go (*ibid*). The way, in which we walk by charity; the truth, to which we cling by faith; the life, to which we aspire by hope. The life in His example, the truth in His promise, the life in His reward (*St. Bernard*). Truth lies between way and life, as if the way to life were through truth (*Leigh*). The true way to eternal life (*Dr. Whichcote*). Without the Way there is no going; without the Truth there is no knowing; without the Life there is no living. I am the Way which thou aughtest to follow; the Truth which thou aughtest to trust; the Life which thou aughtest to hope for. I am the inviolable Way, the infallable Truth, the Godless Life. If thou remain in

My way thou shalt know the truth, and the truth shall make thee free and thou shalt lay hold on eternal life. (*Thomas à Kempis.*) *The Way, the Truth, and the Life*:—Mistakes have been made the occasion of profoundest utterances. It was so here.—I. "I AM THE WAY." Man's primal communion with God in Eden was broken by his fall. Henceforth humanity became as an islet in mid-ocean, without material for bridge or boat. And the Eternal Word became flesh in order that He himself might become the causeway which should reconnect the island-man and the continent-God. He not only shows the way, as our Teacher, He is the way itself, the true ladder connecting earth and heaven. He is alike the portal, the line of direction, the true *Scala Santa*, "The great world's altar-stairs that slope through darkness up to God." His *Via Dolorosa* is our *Via Gloriosa*. His valley of Achor is our door of hope. II. "I AM THE TRUTH." 1. In distinction from what is symbolic. He is the fulfiller and realizer of all prophetic hints. Thus He is said to be the True Light, the True Bread, the True Tabernacle, &c. 2. In distinction from what is phenomenal. For truths are ever greater than facts. There is no necessary morality in mere facts as such, *e.g.*, in the fact that every particle of matter attracts every other particle in the direct ratio of its mass, and in the inverse ratio of the square of its distance. Truth is moral, and can exist only in connection with a person, *i.e.*, a person who shall somehow stand as its end or representation. Such a person is Christ. He not only has truth, He is the Truth—Himself its eternal embodiment; its source, means, and end. He is the meaning of facts. All things have been created through Him and for Him. He is creation's definition or final cause. III. "I AM THE LIFE." 1. Of all animate existence; all things are also subsisting in Him. 2. Particularly is this true of man. (1) Jesus Christ is the life of our bodily nature. Poor Marthas and Marys may weep by the tombs of dead brothers; but Jesus Christ shall say, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." (2) Of our spiritual nature, "God hath given unto us eternal life and this life, is in His Son." Conclusion: Christ is the only way, "No man cometh," &c. Other voices indeed proclaim the contrary; but they are the voices of false prophets. Liberalism says: "There are many ways to the Father; for instance, nature, æsthetics, charity," &c. Materialism says: "It is through the uplifting of environment." Ecclesiasticism says: "It is through the Church, the sacraments." But all who undertake to climb over into the fold by any other way are thieves and robbers. (*G. D. Boardman, D.D.*) *The Way, the Truth, and the Life*:—Science tells us that there are three elements in light—the illuminating, the chemical, and the heat power. So in Him who is "the Light of the World" there is a threefold perfection. I. THE TRUTHS SEPARATELY. 1. Christ the Way. One of the deepest feelings in man's nature is that of a want of something which this world is found not to supply. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing, nor the ambition with success, nor the lust with gratification. It arises from the terrible disruptions with the intervening chasms which sin has produced. Despite our downward tendencies, man is led by what he feels within, and sees around, to look up to a Divine Power. That Being we would fondly claim as a Father. But where is that Father? There is a way, but somehow we have lost it, and the difficulty is to find it. Conceive a planet wandering from its sphere. Now it is hindered by bodies attracting it or attracted by it, and forthwith it dashes through space, threatening to strike and break in fragments, or to kindle into a conflagration, all the other planets and suns it meets with. It is a picture of a wandering man loosened from the Central Power that stays him, and from the Central Light that should illuminate him. Neither wanderer will right itself till made to move in its old path. But how can we know the way? The flaming sword, turned every way to keep the sinner from the tree of life, has entered into him who is God's fellow, and hath now power against us, and there is a way opened by which the sinner can come into the very presence of God. "I am the Way." 2. Christ the Truth. By truth, in this passage, we are not to understand abstract or general doctrine. Systematized truth may serve most important purposes; but it is not to such that our Lord refers. Truth is defined by philosophers as the agreement of our ideas with things. If we know God as He really is, then have we truth in religion. But how can we know God as He really is? Do we not feel as if He were at an infinite distance, as if we could no more rise to Him with our spirits than our frail bodies could mount from earth to heaven? Who will give us wings that we may ascend to Him? Alas! the attraction of earth is too powerful to admit of our rising to Him. The approach must be on His part. Plato was obliged to say: "The Father of the world is hard to discover, and when discovered cannot be communicated." But when we go on

by Christ as the Way, He introduces us to the Father, and we have the truth. God is no longer at a distance; "Emmanuel, God with us." Aristotle has said that the mind as it came from its Maker is organized for truth, as the eye is to perceive light and the ear to hear sounds. He who has found Christ knows that he has found the truth. With the truth there is assurance; the eye has found the light, the ear is listening to the sound. This, this is the reality of things. 3. Christ the Life. It is of vast moment that we know the way, all good that we reach the truth; but we must have more. The well-formed statue is an interesting object, but none of us would exchange our living condition for that of the chiselled marble. Along with the truth we must have life. There are few or no sinners so dead that they do not wish at times to have life. And yet when they would excite and stimulate it, they find that they have only the cold and the clamminess of death. Feeling never will be excited by a mere determination to raise it. There must be a something to call it forth. Nor will it be evoked by an abstract statement or general doctrine. It is called forth by a living person. Christ so lovely and so loving. Apprehended as the truth He becomes the life. II. THE TRUTHS IN THEIR CONNECTION. The full truth is to be found in the union of these various truths. If we would have a true religion, and a proper theology founded upon it, we must give Christ the supreme place. Displace Christ the head from this His proper position and the whole form becomes disproportioned. 1. There are some who would have men first to find the way, and then in the way to find Christ. Who would have, *e.g.*, inquirers first to find the true Church, and then through it to find Christ. But this is to reverse the Scriptural order. 2. Some would have us first seek the truth, and then seek Christ. Seekers of truth deserve all the honour that has been paid to them, but they will never find truth in religion till they find Christ. So Justin Martyr acknowledged, and Augustine, and Luther. Let us not go out with the tapers of earth to seek the sun. Any other light can at best be merely like the star to guide the wise men, serving a good end only so far as it guides us to where Christ as the truth is to be found. 3. Again, some would find life without Christ. Their appeal is to inward feelings, sentiments, and intuitions. But what, I ask, is to evoke such sentiments from our dead and sinful hearts? They tell us by such grand and generous ideas as the infinite and the eternal. But these ideas call forth love only when they are associated with a living being whose love is infinite and eternal. And such is Christ. 4. There are some who would seek for Christ under one of these aspects or in one of these characters, but who do not care for the others. (1) Thus, there are some who are anxious to have Christ as the way, but who stop at the entrance, instead of going on in the path. They are most anxious to have Christ for salvation; but they do not go on to establish themselves in the truth. (2) Some are contented with the truth without the life, with their orthodox creed, their reverence for the Bible, their attendance at religious meetings. Such a formal religion is offensive to man, even as it is displeasing to God. (3) Another class seek the life without the truth, led into this by a reaction against a stiff formalism or a frigid orthodoxy, or by an unwillingness to submit to any restraints. Persons are calling for a life which is to be independent of all the old forms of orthodoxy and of the letter of the Word of God. Of this I am sure, that the life which is not supported by Scriptural truth will be of a very uncertain and wavering and transient character. (*J. Mc Cosh, D.D.*) *The Way, the Truth, and the Life*:—1. Christ is the Way, for He recovers man from his godless wandering. The metaphor views man in the light of his practical obliquities. He is estranged by wicked works from the filial fellowship in which the life of Jesus Christ was unchangeably centred. A way is that which connects the distant and inaccessible. Traversed as is our land in every possible direction by the highways of commerce and civilization, we perhaps scarcely feel the force of this figure. Poor Livingstone, who waded waist-deep through pestilential marshes for weeks, to die at last in a miserable hut by the lake shore; the traveller, who has to cut his way for hundreds of miles through tangled forest and jungle at the rate of half a mile a day; the emigrant, who has to cross the trackless alkali plain, and who may perish midway; the military commander, who had to carry his forces over mountains, some sections of which are almost perpendicular,—know how a well engineered path is the first condition of successful movement. A way is that which makes movement in some specific direction possible. Movement towards God is impossible without the work of Jesus Christ the Mediator. Jesus Christ brings together in His own person the two most distant objects the whole circle of the universe can contain, God dwelling in unapproachable light, and man wallowing in guilt, world-

liness, transgression. Christ subverts and destroys the work of sin in human nature, and makes progress towards God possible to us once more. In Him the alienated are brought back into relations of gentleness, endearment, and obedience. 2. Christ is the truth, for He recovers man from his godless error. The metaphor looks upon man from his intellectual side. Men are estranged from God in their thinkings, "alienated from the life of God by reason of the ignorance that is in them." Christ answers our intellectual need. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Scientific truth puts us into intelligent relation with the world of established scientific fact. Historic truth puts us into intelligent relation with the facts that have determined the growth of particular types of government and civilization. Sociological truths puts us into intelligent relation with the facts that have moulded the social life of mankind. Jesus Christ puts us into intelligent relation with all the vital facts of God's being and nature and government. He is the only possible word by which God can address Himself to a world of sinners. No intellectual activity, no induction of reason, no range of research can fill up this chasm in the mind of man. We can only know God as we give ourselves up to Jesus Christ, and suffer the energy of His spirit and presence to rule us. He is made unto us the wisdom by which we come to the saving knowledge of God. All knowledge that lies outside this sphere of contract with Christ is at the very best but adroit guess-work. 3. Christ is the Life, inasmuch as He raises men from their godless insensibility and death. The ideas deepen as they succeed each other. Knowledge passes into life. "This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." He stands forth in the midst of the universe to counterwork the disintegration and decay that set in when the tie binding all life to its first Centre was ruptured by transgression. Union with Christ, our everlasting Life, will guard against the shock and sting and disability of death. The man who is sailing under trustworthy captainship, and in company with genial friends, out of one zone into another, is scarcely conscious of the lines of demarcation over which the ship glides. So with the man who lives and dies in fellowship with Christ. Throughout the months of summer, darkness is unknown in the latitudes of the far north. The rising and the setting suns blend their light without the hairbreadth of a shadow between. Tourists are all eager to visit the "Land of the Midnight Sun." It seems to me that for the man who is vitally united to Christ, the event of death is very much like that. He sails through the quiet, solemn seas of the midnight sun, and before the light of the earthly life has quite gone the light of a nobler sunrise has come to blend with it. In the solemn crisis of transition, for the man who has become one with Christ his Life no darkness deepens, and the shadow of the grave marks the dayspring. 4. Christ's words present a corrective to all distracted faith. He asks from His followers concentrated thought and attachment and expectation. They had sought a way outside Christ, though a way through whose mazes He was to guide them; a truth outside Christ, though a truth the exposition of which was to come from His lips; a life outside Christ, though a life of which His immortal reign was to be the seal and the defence. The purport of these words is, that they must seek their all in Christ. They must let their eye rest upon His person as the one centre from which all saving power, all teaching light, all quickening inspiration must come. Mark how in these words the Master leads on His disciples to faith in a Saviour unseen. The love of the disciples had been very apt to glide into an idolatry of Christ's human form. But all this is to be corrected by the fresh events that are at hand. The text suggests a warning against all low and dishonouring views of the Saviour's work and person. (*T. G. Selby.*) *The Way, the Truth, and the Life*:—I. I AM THE WAY. To what? To our eternal destiny. There are ends closer at hand than this which man, if left to himself, seeks before all other things—pleasure, fortune, glory, science. That is what the heathens ardently demanded of their gods; but never by a single word did Jesus Christ offer to lavish them upon men. 1. I know that when we speak of the higher aim of life, worldlings shrug their shoulders and smile; and a certain school, now in high favour, gravely affirms that we can neither attain it nor even so much as understand it. But I needs must know whither I go, and if I deem foolish the man who would fling himself in a railway train or embark upon a vessel without asking where the steam power or the breath of the wind is taking him, by what appellation shall I characterize those who allow themselves to be borne away in the voyage of life without knowing whether their destination is death or life? 2. "But," says the sceptic, "supposing a higher life is indeed reserved for man, how shall he know it? So many ways are

open before us! How find out the right path?" Not much science is required to discover which is the path to be preferred, of pleasure or duty, iniquity or justice, selfishness or sacrifice, pride or devotion, purity or corruption. And heathens themselves have understood this well. But how much more simple, and solemn has the question become since Christ said, "I am the Way!" To know if He speaks true, I have only to consider whither He means to lead me. What then is the end which He sets before me? It is the one, holy, just and good Being reigning over all beings: it is harmony governing the world, man loving man. Well, if that is the end towards which Christ would lead me, what need have I to argue further? Were I the most ignorant of men, I would instinctively understand that I must indeed tend towards this aim. Were I the most learned, what could I add to this ideal? II. I AM THE TRUTH. 1. That is what greatly astonishes many of those who hear Him. They are willing to accept Christ as the instructor of souls. But if Jesus Christ had been nothing more than this, we instinctively feel that, after having guided men to the true God, He should have retired in the background and re-echoed the words of the Forerunner: "God must increase, and I must decrease." Others, and among these many of the noblest benefactors of mankind, have been compelled to speak thus. Aristotle, Copernicus, Newton, Bacon, Descartes might be unknown to us without this fact depriving their works of aught of their value. And in the religious order, knew we nothing whatever of Moses, David, or St. Paul, we would none the less be in possession of the genesis of the world, of the most heart-thrilling hymns and of the grand doctrine of grace. These men were the witnesses of the truth. This Jesus Christ has also been; but more than all this, and that is why He utters these words, which in the lips of Moses, David, or St. Paul, had been blasphemy: "I am the Truth." 2. What is truth? It is the exact relation between two things. Thus a word is true when it corresponds perfectly with the fact or the idea it expresses; and arithmetical calculation is true when it gives accurately the results of a relation between two different quantities. Every truth, therefore, supposes a relation. Well, truth in religion will be the harmonious, and perfect relation between man and God. Now Jesus Christ has not only taught us what this relation is, but that He has realized it in His person. You ask what is the true religion. We point to Jesus Christ and answer: "Behold it." III. I AM THE LIFE. 1. Life, which is the most habitual and common of phenomena, is the most unfathomable of mysteries. Materialism, which triumphs to-day in so many schools, is stopped by this problem as before a brazen door for ever sealed. The Eternal God alone calls forth life; I know the terrible objection, if God alone is the Author of all life, wherefore evil? To this the gospel answers that the world is not in a state of order, that evil has, from the origin, been the consequence of the improper use of liberty. But have you observed how closely the notion of sin and that of death are bound up together; have you remarked that the sublime promise of life is essentially reserved for that alone which is in harmony with the will of God? Consequently, strong is our faith, we are able to say to all the powers of evil: "You shall not live for ever." The gospel is the doctrine of life; earth has been visited by the perfect Being, and according to His own words: "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." Alone the Son of God hath life in Himself. Therefore can He say: "I am the Life." 2. As Christ possesses life in Himself, He also brings life. Life alone can bring forth life. Christ came into a world which was literally dried up. What He did in Judæa He has done in Rome, in the uncivilized world; what He did in olden time He is doing to-day; and whilst it remains a fatal law for these nations that civilization alone leads them to destruction, it also remains a certain and striking fact that civilization with Jesus Christ is able to transform and save them. But if Christ brings life to nations, it is by imparting it to souls individually. (*E. Bersier.*)

The movement of the ages:—May it not be said that the movement of our age is towards life? I sometimes fancy that I can discern three epochs in the Reformed Churches corresponding in the main to those three mighty words, *via, veritas, vita.* The Reformers themselves no doubt laid the stress chiefly upon this first. It was on this Popery had gone most astray, obscuring the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The epoch following was essentially dogmatic when the doctors drew up systems of the truth. It was now indeed Christ as *veritas*! but the dogma taken alone led to coldness, dogmatism, sectarianism and formality. Happy will it be for the Church if, not forgetting the other two, she shall now be found moving on to the third development of Christ as *the Life*, which will regulate the two former

aspects, while it consummates and informs them. The life must develop the individual, and on individuals the Church depends; for in God's sight it is no abstraction. (*J. Mackintosh.*) **I am the Way.**—*The Way*:—The most precious things lie in the smallest compass. Diamonds have much value in little space. Those Scriptural sayings which are fullest of meaning are many of them couched in the fewest words. I. How JESUS CHRIST IS THE WAY, AND HOW HE COMES TO BE SO. A way supposes two points—from which and to which. 1. Christ is the Way—(1) From the guilt of sin. The great difficulty was—How is sin to be put away? Some have hoped for pardon from future good conduct, but the payment of a future debt can by no means discharge a past debt. Some hope much from the mercy of God, but the law knows nothing of clearing the sinner of guilt by a sovereign act of mercy. Here is the way for the sinner to approach the Father. His sin is laid upon Christ, who became his substitute. (2) The text is true concerning the wrath of God on account of sin. The way to escape from wrath is to escape from the sin which causes the wrath. Now, when the sin of God's people was moved from them to Christ, the wrath of God went where the sin went. (3) There comes upon us, in consequence of sin, a deep and terrible depression of spirit. Christ is the way out of the sense of the wrath of God. (4) But more, Christ is the way to escape from the power of sin. A man may break off some of his sins by his own unaided efforts. Still, sin dwells in fallen creatures. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? But there is power which can deliver from the power of sin and make holy; it is found in Christ Jesus. The saints in glory overcame through the blood of the Lamb, and there is no other way of overcoming. The precious blood of atonement wherever sprinkled kills sin. 2. Christ is the Way—(1) To the Father. We hear talk of getting to God the Father by nature, but it is a ladder too short to reach the Infinite. It is only by Christ that we realize the Fatherhood of God. We are God's children when we are created anew in Christ Jesus. (2) To conscious acceptance with the Father. "Made nigh by the blood of Christ." (3) To communion with the Father. You do talk with God when you draw near in Jesus Christ. "Truly, our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (4) To resemble the Father. You imitate Christ, and so become like the Father. II. WHAT SORT OF WAY IS CHRIST, AND FOR WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE? 1. What sort of way. He is—(1) The King's highway, the Divinely-appointed way from sin to the Father. (2) An open way. If I am treading the king's highway I cannot be a trespasser there. (3) A perfect way. It would not be complete unless it came down where you are. Where are you? Defiled by evil living? There is a road from where you are right up to the immaculate perfection of the blessed at God's right hand, and that road is Christ. You think you have some preparations to make, some feelings to pass through, something or other to perform; but all you can do to make yourself fit for Christ is to make yourself unfit; all your preparations are but foul lumber—put them all away. Thou must come as thou art. (4) A free way. There is not a toll-bar all along the road. Whosoever wills to have Christ may have Him for the taking. He that will pay for Christ cannot have Him at all. If faith be in one respect a condition, it is in another respect a gift of God, and though we are commanded to repent, yet Jesus is exalted on high to give repentance. (5) A permanent way. Not a way for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, only, but for you; not for the apostles, and martyrs, and early saints, only, but for you. It is a way that never has been broken up, and never will be. (6) A joyful way. (7) The only way. 2. For what sort of people. For all sorts—(1) For wanderers. (2) For back-sliders. (3) For captives. (4) For the poorest of the poor. III. How WE MAKE CHRIST OUR WAY. 1. How do we make Christ our way? As we make any other way our way: by getting into it. 2. In order to keep the way your own, all you do is to continue in it. "The just shall live by faith," not by any other means. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Jesus the Way*:—This word "way" may mean either one of two things—the road along which you must go to reach a certain place; or the thing that must be done in order to secure any particular end. When we think of heaven, Jesus is the way in both these senses. He is the road along which we must walk. He has done all that is necessary, in order that we may get there. The way of salvation through Jesus is—I. A PLAIN WAY. A paved street or a turnpike road, is a plain way. But if we are travelling over a sandy desert, or through a rocky country where there is nothing to mark the path, then we are in a way that is not plain. It is hard to find the way, and at every step, we are liable to get off the right track. The way of salvation in Jesus is easy to find and easy to keep, if we only ask God to help us in finding and keeping it. (Isa. xxxv. 8; Hab. ii. 2). The father of a little girl was

once in great trouble on account of his sins. He lay awake, after going to bed one night, in fear and dread. His little daughter was sleeping in her crib beside his bed. Presently she began to move about uneasily. "Papa, papa!" she called. "What is it, my darling?" he asked. "Oh, papa, it's so dark! Take Nellie's hand." He reached out and took her tiny little hand, clasping it firmly in his own. A sigh of relief came from her little heart. At once she was quieted and comforted. That father felt that his little child had taught him a valuable lesson. "Oh, my Father, my Saviour," he cried, "it is dark, very dark in my soul. Take my hand." So he turned to Jesus and trusted in Him. A minister had a son in the army. Tidings came that his son had been wounded and was not expected to live. On arriving there, the doctor said, "He may die any moment." With a sad heart, the father went in. "Oh, father," said the wounded man, "the doctor says I must die, and I am not prepared for it. Tell me how I can be ready. Make it so plain that I can get hold of it." "My son," said the father, "do you remember one day, years ago, I had occasion to rebuke you for something you had done? You became very angry and abused me." "Yes, father." Do you remember, after your anger had passed off, how you came in and threw your arms round my neck and said: 'My dear father, I am so sorry, won't you forgive me?'" "Yes, I remember it very distinctly." "Do you remember what I said?" "Oh, yes. You said: 'I forgive you with all my heart,' and you kissed me." "Did you believe me?" "Certainly." "And then did you feel happy again?" "Yes, perfectly happy, and since that time I have loved you better than ever before." "Well, now, my son, this is the way to come to Jesus. Tell Him, 'I am so sorry,' just as you told me: and He will forgive you a thousand times quicker than I did." "Father, is this the way. Why, I can get hold of this." And he did get hold of it and was soon happy. After awhile, the doctor came in. He felt the pulse of the wounded man, and said with surprise: "Why, Colonel, you look better." "I am better, doctor. I'm going to get well." He got well; and he is living now, the joy and comfort of that father who made the way of salvation so plain that he could get hold of it. II. A BROAD WAY (Matt. ix. 28; Rev. xxii. 17). There was a poor sailor who had lived a very wicked life. Once, while far off at sea, it pleased God to awaken his conscience. Then he was in great distress. There was no one on board to tell him what to do. One night he lay in his berth, and in the dim light of the feeble lamp, he was reading the Bible. He came to John iii. 16. He put his finger on the word "whosoever," "Whosoever," said he, "that means anybody; that means everybody! Why, that means me!" Then he turned in faith to Jesus, and He received him. He got into the broad way of salvation through this sweet word. One day a minister was visiting with a friend among some of the poorest of the population. He entered a wretched looking house. A rickety bedstead, a couple of broken chairs, the remains of a table, and a few pieces of earthenware on the shelf, made up all the furniture. In the middle of the room a miserable looking woman lay on the floor drunk. The minister said to his friend: "Let us pray for her." They kneeled down and prayed that God would have mercy on this poor woman. She lay there still and stupid, and seemed to take no notice. They went away. Some months after the minister was going again through that part of the city. A well-dressed, respectable-looking woman came up and spoke to him. "Do you not remember some months since praying over a woman who lay drunk on the floor?" "I do." "Well, sir, I am that woman. I was respectably brought up by Christian parents. I married; but after awhile my husband died, and left me with three children in utter poverty. I saw no way of support but by my own shame. Then I took to drinking to drown my sorrow. I was at the lowest point of sin and misery when you stopped and offered that prayer. It saved me. It made me think of my dear mother, now in heaven. And, by God's help, I hope yet to join her there." Oh, it is a broad way of salvation that can take in such poor wretched creatures as this! A gentleman was sent for once to visit one of his class, a newsboy, named Billy, who was very ill. As he entered the room, Billy said: "Oh, captain, I'm mighty glad to see yer." "What can I do for you, my dear fellow?" "I wanted to ax yer two questions. Did you tell us the other night as how Jesus Christ died for every feller?" "Yes, 'Jesus Christ tasted death for every man.'" "Good!" said Billy: "I thought so. Now did you tell us as how Jesus Christ saves every feller that axes Him?" "Yes," said his friend; "Every one that asketh receiveth." "Then I know," said Billy, with a feeble but happy voice, "That He saves me because I axes Him." The teacher paused to wipe away a tear from his eye. Then he stooped down to speak

to the boy. But Billy's head had dropped back on his pillow of rags, and his happy spirit had gone to Jesus. III. A NARROW WAY. It is a broad way, because the greatest sinners may come into it, and any number. It is a narrow way, because when sinners come into it they must leave all their sins behind (Matt. vii. 13). 1. There is a vessel lying at anchor. It can make no progress while the anchor holds it. It may rise and fall, as the tide rises or falls; but it cannot move away. And just what the anchor does to the vessel, one sin, one wrong thought or feeling indulged or allowed, will do for the soul. It will keep it from going on in the way of salvation. 2. A lady once was led to see that she was a sinner. The thought of her sins made her feel very unhappy. The difficulty was just here. She had been a very charitable woman, and wanted to trust in part to good works. One night, after weeping and praying in great distress, she went to bed. In her sleep she dreamed that she fell over a dreadful precipice. In falling, she caught hold of the branch of a tree. In her terror she cried out: "Oh, save me, save me!" She heard the voice of Jesus saying: "Let go that branch, and I will save you." But she was unwilling to loose her hold. Again she cried: "Oh, save me!" The same voice said: "I cannot help you while you cling there." At last she let go, expecting to be dashed to pieces. But, instead of this, she found herself caught in the strong arms of her Saviour. In the joy of feeling herself safe, she awoke. And so in her dream she had learned the lesson which she had failed to learn in her waking hours. She saw that the way of salvation was too narrow for her to carry any of her good works into it. IV. THE ONLY WAY. Some people think that there are a great many ways to heaven, and that one of these is as good as any of the others. What does God say about it? (Isa. xliii. 11; Acts iv. 12). No one can ever get to heaven who does not go there through Jesus Christ. Many will go to heaven without knowing how they get there. But they will find it was Jesus alone who brought them there. A little girl was very ill. She asked: "Papa, does the doctor think I shall die?" With a very sad heart, her father said: "My darling, the doctor is afraid you cannot live." Then her pale face grew very sad. She thought about the dark graves, and her eyes filled with tears as she said: "Papa, the grave is very dark. Won't you go down with me into it?" With a bursting heart, her father told her he could not go with her, till the Lord called him. "Papa, won't you let mamma go with me?" It almost broke that father's heart to tell her that, much as her mother loved her, she could not go with her either. The poor dear child turned her face to the wall and wept. But she had been taught about Jesus, as the Friend and Saviour of sinners. She poured out her little heart to Him with a child's full faith, and found comfort in Him. Soon she turned again to her father, with her face all lighted up with joy, and said: "Papa, the grave is not dark now. Jesus will go with me." But Jesus is the only one who can do this (Psa. xxiii. 4). Some years ago there was a distinguished lawyer, who had an only daughter, the light and joy of her father's life. The mother of this young girl was an earnest Christian woman. She had tried to teach her child that Jesus was the only way of salvation. But her husband was an infidel. He had told his daughter that we could get to heaven without the help of Jesus. This daughter loved and honoured both her parents; but as her father told her of one way and her mother of another way, she could not make up her mind which of these two ways was the right one. At the age of sixteen she was taken very ill. One day, she said to her father with great earnestness: "Father, I am going to die. What must I do to be saved? My mother has taught me that the only way of salvation is in Jesus Christ. You have taught me that we can be saved without Jesus. Shall I take my mother's advice or yours?" The strong man was deeply moved. After a while, he came to the bedside of his daughter. He took her pale, thin hand in his, and said slowly but solemnly: "My darling daughter, take your mother's way." Here is a ship at sea. She has been overtaken by a dreadful storm. Her masts are broken, her sails are rent. She has sprung a leak, and now the pumps are choked, and can no longer be worked. The water is rising. It is very evident that she cannot be kept afloat much longer. There is only one way left to the poor sailors for saving their lives? What is that? It is to take to the life-boat. And we, as sinners, are just in the position of such a storm-tossed wreck at sea. Jesus is the lifeboat. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *Christ the Way*:—We could never rejoice in this His way, if He merely stood in the way as a sign-post, or went before us as a Guide. God be praised, our Jesus is not only Counsellor, but mighty as well; and not mighty only, but Mighty God! (Isa. ix. 6). If He is as a sign-post, He is one with living arms; for He receives us to Himself, from

His Cross He draws us up to Himself, He lifts us upon His shoulders; in short, He is Himself the way, the new living way, which, like a full flowing river, bears along our little bark, and brings it to the ocean of a blissful eternity. Conrad Rieger sets before us Jesus as the way, thus: "Where is the man who will give himself to another to be his way? If the king could not cross over a dyke, and were to say to one of you, 'Lay thyself in this dyke to make a bridge that I may cross over upon thee,' where is the meanest subject in the land who would consent to do it? But what no man would like to do for another, that Jesus does for us all." (*R. Besser, D.D.*) *Christ the way to God*:—I. IN WHAT RESPECTS IS CHRIST "THE WAY?" 1. As a Teacher. He came into a world that was filled with error and falsehood. Everywhere men were groping in the dark, following "blind leaders." And the Saviour affirmed, "I am the Light of the World." "I am the Truth." All spiritual truth is associated with Christ, because it proceeds from Him and terminates in Him. 2. As a Mediator. Many can see that Christ is "the Way" as a Teacher, but not as a Mediator. But if Christ be a Teacher, and nothing more, then He rather shows "the Way," than is "the Way." Between man and God there stretches a wide gulf which sin has opened. Amidst the many expedients which man vainly devises, the Saviour interposes and becomes the "one Mediator between God and man." 3. As such—(1) He intercedes with us, and beseeches us to be reconciled to God. (2) He intercedes with God. For this the Saviour is fitted because of His atoning work. He entered into the holy place, "neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood." "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter," &c. (3) He receives and bestows upon us the Holy Spirit. If man is to come to God it must be as a "new creature" that he comes. II. Some of THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS "WAY." 1. Truth. Immediately our Lord adds, "I am the Truth." From the Fall until now the human mind has been in matters of religion avaricious of error. Now, amidst the many ways which men have invented, Christ presents Himself as the true Way—the Way which God provides, and which Scripture reveals. What other way so commends itself to an enlightened reason as this. 2. Purity. False systems of religion must accommodate themselves to man's frailties, and enable him to compound for his sins; it is only the gospel that presents a pure and perfect standard. 3. Happiness and security. Emphatically may it be said that it is a way of peace. But can you affirm this of those methods of salvation which man has invented? "Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven." Safe as well as happy!—for as this is a living way, all who walk in it participate in that eternal life which it bestows (Isa. xxxv. 8–10). I think of every image that can suggest this security, but they all fail adequately to shadow it forth. I think of Noah sheltered in the ark; of Lot, plucked as a "brand from the burning;" of the criminal pursued by the officers of justice reaching the Temple; of the man-slayer in the city of refuge. "There is no condemnation," &c. 4. Simplicity. What can be plainer than this promise, "He that believeth, shall be saved;" or than this invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour," &c.; or than this assurance, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out;" or than this command, "Look unto Me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved"? 5. Exclusiveness. "There is no other name," &c. (*H. J. Gamble.*) *Make sure that you are in the right way*:—When I was at Fall River, I was obliged to rise at four o'clock in the morning to take the train. I took my carpet-bag in my hand, and ran, but was in trouble lest I might be running directly from the cars, instead of towards them. There was not a person in sight; but I saw a light in one upper window. A watcher was there. I rang the bell, and asked information as to my way. It was given. I was about right—only needed a little help, and now, knowing that I was in the right way, I did run. A bird might have counted it doing well to keep up with me; for I expected every moment to hear the bell, and the rushing off of the train, and then I should be there, and my people without a sermon on Sunday. Only let me be sure that I was in the right way, and I was willing to run. So says the Christian, "Only let me be sure that I am on my way to heaven, and there is nothing that I am not willing to do or to bear." Well, if you are so earnest, know that Christ is the Way; and if you are desirous to cast away all that shall hinder your race, I think that you need not doubt that you are already in it. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ the only way*:—Mrs. Bennet, wife of John Bennet, minister of an Independent Church in Cheshire, the day before she died, raised herself into a very solemn attitude, and with most striking emphasis, delivered, in the following language her dying testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus: "I here declare it before you that I have looked on the right hand and on the left—I

have cast my eyes before and behind—to see if there was any possible way of salvation but by the Son of God; and I am fully satisfied there is not. No! none on earth, nor all the angels in heaven, could have wrought out salvation for such a sinner. None but God Himself, taking our nature upon Him, and doing all that the holy law required, could have procured pardon for me, a sinner. He has wrought out salvation for me, and I know that I shall enjoy it for ever." *The way to our wishes:*—Thomas was the spokesman of the disciples for the moment. The Saviour speaks to them and to us as if we were anxious to get a glimpse of a particular person, and to go to a particular place. Are not these longings strong and deep in the heart of humanity? Is not science itself in search of the Father? Is it not trying by every means in its power to get up to the Great First Cause? And does not superstition unite its sighs with those of science? When it makes its idol and falls down before it, is it not trying to bring God within the bounds of visibility? And is not Pantheism in pursuit of the same object? God everything, and everything God. Deeper still is the desire in the heart of the Church. Now Christ says, "I am the Way." Would it not be wonderful if it were otherwise, if there were no way? We see on all sides provision made for the wants of our nature, for the gratification of the wishes of our hearts. Are we to believe that the desires which we have for the highest and noblest and holiest of all things are to be made exceptions to the rule? I. CHRIST IS THE WAY BY WHICH THE GREAT FIRST CAUSE, THE FATHER OF ALL, HAS BEEN BROUGHT WITHIN THE RANGE OF HUMAN VISION IN A REAL PERSONAL FORM. His attributes are evident from His works. Holy men of old were permitted to hear His voice sometimes, and to behold symbols of His presence. But the Lord Jesus made the eternal God visible to the eye of man in human form—"In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." And that was the only way in which He could be manifested personally to the eye of flesh. Mortal man could not go up to God where He is. The only alternative was, that God should come down in the fashion of a man. In no other nature could He convey a complete conception of His character to the mind. II. CHRIST IS THE WAY BY WHICH MAN GETS UP TO GOD, AND DWELLS WITH HIM AT LAST IN HIS HOUSE. When we were bearing our own sins, we dreaded Him; when He is placed before us bearing our sins, we are attracted to Him, and take hold of Him with our whole heart, as His heart took hold of us when we were perishing. When we are drawn to Him we partake of His nature as really as He partook of ours. His Spirit flows into us, and all that is good is quickened and strengthened in us, so that an affinity is established between us and Him, just as an affinity had been previously established between Him and us. "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me." His people "seek the things which are above," &c. "Our citizenship is in heaven." When the souls of His people are loosed from their bodies at death they go up to Him. And the bodies of believers, as well as their spirits, will be drawn up to Him at last. "And so we shall be ever with the Lord." (*W. Simpson.*) *The way to the Father:*—We hear much of the Fatherhood of God, and cannot hear too much if the doctrine be truly stated. It is not a new doctrine. The heathen knew something of it; it is in the Old Testament, while it is the very substance of the New. Only in the latter, what heathenism never knew, and what the Law and the Prophets only taught imperfectly, God is our Father in the Eternal Son. This distinctly Christian doctrine is declared in our text—I. POLEMICALLY. It protests against certain religious teachings which contravene it. Throughout His ministry Christ was in conflict with men who held a false doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. 1. There were those who represented God as though He looked on His human offspring with a complacency which winked at all moral distinctions. The Supreme Father looked upon all with equal indifference. In opposition to this Christ taught that man was estranged from God through sin. He had lost the knowledge of God and was spiritually dark; the favour of God and was guilty; the image of God and was corrupt; the life of God and was dead in trespasses and sins; and that men could only secure the prerogatives of sonship by intervention from without. There are those to-day who teach the old doctrines of a philosophical Sadduceeism. Christianity challenges them. Appealing to Christ's credentials as a Teacher sent from God, it proclaims to the world that God hath *given* unto us eternal life, and that this life is by a Mediator whom He hath ordained. There is no absurdity in the doctrine. Who but God can determine how we may most fitly come to Him? And as the Mediatorship is actually constituted, what lessons touching Divine love and holiness, and human helplessness and dignity, does it not pour into our ears. 2. But Christ's ministry did

battle even more keenly with those who held that God was their Father through mediatorship. Angels, Abraham, Moses, saintly pedigree, holy observances, &c., were their mouthpieces with God, and stepping-stones to immortality. Christ told them they carried a lie in their right hand; that there was but one Mediator—Himself. Alas! we have the doctrine of the Pharisees too. Men are heard proclaiming that the prayer of a disembodied saint, the magic of a Christian rite, &c., have the stupendous power to join heaven and earth together. The New Testament pronounces all this to be falsehood. Our alms, deeds, fastings, communions, baptisms, &c.—these bridge the gulf between us and God! What does a man think of himself, what does he think of God, who takes up with such a hypothesis? II. DOCTRINALLY. Taken with its context, the text is the summary and index of a most large and precious Scripture teaching. How do men come to the Father through Christ? Necessarily the Person, character, and history of the Mediator will have much to do with the nature and method of His mediation. Who the Mediator was let John tell us (chap. i.), and His character and history let him and his brethren tell. With these facts in view men have held that the value of Christ's mediation consists in the energy of the truth He taught, and the force of His example. Others explain that by His perfect fulfilment of the will of God as our representative, He became so acceptable to God, that by reason of what He did God is now the loving Father of us all, and in Him all men are already virtually, and will be by and by actually justified and glorified. Now both these theories mistake the entire basis, method and scope of Christ's Mediatorship, which is essentially an economy of holy law, in which God and man sustain not simply the relations of Father and Son, but those of moral Governor and rational and responsible creature. According to Scripture—1. Christ's blood has made satisfaction in law to Divine justice for the sins of all mankind, by virtue of which sin is expiated, and all men through personal faith may find mercy and acceptance. 2. As the recompense of the Redeemer's passion. God gives to the world by Christ's hands His Holy Spirit, by whom assurance of pardon is given, and new birth to righteousness. 3. Under the reign of Christ believers are protected from the evil that is in the world; subjected to providential discipline, and furnished with strength to do the will of God and make their way to everlasting life. III. EVANGELICALLY AND PROMISSORY. Men can only come to God by Christ; but by Him there is free access for every soul. To come to the Father is—1. To know God. 2. To be the object of the love of God. 3. To be with God for ever. Conclusion: 1. The words illuminate the widest possible area of religious truth. God is and always has been, whether as Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, the Father of men through a Mediator. 2. Within a narrower circle, Christ's doctrine lays down broad lines of duty and privilege for the Church of God. Let no false charity presume to enlarge what God has straitened. It is at the Church's peril that it dares to cripple man's evangelical liberty. 3. The text speaks with a gracious but authoritative voice to every hearer of the gospel. (1) Do not hope to find God without Christ. (2) Do not treat Christ as though His Mediatorship was inadequate. (3) Let no man despise or neglect the Mediator, "How shall we escape," &c. (*J. D. Geden, D.D.*) *Christ the only way to the Father*:—Not long ago, two little children rambling from home over a wild and dangerous part of Dartmoor, lost their way. Utterly unable to find the right path, they sat down, and cried bitterly. "And what did you do next?" was the question put to them afterwards. "I said, 'Our Father,'" answered the boy, "and sister said, 'Gentle Jesus.'" Then they made another attempt, and discovered a moorland road which led them safely home. Surely the conduct of those little ones, lost on the moor, has a lesson for us. If any of us have wandered from the right way, and lost sight of our Father's House, and fallen among the dangers of a sinful world, what can we do better than shed tears of sorrowful repentance; what can we do better than cry to Our Father and Gentle Jesus? (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *Christ the only way of approach to the Father*:—I. TO COME UNTO THE FATHER MUST BE REGARDED AS THE CHIEF CONCERN OF MAN. 1. The nature of this coming to the Father. It is—(1) To obtain an accurate acquaintance of His character and His will. We are said to be distant from an object when we are ignorant of it. In the Sacred Writings, on the one hand, ignorance of God is mentioned as being a crime; and, on the other, to attain an accurate acquaintance with Jehovah is the highest human blessing. It is, therefore, desired for men that they may have the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of God and His Son. (2) The enjoyment of reconciliation with Him. Reconciliation was the grand theme which Christ preached, as

well as the grand work which He came to accomplish. 2. The importance of thus coming to the Father. Adopting the most general assumption that God is the Governor, and that man is a subject, and that the sanction by which the government of God is vindicated, over the retribution of eternity, then it must follow that nothing can be of importance at all compared to the attainment of a state by which the infliction of the Divine anger may be avoided, and by which the enjoyment of the Divine favour may be secured. II. THE WORK OF THE LORD JESUS AFFORDS A METHOD BY WHICH MEN MAY COME UNTO THE FATHER. In the whole of the series of verses, with which the text is connected, our Saviour speaks of Himself as being one who had been introduced for the purpose of accomplishing a work, through the agency of which man might be made possessor of all that is desirable in the state we have endeavoured to describe. Let us notice—1. The nature of the work which our Lord Jesus has accomplished. (1) Christ is invested with the office of a teacher. One object of His incarnation was to remove those awful shades of ignorance which had overshadowed the nations of the earth; and to inculcate all those principles of spiritual truth which were necessary for man to know and believe. (2) But we must contemplate the work of our Lord as that which also furnishes a positive atonement for sin. 2. The extent to which this work is intended to be applied. The merit of the work of the Saviour is intrinsically sufficient for the world. The means of access and acceptance with God, under the Levitical dispensation, were restricted to a small nation; but under that dispensation of grace and truth, which came by Jesus Christ, it announced that the party walls were to be broken down, and the distinction of Jew and Gentile known no more; and that whomsoever, of any age, nation, rank, or character, would come unto the Father through the work of the Son, should find in the work of the Son a ready plenitude of Almighty energy and grace. There is no limit to that promise—"He that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." III. To COME UNTO THE FATHER, EXCEPT THROUGH THE WORK OF JESUS, IS PERFECTLY AND ETERNALLY IMPOSSIBLE. 1. No other being possesses the characteristics which are possessed by our Lord Jesus, and which are necessary to constitute a sufficient mode of access to the Father. For, what is Christ? He is God, and He is Man. The way to God would be shut if it were not for the humanity of Christ; the way to God would be imperfect if it were not for the Divinity of Christ. Humanity is what gives to the work of the Saviour adaptation; Divinity is what gives to the work of Christ efficacy, plenitude, and power. 2. The Sacred Writings distinctly and solemnly declare that the work of Christ, as the Medium of access to the Father, stands exclusive and alone. "Neither is there salvation in any other," &c. "Other foundation can no man lay," &c. Conclusion: 1. Have you come to the Father? 2. Will you come unto the Father? (*J. Parsons.*) *Christ the only means of access to the Father:*—The passage implies—I. THAT IT IS A PRIMARY DUTY OF ALL INTELLIGENT BEINGS TO COME TO GOD. God is the Father of all spirits, of all beings, to whom He has given an intelligent nature, on whom He has conferred moral capacities. From that very circumstance it is their first and positive obligation, and will constitute their happiness to come to Him, *i.e.*, to have constant intercourse with Him. There is something solemn and impressive about it. To come into contact with the eternal and infinite mind! We feel strongly when we have a prospect of coming into contact with some eminent person. But everything falls short of the idea of coming into the presence of God. And then to have a proper idea of our responsibility, and our being constantly under His eye—and yet it is our primary duty to delight in this, and to do it. II. THAT THERE IS A VERY REMARKABLE SINGULARITY ABOUT THE WAY IN WHICH MAN IS TO COME TO GOD. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Anything like that was never uttered in heaven. It never was uttered, and never will be, in any world in which the beings continue to be just as they proceeded from the hands of God. They delight in constant intercourse with God. Why is this? Worlds that have never fallen are in a state of natural religion. With respect to us who have fallen, if we come to God we must come in a particular manner. And the singularity of this arises from our guilt. God is to be viewed by us not merely as God, but as a God whom we have offended. And, therefore, there is some process required to mark our circumstances, both upon God's part and upon ours. And the peculiarity of the thing as revealed in Scripture is, that we are to come to God, through a Mediator, and to plead the work and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to ask the forgiveness of sin, in the consideration of that reason. Now all just views of religion rest upon this foundation. The Deist rejects revelation and a mediator altogether, because he looks abroad on the face of the world, and he thinks that nothing

more is necessary to come to God but some prayer and some expression of penitence. Then, again, some men reject the idea of the Divinity and sacrifice of Christ, and think it is enough to come to God, as professing to receive the truth of Christ. These views result from very inadequate impressions of the holiness and majesty of God and of the nature of sin, and of that kind of medium which is represented in the New Testament as the way into the presence of the holiest of all. III. THAT IN COMING TO GOD IT BECOMES US TO HAVE RESPECT TO THE MEDIATOR, AND TO COME ON THE SPECIFIC BUSINESS FOR WHICH HE IS APPOINTED. Only imagine that one of your children, or several of them, had deeply and grievously offended you. Or imagine the case of a monarch, against whom a certain portion of his subjects had rebelled. Imagine, in either of these cases, that some kind and gracious and affectionate declaration of readiness to forgive on certain conditions and in a certain way. And just imagine that either the child, or the subject should dare to come into the presence of the parent or of the sovereign, unconcerned about the matter wherein they had offended. Imagine that your child, without adverting to the circumstances of his actual offence, and of your displeasure, and to the plan which you had designed by which reconciliation might be effected between you—that your child came and praised the properties of your character, and rejoiced in the genuine affections of your nature, and the principles of your behaviour, and praising your heart, or your hands, or your head. Or conceive of the subjects entering the presence chamber of their monarch, and that without adverting to the proclamation that had been made, they should come and unite together in some manifestation of their feelings with regard to his government and his reign, and the happiness of his subjects; never once referring to the business on which they were supposed to come. Would there not be something monstrous in all this? And do you not perceive that the child would increase his offence, and that the subjects would add something like ingratitude and contempt to their rebellion? There are many who just treat God in this way. IV. THAT IN COMING IN THE WAY THAT HAS BEEN POINTED OUT WE HAVE EVERY ENCOURAGEMENT; AND WE SHALL FIND IT TO BE SUFFICIENT. We shall have a welcome, and shall surely receive whatever is requisite to ensure for us happiness and satisfaction. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." But "whoever cometh I will in no wise cast out." And the reason why you do not enjoy all this is, because you will not. V. THAT THOSE WHO COME TO GOD BY THE MEDIATOR, AND THEY ONLY, ARE PREPARED FOR DWELLING WITH GOD HEREAFTER. It is not enough to die, and be happy, as some people seem to imagine; you may die and be damned—the Bible says so. VI. THAT THIS SUBJECT IS EXCEEDINGLY FORGOTTEN AND NEGLECTED BY MEN. 1. There are many men who never come to God at all. They never come in any way; they never think of it. 2. There are others who come to God, professedly, but in the wrong way. They do not come to the Father by the Son. 3. There are others who neglect the spirit of this declaration. They profess to come in the right way; but the particular exercises, and the positive enjoyments of religion, are to them an end of itself. (*T. Binney.*) **Truth.**—*The Truth:*—Christ is the Truth—I. IN THE HIGHEST SENSE of that word. Some by the word mean literal accuracy of speech, some a restricted class of theological truths; others some philosophical theories. We use the word to denote the whole sum of Christianity as revealed in the person, teaching, and life, of Jesus; the final test and appeal to which all religious and moral truth must be referred; eclipsing all by its glory, overtopping all by its majesty, swaying all by its authority, and determining all by its decision. II. THE SAVING TRUTH. A few simple facts and doctrines constitute the main features of our religion. They exhibit the Divine law broken by man's transgression. They proclaim the eternal justice condemning man. Man is guilty, and therefore condemned; depraved, therefore impotent; hopeless, therefore wretched. This, then, is the mystery of godliness: the Christ, who is the sinless one, became the representative and the surety of the sinful, obeyed the law we had broken, endured the penalty we had deserved, is gone to heaven to shed down on our hearts the influence which alone can renew and sanctify. By faith we are united to Him. Thus we are cleansed from our transgression, justified from all condemnation, made partakers of the Saviour's Spirit, destined to the Saviour's glory. III. INCOMPARABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL TRUTH. No error can be harmless; every truth must have its use; yet it is equally evident that all truth is not of the same importance; but this is the central, all-pervading truth. If we diverge here, we can only go further and further astray. It is in spiritual science what the law of gravitation is in physical science. Other truth will affect your intelligence, your conscience, your luxuries, your civilization,

your personal freedom; but this affects your soul, your conscience, your character, your eternity. IV. To CONTRADICT AND REFUTE THE WORLD'S FALSEHOOD. The first temptation was a lie; and ever after that time men were deceived. Thus it came to pass that history, with a slight substratum of fact, became little else than a tissue of fables; philosophy, notwithstanding its high pretentions, became for the most part a mere logomachy or imposing sophism; poetry was employed to dazzle the imagination, to blind the understanding, to decorate the vices; while religion, which, above all things, ought to be the unadulterated truth, became the most complicated and abandoned lie; till Christ stood in the deluded world, and confronted all its delusions, and said, "I am the Truth." But since then even the gospel has been perverted. We have need incessantly, therefore, to refer to the first principle; to correct everything by this, "I am the Truth." V. NOTWITHSTANDING THE INDIFFERENCE THAT MEN GENERALLY MANIFEST IN RELATION TO IT. I know of nothing which men are so reluctant to honour. If, indeed, you will lower its tone and destroy its vitality; if you will represent it as a philosophy amenable at the bar of man, and class it as a speculation with all other speculations it will be tolerated. VI. NOTWITHSTANDING THE WORLD'S HOSTILITY. Thus hostility has put the seal to the declaration. Had it not been mighty, it would never have awakened that hostility; had it not been right-hearted, it would never have dared it; had it not been immortal, it would never have survived it; but having awakened, dared, and survived it, in the person of Christ, and in His truth we see it, as if it came direct from heaven, bearing this testimony before all unequivocally and unshakingly, "I am the Truth. VII. AS THE POWER ULTIMATELY TO SUBDUE THE WORLD. "Great is the truth, and shall prevail." The thoughtful of all parties assent to that; the mistake is that men should so hastily conclude that the truth is with them. Even they who are engaged in the worst of enterprises wish to have the truth on their side, and labour to have it appear that it is so. And why? Because truth is of God; the man who knowingly goes against it feels he is struggling with Omnipotence. When men see error with their eyes open the spirit shrinks away from it. And if Christ's doctrine be not true it must perish; all the learning, and power, and skill, and genius, of the universe cannot save it from the perdition it deserves; but Christ cannot be defeated so long as this text is true. Christ's people cannot be defeated so long as they can say, "We are in Him that is true." Living in Him; the Church is founded upon a rock, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. Remember—1. That though this truth is set before you, it will never be yours but in the exercise of deep humility. 2. That fully to enter into this truth you must possess the spirit of Him from whom it comes. 3. That this truth is Divine in its origin, and intends to be saving in its result. 4. Take it with you as at once your defence and your law. (*J. Aldis.*)

Jesus, the Truth:—It is a truth in arithmetic that two and two make four. It is a truth in geometry that "the shortest distance between any two points is a straight line." Certain facts are truths of history. And what we are taught about God or heaven are truths in religion. But Jesus has so much to do with our religion, that we sometimes put His name in place of the word religion, and say of a certain doctrine that it is a truth in Jesus. And this is what Jesus means when He says: "I am the Truth." The truth in Jesus is the best of all truth, because it—I. SANCTIFIES OR MAKES US GOOD. The model of goodness is the example of Jesus. There is none like Him in heaven, in the earth, in any other world. He is "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." And that which helps to make us like Jesus is the very best thing in the world for us. It is the truth the Bible teaches us about Jesus, which makes us Christians in the beginning. And then it is only by knowing more of this truth that we "grow in grace," or become better Christians. II. SATISFIES AND MAKES US HAPPY. When you are hungry you have a very disagreeable feeling, and nothing will take it away and make us feel comfortable, but substantial food. But the hunger of the soul is harder to bear than the hunger of the body. Suppose you go to a person, whose soul is in trouble on account of some great sorrow or sin, and try to comfort him by telling him one of the truths in arithmetic or geography. You say to him: "Don't be troubled; two and two make four; or the sun rises in the east and sets in the west." Do you think that would satisfy him, or do him any good? None whatever. But suppose that, instead of this, you tell him, and he believes, about "the truth as it is in Jesus." This is the food that this hungry soul craves. The Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Charles I., lies buried in Newport Church, in the Isle of Wight. A marble monument erected by Queen Victoria shows, in a very touching way, what

her feelings were about the matter of which we are now speaking, at the time of death. During the time of her father's troubles, she was a prisoner in Carisbrook Castle. She was alone, separated from all the friends and companions of her youth, and lingered on in her sorrows, till death came and set her free. She was found one day dead in her bed, with her Bible open before her, and her finger resting on these words: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And this is what the monument in Newport is intended to show. What a sermon in stone that monument preaches! To every one who looks at it, it seems to say: "Riches and rank cannot make you happy. Jesus only can satisfy the soul." III. SAVES US. But this is what no other kind of knowledge will or can do. You may know all about arithmetic, geography, history, &c., and this knowledge may be very useful to you in the business of this life, but it will not be of the least use to you in trying to get to heaven. If some poor soul, distressed about his sins, should come to you and ask the question: "What must I do to be saved?" you would find nothing in all those studies that would be the least help to you in answering that question. But, if you only know what the Bible teaches about Jesus, you will be able to answer this question in a moment. It is the truth in Jesus alone which shows us the way to heaven. Some years since, a respectable-looking person said to two collectors for the Bible Society, "I belonged to a company of pickpockets. About a year since, two of my companions and myself were passing by a church. It was the anniversary of the Bible Society. Seeing so many there, we thought it would be a good chance for us to carry on our wicked business. The Ten Commandments, in large gilt letters, were on the wall behind the pulpit. The first words that caught my eye were: 'Thou shalt not steal.' In a moment, my attention was arrested. I felt as if God were speaking to me. My conscience troubled me, and my tears began to flow. As soon as the meeting was over, I hurried away to a distant part of the city, where no one knew me. I got a Bible, and began to read it. It showed me what a great sinner I was; but it showed me also what a great Saviour Jesus is. I prayed to Jesus with all my heart. He heard my prayer. Please accept five guineas, and may God bless you in the good work you are doing." The late Dr. Corrie, bishop of Madras, in India, was a chaplain there for some time before he was made bishop. At that time, no translation of the Bible had been made into the language of that country. To help in scattering a little light, he was in the habit of translating striking passages of Scripture on little scraps of paper, and having his servant distribute them at his door every morning. Twenty years afterwards a missionary at Allahabad wrote to him: "I have lately visited a Hindoo, who came to this place in ill health. I was surprised to find that he was not only a Christian, but a Christian with a very clear knowledge of Jesus, and of the way in which he saves the souls of His people. 'How is it, my friend,' I said to him, 'that you understand so much about the Scriptures? You told me you never saw a missionary in your life, and never had any one to speak to you about the way of salvation?' He answered this question by putting his hand under his pillow, and drawing out a parcel of well-worn ragged bits of paper, and saying: 'From these bits of paper, which Sahib Corrie used to distribute by a servant at his door every day, I have learned all I know about the religion of Jesus. I have read them till, as you see, they are almost worn out. All I know about Jesus they have taught me; but what I do know of Him is worth more than all the world to me. It has saved my soul.'" (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *Christ, "the Truth"*:—We do not wonder to find "Truth" made the centre-bit of the arch. For "truth," wherever it is, holds everything together. It is the integrity of a man which gathers up the man, and gives a unity to his character. Take away truthfulness, and all his virtues, if he have any, fall to the ground. In like manner, "the Truth" of Christ is the cardinal point of all the strength of Scripture. Therefore, Christ placed it in the middle. For the same reason, in the figurative dress, both of Christ (Isa. xi.), and of the Christian (Eph. vi.), "Truth" is the girdle—that which binds up and knits the power of the man. Consider—I. TRUTH WAS AN ATTRIBUTE ABOVE ALL OTHERS, ESSENTIAL TO THE OFFICES WHICH CHRIST UNDERTOOK TO FULFIL. 1. As Witness. In this character, He came from heaven to reveal and testify to men the invisible things of another world. But what is a witness without truth? 2. As the Substance of that of which the whole of the Old Testament was the shadow. But the substance of anything is "the truth" of anything. Therefore Christ is "Truth." 3. As the Founder of a faith very different from all others which ever appeared upon this earth. Its precepts are

the strictest—its doctrines are the loftiest—its consolations are the strongest. Now what intense veracity did all that require in Him who propounded such a thing! If one iota or any word of His should ever fail, what would become of the whole gospel, of which He was the Author? 4. As His people's Righteousness. Truth had died out of the earth, when Christ came to re-make "truth," to be "Truth." But what must be the "truth" of Him who was to be "the Truth" of all the whole world? 5. As Judge. II. How does Christ become "Truth?" 1. He is nature's "truth." The earliest record that we have of Him is, that He was that "Wisdom" which dwelt with God when He made the worlds—that Word by which all things were made. Therefore, all things which are now in the world were first ideas in the mind of Christ. And there they lay, until His willing it gave those ideas their form, and they took the material substances with which we are conversant. That is the only idea we can form of creation. 2. He is "the Truth" of God. God is a Being of perfect love. And yet, God has announced, that "every soul that sins shall perish." Can you reconcile it? And yet, if two attributes of God cannot be reconciled, where is God's "truth?" In Christ the justice is satisfied that the love may be free. 3. He is man's "Truth." There are three empires of "truth." (1) The intellectual. I doubt whether any mind ever attains the highest order of intellect without an acquaintance with Jesus Christ. For if everything took its rise, as we have seen, in the mind of Christ, then the true science of every subject must revert to Christ. (2) Moral. It is very certain that in proportion as nations have departed from Christ, they have wandered out of the orbit of "truth." And every man—as he dwells more with Christ—grows in rectitude of conduct and integrity of practice. (3) Spiritual. Every undertaking of God to His people owes its strength to Christ, when it says that "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Christ, "the Truth":*—Christ is the Truth, because He came to—I. Reveal truth, and, but for Christ's revelation of it, we should be utterly ignorant of it. He is Himself the substance of all revealed truth. 1. Christ came to teach us about God. And how? "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." What could we have known of God, of His mercy, His faithfulness, His truth, His justice, but for the revelation of them that is made in Christ? 2. Christ is Truth substantially in relation to the types and shadows of the Old Testament. These all pointed to Him. Under the New Testament we are referred for all truth to Jesus Christ, let who will be the teacher. "Every man that hath learned of the Father cometh unto Me." The office of the Holy Spirit is to take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us. And why is this? Because "it hath pleased the Father that in Him should be hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." II. Confirm the truth. Christ came—1. "To confirm the promises made unto the fathers, that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercies." God graciously sustained the faith of the Old Testament saints by a succession of prophecies, and the truth of them was confirmed by the life, and death, and resurrection of Christ. 2. To confirm the threatenings. He had said in Eden that He would punish the breach of His law, at the same time that He promised to spare the offender. Christ confirmed this truth, for in Him we see how the threatenings of the law and the promises of the gospel harmonize. 3. In confirming the Word of God, Christ shows how impossible it is for God to lie. However great the difficulty may be in fulfilling a promise in our estimation, it is impossible for God to lie; and while the infallibility of God's promises should afford strong consolation to all that trust them, it should be a terror to them that will not obey; for the threatenings will as infallibly be fulfilled as the promises. III. Establish the truth, and to set up a kingdom in which truth reigns, and the subjects of which have truth in their inward parts. Now, in establishing truth in a man's heart, Christ not only sets up the principle of obedience to the Word of God, but He establishes that principle by the power of His own life. It is not so much that they live, as Christ that liveth in them. Whatever knowledge men may have of the truth, if it do not lead to the establishing of Christ's kingdom in their hearts, it is lifeless, unprofitable, condemning knowledge. IV. Use the truth? 1. He converts men by the convincing evidence of truth. Christ does not deal with us as machines, but as reasonable beings. He brings truth to bear on our understanding, reason, and judgment; and He makes men exercise them upon the truth. Thus the full responsibility of man is maintained, while the power of God comes in all its sovereign force upon their hearts and consciences. For this purpose He sends forth the Spirit; who makes men feel that they are sinners, and

then He leads them to desire the salvation of Him who is the Truth. And the same Holy Spirit who reproves of sin also goes on to display the perfect righteousness of Christ, in which the sinner is accepted. 2. He rules in a converted heart by the commanding power of the truth. This power extends to all parts of God's holy Word. His right to command is as extensive in one thing as another; His least command is as important as His greatest. (*J. W. Reeve, M.A.*) **The Life.**—*Jesus, the Life:*—He is—I. THE GIVER OF LIFE. We cannot go anywhere without finding living things. Heaven is full of life; for the angels live there. This world is full of life; for, wherever we go, we find people living. And, when we go outside of the homes, in the fields, on the hills, in the ponds, and rivers, and seas, far down to its lowest depths, something or other is found living. And the air is full of life. And it is Jesus who gives life to all these things (Acts iii. 15). But it is particularly because He gives life to souls dead in sins, and makes it possible for them to live for ever, that Jesus is called "the Life." "I say, Charlie," said Willie to his brother, "isn't it nice to be alive! Why, only see how I can toss my arms about, and use my legs, and feet, and hands. And, then, I can see, and hear, and feel. It's real nice to be alive, especially when you are all alive and have no part of you dead." "No part of you dead!" said Willie. "Who ever heard of such a thing as being part alive and part dead?" "I have, Willie. It was myself. The best part of me was quite dead; and what made it still worse was that I didn't know it." "But what part of you was dead, Charlie?" "My soul was dead towards God. When God spoke to me, I didn't hear His voice; when He called me to look to Him, I couldn't see Him; and when He told me to love Him, I didn't do it." "Well, how did it ever come alive?" "Well, Willie, it was Jesus who did it all for me. He sent His blessed Spirit into my heart, to show me that my soul was dead; and that I never could be happy, and never go to heaven unless my soul was made alive. Then I prayed to Him, and He heard me, and ever since He has made me feel so happy!" II. THE SUPPORTER OF LIFE. We have no power to make ourselves alive, and when life is given we have no power to keep or preserve it, and therefore we need such a one as Jesus. Nothing could continue to live, if it were left entirely to itself. Some things, when they begin to live, need a great deal more care and support than others. Look, for instance, at a babe that is just born, and a chicken that is just hatched. How very different they are in the care they require! But there is nothing that requires more care than our souls, after Jesus has made them alive. We are in a position of great danger. If left to ourselves, we must perish. If we have a servant working for us, we can show him the work we want him to do; but we cannot give him the strength to do it. Jesus can do both. He is like a great mountain that can support everything that rests upon it, whether an army or a fly. And He is like the ocean, too. When men launch their huge iron steamers, by scores and by hundreds, the ocean supports them as easily as though they were light as a piece of cork. And so Jesus can support all His people. III. THE EXAMPLE OF LIFE (1 Pet. ii. 21). When Jesus makes our souls alive, then the one thing we have to do is to try to be like Jesus. A little girl went to a writing-school. When she saw the copy set before her, she said; "I can never write like that." But she took up her pen, and put it timidly on the paper. "I can but try," she said. "I'll do the best I can." She wrote half a page. The letters were crooked. She feared to have the teacher look at her book. But when the teacher came, he looked and smiled. "I see you are trying, my little girl," he said kindly, "and that is all I expect." She took courage. Again and again she studied the beautiful copy. She wrote very carefully, but the letters straggled here, were crowded there, and some of them seemed to look every way. She trembled when she heard the step of the teacher. "I'm afraid you'll find fault with me," she said. "I do not find fault with you," said the teacher, "because you are only a beginner. Keep on trying. In this way, you will do better every day, and soon get to be a very good writer." And this is the way we are to try to be like Jesus. But when we read about Jesus, and learn how holy, and good, and perfect He was, we must not be discouraged if we do not become like Him at once. But, if we keep on trying, and ask God to help us, we shall "learn of Him to be meek and lowly in heart;" and we shall become daily more and more like Him. IV. THE REWARDER OF LIFE. Those who love Jesus are the happiest in this world, and will be the only happy people in the world to come. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *Christ, our Life:*—Life includes—1. Appropriate activity. 2. Happiness. The life here intended is not natural and intellectual, but spiritual and eternal. Christ is the Life, as He is—

I. ITS AUTHOR. 1. He saves us from death—(1) By His atonement, which satisfies the law. (2) By delivering us from the power of Satan. 2. He gives inward spiritual life, because—(1) He procures for us the gift of the life-giving Spirit. (2) He not only merits, but sends that Spirit. II. ITS OBJECT. 1. The exercises in which the Spiritual life consists terminate in Him. 2. The happiness involved consists in fellowship with Him. He is our life, as He is our joy, our portion, our everlasting inheritance. III. ITS END. It is Christ for us to live. While others live for themselves, their country, mankind, the believer lives for Christ. It is the great design of His life to promote Christ's glory, and to advance His kingdom. Inferences—1. Test of character. The difference between the true and the nominal Christian lies here. The one seeks and regards Christ as his life only, as He delivers from death; the other as the object of his life. 2. The true way to grow in grace, and in vigorous spiritual life, is to get more of Christ. 3. The happiness and duty of thus making Christ our life. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Christ, the Life:*—A well-known modern scientist has hazarded the speculation that the origin of life on this planet has been the falling upon it of the fragment of a meteor or an aerolite, from some other system, with a speck of organic life upon it, from which all has developed. Whatever may be the case in regard to the physical life, that is absolutely true in the case of spiritual life. It all comes because this heaven-descended Christ has come down the long staircase of Incarnation, and has brought with Him into the clouds and oppressions of our terrestial atmosphere a germ of life which He has planted in the heart of the race, there to spread for ever. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *Christ, the Christian's life:*—I. LIFE IN CHRIST. As the life of the mother is imparted to the child, so Christ's life is imparted to the Christian. Baptism symbolizes our being born in Christ, and the Lord's Supper symbolizes our being fed by Him. Both exhibit a common life between the believer and Christ. In this lies the security of the Christian. If you saw a rill running down a mountain side, you might wonder if that stream would not soon cease to run; but if you found out that a fountain fed it, then you could readily believe that it would keep on running, and that, whatever obstacles might cross its course, it would go on and on toward the ocean. Christ is the eternal fountain—the life of the soul (Rom. viii. 38, 39). II. LIFE ON CHRIST. Some plants grow on that on which they lean. So the life of Christ is to the Christian a support and a supply. This life is given to us through—1. The Word. The words of the Bible are life. Christ is in them. There is not a word here in which, if you go down deep enough, you will not find Christ, as there is not a spot of ground where, if you go down deep enough, you cannot find water. 2. The Sacraments. We do not value these as highly as we ought. In the sixth chapter we read that if we partake of Christ we shall live. This, of course, is but the outward expression of the infinite truth. There is an inward oneness with Christ revealed in the sacraments. We can never understand this union unless we have experienced it. III. LIFE FOR CHRIST. No one can realize Christ's worth to his soul until he works for Him, until he consecrates his life to Him. In consecration Christ is revealed. IV. LIFE WITH CHRIST. The entire life of the Saviour, from Bethlehem to Calvary, is, I may say, an allegory, a mould in which the Christian's life is cast. Christ was born: the Christian is born in Him, &c. We have no trial that Christ did not experience. We can roll all our burdens on Christ, who is by our side. (*J. A. M. Chapman.*)

Vers. 8–11. **Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us.**—*Man's cry and Christ's response:*—I. THE SPIRITUAL CRY OF MANKIND. Philip represents all men in their deepest spiritual experiences. What is this but the cry of spiritual orphans for a lost Father. "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him." The cry implies an underlying belief—1. In the existence of a great Father. In the human heart—(1) there is no atheism; that is a phantom of the brain. The idea of God is at the root of all ideas. (2) There is no pantheism. The heart craves a person. (3) There is no molochism. The heart craves a Father, not the representation of God in certain theologies. This belief is instinctive; you cannot reason it away. It is the hope of the sinner on his death-bed. The heart turns to it as the flower to the sun. 2. In the sufficiency of the Father's manifestation. Until the Father comes the soul will have a gnawing hunger and an aching void. It will satisfy—(1) The intellect. Solving the problems insoluble to reason, and whose crushing weight philosophy but augments. (2) The affections. It will unfold, purify, harmonize, and centralize them. The prodigal was flooded with joy in the

warm caresses of his father's love. As the genial sun of May sets the choristers of the grove into music, the presence of the Father will not only hush all the cries of the child, but fill the heart with filial rapture. II. THE SATISFACTORY RESPONSE OF CHRIST. In Christ the Father of man appears to man in man's nature. 1. This was now amply attested (vers. 10, 11). Who but the Father could have wrought those works which He accomplished, inspired the doctrines He proclaimed, produced such a character as He manifested? 2. This was now practically ignored (ver. 9). Note here—(1) A criminal neglect of means. "Have I," the medium of His power, the organ of His thoughts, the image of His character—"been so long with you," &c. (2) The finality of the revelation. "How sayest thou then," &c. There is no other revelation of the Father to come. "No man hath seen God," &c. If you cannot find the Father in Me, you will never find Him, neither in the universe nor in the speculations of philosophy. Conclusion: Without this, whatever else thou hast, thy destitution is terrible. No amount of worldly wealth, social influence, intellectual culture will be of real and lasting service without this revelation of the Father. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Man's deep cry for the paternal in religion:*—I. THAT THE DEEP CRY OF MAN IS FOR THE UNFOLDING OF THE PATERNAL IN RELIGION. Men cry for the paternal rather than—1. The historical in religion. Religion has a history both interesting and significant. It comes down to us from the earliest times. (1) It unfolds the inner life of humanity. (2) It introduces to our attention the most remarkable and beautiful characters that the world has ever known. (3) It is connected with worship and religious thought. And this is made known to us by a Divine inspiration. Such a history must be interesting to man, yet, after he has perused it, his cry is rather, "Show us the Father." And men read history in search of the Divine Fatherhood. 2. The philosophical in religion. Religion has not merely a history, but also a philosophy. It is at the basis of all philosophical questions. It has given rise and importance to them all. The philosophy of evil, of mediation, of salvation, of futurity, is inseparably connected with the religion of Jesus Christ. These problems are perplexing. They have taxed the best minds. They are still unsolved. Heaven can only give the solution of them. Man studies the philosophy of religion in order to get at the Great Father of the universe, and of His being. 3. The theological in religion. Religion has not merely a history, a philosophy, but also a theology. This theology has been systematized by councils, and crystalized in creeds. The development of Christian doctrine is interesting. But in the study of the Bible, man seeks more to catch the smile of his Father, than to see the sceptre of his legislator, or to hear the voice of his teacher. This is the present direction of human sentiment. Men are everywhere seeking the paternal; they are doing so to an unwarrantable extent; to the overbalance of theology; to the destruction of the moral government of God, in utter forgetfulness, or neglect of other attributes equally involved in His existence. Let men see the Father, but let them also see the King, and the Judge. II. THAT THE DEEP CRY OF MAN'S HEART IS FOR A SENSUOUS UNFOLDING OF THE PATERNAL IN RELIGION. 1. Some men's ideas of religion are thoroughly sensuous. Such was the case with Thomas and Philip. It would seem that the religion of these two men was confined to what they knew and saw. Some men cannot interpret the spiritual meaning of imagery, nor understand symbolism. They remain in its outercourt, and appear unable to enter its holy of holies. We want the power to see heavenly meanings in earthly words. There is another vision than that of sight, even that of faith. 2. We should strive to correct the sensuous ideas associated with the religious life of men. "Have I been so long time with you," &c. Christ was the manifestation of the Divine Father. Philip, in seeing Him, ought to have risen to a vision of the Father. 3. We should strive to lead men into the bright vision of faith. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Some only see half of the things they look at. They look at mountains, and see nothing but crags; at trees, and see nothing but sticks and leaves; at stars, and see nothing but candles; at Christ, and see nothing but manhood. Whereas, to other men all nature is a revelation of God. They penetrate into the inner meaning of things; they behold the invisible. When such men look at Christ, they also see the Father. III. THAT MAN HOPES TO OBTAIN, FROM A VISION OF THE PATERNAL, DEEP SATISFACTION OF HEART. 1. A sensuous vision of the paternal in religion will never satisfy the human heart. Man cannot with bodily eye behold the Father. If he were to see Him, he would doubt the accuracy of his sense immediately the glad vision were gone. This would be but a glimpse of Fatherhood. It would not give satisfaction. 2. A view of the paternal, obtained by faith, will give constant satisfaction to

the soul of man. From this vision the Divine Father will never withdraw. The vision shall be co-extensive with the faith. It will produce the satisfaction of peace, of hope, and of joy. The soul will want no other vision. Lessons: 1. To cultivate the inner sense of the soul. 2. To make Christ the interpretation of all our heavenly relationships. 3. To obtain heart rest from a consciousness of the Divine Fatherhood. (*J. S. Exell, M.A.*) *Show us the Father:*—The mystery of "going away" was deepened when the Master declared that through Him they were to know the Father. The surprise of Thomas, whose faith was dull, but whose love was, nevertheless, genuine—was natural; while the sentiment of Philip was a sort of desperate clutching at something very glorious, but very difficult of obtaining. For an absent Son he asked, as the only compensation, a manifested Father. His words show us—I. THE GREAT WANT OF MANKIND. God has not left Himself without witness, and not the least of His evidences is that our nature is ever seeking Him. The question of Philip—1. Asserts the knowledge of the Father as that which suffices. It is an assertion of our grandeur. Ours are not glowworm faculties; ours no owl-like souls. No dim vision, no starlight manifestations can content us. Our capacity takes in the universe, and then cries, "Show us the Father," &c. Less than such a desire is a degradation of man. Less is to make his nature a dwarfed and sickly thing. 2. Echoes the cry of the races. Our nature is not always conscious that it is after Him; but it reaches and calls after what is in Him alone. The savage approaches the conception of power by his adoration of strength; the sage the worship of infinite understanding through study of the truth; the artist through his vision of the beautiful; the poet through his dream of the right and good. The world swings round, and men catch single gleams of Godhead, and know not what it is—only something great and noble. 3. Is the instructed soul asking for the Father. It is not scepticism searching for a deity—an insensate principle. It is not half convinced doubt feeling along the links of creation after a first cause. It is not amiable optimism out in immeasurable extension of beneficent actuality asking for a Creator. It is awakened faith seeking its author; a hungry soul searching a satisfying love. II. WANT, UNCONSCIOUS OF NEAR SUPPLY. 1. Men go afar for the knowledge at their doors; nay, at their very feet. They search after the mystery of God. They sound for Him in depths; they climb for Him in the heights! Yet His footprints are on every green, His hand touches on each flower and shrub and spire. Gentle and Titanic forces alike declare Him. Could I give the atom a tongue, it would cry, "Have I been so long time with you, and have I not spoken to you of God?" The river sings as it hastens oceanward, "Have I been so long time with you, and have you not seen God reflected in my silver beauty?" Oh, blindness, which can fail to discern Him! Has that word lain by you so long with promise, covenant, and command, and yet have you not known the God it discloses? 2. Philip's error was, that he had looked elsewhere than to Christ for the vision of the Father. God had been described. He had been promised. For the first time he was manifested. His love came out in Christ's Divine human voice, and was in the touch of those human fingers. It was the Father's authority in the "Go in peace and sin no more." It was the Father's majesty in the awakening voice at the grave of Lazarus. Yet it was God incarnate, and Philip knew it not. Conclusion: There is profound significance to us in the lesson of Jesus to Philip. 1. We are to find the Father in the Only-begotten, who dwelt in His bosom, and hath declared Him. You can neither understand Him in His works or word until you study both through the Incarnation. Around that, as we look steadily, both a theology and a theodicy must crystalize. Our knowledge of Jesus is through faith, and through that our knowledge of the Father becomes experimental. 2. It is hence that we know the infinite. Christ's mediation stretches a cord between heart-love and God-love, soul-life and God-life, human nature and Divine nature. It answers nothing as to mysteries it oversweeps. It is silent as to riddles of theology and questions of schoolmen. But it touches us here, God there; we touch it with our guilt, He with His compassion. We apprehend the Infinite we can never comprehend. Jesus came to reveal the Father who hears prayer, who governs in providences, who smiles upon His child; who sees the prodigal, foot-sore and tattered, yet trying to come home, and runs to meet him. (*T. M. Eddy, D.D.*) *The true vision of the Father:*—Philip knew that Moses had once led the elders up to the mount where "they saw the God of Israel," and that to many others had been granted sensible manifestations of the Divine presence. As a disciple he longed for some similar sign to confirm his faith. As a man he was conscious of the deep need which all of us have for something more

than an unseeable and unknowable God. The peculiarities of Philip's temperament strengthened the desire. To all Nathanael's objections he had only the reply, "Come and see." And here he says, "Oh! if we could see the Father it would be enough." His petition is child-like in its simplicity, beautiful in its trust, noble and true in its estimate of what men need. He meant a palpable manifestation, and so far he was wrong. Give the word its highest and its truest meaning, and Philip's error becomes grand truth. I. THE SIGHT OF GOD IN CHRIST AS ENOUGH TO ANSWER MEN'S LONGINGS. There is a world of sadness and tenderness in the first words of our Lord's reply. He seldom names His disciples. When He does there is a deep cadence of affection in the designation. This man was one of the first disciples, and thus had been with Him all the time of His ministry, and the Master wonders that, before eyes that loved Him as much as Philip's did, His continual self-revelation had passed to so little purpose. Learn— 1. That we all need to have God made visible to us. The history of heathendom shows us that. And the highest cultivation of this nineteenth century has not removed men from the same necessity. A God who is only the product of inferences, the creature of logic or of reflection, is very powerless to sway and influence men. The limitations of our faculties and the boundlessness of our hearts both cry out for a God that is nearer to us than that, and whom we can see and love and be sure of. 2. Christ meets this need. How can you make wisdom visible? How can a man see love or purity? By deeds. And the only way by which God can ever come near enough to men to be a constant power and smile in their lives is by their seeing Him at work in a man. Christ's whole life is the making the invisible God visible. 3. That vision is enough. The mind settles down upon the thought of God as the basis of all being, and of all change; and the heart can twine itself round Him, and the seeking soul folds its wings and is at rest; and the troubled spirit is quiet, and the accusing conscience is silent, and the rebellious will is subdued, and the stormy passions are quieted; and in the inner kingdom is a great peace. We are troubled because we see not God, our Father, in the face of Jesus. 4. Our present knowledge and vision are far higher than the mere external symbol of a presence which this man wanted. The elders of Israel saw but some symbolical manifestation of that which in itself is unseen and unattainable. But we who see God in Christ see no symbol but the reality. II. THE DIVINE AND MUTUAL INDWELLING BY WHICH THIS SIGHT IS MADE POSSIBLE (ver. 10). There are here—1. Christ's claim to the oneness of unbroken communion. "I am in the Father" indicates the suppression of all independent will, consciousness, thought, action: "And the Father in Me," indicates the influx into that perfectly filial manhood of the whole fulness of God. 2. The claim, that because of this there is perfect co-operation. Jesus Christ in all His words and works is the perfect instrument of the Divine will, so that His words are God's words, and His works are God's works. 3. And from all this follow—(1) The absolute absence of any consciousness on Christ's part of the smallest deflection or disharmony between Himself and the Father. Two triangles laid on each other are in every line, point, and angle absolutely coincident. That humanity is capable of receiving the whole inflow of God, and that indwelling God is perfectly expressed in the humanity. (2) If this was what Christ said, what did He think of Himself? If Jesus had this consciousness, either He was ludicrously, tragically, blasphemously, utterly mistaken and untrustworthy, or He is what the Church in all ages has confessed Him to be, "the Everlasting Son of the Father." III. THE FAITH TO WHICH CHRIST INVITES US ON THE GROUND OF HIS UNION WITH, AND REVELATION OF, GOD (ver. 11). Observe that the verb at the beginning of this verse passes into a plural form. Our Lord has done with Philip especially. He bids us believe Him. 1. The true bond of union between men and Jesus Christ is faith. We have to trust, and that is better than sight. We have to trust Him. He is the personal Object of our faith. Faith is the outgoing of the whole man—heart, will, intellect and all—to a person whom it grasps. But the Christ that we have to trust is the Christ as He has Himself declared to us. If He be not God manifest in the flesh, I ought not to trust Him. I may admire Him, reverence Him, have a kind of a love to Him. But what in the name of common sense shall I trust Him for? And why should He call upon me to exercise faith in Him unless He stand before me the adequate object of a man's trust—namely, the manifest God? 2. Believing in the sense of trusting is seeing and knowing. Philip said, "Show," &c. Christ answers, "Believe! and thou dost see." If you look back upon the previous verses of this chapter you will find that in the earlier portion of them the keyword is "know"; that in the second portion of them the

keyword is "see"; that in this portion of them the keyword is "believe." The world says, "Ah! seeing is believing." The gospel says, "Believing is seeing." The true way to knowledge, and to a better vision than the uncertain vision of the eye, is faith. 3. Faith, even if based upon lower than the highest grounds, is still faith and acceptable to Him, "Or else believe Me for the very works' sake." (1) And so we are taught that if a man has not come to that point of spiritual susceptibility in which the image of Jesus Christ lays hold upon his heart and obliges him to trust Him and to love Him, there are yet the miracles to look at; and the faith that by help of that ladder climbs to Him, though it be second best, is yet real. Imperfect faith may be the highway to perfection. Let us follow the light if it be but a far-off glimmer, sure that it will bring us into perfect day. (2) On the other hand, no faith avails itself of all the treasures laid up for it which does not lay hold upon Christ in the character which he presents Himself. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The vision of God*:—This request of Philip touches the heart of all religion. It is a question as old as humanity. Sometimes, indeed, the soul becomes so debased, that the desire ceases to be eager, or even conscious; a perversion of natural law as disastrous as if the flame were not to seek the sun, the magnet not to turn to the pole, the solid not to fall to the earth. But in a normal state of human feeling, it has no yearning so spontaneous and strong. This last discourse of our Lord—the greatest and profoundest of His teachings—is simply His answer to this inquiry. It would indeed be a fatal invalidation of the religion of Christ, if it had no answer to this fundamental quest of men. Indeed, the exhaustive definition of Christ's salvation is the Christian way of seeing God. I. THE CRAVING FOR GOD WHICH IS CHARACTERISTIC OF ALL MORAL NATURES. 1. To those who deny God, I am justified in putting the question—Why do I concern myself about religious things? Why do I crave some vision of God? As well ask why my physical body craves food, or my intellectual soul seeks knowledge. By persistent sin, a man may practically disable his soul; just as by drunkenness or licentiousness he may disable his body, or reduce to idiotcy his mind. So also he may reason down his religious instincts by material philosophies; just as by fanciful notions concerning his body he may make himself a hypochondriac. But it is part of him still. He may damage, but he cannot kill it. And sometimes—it may be after years of sin, or scepticism—there shall be a sudden rolling away of the stone, and a coming forth of the entombed soul, and it shall cry out for God, and refuse to be comforted if it cannot find Him. 2. But this, we are told, is only traditional superstition, educational influence, social environment. But how account for the superstition, the social sentiment? Its universality and uniformity point to something inherent and ineradicable. The soul may be befooled. Men take advantage of it when ignorant or morbid, and urge upon it religious sacrifices, services, and ceremonies, sacraments, penances, and prayers. But even those do not suffice. No religious things can satisfy, the living soul cries out for the living God. True, in Philip the desire shaped itself in ignorant forms; but in which of us does it not? Sometimes it is only a feeling of blind unrest, a craving for we know not what. We moan and toss like men in a fever. 3. Who, conscious of a living soul, can be contented with mere laws of nature instead of the living God? If there be no God, our nature, as it is, is the greatest solecism in the universe. All things else have their purpose and harmony. But for man, this spiritual nature is a waste, and a mockery. Robespierre was right. "If there be no God, then it behoves man to make one." 4. The strength of this craving is attested by the credulities of scepticism as much as by the confidences of faith. Let men reject the Christian revelation of God, and as surely as they succeed, wild and incredulous imaginations will break forth and in pitiful forms give the lie to all their philosophy. The fantasies of modern spiritualism are as conclusive attestations as the convictions of Paul. Blind to spiritual truth, men are by the very strength of their spiritual nature "given over to strong delusions, and believe a lie." II. THE MISCONCEPTIONS INTO WHICH, IN THEIR QUEST AFTER GOD, EVEN GOOD MEN FALL. 1. The disciples generally had but a very confused and imperfect conception of Christ and His work. Their persistent dream of a restoration of David's throne and dominion hung like a veil between them and Christ. We find few things more difficult than to believe in purely spiritual forces and processes. It is a poor spiritual teaching that can be fully comprehended. Our Lord has to speak of the highest spiritual things to men of low spiritual type; and after vain attempts to make them understand, He has to content Himself with a promise of the Holy Spirit, who should "teach them all things." 2. Probably Philip thought of some visible manifestation, such as the

Shekinah symbol or of Isaiah's vision. How rarely men recognise manifestations of God in purely spiritual forms, in true religious ideas, in holy actions, in Godlike character. For three years Christ had been with these men, and they were utterly unconscious that, in all His moral glory, they were looking upon the truest and highest manifestation of God. When we think of Divine manifestation we think of supernatural miracle, of inspired fervours, of signal conversions, of ecstatic services. How difficult we find it to realize that in the sublime faith, the unselfish love of a quiet saintly life, there is a far higher manifestation of God than in all miracles! The great aim of our Lord's teaching was to turn men's quest after God from signs and wonders to His spiritual workings in religious hearts. Philip asked some theophany—"the Lord coming suddenly to His temple," as Malachi had predicted—which he thought would give certainty to his faith and precision to his idea. Christ replies by directing him to a living spiritual Person, "full of grace and truth." 3. If, then, this manifestation of purely moral and spiritual glories be the true vision of God—the glory of His goodness which God caused to pass before Moses—may we not, in the light of it, test the various ways of seeking God which men pursue? (1) Men come with their intellectual methods of analysis and reasoning. The astronomer brings his computations; the geologist his hammer; the chemist his crucible; and the philosopher his laws of sequence, order, and causation. They resolve substances into atoms, or ether; they trace back all developments to a common protoplasm; they follow up sequence to its last term, and then they gravely tell you that they cannot find God. How should they, when they have brought only physical tests to the mere material universe of God? His spiritual character they have never attempted to essay. Even on their own physical ground they confess that their atoms are pure imaginations, that when they have traced all organisms to their common protoplasm, the mystery of life is utterly inscrutable; that they can throw no light upon the genesis of mind, or of moral feeling, or of religious idea, or even suggest how vegetable life develops into animal intelligence, or animal intelligence into reason or conscience. Before these primal mysteries, the profoundest philosopher stands as utterly ignorant as the dweller in an African kraal. How should men find God by such processes? As well may the antiquary who unwraps an Egyptian mummy, or the surgeon who conducts a post-mortem examination, demur because he cannot find the heroism of the patriot, the genius of the poet, the affections of the lover, the piety of the saint. All that these processes can lead to is a rational presumption that a universe so wonderful must be the creation of an Infinite Intelligence. The supreme manifestation of God is in the moral sphere of things. Let men ask their moral consciousness whether the scriptural ideas of God are not true and transcendent? whether they do not satisfy the highest thoughts and yearnings and wants of their own spiritual nature? whether they can think anything greater or holier, more congruous and satisfying? While God is supremely and characteristically a moral Being, it must in the necessity of things be that the world by its mere intellectual wisdom cannot know God. (2) The other way in which men seek God is through creeds and churches, priesthoods, sacraments, and rituals. III. THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD THAT MEN CRAVE IS THAT OF A FATHER. In our Lord's day, as in our own, men had been told much about God as the Creator, the Ruler, the Judge of men. But it did not satisfy the soul. They yearned for something else in God—for pity, patience, help, love. Let the thought come that this great and holy God is also the Father. How our hearts leap towards Him! As a Father, He is precisely the God we need: our sins crave the forgiveness, our weakness and imperfections the patience, our sorrows the sympathy of a Father; our yearnings His fatherly love and bosom. We kneel down to pray to Him: how gladly we catch up the great word put into our lips, and say, "Our Father who art in heaven." Some glimpses of this the old Jew had. But, as with all religious truths, the realization of God as a Father depends not upon intellectual ideas merely, but upon religious experiences. It is the experience of what, as a Father, God does for us, that enables us to understand what He is. IV. GOD AS A FATHER IS REVEALED TO US ONLY IN CHRIST. 1. Christ claims this as His distinctive revelation of God. Like a refrain it rings through the Sermon on the Mount at the beginning of His ministry; like an atmosphere it suffuses this last great discourse "on the night that He was betrayed." It is the one unvarying representation of all His intervening teaching. But, in this great word to Philip much more than a teaching is meant. It would be a cold and meagre paraphrase of it to say, "He that hath received My teaching hath received a true doctrine of the

Father." It is a vision of God, not a theory of God, which He gives. 2. I do not think that the explanation is to be found in the Incarnation. Men saw Him, the veritable incarnate Son, and yet they did not see the Father. Nor does He refer to His miracles, the displays of His supernatural power: these He always put in disparaging contrast with His spiritual glories. Clearly His idea is of a purely spiritual conception of God, a vision of God's spiritual character such as God proclaimed to Moses when He made "all His goodness pass before him." There is no sense in which, as distinguished from His almighty works, the spiritual God can be seen but in manifestations of His holiness, goodness, and love. And these can be adequately embodied and expressed only in a personal moral life—the life of the only begotten Son. This is the true incarnation—the embodiment in a human life of these Divine moral qualities. As we conceive of the spiritual God, there is nothing else in Him that could be incarnated. 3. May we venture a speculation upon God's peculiar Fatherhood in its relation to the Incarnation? Is there not an essential oneness between the spiritual nature of God and the spiritual nature of man, as between fire and the sun, the father and the child? Is there not something in the Divine nature of which the Incarnation is the supreme expression?—something in human nature which makes the Incarnation possible in virtue of affinity? Does He not love us because a father must love his children? And does He not in the Incarnation of Christ show us how closely our nature is allied to His? 4. I need not dwell here upon the inevitable inference from all this, as to who or what this transcendent Personage really is. No creature may claim Divine glories, least of all God's spiritual perfections. Deliberately and emphatically this calmest and most ingenuous of men claims to have perfectly embodied them. No other interpretation of the claim is rationally possible than the accepted interpretation of the Christian Church. "I and my Father are one." This conception of the Christ is much more than a theological dogma. It is a great religious inspiration full of practical uses. Nothing so assures our hearts, nothing gives us such a feeling of Christ's practical sufficiency as a Redeemer. We can trust such a Christ, pray to Him, worship Him, realize His presence and help. V. THE MANIFESTATION OF THE FATHER IN CHRIST IS A PERFECT SATISFACTION TO THE SPIRITUAL SOUL. Philip was right. He who really can show us the Father does "suffice us." Let the claims of Jesus be submitted to this test. He who really shows us God must be of God. No one has revealed God to men as Christ has done. And is not this the true and sufficient test of every religious teacher: How truly and in what degree can He show us the Father? Is it not the sufficient authentication of every teaching—does it bring us face to face with the spiritual God? Is it not in this that so much religious teaching is defective? Men tell us about God, but it is doctrine only, they fail to make us see God. About means of grace, again, they have much to say: upon these they insist as the appointed, the indispensable means of seeing God. But we see only the means, not God Himself. Whatever its theological truth, no teaching is really and spiritually such if it do not reveal God to us. This was the supreme characteristic of the teaching of Christ. The sum of all religion is to see the Father; and by whomsoever and by whatsoever the Father is most fully revealed to us, and we are but made to stand in the pure white light of His spiritual glory, there is the truest teacher and the highest worship. "It sufficeth us." VI. HOW THEN MAY WE PERSONALLY REALIZE ALL THIS? 1. The Father can be seen only by men of spiritual vision. "The pure in heart see God." Christ does not demonstrate God, He simply manifests Him. The process is not a theological, it is a religious one. We can know God as a Father only by religious experience of Him. All life, all great passions of life, are understood only by experience. It demands the poet's eye to see poetic beauty; the artist's eye to see art beauty. We do not see light through the demonstrations of the astronomer; we know love only by loving; and life only by living. In the essential nature of things God cannot manifest Himself to an impure unspiritual soul, any more than the sun can shine into a blind man's eye. We know God only by the indwelling of God. 2. The Father is revealed to us in processes and experiences of common religious life. "If any man love Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him," &c. The obedient in life see God, obedience is practical experience of God. 3. The process is somewhat prosaic: men of great fervours and of ecclesiastical enthusiasm get somewhat impatient with it. But here, as everywhere, the divinest wisdom lies in common-place methods. And how transcendent the visions of God which the man attains who thus, by patient processes of purity and obedience, develops all the faculties of his religious life! (*H. Allon*,

D.D.) *The revelation of the Fatherhood of God in Christ*:—Modern theology recognizes two Fatherhoods in God—the extrinsic and intrinsic; first arising from His relation to the external world, the second, from the depths of His eternal nature. Now, the first did not require the Incarnation to disclose it. It depended on the doctrine of creation. "Let us make man," &c., and as the extrinsic Fatherhood was involved in the creation of man in God's image, it was reasonably to be expected that a close and exhaustive analysis of our nature would ultimately discern the likeness, and that an inference should be made therefrom of our sonship and His Fatherhood. As indeed, one of the Greek poets said, "We also are His offspring." But not till men saw the Son coming out from the Father did they understand that He was always with the Father. In the "coming out" they perceived what was always in, and a new truth thus dawned upon the world, to eclipse all others with its grandeur and brightness. A Son has come out from the Father! Then it was understood that Sonship and Fatherhood must have existed from eternity within the inner circle of the incomprehensible Godhead. God is Father in the profoundest abysses of His essential nature. There is no room for this intrinsic Fatherhood in Unitarian theology, because there is no place in it for the Incarnation. The God of Unitarianism, therefore, is not a Father in the profoundest sense; He is not a Father in the deepest essence of His being; He is simply a Father in relation to the world. We are not begotten by Him, of the same substance with Him; He is therefore a Father to us by creation, not by generation. But a Father by creation is only a figurative Father; the Father by generation only is genuine, real Father. According to Unitarianism, before creation God was not a Father; destroy creation and He will again cease to be a Father. His Fatherhood, therefore, is a variable, accidental, extrinsic quality. He can take it up and lay it down when He pleases. With it He is God; without it He is God just the same. But believe in the Incarnation of the Son, and you believe in the truest, deepest Fatherhood of God. Here you have clear, positive, I may say, infinite gain. If the highest, noblest aspect in which we can contemplate God is that of a Father, a real, true Father, then the God of Trinitarianism is immeasurably superior to that of Unitarianism. One is a Father really, truly, intrinsically, for ever and ever; He cannot help being a Father: the other is a Father simply in relation to His creatures; let the universe collapse, and His Fatherhood vanishes the same moment. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *The sufficiency of Christ's revelation of the Father*:—When the pitiless power and fixity of nature seems to oppress our little individual life, and we faint under the sense of our vanity and selfishness; or when we groan under the pressure of the burden, and cry madly, Why hast Thou made me thus, and with this passion, this propension to the dust, this enmity to God, this deadness to the true, the beautiful, the Divine? Christ shows to us the Father, and strengthens us to endure. When the heartstrings are tensely strained, and every touch of things external is anguish, when all that makes life beautiful and dear is vanishing in the darkness, and we look round on what seems a cold drear prison-house of a world, He shows us the Father and it comforts us. And when at last the shadows fall round us thicker, deeper, when heart faints and flesh fails, when the dews of death gather on the brow, and the chill steals into the inmost pulses of the life, He will show to us the Father, and make us more than conquerors over Death and Hell. And when we stand up at last in the great assembly and Church of the first-born, when we gaze on the splendours of the New Creation, when we see the shining hosts in their radiant circles, sphere beyond sphere, and catch the music of their mighty hymn as it floats on a bright sea of harmony around the eternal throne; when the soul faints before the beatific Vision, trembles at its beauty, and shrinks from its splendour, then Saviour, show to us the Father, and it shall suffice us for ever more. (*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) *The heart longs to know God*:—The greatest hunger of the human soul is for a knowledge of its God. The unknowable never takes hold, and never can take hold, of human experience. The orphaned heart yearns for its Divine Father, and will not be content in its orphanage. It looks on the sunset or the flower, and sees the Artist. It looks on the ocean or the forest, and sees the Divine Mechanician. It looks on the manifestations of force and law, and sees the Divine Governor. But it looks in vain in nature for a disclosure of the personal God; of a heart that loves and that can be loved. It is true that the finite soul can never comprehend its God; as the babe can never comprehend its mother. But it longs for a personal presence—for a real interpreter—for a face that shows where the uninterpretable heart is, and a word that speaks the love that transcends speech. (*Christian Union.*) *A sight of God in Jesus*

Christ:—A forlorn woman, discovered by one of our missionaries in the depths of Central Africa, is reported by him to have broken out in the most affecting demonstrations of joy, when Christ was presented to her mind, saying, "Oh, that is He who has come to me so often in my prayers. I could not find who He was." **Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known Me.**—*The patient Master and the slow scholars*:—The question carries a lesson—I. As to WHAT IGNORANCE OF CHRIST IS. Our Lord charges Philip with not knowing Him because Philip had said, "Lord! show us the Father." And that question betrayed Philip's ignorance of Christ, because it showed that he had not understood that "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Not knowing that, all his knowledge of Christ—howsoever full of love, and reverence, and blind admiration—is but twilight knowledge, which may well be called ignorance. 1. Not to know Christ as the manifest God is practically to be ignorant of Him altogether. This man asked for some visible manifestation, such as their old books told them of. But if such a revelation had been given—and Christ could have given it if He would—what a poor thing it would have been when put side by side with that mild and lambent light that was ever streaming from Him, making God visible to every sensitive and responsive nature! The revelation of righteousness and love could be entrusted to no flashing brightnesses, and to no thunders and lightnings. Not the power, not the omniscience, are the Divinest glories in God. These are but the outermost parts of the circumference; the living Centre is a Righteous Love, which cannot be revealed by any means but by action; nor shown in action by any means so clearly as by a human life. Therefore, above all other forms of manifestations of God stands the person of Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh. 2. This is His own claim, not once or twice, not in this Gospel alone, but in a hundred other places. And we have to reckon and make our account with that, and shape our theology accordingly. So we have to look upon all Christ's life as showing men the Father. His gentle compassion, His meek wisdom, His patience, His long-suffering yearning over men, His continual efforts to draw them to Himself, all these are the full revelation of God to the world. They all reach their climax on the cross. "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us." There are some of you who admire and reverence this great Teacher, but who stand outside that innermost circle wherein He manifests Himself as the God Incarnate, the Sacrifice, and the Saviour of the world. But not to know Him in this His very deepest and most essential character is little different from being ignorant of Him altogether. 3. Here is a great thinker or teacher, whose fame has filled the world, whose books are upon every student's shelf; he lives in a little remote country hamlet; the cottagers beside him know him as a kind neighbour, and a sympathetic friend. They never heard of his books, his thoughts, his world-wide reputation: do you call that knowing him? You do not know a man if you only know the surface, and not the secrets of his being. You may be disciples, in the imperfect sense in which these apostles were disciples before the Ascension, but without their excuse for it. But you will never know Him until you know Him as the Eternal Word, and until you can say, "We beheld His glory," &c. All the rest is most precious; but without that central truth, you have but a fragmentary Christ, and nothing less than the whole Christ is enough for you. II. As GIVING US A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAINED AND LOVING HEART OF OUR LORD. We very seldom hear Him speak about His own feelings or experience, and when He does it is always in some such incidental way as this. So that these glimpses, like little windows opening out upon some great prospect, are the more precious to us. 1. In another place we read: "He marvelled at their unbelief." And here there is almost a surprise that He should have been shining so long and so near, and yet the purblind eyes should have seen so little. But there is more than that, there is the pain of vainly endeavouring to teach, to help, to love. And there are few pains like that. The slowness of the pupil is the sorrow of the honest teacher. If ever you have had a child, or a friend, that you have tried to get by all means to take your love, and who has thrown it all back in your face, you may know in some faint measure what was at least one of the elements which made Christ the "Man of Sorrows." 2. But this question reveals also the depth and patience of a clinging love that was not turned away by the pain. How tenderly the name "Philip" comes in at the end! It bids us think of that patient love of His which will not be soured by any slowness or scantiness of response. Dammed back by our sullen rejection, it still flows on, seeking to conquer by long-suffering. Refused, it still lingers round the closed door of the heart, and knocks for entrance. Misunderstood, it still meekly manifests

itself. Surely in that we see the manifested God. 3. Remember that the same pained and patient love is in the heart of the throned Christ to-day. We cannot understand how anything like pain should, however slightly, darken His glory; but if it be true that He in the heavens has yet "a fellow-feeling of our pains," it is not less true that His love is still wounded by our lovelessness, and His manifestation of Himself made sad by the slowness of our reception of Him. III. AS BEING A PIERCING QUESTION ADDRESSED TO EACH OF US. 1. It is the great wonder of human history that, after eighteen hundred years, the world knows so little of Jesus Christ. (1) The leaders of opinion, of literature, the men that profess to guide the thoughts of this generation, how little they know, really, about this Master! Some people take a great deal more trouble to understand Buddha than they do to understand Christ. (2) How little, too, the mass of men know about Him! It is enough to break one's heart to look round one, and think that He has been so long time with the world, and that this is all which has come of it. The great proof that the world is bad is that Christ has stood before it for nearly nineteen centuries now, and so few have been led to turn to Him with the adoring cry, "My Lord and my God." 2. But let us narrow our thoughts to ourselves. (1) Many of you have known about Jesus Christ all your lives, and yet, in a real, deep sense you do not know Him at this moment. Do you know Christ as a man knows his friend, or as you know about Julius Cæsar? Do you know Christ because you live with Him and He with you, or do you know about Him in that fashion in which a man in a great city knows about his neighbour across the street, that has lived beside him for five and twenty years, and never spoken to him once all the time? Is that your knowledge of Christ? If so, it is no knowledge at all. People that live close by something, which men come from the ends of the earth to see, have often never seen it. (2) And, to you who know Him a little, this question comes with a very pathetic appeal. If we know Him at all as we ought to do, our knowledge of Him will be growing day by day. But how many of us stand at the same spot that we did when we first said that we were Christians! We are like the Indians who live in rich gold countries, and could only gather the ore that happened to lie upon the surface or could be washed out of the sands of the river. In this great Christ there are depths of gold, great reefs and veins of it, that will enrich us all if we dig, and we shall not get it unless we do. He is the boundless ocean. We have contented ourselves with coasting along the shore, and making timid excursions from one headland to another. Let us strike out into the middle deep, and see all the wonders that are there. This great Christ is like the infinite sky with its unresolved nebulæ. We have but looked with our poor, dim eyes. Let us take the telescope that will reveal to us suns blazing where now we only see darkness. (3) This knowledge ought to be growing every day; and why does it not? You know a man because you are much with him. And if you want to know Jesus Christ, there must be a great deal more meditative thoughtfulness, and honest study of His life and work than most of us have put forth. We know people, too, by sympathy, and by love, and by keeping near them. Oh, it is a wonder, and a shame, and a sin for us professing Christians, that, having tasted the sweetness of His love, we should come down so low as to long for the garbage of earth. Who is fool enough to prefer vinegar to wine, bitter herbs to grapes, dross to gold? Who is there that, having consorted with the king, would gladly herd with ragged rebels? And yet that is what we do. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.—*The Father manifested in the Son:*—Our Lord meant that in His person, as well as by His doctrine, miracles, benevolence, life, death, resurrection, ascension, God is manifested, as far as could be, even to our senses, as well as to our understanding, and that this is the clearest manifestation God has been pleased to make of Himself to man on earth. Hence, to such as wish to know God, we must say, Behold, and consider, not only His works of creation; look not only at the dispensations of Providence, which manifest such attributes as the works of creation were not calculated to discover; nor read and consider only His Word, which shows Him still more; but behold the person of His Son, who is "the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature" (Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3; John i. 18). Would we discover the Father's wisdom? let us hearken to Him who was the wisdom and word of God incarnate. Would we know the Father's power? let us observe it in the miracles of Christ. Would we know how holy God is, and the nature of His holiness? let us observe the spirit which Jesus breathed and the conduct He maintained. Would we know whether God be a kind and compassionate Being, and what is the nature of His benevolence

and love? we must look how these qualities were displayed in the character of Jesus Christ. Would we see His meekness, patience, forbearance, and long-suffering? let us observe how these dispositions shone forth in Christ. Would we have a display of His justice? let us see sin condemned and punished in Him who "gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God." Do we wish to see the love of God exemplified? observe Christ dying for us, "dying for the ungodly;" when we were enemies, reconciling us to God by His death." Would we know God as our Creator? observe Christ secretly and insensibly multiplying the loaves and fishes; observe Him giving sight to the blind, and life to the dead. Would we know God as our Preserver? let us contemplate Jesus upholding Peter while walking on the water. As our Governor? let us observe Him controlling the powers of nature, "rebuking the winds and the sea, and producing a great calm." As our Redeemer? see Him "giving His life a ransom for us." As our Saviour? consider Him coming "to seek and to save that which was lost." Would we know God as a Friend? mark the familiarity and tenderness with which Jesus conversed with His disciples. As a Father? observe Jesus "begetting us again by His Gospel," and see His parental care for His disciples. In a word, if we wish to know the mind, dispositions, and intentions of God towards man, we must see them delineated and exhibited in the doctrine, example, and works of Christ. In order to this, however, it is necessary we should be enlightened by the Divine Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 11); that we be "taught" and "learn of the Father" (John vi. 45; Matt. xi. 27, xvi. 17). (*J. Benson.*) *The effect of Christ's manifestation of the Father on individuals:*—A sick woman said to Mr. Cecil, "Sir, I have no notion of God; I can form no notion of Him. You talk to me about Him, but I cannot get a single idea that seems to contain anything." "But you know how to conceive of Jesus Christ as a man," replied Mr. Cecil; "God comes down to you in Him, full of kindness and condescension." "Ah! sir, that gives me something to lay hold on. There I can rest. I understand God in His Son. God was in Christ." *The effect of Christ's manifestation of the Father on history:*—The great mass of mankind must have images. The strong tendency of the multitude in all ages and nations to idolatry can be explained on no other principle. The first inhabitants of Greece, there is every reason to believe, worshipped one invisible Deity. But the necessity of having something more definite to adore produced, in a few centuries, the innumerable crowd of gods and goddesses. In like manner the ancient Persians thought it impious to exhibit the Creator under a human form. Yet even these transferred to the sun the worship, which speculatively they considered to be due only to the supreme mind. The history of the Jews is the record of a continual struggle between pure theism, supported by the most terrible sanctions, and the strangely fascinating desire of having some visible and tangible object of adoration. Perhaps none of the secondary causes which Gibbon has assigned for the rapidity with which Christianity spread over the world, while Judaism scarcely ever acquired a proselyte, operated more powerfully than this feeling. God the uncreated, the incomprehensible, the invisible, attracted few worshippers. A philosopher might adore so noble a conception; but the crowd turned away in disgust from words which created no image in their minds. It was before the Deity, embodied in a human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the cross, that the prejudices of the synagogue, and the doubts of the academy, and the pride of the portico, and the forces of the lictors, and the swords of thirty legions were humbled in the dust. (*Lord Macaulay.*) **Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?**—I. CHRIST IN THE FATHER. In the Father's—1. Affections. He loves Christ more than He loves the universe. "This is My beloved Son." As a loving child lives in the affections of his parents, so Christ, only in an infinitely higher degree, lives in the heart of God. 2. Thoughts. What an intelligent being loves most he will think most about. (1) Christ is the Logos, the Revealer of the Divine thought. As the word is to the mind before it is sounded, Christ is in God. (2) He is the Executor of the Divine thought. By Him His creative, redemptive, governing, statutory thoughts are carried out. II. THE FATHER IS IN CHRIST as in His special—1. Temple. He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain has a special dwelling in Christ. In Him He manifests Himself in a fulness and glory seen nowhere else. 2. Organ. As the soul dwells in the body, God dwells in Christ and works by Him. 3. Revealer. "The brightness of His glory," &c.—the Revealer of His power, wisdom, character, as all that is pure, just, tender, and compassionate. 4. Devotee. God is the object of Christ's supreme love. All

His thoughts, powers, and aims, were subordinate to Him. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *God in Christ*:—But is not the Father in all? In every tree, stream, and star? Yes. There is no life where He is not. But He is in Christ in a higher sense. He is in nature as an animating principle, in holy souls as an inspiring influence, in Christ as a Divine Personality. In Him He is God manifest in the flesh. The Father is in Him as—I. An APPRECIABLE personality. It is difficult, if not impossible, to realize the Divine Personality in nature. He seems so vast and boundless. But in Christ He comes within the range of our—1. Senses. 2. Sympathies. 3. Experiences. II. An ATTRACTIVE personality. 1. Does wonder attract? He is "the Wonderful." 2. Does love attract? His is the tenderest, strongest, most self-sacrificing, and unconquerable love. 3. Does beauty attract? He is "the altogether lovely." In Christ there is power to draw all men to Him. III. An IMITABLE personality. Our obligation and well being require us to become like God, partakers of the Divine nature—"holy, even as He is holy." In Christ He appears pre-eminently imitable. 1. His love wins our hearts. 2. His principles command our consciences. 3. His moral glories inspire our admiration. Thus we can imitate Him. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 11. **Believe Me . . . for the very works' sake.**—*The miracles*:—I. SHOULD WE BELIEVE THE MIRACLES? 1. Are miracles possible? Hume, Spinosa, and others say, "No: reason pronounces them impossible." But whose reason? Theirs? Then that contradicts the all but universal reason, which affirms that with God all things are possible. 2. Are miracles improbable and incredible? Yes, say the same authorities. But did they live when they are alleged to have been performed? One ground of disbelief is, that it is impossible to believe what contradicts experience. But what remains to be proved is, Did miracles contradict the experience of the professed witnesses? The denizens of the equator never saw ice. Their experience contradicts that of the Greenlanders. But which shall we accept? Another ground is that it is unlikely that the Creator would disturb the beneficent order of events. Granted, except for the best and wisest purposes, and in such a way as not to derange the order of the universe. This is what is claimed for Christ; and, indeed, on behalf of the freedom and beneficence of the Creator. The anti-miraculous position is the dethronement of God in favour of natural law. 3. Have we satisfactory ground to believe that Christ performed miracles? There is the same evidence for them as that Cæsar entered Gaul and Britain. Upon this evidence the Christian Church is built; the witnesses died to support their testimony. The fabrication of this testimony would be more miraculous than what it records. II. SHOULD WE BE INDUCED BY THEM TO ADMIT CHRIST'S DIVINE CLAIMS? Yes, for—1. They are the acts of a Creator. We recognize the same Voice saying, "Let there be light!" that said, "Lazarus, come forth!" We believe Him "for the works' sake." 2. Christ is the efficient Agent in all miracles. He promised, and gave to, the apostles their supernatural power; and they referred the effects of it back to Him, and exerted it to produce faith in Him. 3. Christ performed miracles by His own power and in His own name, which the apostles never did. Conclusion: 1. The blessedness of belief in Christ. 2. The peril of disbelief. (*E. N. Kirk, D.D.*) *The reasonableness of the evidence of miracles, and its impotence alone*:—It is quite consistent with God's wisdom to reveal Himself to the senses, as well as to the soul; and if the gospel were utterly deficient in this latter kind of proof, one great evidence that it is from God would be wanted—an evidence that we are fortified in expecting from the analogies of nature. God has written His glory—*e.g.*, in the heart—at the same time, He has so constructed the visible universe, that "the heavens declare the glory of God." And when the eternal Word is manifested into the world, we naturally expect that Divine power shall be shown, as well as Divine beneficence. Miracles, therefore, are exactly what we should expect; and I acknowledge a great corroboration and verification of His claims to Sonship. Besides, they startled and aroused many to His claims who otherwise would never have attended to them. Still the great truth remains untouched, that they, appealing only to the natural man, cannot convey the spiritual certainty of truth which the spiritual man alone apprehends. However, as the natural and spiritual in us are both from God, why should God not have spoken to both, and why should not Christ appeal to natural works, subordinate always to the spiritual self-evidence of Truth itself? (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*)

Vers. 12-14. **He that believeth on Me the works that I do shall he do also.**—*The*

activity of the glorified Christ:—I. ITS REALITY AND CERTAINTY. Vers. 13, 14 show that Christ regarded Himself as the worker and His followers only as His agents. II. ITS ORGAN AND INSTRUMENT. Our Saviour's language—1. Does not mean that He will work through no other way than the collective Church, which is His body, and the believer who is a member of it; because in point of fact He does, as the Governor of the universe which He summoned into being. 2. Nor that everything done by the Church or the believer is a manifestation of His activity. To maintain this would be to open a wide door to fanaticism. 3. It does signify, however, that Christ uses His Church collectively and individually to operate on the earth; and that not merely as His representative, but as His body, pervaded by His power and swayed by His will. His own works indicate His unity with the Father (ver. 11): the works of believers their unity with Himself (vers. 12, 20). III. ITS NATURE AND EXTENT. 1. Its nature—"The same works," &c. This was fulfilled in the miracles of the disciples after Pentecost. But that they performed no works, except as they were employed by Christ is shown by the fact they wrought no miracle to cure their friends (Phil. ii. 26, 27; 2 Tim. iv. 20). They had no power to work indiscriminately. 2. Its extent. "Greater works"—not greater miracles, but such works as Peter's at Pentecost, and Paul's in his missionary journeys. IV. ITS MODE AND CONDITION. If Christ is the prime worker and the believer the instrument, connection must be established between them. 1. Christ must be able to reach the believer. This He does by the impartation of the Spirit (vers. 16, 17). 2. The believer must be able to communicate with Christ. This he does by prayer (vers. 13, 14). Nothing could be—(1) Simpler—it would be only needful that they should ask (Matt. xxi. 21, 22; Mark xi. 23, 24). (2) Ampler—all things should be done (Matt. vii. 7; xviii. 19). (3) Surer—Christ would Himself do what they asked. (4) Freer—the only stipulation was that they should ask in Christ's name. Lessons—1. The supreme divinity of Christ involved in all He here says about Himself. 2. The essential dignity of the Christian—a fellow-worker with Christ. 3. The true doctrine of prayer—asking in the name of Christ. 4. The reason why miracles have ceased—the Holy Ghost does not consider them necessary. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The works of the ascended Christ*:—The key-word of this context is "Believe!" In three successive verses we find it, each time widening in its application—to the single disciple: "Philip!" to the whole group: and now, here, to whosoever believeth in Him. Our Lord has pointed to believing as the great antidote to a troubled heart, as the sure way of knowing the Father, as the better substitute for sight; and now here He opens before us still more wonderful prerogatives and effects. We have here—I. THE CONTINUOUS WORK OF THE EXALTED LORD FOR AND THROUGH HIS SERVANTS. These disciples, of course, thought that the departure of Jesus would be the end of His activity. Henceforward whatever distress or need might come, that voice would be silent, and that hand motionless. Some of us know how dreary that makes life, and we can understand how these men shrank from the prospect. Christ's words tell them that in them He will work as well as for them, after He has departed. 1. Christ's removal from the world is not the end of His activity in the world. We are not to water down such words as these into the continuous influence of His memory. That is true, but over and above that, there is the present influence of His present work. One form of His work was "finished" on Calvary, but there is another work, which will not be ended until the angel voices shall chant "It is done, the kingdoms of the world are the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ." And therefore these disciples were not to be cast down as if His work for them were ended. It is clear, of course, that such words as these demand something perfectly unique in the nature of Christ. All other men's work is cut in twain by death. "This man, having served his generation by the will of God, was gathered to his fathers. And he (and his work) saw corruption." That is the epitaph over the greatest, the tenderest, and most helpful. But Christ is living to-day, and working all around us. Now, it is of the last importance, that we should give a very prominent place in our creeds, and hearts, to this great truth. What a joyful sense of companionship it brings to the solitary, what calmness of vision, in contemplating the complications and calamites of the world's history. 2. But not only for us, but on and in and therefore through us Christ is working. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," and through me, if I keep close to Him, will work mightily in forms that my poor manhood could never have reached. And now, mark that a still more solemn and mysterious aspect of this union of Jesus Christ and the believer. It is no accident that in one clause He says, "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me.

The words that I speak unto you," &c.; and that in the next He says, "The works that I do shall He do also;" and so bids us see in that union between the Father and the Son, a pattern after which our union with Him is to be moulded, both as regards the closeness of its intimacy and as regards the resulting manifestations in life. All the doings of a Christian man holding by Christ, are Christ's doings, inasmuch as He is the Life and the Power which does them all. So let us curb all self-dependence and self-will that that mighty tide may flow into us; and let us cast from us all timidity, and be strong in the assurance that we have a Christ living in the heavens to work for us, and living within us to work through us. II. THE GREATER WORK OF THE SERVANTS ON AND FOR WHOM THE LORD WORKS. Is, then, the servant greater than his Lord? Not so, for whatsoever the servant does is done because the Lord is with and in him. The contrast is between Christ's manifestations in the time of His earthly humiliation and His manifestations in the time of His glory. We need not be afraid that such words trench on the unapproachable character of the earthly work of Christ. This is finished. But the work of Revelation and Redemption required to be applied through the ages. The comparison is drawn, between the limited sphere and the small results of Christ's work upon earth, and the world-wide sweep and majestic magnitude of the results of the application of that work by His servants' witnessing work. And the poorest Christian who can go to a brother soul, and draw that soul to Christ, does a mightier thing than it was possible for the Master to do whilst He was here. For the Redemption had to be completed in act before it could be proclaimed in word, and Christ had no such weapon as we have when we can say, "We testify unto you that the Son of God hath died for our sins, and is raised again according to the Scriptures." "He laid His hands on a few sick folk and healed them," and at the end of His life there were 120 disciples in Jerusalem and 500 in Galilee. That was all that Jesus Christ had done, while to-day, the world is being leavened, and the kingdoms of the earth are beginning to recognize His name. III. THE CONDITIONS ON WHICH THE EXALTED LORD WORKS FOR AND ON HIS SERVANTS. 1. Faith, the simple act of loving trust in Jesus Christ, opens the door for the entrance of all His solemn Omnipotence, and makes us possessors of it. So if Christian individuals and communities are impotent, there is no difficulty in understanding why. They have cut the connection, they have shut the tap. 2. Prayer. (1) Our power depends upon our prayer. Not God's and Christ's fulness and willingness to communicate, but our capacity to receive of that fulness, and so the possibility of its communication to us, depend upon our prayer. "We have not because we ask not." (2) The power of our prayer depends upon our conscious oneness with the revealed Christ. Christ's name is the revelation of Christ's character; and to do a thing in the name of another person is to do it as His representative, and as realizing that in some deep and real sense—for the present purpose, at all events—we are one with Him. Prayer in the name of Christ is hard to offer. It needs much discipline and watchfulness; it excludes all self-will and selfishness. And if, as my text tells us, the end of the Son's working is the glory of the Father, that same end, and not our own ease or comfort, must be the end and object of all prayer which is offered in His name. When we so pray we get an answer. And the reason why such multitudes of prayers never travel higher than the roof, and bring no blessings to him that prays, is because they are not prayers in Christ's name. (3) Prayer in His name will pass into prayer to Him. As He not obscurely teaches us here, if we adopt the reading, "If ye shall ask Me," He has an ear to hear such requests, and He wields Divine power to answer. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christian work with an absent Redeemer*:—I. THE BLESSINGS WHICH THIS PROMISE CONTAINS OR CONVEYS? 1. Ability to work. Professing Christians of a certain school speak scornfully of this "to do," but this is to despise the words and things of God. He who redeems us works in us to will and "to do." 2. Power to do good and to serve others. This was and is the great feature of Christ's character. 3. Power to work as Jesus Christ wrought. There is an evident limitation here. Miracles cannot be perpetual; but if the working of miracles were at all desirable now, the power would be again given. Atonement for sin is another work which we cannot imitate. Still there is a path of work in which we may follow our Saviour. The blessing promised is—4. The power to work superior work. "The greater" here may, perhaps, point to more extensive service, but we think the word rather points to nobler and to higher service. Now, it is greater, to enlighten the mind than to open blind eyes; to create faith than to unstop deaf ears; to awaken praise than to loosen dumb tongues; to purify from sin than to cleanse from

leprosy; to quicken the dead soul than it is to raise the corporeally dead. 5. Not an extraordinary blessing, but one that is the common heritage of all who believe. Great injury has been done to the Church, and to many not in the Church, by the fuss which is made about any man or woman who happens to try to be useful. So much is made of the mere human worker, as that He who works in, and by us all, becomes completely concealed. Now there are many persons who seem to think that admiring those who do Christian work a very blessed substitute for doing that work. We require in our churches less said about what is done, in order to begin to do more. It is thus too about giving. Men who give a little expect so much notice taken of that little, that their hands are closed by the mischievous power of that very expectation. II. THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN CONNECTION WITH WHICH THE FULFILMENT OF THIS PROMISE IS SECURED. "Because I go unto My Father." The Father is everywhere; but He is not in all places equally manifest. Where the manifestation of the Father is perfect, Jesus Christ now is. There He is seated on the throne of His Father. 1. With the Father, Jesus is absent from this earth, and—(1) His disciples are here as His representatives. Now, what would Christ have been doing on this earth were He here? He went about doing good. Perhaps some of you would be extremely surprised to find the eyes from which you have wiped away tears; or the mind to which you have given one religious idea; or the feet that you have turned from the path of inquity into the path of redemption. (2) He has received gifts for men, and is able from His throne to endow His disciples with all power. (3) The providence of Jesus Christ is over the working of His disciples. I do not say that His providence prevents some wretched hand laying hold of portions of your work, and disturbing it, but I say that it secures a good general result. And you will work with much more courage if you feel this. 2. There is a close connection between believing on Christ and Christ-like work. Believing qualifies for it and impels to it. 3. This Christ-like work is a privilege and a blessing to the man who performs it. 4. Moreover, the Christian disciple has the highest power, and the largest resources, and the noblest motives in the direction of doing good. If a Christian cannot render service in this world of sin and sorrow, who can? Some of you will say, that Christians are not generally wealthy, and not generally in high social positions. Put your finger upon a passage in the New Testament that teaches you that these two things are essential to doing good, or that good is often done where these two things exist. One reason why many of our evangelistic operations are so blasted is to be found in this fact, that those who conduct our societies go hunting for what they call patronage. Patronage for the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ! One's very heart is sick sometimes over this human patronage of Divine things. 5. Those who look for Christ's coming again speedily, seem to think that that will bring an increase of the working power. We believe that all the power that Christians want now may be obtained now. Our tendency is continually to say that "the time has not come," and we must wait for a larger outpouring of the Spirit? Is not the Spirit here? Will the Spirit ever be here more than He is now? 6. Do your work. I say it because some among you are spending your time in idleness. (*S. Martin.*) *The believer doing greater works than Christ*:—I THE WORKS IN WHICH CHRIST AND THE BELIEVER HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON. 1. In His greatest work of course Christ stands alone. He came to work out and bring in an everlasting righteousness; to be the embodiment of a perfect obedience. Further, He came to die as an atonement for sin, and to rise and ascend and plead its merits in heaven. In neither of these can the believer have any part. "I have trodden the wine-press alone." "Mine own arm hath wrought salvation." And yet in the ministrations of truth, in the exemplifications of goodness, and in the triumphs of mercy in which that sacrifice shall demonstrate its power, and that righteousness find its embodiment, all believing souls are invited to take their share. 2. The apostles were endowed with the power of working miracles. In this sense the doing of the works of Christ was confined to them. But Christ's miracles and theirs while real, and not to be spiritualized away, were physical types of spiritual. As bodily misery pointed out the misery of the soul, so healing symbolized salvation. II. THE WORKS IN WHICH BELIEVERS, IN SOME SORT, SHALL EXCEL. To apprehend this, look at—1. The results of our Lord's personal ministry. That cannot be regarded as unsuccessful. No doubt much of His teaching ripened after the rain of Pentecost, and those impressed before became converted afterwards. But during those three years how many benighted minds must have received light and foul hearts cleansing! Yet—as far as visible results go—how few

even amongst the disciples, and of what a quality! 2. The results of the ministry of the Church. These great works are the burden of the Acts of the Apostles. How soon in the place where they murdered Christ were thousands won to His cause? Then the work spread to Samaria. Then the representative of far off Ethiopia was converted: then Cornelius the representative of Rome, and so on under the Apostles and their successors the tidal waves flowed on, until in the course of three centuries Christianity had overflown the world. Better still the nature of the results produced. The world was then at its very worst. At Thessalonica you have only a representation of what was universal. Men swallowed up in idolatry, but "the Word came with the demonstration of the Spirit," &c. In Corinth philosophy was rampant on the one hand and vice on the other, but then people were "washed, sanctified," &c. And thus from that time to this the gracious words have been fulfilled. III. THE GROUND OF THIS. "Because I go," &c. 1. Christ went from them, but for them. It was not His departure simply, but what followed upon it—the gift of the Comforter, the burden of this discourse. Christ's departure was expedient—(1) In regard to their character, that they who had been so worldly, ignorant, and timid, might become spiritual, enlightened, and heroic. (2) In relation to their work. 2. Christ went from them yet remained with them. This enigmatical form of speech occurs often. "I go away." "Lo, I am with you alway." Our Lord would not leave them to the miseries of defeat or to the calamity of self-sufficiency. He therefore resolved to abide with them, and by His Spirit to be in them, their energy, courage, wisdom, sanctifying power. 3. All this is guaranteed to us. IV. THE RESPONSIBILITY THIS INVOLVES. "If ye shall ask anything in My name," &c. You will prove your faith that you are Mine, and that I am with you, only as you, by grace work out these results. (*J. Aldis.*) *Greater than miracle*:—This is one of the reasons why the disciples, whom Christ was about to leave, were "not to let their hearts be troubled." The discipleship to which He had called them was a very arduous one, but so long as He was with them, performing such miracles, they were safe. They would therefore think with dismay of His going away, inasmuch as this marvellous miracle-working would cease, and they would be left to the merciless Pharisees. It was, then, fitting to tell them that they should do the miraculous works and greater things. The way in which our Lord speaks about miracles is striking. Had these narratives been a fiction, Christ would have spoken of miracles very differently. So far from magnifying them, He speaks of them as inferior things. Both Christ and His apostles appealed to men in two ways. Such as were unspiritual were appealed to by miracle; but He often told them that it was a higher and more spiritual thing to believe Him for His truth's sake than for His works' sake. So He tells His disciples here they should have power to work miracles, so far as this was needed to convince the unspiritual world; but they should have a greater power, viz., to do spiritual works in the conversion and sanctification of men. This is Christ's meaning. (1) Because He connected it with the gift of the Holy Spirit, whose work is to convince men of sin, and righteousness, and judgment. (2) From the very nature of the case: no one can doubt that moral goodness is greater than miraculous works. I. THE HISTORY OF THE APOSTLES ABUNDANTLY FULFILS THIS PROMISE. Depending upon His power, that is, "believing on Him," they did the miraculous works. 1. Christ does not mean that these were greater than His own; no miracles may be compared with His. (1) His were always wrought in His own name, and by His own power; those of the apostles always in the name and by the power of their Master. (2) His were always full of great spiritual significance. Nature was moulded by Him into evangelical sermons. 2. But their spiritual achievements were to be greater than Christ's miracles. (1) The conversion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost was a greater miracle than the feeding of five thousand in the wilderness; the conversion of a single soul is greater than the hushing of the storm. In the charge Christ gave to the seventy He makes the same distinction between the miraculous and the moral. He gave them power to heal the sick and to cast out devils. The exercise of this power seems greatly to have elated them. He instantly turns their thoughts to spiritual things. (2) It is a common, perhaps a correct impression, that the personal ministry of our Lord did not produce such great spiritual results as that of the apostles. The Holy Ghost was not yet given. We have no records of two and of five thousand converts at a time. The largest intimation of the spiritual results of His ministry is that after His resurrection He was "seen of above five hundred brethren at once." And yet

what preaching was ever like His preaching, in spiritual character, and depth, and earnestness? "Never man spake like this Man." And yet the Jews listened to His preaching and remained unconverted. Was it that Peter had a greater truth to proclaim than even Christ taught? Was it that no preaching can be powerful to save men's souls but the preaching of the Cross? Christ predicted His death, and spake of its atoning character, but He did not preach it to the people: the apostles "preached Jesus and the resurrection"; and even in their comparatively rude and unskilful hands it proved more powerful in subduing men than Christ's Divine words. His own great prediction was fulfilled —"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." II. OUR LORD INTIMATES A GREAT AND IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE IN THE SERVICE OF HUMAN LIFE—that grace is greater than gifts; that the ministry of moral truths and influences is greater than the exercise of the most brilliant talents. It is a great work to perform a miracle; but the credentials of a messenger are not so great as his message. It is an honour to be so employed and attested, but this is in order to the accomplishment of the mission. In Christ Himself miracles were the lowest manifestations of His glory. They showed that God was with Him; but His true glory was in His own character, and mission, and words. So it was with the apostles. Paul's shaking the viper off his hand is but a small thing compared with his sacrifice of his honours and emoluments for Christ's sake. Peter's healing of the lame man is but a small thing compared with the conversion of three thousand on the day of Pentecost. The moral sense of all men confesses this. There is constant danger lest we be led away by brilliancy, crowds, outward successes, intellectual miracles. Ministers sometimes so mistake, and others so mistake them. A man is lost as a minister of Christ who thinks about popularity or sets himself to seek it. The humble, obscure man is often greater than the prominent and brilliant one; he has greater aims, secures nobler things, bears a nobler character. 1. Conversion is greater than miracle—(1) In its sphere of operation. Miracle operates in the outer and physical world. Regeneration operates in the inner and moral world, amongst the passions and purposes of the soul. (2) In the power that is put forth. In miracle God's simple fiat is absolute; He commands the laws of nature—they instantly obey; but in regeneration God's will encounters another will—a will that He has made free and powerful, and that He will not coerce. Nature never resisted Christ's Word; the men of Jerusalem would not come to Him that they might have life. To convert a human soul, therefore, is infinitely greater than to create a planet: moral forces have to be used; it needs to be made willing, and this demands no less an agency than the Incarnation and the Cross. (3) In its results. Miracles have fed the hungry, &c.; but conversion changes moral character, makes its subject a saint, and when he dies it secures his life with God in heaven. 2. Charity is greater than miracle (1 Cor. xiii.). Moral excellencies have in them the quality of permanence; Christ's miraculous acts have ceased. His love moved His power, which was miraculous; our love moves our power, which is not miraculous: the feeling and motive are the same, only the power and the form of the action differ. Christ's disciples perpetuate His pitying love—they visit the sick, they relieve the poor, &c. And this is far grander than miracle: the aggregate benevolence of the Church of Christ is a nobler thing than the creation of a new world would be. 3. Patient submission to God's will is greater than miracle. What can be nobler than a life wholly consecrated to God and to whatever is holy and benevolent?—a life of self-sacrificing service in the Church, the school, or the mission-field—a life that surrenders its dearest joys and interests for Christ's sake? Perhaps the only nobler thing is, when devoted service is crowned by patient suffering. 4. Victory over death is greater than miracle. (*H. Allon, D.D.*) *The disciple's work greater than his Lord's*:—It is a common thought and remark with us, that the child and the day-labourer now use forces and truths, and do works, without esteeming it unusual, which the earlier ages of science and thought, the ages of Copernicus and Columbus, were dimly and laboriously guessing and imagining and hoping. Those early masters laid down theories and principles, and they were ridiculed if not persecuted, misrepresented if not denied, obstructed if not stopped and interdicted. Their work was immense, greater than the work of their successors. It was the massive foundation. But their successors stand on a vantage ground. Slowly those beneficent theories have won acknowledgment. They had enlarged their sphere and field and power of operation. Their activity has increased till nothing now impedes. The noble originators have mounted into universal recognition.

And their children daily develop the power which they made possible; make new applications as new exigencies arise and new fields open. Their successors and disciples do the same works in one sense, for it is the continuation of the same principle in activity: or, in one sense they do a lesser work, for it is less to continue than to originate. But in another sense they do "greater works," for their activity is daily widening, daily less impeded, daily more and more encouraged by more auspicious surroundings. And yet they are not greater than the early originator, who cannot show the "greater works" which come so properly and naturally to them. They follow him. Yet they go beyond him. Nay, stranger still, they go beyond him only because they follow him, and are the disciples of and the believers in his first great underlying work. Apply this illustration to Christ and His disciples. True, His was the great spiritual, all-supporting work. The great problem was finished and enunciated at the Cross. It received its seal at the Easter. And yet the field of the Lord's activity during His own earthly life was contracted to the smallest limits. He could not go beyond Judæa. His spiritual work found no spiritual surrounding, found no spiritual response, left no spiritual fruit (John i. 5, 11; Mark vi. 5). These were the judgments of His contemporaries upon Him (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark iii. 22; John ix. 29, vii. 47, 48). Stop the world after Christ's ascension, and ask it how it had been the better for Christ's living, and it would have nothing to show you. It would know of nothing done, but a few that were blind, now seeing, a few that were deaf, hearing, a few lepers cleansed, a few inanimates restored. And a single generation would have removed even these. Struggling as man in the world of men, bearing sin in the world of sin, Christ laid indeed the massive foundation of a world's redemption; but it was a work wholly wrought out in and by Himself. None other knew of it. It hardly left any outward impression upon men and their lives. And what it did leave was vague, and easily lost. But at the Ascension a change begins. He goes to the Father. He is no more a mere single labourer, working out a great work among men; sufficient to do all, and doing all by Himself; but He has mounted to the seat of His power. And the Spirit of His power goes forth to create outward impressions upon men, to carry His work to others. In the first day of Peter's preaching three thousand are converted; vastly more than Christ ever influenced; greater works than Christ's, because He has gone to the Father. His successors and followers stood on a vantage ground of work. Their great, earlier Master had mounted into universal power. He was no longer compelled simply to suffer and submit as in the garden; but was omnipresent and omnipotent by His Spirit. And daily His Spirit makes new advances possible for them, which were not possible for Him when dwelling in the flesh. (*Fred. Brooks.*) *Greater works than Christ's*:—What were the works that Jesus did? What was their very essence? We must look a little beneath the surface. Some minds are apt to confine their attention to the surface results of our Saviour's wonderful course. They think of the leaping of the lame, the seeing of the blind, the hearing of the deaf, the speaking of the dumb, the rising of the dead, the conscious strength of the paralytic, and the emancipation of the demoniac. It is befitting to think of these things. Our Saviour wished them to be considered. They were as a voice from the excellent glory and drew attention to the fact that a gracious Divine Person was at work among men. And yet, comparatively speaking, they were but a voice drawing attention to something else. They pointed to something that was really higher and greater than themselves. It is good indeed that the lame should leap; but surely there is something better even for the lame. What if after leaping they hasten away to the haunts of dissipation! Of what very great benefit will their leaping be to them? It is true, too, that it is good for the blind to see, and to see clearly. But what if, after the first transports consequent on the restoration of vision, the eyes neither read the glory of God in the heavens, nor the glory of His grace on the pages of revelation? What if they lower with passion, or look out for opportunities of alluring the unwary to their destruction? There are surely better things still than mere seeing, hearing, speaking. Even life from the dead, if merely physical, is not the highest conceivable blessing. A new lease of life, if it turn, as may too often be the case, to be a lease mis-spent, is not the greatest possible benefit which can be conferred upon an immortal man. Neither is deliverance from demoniac torture and oppression the most glorious emancipation of which we can conceive. Surely, then, there was scope for the apostles doing even greater works than our Saviour performed when He scattered miracles of power all along

the pathway of His terrestrial career. There was scope for those greater works, because the Saviour was resolved to go on, and yet further on, till He went up to His Father. Had He faltered in this resolution, had He shrunk when the crisis became imminent, had He refused to suffer and to die as an atoning Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, then, not only would there have been no provision in Divine moral government for a repetition, or continuance, of such miracles of power, as were also miracles of mercy, but the door would have been actually closed upon hope in reference to deliverance from spiritual lameness, blindness, deafness, dumbness, paralysis, and death, and from all the spiritual demons of discord, and passion, and hate, and intemperance, and licentiousness, that are making demoniacs of myriads, and that would be in danger but for Christianity of making demoniacs of us all. Our Lord did not, however, repent of His high resolve. He did not draw back from the completion of His enterprise when the difficulty was at its climax, and the hosts of darkness had gathered around Him in their serried and most formidable array. Oh, no! He strode on to victory. And it was in view of that victory, and of its mighty moral influence in the Divine government, that He promised that all the blessings which He had conferred on individuals during the brief period of His own personal and preliminary ministry, should be but the precursory drops as compared with the plenteous rain that would by and by descend and refresh, not the land of Palestine alone, but all the dry and thirsty lands on the face of the earth. The Saviour looked far and wide from His elevated standpoint and saw, as the consequent of His triumphal ascent to His Father, the overthrow of Phariseeism and Sadduceeism. That was a very great work. He looked further and saw the overthrow of Roman and Grecian and Scythian idolatry. What great works were these! He looked further and saw the destruction of slavery through the influence of His gospel of love as preached by His disciples. He saw too the gradual emancipation of the masses from the tyranny of tyrants, and their elevation into political and social privileges. He saw, besides, the erection of hospitals and other institutions of benevolence wherever His Cross should be planted fast and firm. He saw the establishment on the one hand of home missions descending to the hundreds of thousands who have lapsed, and the establishment, on the other, of foreign missions sending the gospel of His grace to the ends of the earth in hundreds of tongues. What wonder that He spoke of "greater works" than He Himself had performed on a few impotent folk round about the Sea of Galilee, and in a few other insignificant places within the narrow radius of the Holy Land? And then He looked still further forward, and saw His Church everywhere purified after it had passed through fiery trials. He saw, in that future, that just because He was about to go up to His Father, all demonism would be vanquished, all diseases would be healed; men and women everywhere would see right, and hear right, and speak right, and act right. He saw, as the grand conclusion of His enterprise, that men everywhere would be a brotherhood of love, no one acting selfishly, but each ministering benevolently to all around. (*James Morison, D.D.*) *Miracles in nature and grace contrasted*:—I. THE WORK OF CHRIST IN THE KINGDOM OF NATURE, CARRIED ON THROUGH HIS DISCIPLES. 1. The use of miraculous powers. Miracles were the credentials of Christ's Messiahship. The words of the Saviour ought to have brought the world in homage to His feet. But seeing that men are held in bondage to sense He condescended to this weakness, and substantiated His preternatural knowledge by the exercise of preternatural power. When He added to His words this sign manual of Heaven, then numbers like Nicodemus said, "No man can do these miracles," &c. 2. Their present disuse. They were only for the commencement of our religion. The pillar of a cloud and fire was God's miraculous ratification of the authority of the Hebrew legislator. But that pillar was not a permanent gift. The Jews were trained to higher spiritual manifestations of the Divine presence, and then the cloud retired into the holy place and was seen no more. So the miracles of Christ and His apostles were the leading strings in which the infant Church was tenderly led until her inherent strength was developed, and she was enabled to walk alone in her spiritual might. The miracles in nature waned as the miracles of grace waxed, and the transforming influence of the gospel on the heart and life of a believer was left to be the world's standing sign and proof that it was the power and the wisdom of God. II. THE GREATER WORK OF CHRIST IN THE KINGDOM OF GRACE. The conversion of the soul is a greater work, because—1. It is wrought upon a greater object. Miracles were wrought upon material things; but conversion is wrought upon the soul. Who

can calculate the vast superiority of spirit over matter? The soul allies us with Deity, for God is a spirit. It is the breath of the Almighty: matter is the rough clay in His hands. Hence the most degraded human being can say to the sun, "I am greater than thou!" 2. It demands more and greater attributes to effect it. Miracles were in the main displays of power. But in the conversion of our soul all the attributes of Jehovah are brought into play. Infinite wisdom must solve the problem, how the condemned can be pardoned, the lost saved, and the law honoured. Infinite power must work out the plan which wisdom has devised, and unite the Godhead and humanity in the person of Immanuel. Infinite love must be manifested in the undertaking of such an amazing work. 3. It encounters greater difficulties. It was easier to make a world than remake a fallen soul. In miracles of nature there was nothing to resist the Divine will. But in the restoration of the soul difficulties on all sides were encountered. Divine justice and truth stood in the way. All the powers of darkness were marshalled against it. The soul opposes its own conversion. It required four thousand years to prepare for the coming of Christ, and after His coming His thirty-three years of humiliation, privation, and toil. It still requires the striving of the Spirit on earth, the unwearied intercession of Jesus above, and the process of earthly discipline before one soul can be brought to glory. 4. It secures a greater good. Even the miracles of Jesus secured only a temporal good, though they aimed at awaking desires after spiritual benefits. But conversion is man's highest good, securing the richest blessings. 5. It has a greater duration. A change of heart has imperishable results. Where are the few whom Jesus summoned from the grave? To the grave they were summoned again. Where is the crowd from whom disease fled? The forces of human affliction returned, and brought death as their leader. Where are those miraculously fed? They hungered again. III. THE ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATION FOR THIS WORK. "He that believeth." One of the most prominent features in our Lord's teaching is the importance attached to faith. With respect to outward miracles, none of His disciples could perform them, none of the multitude could enjoy them without faith. If confidence in Christ was so essential in outward miracles, much more is it essential—1. In the reception of the great miracle of grace. 2. To its instrumental accomplishment. The conversion of the world is entrusted to the Church as the instrument by which the Spirit effects this spiritual change. "He that believeth," whosoever he may be, may aspire to this surpassing honour. There are three truths which should be deeply graven on our hearts. (1) Faith in the adaptation of the gospel to meet the wants of men of every class and in every age. (2) Faith in the fact that none are excluded from a participation in its saving blessings except through their own unbelief. (3) Universal reliance or dependence on the Spirit of Christ in every work of faith and labour of love. If we put our faith in the splendour of our sanctuaries, the talent of our ministers, the respectability of our churches, the machinery of our religious societies, the purity of our creed, we are trusting to a broken reed. IV. THE SOURCE OF ALL SUCCESS IN THIS WORK. The outpouring of the Spirit resulting from the exaltation of Jesus. "For if I go not away, the Comforter," &c. 1. Our inward state requires this. To suppose a spiritual change without the Spirit is to suppose not only an effect without a cause, but an effect contrary to all causes. 2. Our outward state requires it. How can we conquer a hostile world, except by that Spirit who makes His strength perfect in our weakness? 3. Spiritual agency of a corrupting and deadly character shows our need of it. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." Conclusion: Learn—1. The Divinity of Christ Jesus. Man, however gifted, is never able to impart at his will, his power to another. Napoleon could not bestow as a legacy on his faithful adherents his own genius. Christ says, "The works that I do shall ye do also." 2. The honour and dignity of all believers. A greater miracle has been wrought on them than on the body of Lazarus. 3. The ennobling character of Christian work. 4. The lamentable condition of every unbeliever. (*R. Best.*) *The eclipse of miracle*:—I. The text presents us with a PARALLEL. Christ teaches that there shall be a relation of likeness or identity between His own personal works and the works carried on by believing disciples after His departure. "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do, shall he do also." The terms in which Christ describes His own supernatural works are remarkable and suggestive. He scarcely ever speaks of them as miracles. He nearly always uses the quiet, unostentatious phrase employed in the text—"works." The mere triumph over physical law seems to be forgotten, and there is a godlike unconsciousness of that which is extraordinary to us. The term is suggestive of calm power. These things

are not miracles to Him, they were miracles only to the beholder. The word too is one that links His achievements with the achievements of the future Church. It expressed only that which should be common between the two. The miraculous element, in the popular sense of that word, was not the most conspicuous feature in the works. Christ's thought would seem to have been fixed upon those elements in the works that embodied living relations. The eye of the child is caught by the glare of colour in the picture, and a little Red Riding Hood from an illustrated paper will fascinate it just as much as a Holy Family by Titian. The eye of the artist is riveted by the form and composition and delicate suggestion and sentiment with which the canvas has been made to speak. The first living relation in Christ's works was with the Father. They were a continuous testimony of the Father to the Son before the world. "The Father worketh hitherto, and I work." "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do." "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." The second living relation embodied in Christ's works was with the Holy Spirit. Now these are the essential elements in Christ's works, and the power of accomplishing such works is given just as much to us as to Jesus Christ. Through all the life of a man who believes in Jesus Christ the Father directly testifies concerning His Son. Whilst the man retains a loyal, believing relation to his great Head, the Holy Ghost is the sovereign guide of all his activity, and his works are as perfectly adapted to the removal of suffering, the destruction of unbelief, and the awakening of faith in those with whom he is associated, as were the most imperial works of the Son of God upon earth. "The works that I do shall he do also." If we cannot do works upon which the miracle-glory rests, we can do works upon which there rests a glory that in Christ's view outshines and eclipses that of miracle, so that even "that which was made glorious had no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth." II. The text contains a CONTRAST. There is to be a splendid advance in the character of the believer's achievements, an advance that will make them transcend even the Lord's own personal works amongst men. "Greater works than these shall he do." Christ had always thought more of the moral elements and relations in His works and those of His disciples, than of the merely miraculous. The time Christ spent in teaching men was enormous, compared with the time spent in healing disease. A second sufficed to touch a leper with His restoring hand: it sometimes cost Him days to do the yet greater work of touching a polluted soul with heavenly light. In the Acts of the Apostles we find the space occupied by narrating the work of miracle small, and that occupied by the work of conviction increasingly large, in comparison with the relative spaces they fill in the synoptical gospels. The apostles were beginning to enter into Christ's estimate of the relative value of the two types of work. The physical conditions that constituted Christ's works miraculous are often realized in connection with spiritual work upon a much more commanding scale. Did some of Christ's works, such as turning the water into wine and feeding the multitudes, imply mastery over creative processes? Whilst fruitful seasons and food and gladness are given by the loving Father to good and evil alike, I have no doubt, the cry of the scientists notwithstanding, they are given in conspicuous degrees to the piety and prayers of God's people. And not to speak of the supernatural influence of Christianity, how much of the wealth of the world is due to the thrift and righteousness growing up out of its conversions! Take away its presence from the earth, and nations that now overflow with luxury would be represented by groups of scattered savages gnawing roots and uncooked carrion. It is Christianity that is feeding the nations. By its uplifted hands of righteousness and prayer it is multiplying bread for thousands in comparison with whom the crowds Christ fed were but as units. And is not this a greater thing than the miracle on the table-land of Bethsaida or the plain of Gennesaret? Did the largest group of Christ's miracles imply command over disease and death? How much has that active sympathy, which is the outcome of faith in Christ, done to limit the ravages of disease and add to the length of human life? The evils turned back by the conversion of those present in thousands of Christian congregations are as ghastly and as terrible and manifold as the evils that shrank before Christ's word in the days of His flesh. For Christian faith and love to put healing hands upon human sickness and infirmity, to prevent in incalculable degrees human pain, to add year by year to the length of human life in all quarters of the globe, is it not a greater work than Christ's comparatively circumscribed work of healing the sick and raising the dead when upon earth? The spiritual works effected by believers in Jesus Christ bring about that conviction which is the great end of miracle by more effective methods. In miracle

the work of the Spirit came before the eye. Miracle left the man more or less the victim of his own prejudice, unbelief, self-will. Miracle was only occasional in its appeal. The demonstration of the Spirit in the heart of man was a power that outlasted the believing prayers and labours to which its first coming was a response. If our faith reach up to the full evangelical altitude, we may do by the instantaneous help of the Spirit what it cost Christ years full of pains and sighs and toils to accomplish. Our work transcends miracle because the spirit, which is the special sphere touched by it, is more delicately sensitive than the body, which is the sphere in which miracle was wrought. The unseen part of a man's nature has capabilities of enjoyment or suffering which are indefinitely in advance of the part of his nature represented by the senses; the work of saving and tranquillizing it must be indefinitely higher in both process and result. In comparison with the agony of a wounded spirit, physical suffering is a mere pin-prick. To impart health by miracle to a diseased frame is a work unspeakably inferior to that of ministering salvation to diseased souls, plucking out rooted sins from the memory in which they rankle, and freeing the conscience from the haunting sense of eternal wrath. The spiritual works it is the believer's high privilege to do outshine Christ's personal miracles, because spiritual work is the key to the final destruction of all physical evil and disability at the last day. In spiritual miracle, the sentence is pronounced that shall then be carried out, and evil is virtually dead for the man whose nature has been touched by the works we do through our believing fellowship with Christ. The miracle was only respite. "Lo! disease and death come back to undo the triumph of the vanished wonder-worker." By the power I wield as a believer in Jesus Christ I work irreversible miracles. I dismiss disease and death into a realm from whence they can never return. The inward miracle of regeneration is the mainspring of that climatic miracle which sums up all other acts of healing power, when sickness and sorrow and sighing shall be swept for ever away. This is the true virtue radiated from the ascended Saviour, imparted freely to all His disciples, and perpetually reflected from every quickened Church in fellowship with its Lord. It pulsates unseen in our midst just now, but a few transient breaths must come and go before it can be seen that the flush of immortal health has been restored to the universe. III. The text points out THE SECRET OF THIS CONTRAST between Christ's works and those of His favoured followers. The secret has a Divine and a human side. Christ's presence at the right hand of the Father is the pledge and sign that sin has been dealt with, man's unfitness to receive these high and holy gifts has been taken away, the burden which crushed human nature into impotence removed, and the Father's hand opened to His reconciled people in more than its ancient wealth of blessing. This secret of transcendent power has an earthly as well as a heavenly side. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do." Some of the natural forces of the universe can only be manifested through the special elements and agencies that are adapted to transmit them. Electricity must have a pathway of susceptible matter over which to travel, even if that pathway be one of indefinitely minute particles of ether only. So with the spiritual forces of the universe. If the power of the mediatorial presence have no conducting lines of faith along which to travel, it must sleep for ever, and the world be left to swing on in its old grooves of evil and death. The manifestation of all the energies of that presence can only come through the believing request of the disciples. Prayer, bound only by the holy instincts of the faith that inspires it, and the rights of the name in which it is presented, is a thing of illimitable power. Let us never forget the dignity and beneficence of all spiritual work. This promise suggests the plenary character of the Pentecostal endowment. (*T. G. Selby.*) **Because I go unto My Father.**—I. COMPLETING MY WORK IN THE FLESH. II. ACCEPTING MY PLACE AT THE THRONE. III. BEQUEATHING MY WORK TO THE CHURCH. IV. ENDURING MY SAINTS WITH THE SPIRIT. (*S. S. Times.*)

Vers. 13, 14. **Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name that will I do.**—*Praying in the name of Christ*:—I. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? 1. To obtain anything in the name of another supposes that your own name is an insufficient warrant. In the negotiation by which you secure it, your own personality is lost altogether. Thus an ambassador personifies the country he represents; he has no personal recognition when he sits in the councils of foreign potentates. So in familiar life we invest a subordinate agent with our own reputation and credit. 2. But in neither of these senses do we make mention of the name of Christ in our prayers. We may be said, it is true, to traffic with another's credit, and represent the authority of a sovereign

in some conditions of intercourse with God; but praying in the name of Jesus implies a closer union than that of service. "If ye shall ask the *Father*" (see chap. xx. 17). Prayer rises from outside, knocking into the tender confidences of family intercourse. We ask in the name of Christ because we have put on that name as a woman by marriage puts on the name of her husband, and with it his rank and property. When she asks anything in the husband's name she brings with her whatever that name merits or can demand. To deny her is to deny him. In the Scriptures our union with Christ is described by marriage. This is foreshadowed by the prophets (Isa. liv. 5; lxii. 5), and God's name is used as an argument of deprecation as if somehow that name were bound up with the fate of His people (Jer. xiv. 21; Josh. vii. 9; Ezek. xxxvi. 22, 23). In Matt. ix. 15 Christ accepts all this, and in His marriage parables. And so St. Paul (Eph. v. 25–32), and St. John (Rev. xix. 6–9; xxi. 2–9). Let the light of these statements shine on the text. In communion with the Father we have lost our name. He found us nameless, for we had not a name of any honourable distinction to lose or merge. The Saviour describes our condition as lost—without name, home, repute. He allured us back (Isa. lxii. 2), and gave us His own name, and our miserable name was hidden and lost in the brightness of Christ. That name is ours, its renown and the vast treasures of grace procurable by its warrant (1 Cor. iii. 23). II. THE POWER OF PRAYER MUST BE PROPORTIONED TO OUR ABSORPTION IN CHRIST. 1. It is the conscious weight of His name that gives its energy to faith. When that name is not predominant, we naturally dwell on our own unworthiness, &c., which produces distrust —the fatal sickness of prayer. Distrust blocks the way up to God, and no prayer can pass to Him (James. i. 5–7). Not that no prayer can prosper unless faith be perfect, for then how could we pray for faith at all; but the chief condition of our receiving is a belief that Christ will do it (Mark xi. 24). It is the name of Christ, and that only, that gives us such a confidence. With His name in our hands, or rather written on the covenant register of our love, we can no more fail with the Father than He can. When we pray in His name it is as if He prayed. 2. This nearness of fellowship with Christ explains the "anything" of the text. It is not supposed that such a licence will be abused by caprice. The prayer of a depending love to a conferring love will interpret it by the extent of its wants, and the right it is permitted to assume. 3. The endearments of such a state are not sustained by great services. Whatever concerns you concerns Him; if in itself it be a trifle, it is not a trifle to Him if it affects you. (*E. E. Jenkins, LL.D.*) **If ye shall ask anything in My name.**—*Prayer in Christ's name*:—I. THE FACT WHICH IS THE ROOT OF THIS PROMISE is described in what our Lord says about the vine. The vine and the branches are one, the same name covers them. Whatever the branch asks for—that its blossoms may be abundant, and that its clusters may ripen—the vine asks for. And it was in immediate connection with this that our Lord said, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will," &c. We are to pray in Christ's name because we are so undeniably one with Him that what we ask He asks. The use of His name, then, is not an incantation, nor is it one of a number of conditions of successful prayer. It is the one condition of both prayer and work. This promise is connected with that which precedes it. "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do," &c. Why? "Because I go unto My Father; and those who are one with Me share My glorified powers." It is the consciousness of this union that enables us to pray too and work for God with a large and happy faith that He will hear us and help us. II. THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF THE PROMISE. 1. It may be objected that when we pray in the name of Christ the range of our prayers must be narrowed. We must pray about Christ's affairs, and not about our own. We may pray, for example, that the gospel may reach the hearts of men; but can we ask in Christ's name that we may be successful in business, or that our children may be healthy and happy? When we pray for the strong help of the Spirit of God to enable us to practise all Christian virtues we may pray in Christ's name; but if we want to get an appointment which will bring us a larger income, to win a contested election, to escape a bad debt, protection, or better health—these are our own affairs. It is as if a minister of the Crown were to use his official authority for his own personal interests; or as if the representative of a commercial firm, who was authorised to sign cheques for the firm, signed cheques for the payment of his private and personal accounts. But have we any interests that are not Christ's? Should we really choose the better appointment and the larger income at the risk of becoming of less use to Christ? Should we care to win the contested election if success did not give us new opportunities for serving Him? Are we not carrying on our busi-

ness as Christ's servants? And when we pray for our children, do we not remember with a leap of the heart that they are much more dear to Him than they are to us? Can we really desire anything for ourselves that Christ does not desire us to have? Can we desire anything for others that Christ does not desire them to have? 2. But these answers, though good as far as they go, are incomplete. The real root of that vague discontent is in that dualism which divides human life into the religious and the secular; in one of which we know that Christ is interested, while the other seems to be of interest only to ourselves. That we should care for righteousness more than for everything besides we acknowledge frankly. To serve Christ well—that is what we desire above everything. If the chance were offered to us between a saintly character and the most splendid earthly position, not for a moment should we hesitate. But our nature is complex. Righteousness is the great good to which every inferior good gives place; but there are many good things besides. The worst of all evils is to sin against God; but it is a bad thing to be cold, hungry, friendless; to see the wealth which has been accumulated by skill, industry, and thrift, wasting away through the dishonesty of those we have trusted. It is the worst of all evils to be lashed day after day by a guilty conscience; but it is also a bad thing to suffer the physical tortures which are the result of some terrible forms of disease. From the worst evils we can ask in Christ's name to be delivered, that others should be delivered from them; but how is it with the rest? Have we forgotten that Christ created us body and soul? When a limb is broken, Christ's own creation is injured, just as the creation of an artist is injured when the marble which is the triumph of his genius is shattered, or when the canvas on which he has recorded some dream of beauty is rent. Christ's miracles were the signs of the depth of His compassion for the miseries of our race; and has He not made it a part of the service which we owe to Himself to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, &c. In His name we are to relieve all forms of human want—in His name, when the want is our own, we may ask that the want may be relieved. If we serve Christ in common things, we shall be able to pray in His name about common things; and perhaps it is because we alienate a large part of our life from His service that we are conscious of a certain incongruity when we try to pray about it. 3. But we may sometimes doubt whether relief from want, pain, trouble, is really good. It is right to ask, and to ask in Christ's name, for relief from it; but Christ may cancel the prayer, and put in its place a petition for a higher blessing. We pray that it may be removed: He loves us too well for the prayer to be answered. But when we pray for the great gifts, whether for ourselves or for others, then we know that our prayers are but the experience of the central thoughts and desires of the very heart of Christ; we know that we should not offer them were it not for our union with Christ; and therefore with perfect confidence we offer them in His name, they are less ours than His. (*R. W. Dale, D.D.*) *Praying in Christ's name*:—In the common acceptation, the phrase "in my name" means the same thing as "for my sake" or "on my account." The common notion seems to be that if we present ourselves before the Infinite Majesty with any request and make use of this formula, our requests will be granted, no matter what they may be. The young soldier dying on the field sends by his wounded comrade a letter to his father at home, saying, "This is my friend; give him whatever he asks for, for my sake;" and although the requests of the wounded man are unreasonable and injurious, the father grants the petition, simply because of the love that he bears his son. Just so men go to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with this text as their warrant. Another conception of the promise is that Christ has accumulated an infinite fund of merit by His death, and has put the Father under infinite obligations to Him. Those, therefore, who come to the Father in the name of the Son have a claim on Him which He is bound to recognize. The transaction, as thus conceived, is partly legal and partly commercial. To ask in Christ's name is therefore substantially the same thing as to present an order at a store signed by one of the joint proprietors, or a cheque upon a bank certified by the cashier. The name, as we say, is good for the amount. It matters not to us whether the persons to whom the cheque or the order is presented are friendly or unfriendly to us; nor to them whether the thing is good for us or not; there need be no acquaintance beyond simple identification. What they impart to us is not of grace to us but of debt to the one whose name we present to them. This view needs only to be distinctly stated in order that its credulity may be perceived. I. WHAT IS MEANT BY ASKING IN CHRIST'S NAME? The name, in the New Testament, generally stands for the person. So always when miracles are wrought by the name of Christ, it is

the personality and the power of Christ that are referred to. Believing in the name of Christ is believing not merely in a word but in Christ, with a glance, no doubt, at His trustworthiness. To ask for anything in the name of Christ, then, is to put ourselves in His place as nearly as we can, and to ask for the things that He would ask for, and in the spirit with which He would present His requests. Just in proportion as His mind is in us, and our lives reproduce His life, will our prayers be effectual. The same truth is put in another form in chap. xv. 7, 16. It is only when the life of the Master quickens and invigorates the disciple, just as the life of the vine does that of the branches, that he can truly pray in Christ's name, and find a certain answer to his prayers. II. THIS INTERPRETATION LIMITS THE PROMISE IN CERTAIN DIRECTIONS. That is really no objection to the interpretation. 1. Men have brought to God many strange requests for objects unworthy and injurious to themselves, and yet have supposed that by the use of this phrase they made good their demand upon Him. Those to whom, *e.g.*, worldly prosperity would be a curse, who have no power to use wealth wisely, and would surely be corrupted by it, sometimes ask for it, and seem to think that God is not faithful to His promise because He does not give it to them. 2. Sometimes good people have hateful whims that they wish to have gratified. One good woman whom I knew prayed, so she said, in Christ's name all night, that her husband may be kept from joining a certain church. Thus she imagined this promise to be a weapon with which she could compel the Deity to gratify her small bigotry, her antipathy to another Christian sect. 3. Neither does the text encourage speculative or experimental praying. A proposition was made that Christians should pray for the patients in a certain ward of a hospital; and if these recovered more rapidly than those in other wards the result would be a demonstration of the power of prayer. But men who pray, just to see whether there is any use in praying or not, are not praying with the mind of Christ, no matter what phrases these may use; and there is no promise of answer to any such prayers. To ask a good man for a good gift, just to see what he would say, would be an insult; and it is not less offensive to approach God in this way. 4. Neither does this interpretation encourage the expectation that God will work miracles to relieve us of work. Some imagine that God will support them in idleness if they only pray in faith for food and raiment and shelter. We know, as well as we can know anything, that it is God's will that we should earn our livelihood by labour, and husband our earnings with prudence. 5. The same principle applies to suffering. One who violates a physical law the existence of which he knows or ought to know, and then thinks to escape through prayer from the penalty of that law, really insults God by his prayer. No one can pray really in the name of Christ who is not careful to obey every part of the law of God, natural as well as Biblical. The very first condition of asking in Christ's name is an entire and hearty willingness to know and to do the will of the Lord. To pray in the name or character of Christ is to remember that we are ignorant and that God is infinitely wise; and that what He chooses for us, though it may seem evil to us, is by far the best that we can only make known to Him our desires, and then leave ourselves with entire submission in His careful and powerful hands. III. AFTER WE HAVE QUALIFIED THIS PROMISE IN ALL THESE WAYS IT IS STILL LARGE ENOUGH—so large that we shall never begin to realize all the good it offers us. 1. It does not forbid us to ask for temporal mercies, for the least of the good things that God provides, nor for the greatest of them. You may pray for health; that is a blessing that Christ gave to many while He was here. But it is a gift that He does not always give to those He loves best; and when you pray for it you must always say, "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done." 2. You may pray for success in business and for prosperity if you desire them for spiritual or benevolent rather than for natural and selfish reasons. But here, too, the dominating wish will be that God's will may be done. You may honestly think that you could use wealth in such a way as to derive moral and spiritual benefit from it for yourself, and to confer benefits upon others; but the Omniscient One may know that you are mistaken about this, and, for your own good, as well as for His glory, He may therefore withhold what you crave. 3. There is one class of petitions, however, in which you do not need to make any of these reservations. When you ask for spiritual gifts, then if you are sincere you know that you are asking in Christ's name. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." (*Washington Gladden D.D.*) *The reason for delay in the answers to prayer*:—"Pa said he liked us to ask him for whatever we wanted, and I asked him yesterday to get me a kite, and he has not got it for me!" said a curly-headed grumbler, on a cold

foggy day in November. "Yes, and I asked him to give me a gold watch, and he has never given me one!" said a brother, two or three years older; "and I don't see the good of asking him for things." Six months passed away, when behold! one fine day in May, the father came in with a beautiful kite, which he gave to his little boy without saying a word. But it was eight or nine years before he called the other boy to him and said, "I suppose you have forgotten, when you were a boy in pinafores, asking me for a gold watch, haven't you?" "Yes, that I have," answered the now tall youth. "But I have not," said the father. "Here's the watch, my dear boy; you can value it and take care of it now! Ah, Christian, need I add a word? else I might say that prayers do not spoil by keeping, but are only put out at interest. (*H. H. Dobney.*) **If ye love Me, keep My commandments.**—*True love for Christ:*—I. ITS TRUE NATURE AND CHARACTER. 1. The text suggests a contrast with something besides which, while purporting to be the love of Christ, is not the very reality. There is a love of Christ which is—(1) Affected—that of Judas. His successors are men who, for selfish purposes, have said, "Lord, Lord!" (2) Visionary—that of Simon Magus. His love was not a falsehood like the traitor's; but it was an illusion. How much of Christianity consists in acknowledgment of Gospel verity, respect for Christian institutions, &c. (3) Morbid, that perhaps of Thomas, which has its eyes turned in upon himself—a type of Christianity induced by persecution, the prevalence of wickedness, a high state of civilization, want of moral earnestness. (4) Partial and unworthy, that of Peter, who made the commonest of mistakes, overestimating His love. It was a genuine feeling; but not equal to all emergencies, and so vanished as soon as it confronted danger. 2. The love of Christ—what is it? (1) Acquaintance with Christ. How can we love what we do not know? How can we love Christ if we are ignorant of His Person, work, character, claims, promises, &c.? Of this knowledge our Lord makes the highest account, and provides for it by the gift of His Spirit. This knowledge is not the measure of love, but is its companion, and one of the spheres of its activity. (2) Affection for Christ. Knowledge may be divorced from any alliance of the heart or will. But the soul who possesses the love of Christ will be filled with a sacred passion for Him shed abroad by the Holy Ghost. (3) Obedience to Christ, which is Christ's own definition here. This is to live in—(*a*) Piety towards God. Christ will recognize no love for Him which does not show forth the praises of His Father. (*b*) Self-control and purity. (*c*) Truth, love, justice to all men. II. ITS BLESSEDNESS AND DIVINE EXCELLENCE. To love Christ is—1. To be loved of the Father and the Son (ver. 21). The Divine Son is so dear to the Father, that love for Him in a human soul makes it dear to God. 2. To receive the manifestation of the love of God is the coming to the soul of the Father and the Son (ver. 23). Human love often remains unmanifested through lack of opportunity, &c. So there was a lack of the manifestation of Divine love before the Incarnation; but Christ promises to the disciples that He and the Father will "come." Believers shall know the love which God has for them, the Spirit Himself bearing witness of the fact. 3. To enjoy this manifestation as a permanent condition of soul: "make our abode." Conclusion: 1. What bewildering and entrancing views of heaven does this scripture open before us? If God so loved us here, how will He love us in the mansions above! 2. To how great a height does the Christianity of the New Testament tower above that of most of its professors. 3. Let those who name the name of Christ be careful to keep His commandments. (*J. D. 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foggy day in November. "Yes, and I asked him to give me a gold watch, and he has never given me one!" said a brother, two or three years older; "and I don't see the good of asking him for things." Six months passed away, when behold! one fine day in May, the father came in with a beautiful kite, which he gave to his little boy without saying a word. But it was eight or nine years before he called the other boy to him and said, "I suppose you have forgotten, when you were a boy in pinafores, asking me for a gold watch, haven't you?" "Yes, that I have," answered the now tall youth. "But I have not," said the father. "Here's the watch, my dear boy; you can value it and take care of it now! Ah, Christian, need I add a word? else I might say that prayers do not spoil by keeping, but are only put out at interest. (*H. H. Dobney.*) **If ye love Me, keep My commandments.** —*True love for Christ*:—I. ITS TRUE NATURE AND CHARACTER. 1. The text suggests a contrast with something besides which, while purporting to be the love of Christ, is not the very reality. There is a love of Christ which is—(1) Affected—that of Judas. His successors are men who, for selfish purposes, have said, "Lord, Lord!" (2) Visionary—that of Simon Magus. His love was not a falsehood like the traitor's; but it was an illusion. How much of Christianity consists in acknowledgment of Gospel verity, respect for Christian institutions, &c. (3) Morbid, that perhaps of Thomas, which has its eyes turned in upon himself—a type of Christianity induced by persecution, the prevalence of wickedness, a high state of civilization, want of moral earnestness. (4) Partial and unworthy, that of Peter, who made the commonest of mistakes, overestimating His love. It was a genuine feeling; but not equal to all emergencies, and so vanished as soon as it confronted danger. 2. The love of Christ—what is it? (1) Acquaintance with Christ. How can we love what we do not know? How can we love Christ if we are ignorant of His Person, work, character, claims, promises, &c.? Of this knowledge our Lord makes the highest account, and provides for it by the gift of His Spirit. This knowledge is not the measure of love, but is its companion, and one of the spheres of its activity. (2) Affection for Christ. Knowledge may be divorced from any alliance of the heart or will. But the soul who possesses the love of Christ will be filled with a sacred passion for Him shed abroad by the Holy Ghost. (3) Obedience to Christ, which is Christ's own definition here. This is to live in—(*a*) Piety towards God. Christ will recognize no love for Him which does not show forth the praises of His Father. (*b*) Self-control and purity. (*c*) Truth, love, justice to all men. II. ITS BLESSEDNESS AND DIVINE EXCELLENCE. To love Christ is—1. To be loved of the Father and the Son (ver. 21). 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which is most pleasing to Him, and will most glorify Him. There is the answer to every rapturous inquiry. (4) Moreover, the Saviour knew, when He bade us try this test, that it would prepare us for honouring and glorifying Him in many ways. When a friend is dying, and he asks you to prove your love by such and such a deed, he may ask what he wills; you give him *carte blanche*. Baptism and the Lord's supper will never be slighted by those whose hearts are fully possessed with love to Jesus. They may seem trifles, but if the Lord Jesus commands them they cannot be neglected. III. TRUE LOVE WILL ENDURE THIS TEST. "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments." This is the Revised Version, and I hope it will be written out in capitals upon our revised lives! If you love Christ—1. Set to work to find out what His commandments are. 2. Be always true to your convictions about what Christ's commandments are. Carry them out at all hazards, and carry them out at once. 3. Take note of every commandment as it concerns you. If there be a commandment which you do not relish, it ought to be a warning to you that there is something wrong in your heart that needs setting right. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Love and obedience*:—The keyword of the preceding context is "Believe!" and that word passes now into "Love." The believing gaze upon Christ kindles love and prompts to obedience. There is another very beautiful and subtle link. Our Lord has just been saying, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name that will I do." The Lord does as the servant asks, and the servant is to do as the Lord commands. On both sides there is love delighting to be set in motion by a message from the other side. I. THE ALL-SUFFICIENT IDEAL OR GUIDE FOR LIFE. The authoritative tone which Christ assumes is noteworthy. He speaks as Jehovah spoke from Sinai; and quotes the very words of the old law. There are distinctly involved, in this incidental utterance, two startling things—one the assumption of the right to impose His will upon every human being, and the other that His will contains the all-sufficient directory for conduct. 1. What, then, are His commandments? Those which He spoke are plain and simple; and some people crow loud if, scratching amongst rabbinical dust-heaps, they find something that looks like anything that He once said. What does that matter? Christ's "commandments" are Christ Himself. There is the originality and uniqueness of Christ as a moral teacher, that He says, "Copy Me." His law is to be found in His life. 2. And then, if that be so, what a change passes on the aspect of law! Everything that was hard, repellent, far-off, cold, vanishes. We have no longer tables of stone, but fleshy tables of a heart; and the Law stands before us, a Being to be loved, to be clung to, to be trusted in, and whom it is blessedness to know and perfection to be like. 3. It is enough for conduct, for character, and in all perplexities of conflicting duties that we listen to and obey the Voice that says, "Keep My commandments." II. THE ALL-POWERFUL MOTIVE. The Revised Version reads, "If ye love Me ye will keep," &c., making it an assurance and not an injunction. 1. The principle that underlies these words is, that love is the foundation of obedience, and obedience is the sure outcome and result of love. We all know that love which is real delights most chiefly in knowing and conforming to the will of the beloved. And you have only to lift that which is the experience of every true heart into the higher regions, to see that Christ has invoked an omnipotent power. 2. That is exactly what lifts the morality of the Gospel above all other systems. It is not for want of knowledge that men go to the devil, but for want of power to live their knowledge. And what morality fails to do with its clearest utterances of human duty, Christ comes and does. The one is like the useless proclamations posted up in some rebellious district, where there is no army to back them. The other gets itself obeyed. Here is the road plain and straight. What matters that if there is no force to draw the cart along it. Here stand all your looms, polished and in perfect order, but there is no steam in the boilers; and so there is no motion and nothing manufactured. What we want is not law, but power. And what the gospel stands alone in giving us, is not merely the clear revelation of what we ought to be, but it is the power to become it. 3. Love does that, and love alone. The true way to cleanse the Augean stables, was to turn the river into them. It would have been endless to wheel out the filth in wheelbarrows loaded by spades. When the ark comes into the Temple, Dagon lies, a mutilated stump, upon the threshold. Christ, and He alone, entering my heart by the portals of my love, will coerce my evil and stimulate my good. 4. Here is a plain test and a double-barelled one. (1) There is no love worth calling so which does not keep the commandment. All the emotional and the mystic, and the so-called higher parts of Christian experience have to be content to submit to this plain test—do they help us to live as Christ would have us, and that because

He would have us? Not that in regard of each action there must be the conscious reference to the supreme love. The colouring matter put in at the fountain will dye every drop of the stream; and they whose inmost hearts are tinged and tinctured with the sweet love of Jesus Christ, from their hearts will go forth issues of life all coloured and moulded thereby. (2) There is no obedience worth calling so which is not the child of love; and all the multitude of right things which Christians do, without that motive, are made short work of by the principle. Obedience which is mechanical and matter-of-course, or which is forced upon us by dread, is nothing. This is a sieve with very small meshes, and there will be a great deal of rubbish left in it after the shaking. III. THE ALL-SUBDUING GAZE. This is not included in the text, but it is necessary to complete the view of the forces to which Christ here entrusts the hallowing of life. Nothing will kindle a man's love but the faithful contemplation and grasp of the Redeeming Christ. 1. Here is a man, dead for nineteen centuries, expecting you and me to have towards Him a vivid personal affection which will influence our conduct and our character. What right has He to expect that? There is only one reasonable ground, and that is, that He died for me. And such a love towards such a Christ is the only thing which will wield power sufficient to guide, to coerce, to restrain, to constrain, and to sustain my weak, wayward, rebellious, and sluggish will. 2. Here is a unique fact in the history of the world, that not only did He make this astounding claim, but that it has been responded to, and that to-day there are millions of men who love Jesus Christ with a love warm, personal, deep, powerful—the spring of all their goodness and the Lord of their lives. Why do they? For one reason only. Because they believe that He died for them, and that He lives an ascended yet ever-present Helper and Lover of their souls. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Love and obedience:*—I. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN KEEPING THE DIVINE COMMANDS? 1. That we retain them in our memory, so as not to forget them. This is necessary to all other ways of keeping them (Deut. viii. 7; xvii. 18). The heart of every Christian should be a sacred ark, containing the two tables of the law, that they may be ready for use, and secured against all hostile attempts to deprive us of them (Psa. cxix. 61, 93; Heb. ii. 1; 2 Pet. i. 12, 13). 2. That they have a place in our affections; we must love them, and delight in them. A thing may be lost to the memory, and yet be kept in the heart; the words of a discourse may be forgotten, and yet the savour of it be retained. But God's commands require to be kept in both these respects. The believer loves the Divine law, on account of its Author; and the subject matter of it, on account of its own intrinsic excellence. 3. That we preserve them unadulterated, pure and entire. Nothing is more displeasing to the Lord, than to blend human inventions with His institutions (Deut. iv. 2; Rev. xxii. 18). 4. A decided and persevering obedience to the Divine will, regardless of the consequences (Matt. vii. 24–29; Rev. xxii. 14). 5. That we recommend them to the attention of others. II. HOW OUR KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS IS AN EVIDENCE OF OUR LOVE TO GOD. 1. It is a very rational evidence, for all love is active and influential. Obedience without love is in many instances found to be impracticable; with it, it is almost unavoidable. 2. It is a scriptural evidence, very frequently inculcated (vers. 21, 23; chap. xiv. 14). 3. The evidence is simple and easy. This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous. 4. It is an obvious and convincing evidence (Matt. vii. 20; 1 John ii. 4, 5). 5. It is such an evidence that without it no other kind of evidence would be sufficient. Reflections: The subject teaches us —1. That love is the foundation of Christian obedience. 2. To judge of our love by our obedience, and not of our obedience by our love. 3. Love and obedience will bear a proportion to each other. 4. They will at last be consummated together. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *Love and obedience:*—Nothing can be love which does not shape itself into obedience. We remember the anecdote of a Roman commander who forbade an engagement with the enemy, and the first transgressor against his prohibition was his own son. He accepted the challenge of the leader of the other host, met, slew, spoiled him, and then, in triumphant feeling, carried the spoils to his father's tent. But the Roman father refused to recognize the instinct which prompted this as deserving the name of love. Disobedience contradicted it, and deserved death. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Obedience the true test of love to Christ:*—I. CHRIST MERITED THE HIGHEST ESTEEM OF ALL HIS PEOPLE. 1. In Himself He is the most lovely of objects. 2. From Him the disciples have received the most delightful instruction. 3. He has died to save them from the direst of evils and lives to procure for them the highest blessings. 4. His laws are the conditions upon which our well-being is secured. II. THERE ARE IN CHRIST'S DISCIPLES

SUCH THINGS AS RENDER THEIR LOVE TO CHRIST SUSPICIOUS. 1. Sad neglect of public worship. 2. Backwardness in prayer. 3. Reluctance to study the Scriptures. 4. Passion easily agitated. 5. Fear of death. III. THE METHOD OF GETTING RID OF ALL THAT RENDERS OUR LOVE SUSPICIOUS. Obedience: 1. Universal. 2. Constant. 3. Self-denying. (*R. Robinson.*) *Affectionate obedience:*—I. THE IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE OF LOVE TO JESUS CHRIST. Consider this principle—1. As to its nature. Love to Christ implies several things. (1) A knowledge of Christ. (2) Satisfaction with Christ. (3) Esteem for Christ, and delight in Him. 2. In its causes. "He first loved us." 3. Consider this love in its characteristics. What should be the features of this love? (1) It should be ardent. A flame burning intensely on the altar of the heart. (2) It should be progressive. Cannot stand still. (3) It should be pre-eminent. 4. In its importance (see 1 Cor. xvi. 22). II. THE EVIDENCE OF ITS POSSESSION. Obedience is the essential fruit of a renewed heart. Christ's commandments—1. Are revealed. They are left on the pages of Holy Writ. 2. They are sometimes difficult. Hence self-denial and cross-bearing are always so. 3. They are always practicable. "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." 4. They are indispensable. Not to be despised or neglected. Essential to Christ's favour, and our own comfort. Application: 1. Right obedience to Christ is humble, universal, and hearty. It does not question, or choose, or obey reluctantly. 2. Christ's order seems this: Hear, repent, believe, be baptized, and then do whatsoever else I command you. (*Jabez Burns, D.D.*) *Love the inspiration of courage to obey:*—Several boys were playing marbles. In the midst of their sport, the rain began to fall. Freddie S. stopped, and said, "Boys, I must go home: mother said I must not go out in the rain." "Your mother—fudge! The rain won't hurt you any more than it will us," said two or three voices at once. Freddie turned upon them with a look of pity, and the courage of a hero, and replied, "I'll not disobey my mother for any of you!" *Love the motive power of obedience:*—When the Bible prescribes Christian graces, it always implies love as the motive power; as when we speak of rearing harvests it is always implied that there is a soil. Without love there is no soil for any Christian grace. If there be little of it, the fruit of Christian feeling will be poor and scant. If there be much, there will be great fruit, and easily grown. All things are easy to love. It tames all passions, inspires all affections, feeds every generous sentiment, gives both softness and potency, as its needs require, to the will, makes the understanding luminous and by making the whole man like God, makes it easy for him to be god-like to his fellow-men. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Love liberates us for obedience:*—Obedience is freedom, when we have learned to love the lips that command. We are set free that we may serve. (*Ibid.*) *Love makes obedience delightful:*—Love obeys with delight. It is not a burden to pray, but a pleasure. Hard duties become easy to love and the time seems not long nor tedious; as Jacob for the love of Rachel (Gen. xxix. 20). Seven years to love seems but as one day. One day spent in a holy duty to one who hath love, seems to pass away sooner and with more delight than one day spent in flesh displeasing duties where there is no love to take off the tediousness of it to the flesh. (*Percy.*) *Love makes obedience easy:*—Love is like wings to the bird, like sails to the ship; it carries a Christian full sail to heaven. When love cools, obedience slacks and drives heavily, because it wants the oil on it which that love used to drop. (*T. Watson.*) *Love better than the mere sense of duty:*—Men will do far more from love than we might dare to ask as a matter of duty. Napoleon's soldiers frequently achieved exploits under the influence of fervid attachment for him, which no law could have required them to attempt. Had there been cold-blooded orders issued by some domineering officer, who said, "You shall do this, and you shall do that," they would have mutinied against such tyranny, and yet when the favourite little corporal seizes the standard, and cries, "Come on!" they will rush even to the cannon's mouth, out of love to the person of their gallant leader. This is the difference between the law and the gospel. The law says, "You shall, or you shall be punished;" but the gospel says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have forgiven all your trespasses; now my love shall sweetly constrain you, and the influence of inward principle shall guide you in my ways, my law shall be written, not upon stone, but upon the fleshly tablets of your hearts." The old covenant in all that it did only provided precepts; but the gospel provides the power to keep the precept. The law drove us, but the gospel draws us. The law came behind us with its dog and stick, as our drovers do from the cattle markets; but the gospel goes before us, as the Eastern shepherd before his sheep, and we cheerfully

follow where the gospel leads the way. This is the difference, then, between the old law and its inability to sanctify us, and the gospel and its wonderful power to purify. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Sonship manifested in love:*—Outside, in the streets, a man's companions will do him a kindness, and the action performed is friendly; but for filial acts you must look inside the house. There the child does not lend money to its father, or negotiate business, yet in his little acts there is more sonship. Who is it that comes to meet father when the day is over? and what is the action which often indicates childhood's love? See the little child comes tottering forward with father's slippers, and runs off with his boots as he puts them off. The service is little, but it is loving and filial, and has more of filial affection in it than the servant's bringing in the meal, or preparing the bed, or any more essential service. It gives the little one great pleasure, and expresses his love. No one who is not my child, or who does not love me in something like the same way, would ever dream of making such a service his speciality. The littleness of the act fits it to the child's capacity, and there is also something in it which makes it a suitable expression of a child's affection. So also in little acts for Jesus. Oftentimes men of the world will give their money to the cause of Christ, putting down large sums for charity or for missions, but they will not weep in secret over other men's sins, or speak a word of comfort to an afflicted saint. To visit a poor sick woman, teach a little child, reclaim a street Arab, breathe a prayer for enemies, or whisper a promise in the ear of a desponding saint, may show more of sonship than building a row of almshouses or endowing a church. (*Ibid.*) *The Divinity of a Christ-loving soul:*—I. As living a Divine life. The life is that of keeping Divine commandments. 1. This is the effect of loving Christ. Here is a law of mind. He who really loves another is naturally desirous of acting in accord with the wishes of the object loved. We see this in families and among friends, and the professing Christian who is not obedient from love, is not obedient at all. 2. This is the evidence of loving Christ (ver. 21). There may be the most glowing songs of praise, &c., but love is only proved by practical obedience. The true Christian is an incarnation of the God of love. Worldly men only embody and work out the current notions of their age. "I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart." II. As possessing a Divine helper (ver. 16). 1. He is the gift of the Father—free, sovereign, priceless. 2. He is the messenger of reality—"the Spirit of Truth." The world is under the dominion of falsehood and shams. False ideas of God, life, duty, happiness, and greatness prevail. The Paraclete comes to scatter delusions, and to bring souls into contact with the morally real. 3. He is exclusively for the Christ-loving—"And I will pray the Father . . . whom the world cannot receive," &c. Love is the receptive and recognizing faculty (1 Cor. ii. 14). As soon may a man, who has not attained the faculty of reading, see in "Paradise Lost" the genius of Milton as the man who has not the love of Christ, see and receive the Spirit of God. 4. He is the spiritual presence of Christ (ver. 18). 5. He instructs in the things of Christ (ver. 26). III. As enjoying Divine companionship (vers. 20, 21). Love to Christ makes the soul the residence of God. Such a soul He enters, not as a passing visitor, but a permanent guest (1 Cor. iii. 16). IV. As participating in a Divine peace (ver. 27). Peace with our own conscience, with society and God. Not as the world giveth. 1. As to quality. The world gives inferior gifts, Christ gives the highest. The world gives non-essential gifts. Men can do without the best of the world's gifts, but Christ's is indispensable. 2. As to manner. (1) The world gives selfishly, looking for something in return. Christ gives from infinite disinterestedness. (2) The world gives limitedly. It has neither heart nor capacity to give much. Christ gives unlimitedly. (3) The world gives occasionally, and according to its moods. Christ gives constantly. (4) The world gives to its friends. It loves its own. Christ gives to His enemies. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 16. **I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter.**—*The praying Christ, the giving Father, and the abiding Spirit:*—The "and" shows us that these words are a consequence of some preceding steps. The ladder that has its summit in heaven has for its rungs, first, "believe"; second, "love"; third, "obey." And thus the context carries us from the very basis of the Christian life up into its highest reward. And there is another very striking link. There are, if I may so say, two telephones across the abyss that separates the ascended Christ and us. One is, "If ye ask anything in My name I will do it"; the other, "If ye keep My commandments I will ask." Love on this side of the great cleft

sets love on the other side of it in motion in a twofold fashion. If we ask, He does; if we do, He asks. I. THE PRAYING CHRIST AND THE GIVING FATHER. 1. "I will ask and He will give" seems a strange drop from the lofty claims in the earlier verses. The voice that spake the perfect revelation of God lowers its tones into petition. Now apparently diverse views lying so close together cannot have seemed contradictory to the utterer, and there is no explanation which does justice to these two sides of Christ's consciousness, except that He is God manifest in the flesh, who prays in His Manhood and hears prayer in His Divinity. The bare humanistic view which emphasizes such utterances as these of my text does not know what to do with the other ones. 2. His intercession is the great hope of the Christian heart. The High Priest passes within the veil, bearing in His hand the offering, and by reason of that offering, and of His powerful presence before the mercy-seat, all the spiritual gifts which redeem and regenerate and sanctify humanity are for ever coming forth. Note—(1) Christ's quiet assumption that all through the ages He knows, at the moment of their being done, His servants' deeds. (2) He puts the Father's act in pledge to us, and assures us that His prayer brings ever its answer. "Father! I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me." How far beyond the warrantable language of man! And how impossible for a fisherman of Bethsaida to imagine that strange blending of submission and of authority which speaks in such words. (3) That which puts in motion Christ's intercessory activity is the obedience of a Christian man. If you obey He will pray, and the Father will send. So the reward of imperfect obedience is the larger measure given to us of that Divine Spirit by whose indwelling obedience becomes possible, and self-surrender a joy and a power. II. THE ABIDING GIFT. 1. "Comforter" means not only One who administers sweet whispers of consolation. We have to look not merely for a vague influence, but a Divine Person who will be by our side on condition of our faith, love, and obedience, to be our Strength in all weakness, our Peace in all trouble, our Wisdom, Guide, Comforter and Cherisher, Righteousness, the Victor over our temptations, and the Companion and Sweetener of our solitude? The metaphors with which Scripture represents this great personal Influence are full of instruction and beauty. He comes as "The Fire," which melts, warms, cleanses, quickens; as the "rushing, mighty Wind," which bears health upon its wings, and sometimes breathes gently as an infant's breath, and sometimes sweeps with irresistible power; as the "Oil," gently flowing, lubricating, making every joint supple, nourishing; as the "Water of Life," refreshing, vitalizing, quickening all growth. He comes fluttering down as the Dove of God, the bird of peace that will brood upon our hearts. He is the Spirit of holiness, truth, wisdom, power, love, a sound mind, sonship, supplication, &c. 2. And this Strengthener and Advocate is to replace Christ and to carry on His work. "Another Comforter." All that that handful of men found of sweetness and shelter and assured guidance, and stay for their weakness, and companionship for their solitude, and a breast on which to rest their heads, and love in which to bathe their hearts, all these this Divine Spirit will be to each of us if we will. 3. This strong continuation of Christ's presence will be a permanent companion. He was comforting the disciples who were trembling at the thought of His departure. Here is the abiding Guest, that nothing but your own sin will ever cast out from your hearts. 4. And Christ tells us how this great Spirit will do His work. He is the "Spirit of Truth," not as if He brought new truth. To suppose that opens the door to all manner of fanaticism, but the truth, the revelation of which is all summed and finished in the person and work of Jesus Christ, is the weapon by which the Divine Spirit works all His conquests, the staff on which He makes us lean and be strong. III. THE BLIND WORLD. There is a tone of deep sadness in Christ's words. A savage stares at the sunshine and sees nothing. And worldly men, who are bound by this visible diurnal round, lack the organ that enables them to see that Divine Spirit moving round about them. Whether you have put your eyes out by fleshly lusts, or by intellectual self-sufficiency and conceit, you are stone blind to all the best realities of the universe; and if you look out upon the history of the Church, or upon the present condition of Christendom, and say, "I see no Divine Spirit working there"; well, then, the only thing that is to be said to you is, "Go to an oculist, your sight is bad. Perhaps there is solid land, as some of us see it, where you see only mist." IV. THE RECIPIENT DISCIPLES. Observe that the order of clauses is reversed. The world cannot receive, because it does not know. The disciple knows, because He receives. Possession and knowledge reciprocally interchange places, and may be regarded as cause and effect of one another. At

bottom they are one and the same thing. Knowledge is possession, and possession is the only knowledge. "He dwelleth with you now, and He shall be in you" hereafter. There is a better form of possession opening before them, which came at Pentecost, and has lasted ever since. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The gift of the Spirit and the gift of the Son compared* (text and chap. iii. 16):—It is a much overlooked, but nevertheless true, fact that the Divine love is as much displayed in the gift of the Spirit as in the gift of the Son. I. THE SPIRIT IS AS INTRINSICALLY GREAT AS THE SON. The same attributes, prerogatives, words belong to both. II. THE SPIRIT IS AS ACTIVELY ENGAGED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WORLD AS THE SON. Did He not strive with the old world? Did He not inspire the prophets, &c.? Has there ever been a soul regenerated without His agency? Has there ever been a conscience that He has not touched? In every solemn thought and expression is He not working? III. THE SPIRIT HAS BEEN AS WICKEDLY TREATED BY THE WORLD AS THE SON. The people of Judæa alone personally ill-treated Christ; the population of the whole world "do always resist the Spirit." About thirty-three years measured the period of the Saviour's personal ill-treatment, but that of the Spirit extends over well-nigh twice that number of centuries. IV. THE SPIRIT IS AS NECESSARY TO MANKIND AS THE SON. Two things are necessary to man's salvation: deliverance from the guilt, and from the power of sin. Christ was necessary for the first, the Spirit for the second. It is said that man wants nothing but sufficient evidence and the free use of his faculties to believe. 1. But there are circumstances antagonistic to faith which need to be removed. There is—(1) Moral habit. The habits contracted by most, before the gospel comes fairly under attention, are such that the whole tenor of its truths condemn, and when assailed marshal every power of the soul to their defence. (2) Servile fear. The man who feels that he is hastening to insolvency is frequently reluctant to go into his accounts. Nothing but sheer urgency will induce him to open his ledger. Is there not something similar to this in a man's soul in relation to the Bible. Often has conscience whispered that a fearful debt has been contracted, and that there is nothing to pay, and the Bible which confirms that is shunned. (3) Social influence. (4) Satanic agency. "The god of this world blindeth the eyes of men." 2. All this being true, the Spirit is necessary, in a sense, apart from truth, and apart from His dwelling in the truth. He is a personal power, using the truth and making it effective in the minds and hearts of men. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The parting promise*:—Among the many sources of trouble which disquieted the disciples we can distinguish four. And for each of these our Lord provides an adequate consolation. 1. The pang of separation from a beloved Master. For this His consolation is, that such separation shall not be for ever (vers. 2, 3). 2. The fear lest, in proclaiming their message, they should not be able to appeal to those "mighty signs and wonders" with which our Lord Himself had demonstrated the Divine origin of His mission. For this He gives them the assurance that they should even perform greater wonders (ver. 12). 3. That they should not have their Divine Master to fly to when they might require protection and provision. The answer to this was that our Lord would secure to them a perpetual access to God in prayer (ver. 13). 4. The painful consciousness that they should no longer have the wisdom of their Master to guide them in their proclamation of the gospel. For this our Lord provided in the text. Consider this blessing—I. IN ITS SOURCE: as it arises from the mediation of Christ Himself. "I will pray the Father." This does not mean that the Father is unwilling to bestow, but that in the order of the eternal counsels Christ must "ascend up on high" to "receive gifts for men." Large and blessed as were the results of our Lord's personal ministry, yet all the blessings which attend the promulgation of the gospel spring directly from the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, the result of Christ's intercession. II. IN ITS EFFICACY: as able to impart a consolation equal to that of Christ Himself. Large and dreary must have been the void created by Christ's departure. But He would not go away until He had provided "another Comforter." "I will send One to you, who shall achieve for you mightier, more abundant, more lasting benefits. I will send that blessed Spirit, whose office shall be to seal and to bind upon your souls all those comforting promises which you have heard from Me; who shall recall all My discourses to you, and enable you to pour out your prayers to God by reason of His 'groanings which cannot be uttered.'" III. IN HIS PARTICULAR OFFICE OF SPIRITUAL ILLUMINATION we are to have "the Spirit of Truth"—1. To instruct us in all points of doctrine. It is the office of the Spirit to take of the things of Christ and to show them to the soul; to reveal the mysteries of redemption. Thus we see that this office of the

Spirit must be a great comfort to those destitute of human learning. Having One to "guide into all truth," the poor and the wayfaring have the assurance that the whole mind of God shall be made plain to them, as much as to the greatest genius that ever tenanted the soul of man. 2. To direct us in all the practical concerns of life. "He shall teach you all things." IV. IN ITS EXCLUSIVENESS: as applying to all true believers. Christ does not say, "Whom the Lord will not give"; but, "Whom the world cannot receive." Why cannot the world receive Him? "Because it seeth Him not." Why does not the world see the Spirit? Is it from deficiency of evidence? No, but because they will not see. They close the shutter, and complain of darkness. Every worldly man is permitted to witness the daily operations of God's Spirit in the world. Let him look abroad and see the transforming power of religion, the revivals in many Christian Churches, the changed habits of many families, and of many souls, brought under the power of God's Spirit. Seeth it not!—might he not as well say that he seeth not the wind? He sees the ocean roused into tempest, &c.; will he tell us he cannot see the wind? V. IN ITS PERMANENCE. He is not a stranger to visit; He is not a traveller, to sojourn for a season; but He is a friend, to abide and dwell. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The Paraclete*:—The etymological meaning of the word is, "One called to be beside another." The word is used in classical Greek, and a word of similar etymology, from which our word "advocate" is derived, is used in classical Latin to denote a person who patronises another in a judicial cause, and who appears in support of him. It was the custom, before the ancient tribunals, for the parties to appear in court, attended by one or more of their most powerful and influential friends, who were called "paracletes"—the Greek—or "advocates"—the Latin term. They were not advocates in our sense of the term—feed counsel; they were persons who, prompted by affection, were disposed to stand by their friend; and persons in whose knowledge, wisdom, and truth the individual having the cause had confidence. These paracletes, or advocates, gave their friends—"prospelates," or "clients," as they were called—the advantages of their character and station in society, and the aid of their counsel. They stood by them in the court, giving them advice, and speaking in their behalf when it was necessary. Jesus had been the Paraclete of His disciples while He was with them. He had made their cause His own. He had taught them how to manage their cause with God. He had taught them to pray; and He had prayed for them. He had taught them how to manage their cause with the wicked one; bidding them watch and pray, lest they should enter into temptation; and He had prayed for them, that their faith should not fail. When the scribes and Pharisees attacked them, He was ever ready to defend them. In the great cause which was at once His and theirs He was their great helper. He instructed them what to say, and how to act. He gave them miraculous powers, and taugbt them how to use them. Thus He had been their patron—their paraclete. And He was not to cease to be so; He was, in His Father's house of many mansions, "ever living to interpose in their behalf" (1 John ii. 1; Heb. vii. 25). But He was to cease to be their Paraclete on earth; and therefore, knowing how much they needed such a patron and adviser, and monitor and helper, He says, "I will pray to the Father, and He will send you another Paraclete." "Instead of losing, you are to gain by My removal." They had, in becoming His disciples, identified themselves with His cause. They stood pledged to establish the right which their Master's principles had to be universally embraced and submitted to. And all the resources of Judaism and Paganism, all the subtility of philosophy, all the seductions of idolatry, all the power of kingdoms and empires, all the craft, and activity, and energy of hell, were against them. And what were they? poor, unlearned, obscure men? Truly, they needed a powerful patron, a wise adviser. And such a paraclete was He whom the Saviour promises. He cannot want power, through whose plastic influence the world was formed; He cannot want wisdom, who "searches all things, even the deep things of God"; and we know how He guided them, and enabled them to bring to a triumphant issue their mighty litigation. He filled their minds with the pure light of Divine truth, and their hearts with the holy fire of Divine love, and He poured grace and power into their lips; and when brought before counsels and synagogues, and governors, and kings, He gave them a force of reason and a power of eloquence that could not be withstood. "They spake with tongues, as He gave them utterance," and proclaimed the mysteries of the kingdom, "not in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Holy Ghost." (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *The Paraclete*:—It means one who calls us to his side, as a father does his child when he has some special thing

to say. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *The Paraclete*:—I. How the Spirit of God is the Paraclete. 1. The Holy Spirit is to be to us all that Jesus was to His disciples. What a valiant leader is to an army, the shepherd to the sheep, Jesus Christ was to His people. As the Orientals say of the palm-tree, that every fragment of it is of use, and there is scarcely any domestic arrangement into which the palm-tree in some form or other does not enter, even so Jesus Christ is good for everything to His people, and there is nothing that they have to do or feel or know but Jesus Christ enters into it. What would that little company have been without their Lord? Now, all that Jesus was, the Spirit of God is now. If there be any power in the Church, any light in her instruction, life in her ministry, glory gotten to God, good wrought among men, it is entirely because the Holy Spirit is still with her. And we shall do well to treat the Holy Spirit as we would have treated Christ. Our Lord's disciples told Him their troubles; we must trust the Comforter with ours. Whenever they felt baffled by the adversary, they fell back upon their Leader's power; so must we call in the aid of the Holy Spirit. When they needed guidance, they sought direction from Jesus; we also must seek and abide by the Spirit's leadings. When, knowing what to do, they felt themselves weak, they waited upon their Master for strength; and so must we upon the Spirit of all grace. 2. The Holy Spirit comforts by His presence and indwelling (ver. 17). 3. He comforts us by His teaching (ver. 26). We can, so far as the letter goes, learn from the Scriptures the words of Jesus for ourselves; but to understand them is the gift of the Spirit of God. What comfort is there equal to the words of Jesus, "the consolation of Israel," when they are really understood? 4. Through the Holy Spirit we obtain peace (ver. 27). He who is taught of God naturally enjoys peace, for if I be taught that my sins were laid on Jesus, and the chastisement of my peace was upon Him, how can I help having peace? 5. The Holy Spirit, according to chap. xvi. 13, guides us into all truth, which is more than teaching us all truth. There are caverns full of sparkling stalactites. Now, it is a good thing, when you are travelling, to be taught where each of these caverns is—that is teaching you truth; but it is a better thing when the guide, with his flaming torch, conducts you down into the great subterranean chambers, while ten thousand crystals, like stars, vieing in colour with the rainbow, flash their beams upon you. So the Spirit of God will convince you that such and such a teaching is truth, and that is very much to know; but when he leads you into it, so that you experimentally know it, taste it, and feel it, oh, then you are admitted to the innermost cave of jewels, where "the diamond lights up the secret mine." A great many Christians never get *into* the truth. They sit on the outside of it, but do not enter in. 6. The Spirit (chap. xvi. 14) glorifies Christ by "taking of the things of Christ and showing them to us." Could infinite wisdom select a sweeter topic for a disconsolate heart than "the things of Christ"? You may bring me the things of Moses and of David, of Solomon and of Daniel, but what are they to me compared with the things of Christ? II. The nature of the Holy Spirit's comfort. 1. He never dissociates His comfort from character (see ver. 15). The Spirit of God never comforts a man *in* his sin. See what sin it is that makes you sorrow—obey, and ye shall be comforted. 2. He does not aim at working mere comfort by itself and alone. He does not comfort us as a fond mother who does not teach the child anything, nor cleanse its body or purify its heart in order to comfort it, but who neglects these to please the little one; but the Holy Spirit never acts so unwisely. When a man is feeling pain he is very desirous that the surgeon should administer some drug which will stop the unpleasant sensation immediately; yet the surgeon refuses to do anything of the kind, but endeavours to remove the cause of the evil, which lies far lower than the pain. Do not expect to get comfort by merely running to sweet texts or listening to pleasing preachers, but expect to find comfort through the holy, reproving, humbling, strengthening, sanctifying processes which are the operation of the Divine Paraclete. 3. His comfort is not founded upon concealment. Some have obtained consolation by conveniently forgetting troublesome truth. Now, the Holy Spirit lays the whole truth open before us; therefore our consolation is not of fools, but of wise men; peace, which age and experience will not invalidate, but which both these will deepen, causing it to grow with our growth and strengthen with our strength. 4. It is a comfort always in connection with Jesus. 5. It is comfort which is always available. It does not depend upon health, strength, wealth, position, or friendship; the Holy Spirit comforts us through the truth, and the truth does not change; through Jesus, and He is "yea and amen"; therefore our comforts may be quite as lively when we are dying as when we are in

vigorous health, when the purse is empty, and the cruse of oil low, as when all worldly store and cheer abound to us. III. SOME OBSERVATIONS UPON THE WHOLE SUBJECT. 1. To the believer—(1) Honour the Spirit of God as you would honour Jesus Christ if He were present. 2. Never impute the vain imaginings of your fancy to Him. 3. In all your learning ask Him to teach you, in all your suffering ask Him to sustain you, in all your teaching ask Him to give you the right words, in all your witness-bearing ask Him to give you constant wisdom, and in all service depend upon Him for His help. Believingly reckon upon the Holy Spirit. 4. To the unconverted—if thou art ever to be saved, the Holy Spirit is essential to thee. Except thou be born again from above, thou canst never see the kingdom of God, much less enter it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Another Comforter*:—I. "THERE IS A COMFORTER." 1. So our high festival of the Holy Ghost comes round, and meets the wants which the year has been accumulating. Just as Good Friday came and met another year's guilt, Whit-Sunday comes to meet another year's grief. Some have wept alone, and have had no earthly solace. Some have had comforters; but their well-intentioned comfortings mocked you. Or, the human comforting was very precious and very true, and you know what that word "comforter" means; but here is that which exceeds it all, as the fountain exceeds one of its own smallest drops—"a Comforter." 2. Christ said, "Another Comforter." Who is it? The Father? Yes; for He is "the God of all comfort." The Son? Yes; "I will not leave you comfortless." Then, a Trinity of Comforters. Is that the way we travel to "God is love"? Through a Comforter I ask a Comforter to send a Comforter. Or more truly, two Comforters, of themselves, send a Comforter. You are a deep mourner. But see how yon are encircled. And can any sorrow outreach that comforting? II. THE MODE OF HIS COMING. 1. It is the comforting of a Spirit. Therefore He mingles with our spirit. He does not need that there should pass any actual words. Every one who has ever passed through very deep sorrow will appreciate this. There are times when all language is poor and rude. How often have we longed that our minds could throw themselves into another's mind without speaking. The Holy Ghost does that. 2. And what power there is in that thought, that He is the *Holy* Ghost! It wants holiness to deal with a wounded mind. Nothing but what is very holy ought ever to come near sorrow. 3. Still, the Spirit uses instruments, and almost always the Word. It is not always a promise. Sometimes it is a doctrine, whose grandeur fills, and raises, and assures the Spirit. Sometimes it is a command, and the comfort is the sense of duty. The Comforter never forgets that He is the Sanctifier, and the Sanctifier never forgets that He is the Comforter. Therefore, if you would be comforted, obey the impulse of the Spirit, and go and be much with your Bible, and be jealous that the first thing you seek is holiness. 4. He does not make you forget, but He draws happiness out of the unhappiness; He makes the subject of your tears the element of your smile; He does not take away the cloud, but He makes a rainbow of the shower; the pain does not go, but gradually the pain has so much of Christ in it that you scarcely wish to part with it. 5. He always displays Christ—makes you find what you want, not in man, but in Christ. If the thought which is presented to your mind does not draw you nearer to Christ—if you are not led to do something for Christ's sake—it is not the true Comforter who has been speaking to you. Jesus is the balm of life, and the comfort of the Spirit is the revealing of Christ. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Another Comforter*:—The Divine Spirit is—I. A HOLY COMFORTER. There can be no comfort apart from goodness. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." His name indicates His work. By Him the soul is regenerated. Christians are "elect through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience." II. AN INSTRUCTIVE COMFORTER. By His inspiration all Holy Scripture was given for our learning. Not by methods opposed to or ignoring our intellectual nature; not by mere excitement of the emotions; but by conveying truth to the mind, and enabling us to understand and feel it, the Holy Spirit acts as "another Comforter." By His help we believe, and then, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God," and enjoy that "peace which passeth all understanding." III. A PERSUASIVE COMFORTER. By revealing Jesus to the soul the Holy Spirit produces that love which is the strongest motive to holiness, and which is the fulfilling of the law. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." And "the love of Christ constraineth us to live not to ourselves, but to Him who died for us and rose again." The Comforter, as a faithful guide, in places of difficulty takes the traveller by the hand, and in addition to words of counsel, restrains him when he would step into danger, and kindly compels him to proceed when through

fear or thoughtlessness he hesitates and may be overtaken by storm or darkness. IV. A STRENGTHENING COMFORTER. He "helpeth our infirmities." He comes to our succour when we are too heavily burdened, and lightens the weight or gives us strength to bear it. We are "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." The result of such strengthening is Christ "dwelling in our hearts by faith," the being "rooted and grounded in love," "knowing the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," and being "filled with all the fulness of God." And what consolation can surpass that which must result from such strengthening! Especially are we taught to expect this help in prayer (Rom. viii. 26). He helps us to obtain comfort by teaching us what to pray for, by enabling us to pray aright, by overcoming the doubts which hinder us in the exercise, by creating within us earnest longings after God, by exciting in us desires which we may be unable to express in words, but which bring down the refreshing showers upon the mown grass, and cause us to say, "I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplication." V. AN ASSURING COMFORTER. What consolation can be greater than to know that Jesus is our Saviour and that we are His friends, and that through Him we can look upward and with confidence say, "*My* God! *my* Father!" (Rom. viii. 14–16). VI. A HOPE-INSPIRING COMFORTER. We "abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. viii. 17–19). Practical lessons: 1. Let us regard the Holy Spirit, not with dread, but with loving confidence. 2. Let our actions respond to His methods of help. Does He comfort by teaching? let us be diligent learners; by persuasion? let us yield to His influence; by guiding? let us follow; by promoting our holiness? let us strive against sin; by helping us to know our high vocation? let us "give diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." 3. Let all be encouraged to seek His help, for "If ye, being evil," &c. (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *Another Comforter*:—I. THE BEING SPOKEN OF. 1. Spiritual (ver. 17). 2. Personal. Not a mere influence or energy, as according to the Monarchians, Patripassians, Unitarians, but a Person as truly as Christ was. That Christ taught this is apparent from—(1) The use of the personal pronoun (ver. 26; chap. xv. 26). (2) The names given Him. 3. Divine. Christ could not be represented by or commit the interests of His Church to a creature. 4. Distinct, as against Sabellians and Swedenborgians. "Another." II. THE RELATION IN WHICH HE STANDS—1. To the Father. (1) Ontologically: one with Him, equal in being, wisdom, power, and glory, and yet proceeding from Him (chap. xv. 26). (2) Historically. He is sent (ver. 26) and given (ver. 16) by the Father. 2. To the Son. (1) Essentially the Son's as the Father's equal, He is nevertheless—(2) Historically exhibited as sent forth by the Father at the Son's intercession. 3. To the Truth. Spirit of Truth may signify the Spirit whose essence is the Truth, whose operations concern the Truth, whose office it is to testify of Him who is the Truth (chap. xv. 26), and to guide into all the Truth (chap. xvi. 13). 4. To the disciples. A presence—(1) Inward; not with and by, but in them (1 Cor. iii. 16). (2) Permanent; not temporary, as Christ's had been. (3) Helpful (Matt. x. 20). 5. To the world (ver. 17; chap. xvi. 8). III. THE CONDITIONS OF RECEIVING HIM. 1. Loving obedience to Christ (ver. 15). 2. Believing recognition of the Spirit (ver. 17). The world had closed its eyes and steeled its heart against Him. Learn—1. That all a saint obtains on earth he owes to the Saviour's intercession (Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25). 2. That the highest gift a human spirit can receive is the Holy Ghost as a Divine Being, an all-sufficient Helper, a heavenly Teacher, an unchanging Friend. 3. That the world's unbelief of the Spirit is no proof that He does not exist. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Another Comforter*:—I. THE WORK OF CHRIST AS IMPLIED IN THE ALLUSION TO HIMSELF. Christ is a Comforter. 1. In the needs He came to meet. To have had no mission for the sorrowful would have been to neglect the most evident of the world's wants. 2. In the predictions concerning Him—"He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted," &c. 3. In the nature of His words and works. To alleviate pain, to console bereavement, to meet doubt, to lighten death, He set Himself with all the absorbing interest of a master passion. II. THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT RESEMBLES THAT OF CHRIST. The life of Jesus is an index of the work of "the Comforter." 1. What we read of Jesus doing as a consoler, we read also of the Holy Spirit doing. 2. What men saw Jesus doing in Judæa, we may see and feel is being done by the Spirit now. As Christ led, inspired, soothed, and elevated human hearts, so the Spirit will ever do. III. THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT TRANSCENDS THE SIMILAR WORK OF CHRIST. 1. In its permanence. Jesus Christ "went away." His stay was only for "a little while." But the Spirit abides "for ever." 2. In its

universality. Jesus was only known to the comparative few who were around Him. But on every shore, and under every sky, the Spirit dwells with men. 3. In its nearness. Those who came nearest to Christ but kissed His feet or lay in His bosom. This is distant in comparison with the Spirit's indwelling. (*V. R. Thomas.*) *The Comforter*:—I. OUR NEED OF A COMFORTER. We live in a world of sorrow and suffering. II. IS THERE A REMEDY? God is love; and it is impossible that He should intend His creatures to sink under such a burden. 1. Shall we seek for it in the influences of nature? 2. Shall we seek for it in our fellow-men? Many seem to think so. 3. It may be said, indeed, that there is no need, even if we feel that all these earthly stays and solaces are insufficient, to think of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter. We have "consolation in Christ," and we need no other. We need a present Comforter to make them efficacious. III. HOW, THEN, DOES THE HOLY GHOST COMFORT US? When we first approach the consideration of the work of the Comforter, we meet with certain views of that work which seem to be the reverse of comforting. How can He who convinces us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, be a Comforter to us who are sinners? The friend who is found to be the truest and most trustworthy comforter is not he who whispers merely pleasant things in our ears; but he who tells us the truth, who, by telling us the truth, prepares us to understand what is wrong with us and to seek for a remedy. And how does He administer to the necessities which He thus makes apparent? 1. By revealing the fulness and sufficiency of Christ for all our spiritual wants. We say the work of comfort must begin here; for it is plain that, unless there be a supply for those deepest wants of our nature, we can have no real comfort or happiness. How, for instance, can a man be happy, or what kind of comfort can he enjoy, while he is laden with the burden of unforgiven sin? 2. By giving grace and strength in temptation. 3. And as it is in our spiritual trials, so also He comforts us in the ordinary troubles of life. (*W. R. Clark.*) *Another Comforter*:—Christ Himself was a Comforter, a true Barnabas, a brother born for adversity. His disciples found Him such. I. The Spirit is an INDWELLING Comforter. "Dwelleth with . . . shall be in you." Most of our comforts are external, outside of us. Our souls are empty, weak, unsatisfied; and we need to look outward for strength and consolation. Even Christ's bodily presence was without, and sometimes He and His disciples were separated from each other. But the Holy Ghost is *in* you; He goes where you go; He dwells with you; He makes your bodies temples of the Holy Ghost; He makes your souls wells of living water; He is the glory in the midst, in the heart, of each of you. II. The Spirit is an ABIDING Comforter (ver. 16). Change is written upon all things here. Health and strength fail, friends die, riches fly away. Even Christ, as to His bodily presence, was only a sojourner on earth. But the Spirit abides; He will never leave the soul of which He has taken saving possession. III. The Spirit is an UNWORLDLY Comforter (ver. 17). He is spirit, and so the world cannot see Him, cannot handle Him. Even if He could become visible and tangible, the world would neither know Him nor receive Him. The world can have no sympathy with Him, for He does not speak of earthly things; it is not with them that He seeks to comfort sorrowful, longing souls. If He spoke of earthly things, He could not be a Comforter to God's poor, humbled, broken, wearied ones. The true believer has left all for Christ, has sold all to get the treasure, and now nothing but Christ can satisfy him. And so the Holy Ghost, when He wishes to comfort, speaks of Christ (chap. xv. 26; xvi. 14). IV. The Spirit is an EFFECTUAL Teacher (ver. 26). Christ was a Teacher; He was always at work, in public and private. (*John Milne.*) *The Comforter*:—I. THE OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT. This term signifies to call to one's self. A person is in distress on account of ignorance, and he calls to him a learned person; a person ignorant in the law, who wants to appear in a court of justice, calls a person learned in the law; a person who is in distress on account of any disease calls a physician. So the Holy Spirit. In the season of distress He comes to us at our call. The Holy Spirit performs this office—1. By the attestation of pardon. 2. By the production of a new and holy nature. 3. By maturing the Christian character. 4. By the assistance He affords in devotional exercises. 5. By fortifying the mind against the fear of death. II. THE PERIOD OF HIS CONTINUANCE. His continued residence —1. Constitutes the great distinction and difference between the Church and the world (ver. 17). 2. Gives efficiency and success to the means of grace. 3. Is an assurance of the ultimate triumph of the Church. III. THE MODE OF HIS ATTAINING THIS OFFICE. We are indebted to Jesus Christ for the gift of the Holy Ghost, because—1. It is the reward of His sufferings. 2. The reward of His intercession.

Therefore—3. We have a pledge and an assurance that Christ will pray the Father. (*T. Lessey.*) *Comfort by the support of the indwelling Spirit:*—If you thoroughly exhaust a vessel of the air it contains, the pressure of the air outside will break that vessel into perhaps millions of pieces, because there is not a sufficiency of air within to resist and counteract the weight of the atmosphere from without. A person who is exercised by severe affliction, and who does not experience the Divine comforts and supports in his soul, resembles the exhausted receiver above described; and it is no wonder if he yields, and is broken to shivers, under the weight of God's providential hand. But affliction to one who is sustained by the inward presence of the Holy Ghost resembles the aerial pressure on the outer surface of an unexhausted vessel. There is that within which supports it and preserves it from being destroyed by the incumbent pressure from without. (*T. H. Leary, D.C.L.*) *The two paracletes:*—Their mutual and distinctive relation to the work of redemption, to the life of believers, and to the service of the Church. I. WHAT DOES THE WORD "PARACLETE" MEAN? Nearly all the ancient interpreters render it comforter or consoler. This accords with one use of it and its related words in both the Old Testament and the New. It does not cover the whole ground, since the Holy Ghost not only comforts, but does a great deal more than that. In some cases the word is equivalent to master, teacher, interpreter. In other cases it means a pleader or advocate—one engaged to take up a cause and to carry it through. Hence the word comes to mean—one by whose grace and love the entire case and cause of men are undertaken: who will soothe, comfort, advocate, plead, teach, interpret—yea, who will stand by us and render any needed aid whatever! For this reason the word "advocate" is, like the word "comforter," too restricted. We want a word of wider significance than either. The word helper is the best that we can find. 1. A helper—a large and beautiful word, which, in the fulness of its meaning as here used, nought but the experience of God's love can unfold to us. 2. A Divine Helper. And we have two Divine Helpers, both working together to make the help complete. But who are they who have causes in hand that need such help? Manifold and complex is our need. We want help in every form. As sinners, we want such help as One can give who has a right to say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." As penitents, we want One who can grant us access to the Father. As learners, we want One who can take of the things of God and show them to us. As suppliants, we want One who can receive and answer our requests. As believers, we want One who can lead, sustain, and inspire. As confessors of Christ and ambassadors for Him, we need One who can convict men of sin, and who can speed our words directly to their hearts. Strong, constant, varied help do we want. II. Then let us look at OUR TWO HELPERS AND SEE HOW THEY COMPLETE EACH OTHER'S WORK. 1. One Helper is in heaven, is a link joining on heaven to earth; the other Helper is on earth, as a link uniting earth to heaven. Hence one Helper remains *for* us above; the other remains *in* us below. 2. The help of the Son is by the appointment of the Father; the help of the Spirit is through the ministration of the Son. 3. By the help of the one Helper we have a great sacrifice *for* sin; by the work of the other Helper men are convicted *of* sin. 4. Hence another and not less striking correspondence appears. The Lord Jesus Christ presents Himself *to* us as the object of faith; the Holy Ghost, working *within* us, enters into the region of an inward experience, and enables us by the power of a spiritual intuition to verify what we believe. 5. Further: In every detail of Christian truth and life these two Divine Helpers supplement and complete each other's work. Christ reveals the Father to us; the Holy Ghost creates the spirit of adoption in us, so that we cry, Abba, Father. Christ gives us, when we believe, the right of being sons of God; the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that such we are. Christ is in Himself the truth; the Holy Ghost gives us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. Christ is the object in whom we rejoice, but the joy itself is imparted by the Holy Ghost. 6. One Helper intercedes *with* the Father; the other Helper intercedes *in* the children. In one case the scriptural expressions are, "We have an Advocate with the Father"; "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." In the other case, "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." 7. But we must not omit to give distinctness to the thought of the advocacy of our two Helpers. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Advocate, Pleader, and Defender of our cause above; the Holy Ghost is the Advocate, Pleader, and Defender of our cause below. Christ above, that sin may not bar us from the throne; the Spirit below, that the world may not put us to shame. 8. One Helper is graciously preparing a place for us; the other Helper

is engaged in preparing us for the place. III. In view of the combined work of these two Divine Helpers, we can see THE COMPLETENESS OF REDEMPTION'S PLAN. Had our Redeemer wrought alone, His work had been unappreciated by man; but let another Helper come, creating men anew, convicting, regenerating, enlightening, educating, and training, then we see the Divine completeness of the Redeemer's mighty work, and learn how surely the Redeemer will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. On recognizing and laying hold of both these Helpers will depend our completeness as Christians. Our own piety and power *in* Christ are a prime condition of power *for* Christ. The degree to which the Spirit of God works by us surely depends on the measure in which He works in us. So also the efficiency of Church life depends on realizing and utilizing this double help. Not merely has soundness in faith to be guarded, but vigour of life has to be carefully watched. On this double help depends the efficiency of private members. It is also, and only, in the full use of this double help that the Christian ambassador is completely equipped. While we hold up Christ as the Light of the world, let us also equally extol the Holy Ghost as the Power of the Church. (*C. Clemance, D.D.*) **Even the Spirit of Truth.**—*The spirit of truth:*—I. THE NEED OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH. It was by a lie that evil gained entrance into the world. Satan is both a liar and a murderer. . . . Evil first introduced by means of a lie has been continually promulgated through the same instrumentality. Alas! the dominion of falsehood has been almost universally established!—false notions of God, of ourselves, of happiness; false estimates of good and evil; false dealings in the intercourse of life. Who is not conscious of these and other forms of it. It is amongst the most melancholy proofs of our fallen estate, that often, with children, the earliest exercise of the gift of speech is an endeavour at deceiving their parents. And as we grow up, it cannot be denied, that a rigid and unvarying adherence to truth is the most difficult of our duties. Hence the suspicion and mistrust between man and man. We admit, indeed, that a liar is held in general abhorrence. Men have naturally an admiration of courage in whatever way displayed; and therefore they despise a liar as they do the poltroon. And over and above the cowardice which is manifested by a lie, there is the injury which is done to society. Therefore, it may be little more than a consciousness that its own permanence is identified with adherence to truth, which induces society to be so vehement in its rebuke of a lie. But even if the contempt in which a liar is held might be referred to the very highest principles, whatever indignation at falsehood is excited, it exists in a degree which proves this indignation but little efficacious in destroying its empire. There is not the land where false principles are not wielding an influence which should belong only to true. There is not a family within whose circle there is no admiration for false theories in regard of duty and intereet. There is not a heart so thoroughly hallowed into a sanctuary for truth that it is always closed against the intrusion of false opinions and false expectations. The whole creation groaneth for the establishment of truth. II. HOW IN HIS RESIDENCE WITH THE CHURCH THE HOLY GHOST HAS VERIFIED THIS TITLE. 1. It is curious and interesting to observe how truth of every kind has advanced hand in hand with religion. Not, indeed, that it was the office of the Holy Ghost to instruct the world in natural philosophy. He came to unfold redemption, and so to strengthen the human understanding, that it might be able to bear the vast truths of the Mediatorial work. But, nevertheless, it did come to pass—that the understanding, so strengthened, found itself strengthened also to investigate creation. The Christian era has been distinguished by a rapid advance made in every branch of science; by the emancipation of mind from a thousand trammels; by the discovery of truths which seemed to lie beyond the scope of human intelligence. In the dark ages when Christianity was almost buried beneath superstition, ignorance of every kind oppressed the earth; but when better days dawned; science revived and the arts again flourished. And besides this, there is the same strict alliance between all kinds of truth as between all kinds of falsehood. And it ought not therefore to excite surprise that science and Christianity should have marched side by side. The "rushing mighty wind," which swept superstition before it, swept also much of the cloud which had rested on natural things. In clearing the moral firmament, that the "Sun of Righteousness" might be discovered, it took the mist from the material heavens. 2. But, at the same time, the great business on which the Holy Ghost came was the instructing the world in the mysteries of redemption—(1) The Holy Ghost was "the Spirit of truth" to the apostles. We do not know that it is more amazing to hear so soon as the Spirit had descended, the twelve speaking fluently all the languages of the earth, than the

preacher expounding to the multitude the blessed gospel of Christ. He made good this character by enabling them to preach the truth: and also by enabling them to write the truth. We know too well the treachery of the memory, and might reasonably say, that where the writing had been so long deferred, the narrative would be imperfect. But this is our security—the fact that it was "the Spirit of Truth" which guided the evangelists. (2) If the Spirit were thus "the Spirit of Truth" in regard of apostles, is He not still such in regard of every real Christian? There is naturally gross darkness on the mind, and the most gifted of our race is unable to discern things so long as he is left to his unassisted powers. Mental as well as moral power has been put out of joint through apostacy; the affections strongly biassed towards evil exert a disastrous power over the will, and the will does the same with the understanding. And then the understanding will often reject the clearest evidence and fail to comprehend the simplest truth. It is the office of this Divine person to rectify the disorder of the moral and mental constitution, and thus to communicate that sort of inner light in which alone can be discerned the great truths of religion. And when a man has once submitted himself to the teaching of the Holy Ghost, "the Spirit of Truth," guides him into truth, and leads him from one stage to another of knowledge, showing him, successively, the mysteries of redemption, and never allowing him to open the Bible without finding fresh matter for thought and for thankfulness. There remains much, very much, for this Spirit to teach. But observe, our Lord says—"He shall abide with you for ever." But we are now only in the infancy of being. No marvel then if we master only the rudiments of truth. And if this Spirit is to abide with us "for ever," why may we not expect the completion of what is thus commenced? He has all Eternity to teach in. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The Spirit of Truth:*—The Holy Ghost is the living, personal, Divine unity of complete revelation, and, as such, the Spirit of Truth. He is the Spirit of Truth inasmuch as He makes objective truth subjective in believers, in order to a knowledge of the truth. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *The function of the Spirit of Truth in relation to revealed truth:*—When a telescope is directed to some distant landscape, it enables us to see what we could not otherwise have seen; but it does not enable us to see anything which has not a real existence in the prospect before us. The natural eye saw nothing but blue land stretching along the distant horizon. By the aid of the glass, there bursts upon it a charming variety of fields, and woods, and spires, and villages. And so of the Spirit. He does not add a single truth or character to the book of Revelation. He enables the spiritual man to see what the natural man cannot see; but the spectacle which he lays open is uniform and immutable. It is the Word of God which is ever the same; and he whom the Spirit of Truth has enabled to look to the Bible with a clear and affecting discernment, sees no phantom passing before him; but amid all the visionary extravagance with which he is charged, can for every article of his faith, and every duty of his practice, makes his triumphal appeal to the law and to the testimony. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Willingness to know the truth a condition of the reception of the truth:*—A celebrated French beauty was smitten with small-pox, and as she became convalescent, her friends, fearing the consequences, would not tell her of her disfigurement. But one day, not getting an answer to her questions, she called for a mirror, and when she saw the calamitous fact that her beauty was gone, in a fit of passion, smashed the glass. It had told her the truth about herself. So the Spirit of Truth tells us about ourselves; and some people, rather than believe His witness, deny His existence. **Whom the world cannot receive.**—The world—that is, worldly men, minds full of worldliness—cannot receive, cannot see or know the Spirit, because He is wholly heavenly. As a mirror which is unclean cannot reflect clearly the image which is before it, so the heart that is impure, and which clings to the things of earth, cannot see with the eye of faith the Spirit of Truth, and so cannot receive Him. Worldliness receives Him not—(1) Because it does not and cannot see Him intellectually, which is the only mode by which it is accustomed to perceive anything that is not corporeal. (2) Because it does not see Him corporeally; for such a temper of mind receives only what it sees: sight and the other senses are the instruments of reception, not faith; and hence, since He cannot be apprehended by the senses, such men did not receive Him, and cannot love Him, for the knowledge which is here spoken of includes love. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) **But ye know Him.**—*The saint and the Spirit:*—The Holy Spirit, although the most active, potent, and real worker in the world, is not discerned by the mass of mankind, who are affected only by what they see, or hear, or feel. The vital distinction between

the man of God and the man of the world is this: the man of God knows the Holy Spirit, for He is with him and dwelleth in him; but the man of the world knows not the Holy Ghost. I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS KNOWN TO BELIEVERS THROUGH HIS OPERATIONS IN THEM AND UPON THEM. 1. We have seen the operations of the Holy Spirit in the Church at large—(1) It was the Holy Spirit who at the very first formed the Church; who called out the chosen ones, quickened them, made them living stones fit to be builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit; who binds these living stones together, for all Christian unity comes from Him as the Spirit of peace, the Holy Dove proceeding from the Father. (2) The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Church is as manifest to many of us as any other great fact can possibly be. Even when we have doubted whether we ourselves possessed the Spirit, we have been charmed to see his work in others. We have seen conversions which nothing but Omnipotence could have wrought; we have seen graces exemplified which unaided human nature could not have produced. 2. The works of the Holy Spirit within a regenerate man find an illustration in the work of the Holy Spirit upon the person of our Lord, our Covenant Head and Representative. (1) Christ was not born at Bethlehem without the Spirit of God, neither is He born in our hearts. (2) Although Christ was baptized by man with water, He was also baptized with the Holy Ghost; and it is only in the power of His Divine anointing that we can have power to minister in the Lord's house. (3) Then the power by which Christ wrought miracles, and preached, is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me," &c. Did the Master work in the power of the Spirit of God, and shall not the servants do so? (4) The resurrection of Christ is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. You are promised that the same power which "raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies." 3. If we know the Spirit of God at all, we shall know Him as having convinced us of sin. No one ever came to Christ until he felt his need of Him. 4. If you know the Holy Spirit, you will also know Him as the great revealer of Christ. 5. Since that, have we not often known the Spirit as our helper in prayer? 6. Then, when we rose from our knees, we opened the Scriptures, the Spirit of Truth acted as interpreter. He wrote the book, and therefore He understands it meaning. 7. You know not the Spirit unless you have often recognized Him as the great calmer and quieter of His people's minds when under distractions. 8. More especially is the Spirit known to believers as their sanctifier. II. THEY KNOW HIM BY HIS PERSONAL INDWELLING IN THEIR SOULS. The Holy Spirit gives us His operations and His influences for which we should be very grateful, but the greatest gift is Himself, which "dwelleth with you and shall be in you." This is—1. Wondrously condescending; 2. Singularly effective. There is no way of doing work well, except doing it yourself; and when the Master comes and gives personal attendance, it is sure to be done. 3. Delightfully encouraging, "If God actually dwells in me, then what may I not expect?" 4. Potently sanctifying. If God dwell in us, let us not defile these bodies. When Ignatius stood before the judges, they said, "You are called the God-bearer, Theophorus; what mean you by this?" He said, "God dwells in me." When the persecutor looked at him and said he blasphemed, he replied that the Holy Spirit dwelt in him. Ah! but Ignatius proved it. If you and I dare to say God dwells in us, we must prove it too; perhaps not by a cruel death, but by what is far more difficult—a holy life. III. WE SHALL KNOW HIM BETTER SOON. We shall be more instructed; and the instructed disciple knows the Master better than he who is in the A B C class. We shall be more fully sanctified, and the more pure we become, the more clearly shall we see the great Purifier. I do not know what we may be even here. We become warped and crippled by our small conceptions of the possible in grace. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.**—*The office of the Spirit*:—I. THE ASSURANCE OF A NEARER RELATION TO THE DIVINE BEING CONVEYED BY THIS PROMISE. The indwelling of the Spirit is declared to be a mere metaphor, as when we say of a philosopher, there is in him the soul of science; or of a poet, that he has the spirit of song. The disciples at this time needed comfort, they were about to lose the support of their Master's personal presence. What mockery to have been told that they should be so inspirited with truth as to compensate them abundantly for all their loss. A literal indwelling, then, being contended for, notice some of the included blessings. 1. It is a standing pledge of the Divine presence and protection. The Divine Spirit dwelling in us is God Himself coming back to that temple. He had dwelt in it once before; but this once living temple lost its purity, and in that same hour lost the presence of God. The rebuilding of this temple, the preparatory step for bringing back God to His forsaken

sanctuary, was the awful mystery of the Incarnation. By this one act the human nature became an honoured and noble thing. Through the power of the Spirit it had enshrined Godhead. The indwelling of the Spirit is an abiding pledge of restored and continuing confidence between God and man. 2. It is the vital principle of union betwixt Christ and His people. Our being made one in Christ is one of the great junction facts of the Gospel system. It connects the sinner with his hope, the elect with the covenant, and both originates and effects that vital relation to God which brings the faithful within the reach of the mediatorial designs and purposes. The Spirit initiates that union, for "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." He assures us of the union remaining unbroken, "Thereby we know that Christ abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us" (Rom. viii. 11). "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." II. THE PERMANENT INFLUENCE PROMISED AS IT BEARS UPON OUR HAPPINESS AND ADVANCEMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. 1. It assures to us a constant supply of enlightening and directing influences. "He will guide you into all truth." He enlarges the range of our spiritual knowledge, and reveals, as if by a new spiritual sense, the great mystery of godliness. 2. It influences the moral affections also. This imparted life makes the heart to burn, while it opens the understanding. 3. It gives to all our services a filial and loving character—"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage," &c. There is a service which is not happy. It may be sincere, and earnest, and costly, and self-denying; but it is the service not of a son, but of a bondsman. The Spirit in us changes constraint into cheerfulness and duty into happiness, and the restless activities of a self-devised worship into a calm repose and a commanded and accepted sacrifice. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The Spirit with you and in you:*—I. A MAN MAY HAVE THE DIVINE SPIRIT WITH HIM, BUT NOT IN HIM. The Divine Spirit was with the disciples in the person of Christ. Every man has the Spirit with him. 1. In the operations of nature. 2. In the revelations of the Bible. 3. In the events of history. 4. In the lives of all good men. II. IT IS A GREAT PRIVILEGE FOR A MAN TO HAVE THE SPIRIT OF GOD WITH HIM. We have one who is ready to—1. Guide; 2. Protect; 3. Strengthen; 4. Perfect us. III. IT IS A GREATER PRIVILEGE FOR A MAN TO HAVE THE DIVINE SPIRIT IN HIM. Christ had unfolded to His disciples an infinite system of truth, but it lay cold and dead in their memories. He deposited precious seed in the soil; but the soil lacked the warmth and sunshine that the Spirit of God alone could give. Compare the difference between the disciples before and after Pentecost. When the Spirit of God is in you you have spiritual—1. Life. 2. Satisfaction. 3. Power. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The indwelling of the Spirit:*—God is said to dwell in heaven; among the children of men; in Zion; among His people; in believers. The Spirit is said to dwell in His Church which is thus a temple of God, and in believers individually, who are severally His temple. It follows, then, that where the Spirit dwells His presence is indicated by certain specific effects. I. KNOWLEDGE. This is one of the chief ends for which He was promised. This knowledge includes correct intellectual convictions and spiritual discernment. To this are due orthodoxy, love of truth and adherence to it under all circumstances. To this source, also, we are indebted for the unity as well as the preservation of the faith. This is a ground of conviction beyond the reach of scepticism, and unassailable by infidelity. II. HOLINESS in all its forms. 1. Faith, confidence in God, in His word, promises, favours, &c. 2. Love—(1) To God. (2) To Christ. (3) To the brotherhood. (4) To all men. 3. Temperance. 4. Meekness. 5. Long suffering. III. HOPE, JOY, AND PEACE. The consolations of the Spirit which sustain the soul under all sorrow; whether from conviction of sin or from affliction. IV. ACTIVITY IN RESISTING SIN AND IN DOING GOOD. He is the source not only of inward spiritual life, but of outward acts of devotion and obedience to God. V. GUIDANCE. 1. By the Word. 2. By inward operation on the mind, guiding its thoughts, shaping its conclusions and exciting right feelings; not by impulse or any magic methods. Duties flowing from this doctrine—1. To cherish the conviction that we in a special sense belong to God. 2. To reverence and obey the admonitions of the indwelling Spirit. 3. To preserve our soul and body pure as the temple of the Holy Ghost. 4. A grateful sense of this unspeakable blessing and dignity. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *God in us:*—I. ALL THE CONDITIONS OF THE DIVINE LIFE IN MAN BASE THEMSELVES ULTIMATELY ON THE NECESSARY AND ETERNAL RELATIONS OF THE EVER-BLESSED GODHEAD, OF THE TRINITY IN UNITY. The gradualness of God's revelation of Himself enables us to trace out something of this mystery. 1. For many generations the revelation of the everlasting Father covered the canvas, and that form of awful majesty was shrouded everywhere in clouds and darkness. The utterance was, "I am the Almighty God;

walk before Me, and be thou perfect." 2. To this succeeded the revelation of the co-eternal Son. At first, wrapped up in the types and figures of the old law: then struggling like the sun through the mists of the morning, as by the chant of Psalms, and the voice of prophecy, the ever-brightening form was declared to the waiting soul of humanity; until the fulness of the time was come, and the eternal Son stood incarnate upon the earth. Humanity had now reached altogether a new stage; God was manifest in the flesh; yet still God was external to man. The brightness of the uncreated glory shone before his eyes, but his eyes were not quickened to receive it. 3. One mighty further step was yet to be reached, and it is with the promise of this that the Lord here upholds their hearts. The Paraclete "shall be in you." The external revelation was to be replaced by the internal. Accordingly, when the coming of the Holy Ghost was perfectly accomplished, all additions to the external revelation ceased. Miracles were but visible attestations of the outward kingdom passing into the inward, and one by one they expired as the inward kingdom was established. Even the external revelation of the heavenly mysteries soon ceased. The canon was closed. II. FROM THIS FOLLOWS THE PECULIAR CHARACTER OF OUR PROBATION. For though the Spirit of God works as a most free agent, quickening whom He will; yet does He work on humanity according to the law under which God has created it; not destroying its free agency, but, in the mystery of man's freedom, working with his spirit, and not by external force, overpowering its proper action. The energy of the Spirit's working is enlarged or restrained as man yields himself to it, or resists it. In the first preaching of the gospel this great distinction of the new dispensation was emphatically declared. "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, 'that the times of refreshing may come, from the presence of the Lord, and He shall send Jesus.'" This is—1. A promise to the whole Church. The stirring of the indwelling power was openly manifested, and through all times since the same law may be traced as pervading the Church's history. It does not set before us one equally prolific age, but times of utter coldness and weariness alternating with blessed seasons of refreshing. Ease, success, quietness, has often bred a deadly lethargy in the Church, and the Spirit seems to have left her; but when danger, or persecution, has brought her back to repentance, at once the Spirit stirred within her, and the times of refreshing were restored. This has been, all along its history, the distinctive criterion of the Church. No dead empire has ever lived again; no exhausted school of philosophy has ever revived; no sect has ever recovered again its early strength after falling into decrepitude. The Church of Christ alone has thus renewed her strength, and mounted up from her decay with wings as eagles, because in her only is this hidden presence of God the Holy Ghost, and therefore for her only these times of refreshing are possible. 2. The law of the life of separate souls. With what energy does it awake when the heart turns really to God. Who has not known hearts, which seemed dead, the mere slaves of selfishness, burnt out,—like exhausted volcanoes buried in their ashy scoriæ,—which have suddenly revived, under the breathing of the Spirit, and put forth again, like the earth in the blessed spring-time, the manifested glories of an irrepressible life? III. FROM THIS GREAT MYSTERY THERE FOLLOW SOME PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES. 1. As this is the characteristic of the dispensation of the Spirit, how do they lose the glory and the blessedness of life who do not know it in its fulness? What earthly joy can be compared with these Divine refreshings? How different a life is this from the cold, doubting, questioning, colourless life which the greater number of those who call themselves Christians are leading. What know they, alas! in life or in death, of this word of promise, "He shall be in you?" 2. This indwelling of God must, with all its unspeakable blessedness, be accompanied by correlative perils. So the word of God distinctly teaches us when it speaks of sin against the Holy Ghost as marked with such a peculiar malignity of charity, and leading to so terrible and hopeless an end. (1) For other sins are committed against God as external to the soul, these are committed against Him within us. (2) But beyond this. He who did not believe in the Son of Man, great as was his guilt, might under the power of the Holy Ghost be won to penitence; but he who blasphemes that Holy Spirit, on whose presence within us depends the faculty of seeing, destroys in his soul the very power of vision itself. He can never see the truth; he can never be won to repentance, and so he hath never forgiveness, neither in this life, nor in that which is to come. (3) Again, the progress of this deadly sin is from its peculiar character pre-eminently insidious. Every external act of wickedness has of necessity about it some note of warning. But the separate actings of

these sins against the Holy Spirit are so inward and secret, that men may pass through the whole series without any external sign awakening their alarm. (4) The end of such a course, and the secret history of that spiritual decay, may sometimes be read in those terrible cases of what seem to be the sudden falls into gross iniquity of those who have long stood upright. The evil has, we may be sure, been long festering within. There may, perhaps, be no very marked outward change in the conduct. It is but that they are colder than they were in all the religious life: that is, God the Holy Ghost has left them. Then some sudden gust of temptation falls suddenly upon them, and their utter failure under it reveals to light and day the fearful secret. Conclusion: With such capacities of ruin involved in the very blessedness of our regenerate life, surely the lesson of lessons is for us the need of perpetual watchfulness: of guarding jealously that secret indwelling of God within us which is our glory, but which we can make our destruction. (*Bp. S. Wilberforce.*)

Vers. 18, 19. **I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.**—*Not left comfortless:*—The word "comfortless" means "bereft." We have adopted the Greek word, and have gradually limited it to the severest kind of bereavement—orphanhood. But the promise, starting from one kind of bereavement, enlarges itself, and takes in all who from any cause want comfort. God does not say that you shall never be comfortless, but on the contrary, He implies that you shall be so. Nobody, however saintly, could say he was never comfortless, but he can say, "I was not left comfortless." And the length of the comfortless period depends upon the faith we have in Christ's coming to us. I. Let us confine our view to one kind of sorrow—BEREAVEMENT. This has in it—1. Change. One you loved, and with whom you were almost hourly in converse, has passed away. Everything is changed; nothing looks to us as it used to look in the sunshine, which seems as if it never would come back again. It is wonderful how one face gone, one voice silent, alters the whole world. 2. Separation. Then a gulf opens, which, however persons may talk about it, is then very wide. The grave is a wall of adamant to you—they may be conscious of no distance, but to you, oh, how very far off! 3. Loneliness. No wonder that the silence is oppressive. No matter how many you may have around you, or how kind, you are thrown back into your own thoughts which circle about one, and that one is gone, and it is a perfect solitude. 4. Fear: a painful apprehension of what the future is going to be. "How shall I live on? What shall I do without that love, that counsel?" II. FOR THESE FOUR WRETCHEDNESSES, CHRIST IS THE ONLY ANTIDOTE—"I will come to you." And mark, it is His presence, not His work, His Cross, His final Advent, but His living presence now. 1. With Him there is no shadow of a turning. It is the same voice which faith hears, and the same face which faith sees now, which you heard and saw in years long gone by. "I will never leave you." And the awful change which has passed over everything else only makes it stand out more comfortingly—His impossibility of change. 2. And with that felt, present, unchangeable Christ, both worlds are one. The Church in heaven and the Church on earth are the members, and all meet in that one Head, and in Him they are here. Where then is loneliness? He is a Brother by me, to whom I can tell everything, and He will answer me. I seem speaking to them because they are holding the very same converse within the veil. 3. The solitude of the soul, where He is, becomes peopled with the whole host of heaven. There is no sense of being alone when we realize that we are alone with Jesus. 4. And so the fear flies away. For what Christ is now, He will be always. And that presence is the pledge of a re-union. A little while, and it will be He, and they, and I, and we shall be together for ever. Conclusion: 1. Read a particular emphasis on the "I," that great word which God is so fond of. Whatever it be to you now, this gay world will leave you utterly "comfortless." Those whom to-day you are most fondly cherishing, and the thought of whose death you dare not admit to your own heart—if you have none but them, and no Christ in them, you will wake up some morning to such a cold vacancy, for that one will have gone, and will have left you "comfortless." Friends will come with their emptinesses, and they will go, and you will be as comfortless as when they came. Only He who could say, "I will come to you" as none other comes, as He came to Martha and Mary at Bethany; only He can say, "I will not leave you comfortless." 2. Read another emphasis on that "you." "I," Jesus seems to say, "I was left comfortless, but I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." 3. Of all the bereaved in the whole world,

there is none so bereft as that man of whatever happy circle he may be, who cannot look up to heaven, and say, "My Father." That man is an orphan indeed. 4. There is another. He has known what it is to feel God His Father, but it is gone Do you say, "It is I?" Then I am sure that at this moment Jesus is saying it to you—"I will not leave you an orphan," &c. For if there be a thing on the whole earth which Jesus will not have it is an orphaned heart. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Our Comforter*:—I. MAN NEEDS A COMFORTER. I do not now speak of men in the bulk, but in units. Wars, pestilences, strikes, and social evils trouble men, but besides these, each man in himself has trouble which none but God can soothe. Perhaps friendless poverty is the sorest trouble of existence. Returning along the road from Warrington, I heard a groan which made my heart shudder. Stooping to the hedge, I saw a woman and a little child in great distress. She was from Liverpool; her husband had come to Manchester seeking for work and had written saying he had been taken ill, and that as he could send no money, she must trust in God. Without a penny in her pocket, love for her husband gave her strength to walk to Manchester with her child in her arms. She inquired at his lodgings, but found he had been taken to the hospital. She then by asking at every corner arrived at the Manchester workhouse, and found that her husband was dead, and his remains had been placed in the grave the day before. Footsore, hungry, and friendless, she was sent away, and pawned her shawl to keep from dying in the street. Then she dragged herself to the road near Irlam and lay down under a hedge to groan and to die. But in the cottage of a poor farm labourer she found help and sympathy which caused her to live. Did God not hear, and hearing, did He not provide comfort? II. MEN VERY OFTEN SEEK ARTIFICIAL COMFORTERS. After the great deluge, men built the tower of Babel, hoping by that means to receive comfort in any similar calamity. And in these days men are building towers which they hope will save them from the deluge of trouble. Many people think that if they build up a tower of riches they will be happy. But the rich man is no happier than the poor one. I was once asked to visit a man who was said to be dying. Standing at his bedside and holding his hand in mine, I said, "Have you the joy of knowing that your sins are forgiven?" The man looked and replied, "Joy! joy! joy!" Taking his hand from mine he pushed it under the pillow and bringing out a bottle of brandy he held it with his trembling hand, saying, "This is my joy." Poor, miserable, drunkard! Most people before they become drunkards have had some sickness of mind or body preying upon them; but do not fly from your great trouble to drink. III. OUR FATHER HAS PROVIDED A COMFORTER FOR EVERY MAN. If you seek in the history of the past, what man would you select to be your comforter? I ask the philosophers if they would ask for Socrates above all others? I ask the deists if they would ask for Thomas Paine or Voltaire? Or would you ask for John Bunyan, or for Wesley or Whitefield? If you knew none better you might. Take the worst man in the world, or an unbeliever, and ask him, "If you were to select out of all men one who should be your bosom friend until you die, upon whom would you fix?" If he told his heart's truth, he would reply, "Jesus." 1. Jesus our Comforter is with us. My mother died in giving me life, and, of course, I have not the slightest remembrance of her. The only relic I had was a little piece of her silk dress, and this I preserved as my dearest treasure. Tossed about, and yearning for a love which was not to be had, I used to sit alone for hours, and long for, and pray to my mother. You may call it an insane fancy, but to me it was real and powerful and comforting. And I owe the success of my boyhood to the consciousness of her beloved presence. In the same way, Jesus communes with us. Jesus in Spirit is with you. 2. He comforts—(1) By showing that our Father loves us. Deep down in every human heart there is the instinct that God loves men. In great calamity men always cry to God. (2) By pointing us to the Cross. Look to the Cross of Jesus, and see the remedy which shall in time save all the world. (3) By inspiring us with hope. When a man is cast out of society, and swears in his despair, "I will now do all the evil I can and spite them," if a friend tap him on the shoulder, saying, "Brother, why despair of yourself? Come with me, and I will hold on to you until you are a better man," why, such language would be an inspiration! Jesus is the friend who does this to the despairing souls of men. (4) When we are heavily burdened. Paul was burdened. He had a "thorn in the flesh." But did God take it away? No; but He gave him grace to bear it. So Jesus comforts us when we are burdened by giving us strength to bear it. (5) He comforts us too by showing us God's purpose. He teaches us that all things work

together for good. (*W. Birch.*) *Soul orphanhood*—I. CONSISTS IN MORAL SEPARATION FROM GOD. 1. Not local, for God is everywhere, and no spirit can flee from His presence. 2. Not physical; for in God we live and move, &c. 3. But, morally, the unregenerate are ever distant from Him—alienated in sympathy, purpose and pursuit: "without God." The ungodly world is a world of orphans, without a father's fellowship and guidance. II. IS AN EVIL OF STUPENDOUS MAGNITUDE. 1. Orphanism, so far as human parentage is concerned, is a calamity, but this is a crime. The soul has broken away from its Father, not its Father from it. 2. Orphanism in the one case may have its loss supplied, but not in the other. Thank God, society in this age has loving hearts, and good homes for orphans. But nothing on earth can take the place of God in relation to a soul: such a soul is benighted, perishing, lost. III. IS REMOVED BY THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST. He brings the soul into a loving, blessed fellowship with God. The deep cry of humanity is the cry of an orphan for the Father. The response is the advent of Christ. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The absent present Christ*:—I. THE ABSENT CHRIST IS THE PRESENT CHRIST. "Orphans" is rather an unusual form in which to represent the relation between our Lord and His disciples. And so, possibly, our versions are accurate in giving the general idea of desolation. But, still, it is to be remembered that this whole conservation begins with "Little children"; and they would be like fatherless and motherless children in a cold world. And what is to hinder that? One thing only. "I come to you." Now, what is this "coming"? Our Lord says, not "I will," as a future, but "I come," or, "I am coming," as an immediately impending, or present, thing. There can be no reference to the final coming, because it would follow, that, until that period, all that love Him here are to wander about as orphans; and that can never be. 1. We have here a coming which is but the reverse side of His bodily absence. This is the heart of the consolation that, howsoever the "foolish senses" may have to speak of an absent Christ, we may rejoice in the certainty that He is with all those that love Him, and all the more because of the withdrawal of the earthly manifestation which has served its purpose. Note the manifest implication of absolute Divinity. "I come." "I am present with every single heart." That is equivalent to Omnipresence. I cannot but think that the average Christian life of this day wofully fails in the realization of this great truth, that we are never alone, but have Jesus Christ with each of us more closely, and with more Omnipotence of influence than they had who were nearest Him upon earth. If we really believed this, how all burdens and cares would be lightened, how all perplexities would begin to smooth themselves out, and how sorrows and joys and everything would be changed in their aspect. A present Christ is the Strength, the Righteousness, the Peace, the Joy, the Life of every Christian soul. 2. This coming of our Lord is identified with that of His Divine Spirit. He has been speaking of sending that "other Comforter," who is no gift wafted to us as from the other side of a gulf; but by reason of the unity of the Godhead, Christ and the Spirit whom He sends are, though separate, so indissolubly united that where the Spirit is, there is Christ, and where Christ is, there is the Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." 3. This present Christ is the only Remedy for the orphanhood of the world. We can understand how forlorn and terrified the disciples were, when they looked forward to the things that must come to them, without His presence. Therefore He cheers them with this assurance. (1) And the promise was fulfilled. How did that dispirited group ever pluck up courage to hold together after the Crucifixion at all? Why was it that they did not follow the example of John's disciples, and dissolve and disappear, and say, "The game is up." If it had not been that He came to them, Christianity would have been one more of the abortive sects forgotten in Judaism. But, as it is, the whole of the New Testament after Pentecost is aflame with the consciousness of a present Christ working amongst His people. (2) The same conviction you and I must have, if the world is not to be a desert and a dreary place for us. If you take away Christ the elder Brother, who alone reveals the Father, we are all orphans, who look up into an empty heaven and see nothing there. And is not life a desolation without Him? Hollow joys, roses whose thorns last long after the petals have dropped, real sorrow, shows and shams, bitternesses and disappointments—are not these our life, in so far as Christ has been driven out of it? II. THE UNSEEN CHRIST IS A SEEN CHRIST. 1. That "yet a little while" covers the whole space up to His ascension: and if there be any reference to the forty days, during which, literally, the world "saw Him no more," but "the apostles

saw Him," that reference is only secondary. These transitory appearances are not sufficient to bear the weight of so great a promise as this. The vision, which is the consequence of the coming, is as continuous and permanent as the coming. It is clear, too, that the word "see" is employed in two different senses. In the former it refers only to bodily, in the latter to spiritual perception. For a few short hours still, the ungodly mass of men were to have that outward vision which they had used so badly, that "they seeing saw not." It was to cease, and they who loved Him would not miss it when it did. They, too, had but dimly seen Him while He stood by them; they would gaze on Him with truer insight when He was present though absent. So this is what every Christian life may and should be—the continual sight of a continually present Christ. 2. Faith is the sight of the soul, and it is far better than the sight of the senses. (1) It is more direct. My eye does not touch what I look at. Gulfs of millions of miles lie between me and it. But my faith is not only eye, but hand, and not only beholds but grasps. (2) It is far more clear. Senses may deceive; my faith, built upon His Word, cannot deceive. Its information is far more certain, more valid. So that there is no need for men to say, "Oh! if we had only seen Him with our eyes!" You would very likely not have known Him if you had. There is no reason for thinking that the Church has retrograded in its privileges because it has to love instead of beholding, and to believe instead of touching. Sense disturbs, faith alone beholds. (3) "The world seeth Me no more." Why? Because it is a world. "Ye see Me." Why? Because, and in the measure, in which you have "turned away your eyes from seeing vanity." If you want the eye of the soul to be opened, you must shut the eye of sense. And the more we turn away from looking at the dazzling lies which befool and bewilder us, the more shall we see Him whom to see is to live for ever. III. THE PRESENT AND SEEN CHRIST IS LIFE AND LIFE-GIVING. Because He comes, His life passes into the hearts of the men to whom He comes, and who gaze upon Him. 1. Mark the majestic "I live"—the timeless present tense, which expresses unbroken, undying and Divine life. It is all but a quotation of the name "Jehovah." The depth and sweep of its meaning are given to us by this Apostle, "the living One," who lived whilst He died, and having died "is alive for evermore." 2. And this Christ is life-giver to all that love Him and trust Him. (1) We live because He lives. In all senses the life of man is derived from the Christ who is the Agent of creation, and is also the one means by whom any of us can ever hope to live the better life that consists in union to God. (2) We shall live as long as He lives, and His being is the guarantee of the immortal being of all who love Him. Anything is possible, rather than that a soul which has drawn a spiritual life from Christ should ever be rent apart from Him by such a miserable and external trifle as the mere dissolution of the bodily frame. As long as Christ lives your life is secure. If the Head has life the members cannot see corruption. The Church chose for one of its ancient emblems of the Saviour the pelican, which fed its young, according to the fable, with the blood from its own breast. So Christ vitalizes us. He in us is our life. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christians not forgotten by Christ*:—A tragic story comes from Senegal. Four natives who had been sent to guard the French flag on a newly acquired barren island in that region were left without provisions, and died of starvation. They had a supply of food to last three months, but the governor had entirely forgotten to send relief to the guardians of the standard on the lonely rock. (*Christian World.*) *Christ in heaven helps His disciples*:—Suppose a king's son should get out of a besieged prison and leave his wife and children behind, whom he loves as his own soul; would the prince, when arrived at his father's palace, please and delight himself with the splendour of the court, and forget his family in distress; No; but having their cries and groans always in his ears, he should come post to his father, and entreat him, as ever he loved him, that he would send all the forces of his kingdom and raise the siege, and save his dear relations from perishing; nor will Christ, though gone up from the world and ascended into His glory, forget His children for a moment that are left behind Him. (*J. Gurnall.*) *Comfort for the bereaved*:—On every Mohammedan tombstone the inscription begins with the words, "He remains." This applies to God, and gives sweet comfort to the bereaved. Friends may die, fortune fly away, but God endures. He remains. **Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me.**—*Seeing the living Christ*:—Came in the flesh—that is the outward, material fact. He is here in the Spirit—that is the inward, spiritual reality. I. CHRIST'S LITTLE WHILE. 1. His visible appearance on earth was only for a "little while." Yet how much has been crowded into it. Example; teaching; miracle;

suffering. All this helps us to understand His mission, and especially to realize to ourselves His abiding spiritual presence. He is still with us, the very Christ that He was. 2 When Jesus spoke these words there was but a very "little while" left. Only the death-scene, and the forty days in the Resurrection body. But these also help us to realize the spiritual presence of Christ, as we can know it; especially do we get suggestions from the Resurrection-time. II. THE WORLD'S BLINDNESS. What report can the "world" give of Christ? "He was a good Man, an original Teacher, But He offended the religion and society leaders of His day, and they secured His crucifixion." The world testifies that He was dead and buried; but the world resists the bare ideas of His Resurrection or spiritual life. How little the world knows, or can conceive, of the "coming, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost." So Christ is lost as an actual power in life. III. THE DISCIPLES' VISION. "Ye see Me." That is, "Ye do constantly see Me." If they had seen Christ truly while He was here on earth, then they would find they never lost the sight of Him. Because, during His earthly life, His real presence with the disciples had been presence to heart, not to eye. 1. Christ never goes out of disciples' thought or heart. 2. Christ never ceases to be the disciple's Ruler and Referee. 3. The honour of Christ never ceases to be the disciple's sole aim. 4. The strength of Christ never ceases to be the soul's victory. The joy of Christian life depends on the clearness of our vision of this ever-present Christ. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) **Because I live, ye shall live also.**—*The Lord of Life*:—This saying is only to be fully understood in the light of the Resurrection and Ascension. Christ has taken the measure of death; death was to be no real interruption of His ever-continuing life. Already He sees the Resurrection beyond. He treats Death as an already vanquished enemy. Observe: I. WHAT OUR LORD'S WORDS DO NOT MEAN. They do not mean that the immortality of the soul of man is dependent upon the work or life of Christ. Man is an immortal being, just as he is a thinking and feeling being by the original terms of his nature. Any of us may see who will consider how generally unlike the spirit or soul of man is to any merely material creature. 1. The soul of man knows itself to be capable of continuous development. However vigorous a tree or an animal may be, it soon reaches a point at which it can grow no longer. Its vital force is exhausted; it can do no more. With the soul, whether as a thinking or feeling power, we can never say that it has exhausted itself. When a man of science has made a great discovery, or a man of letters has written a great book, or a statesman has carried a series of great measures we cannot say—"He has done his all." Undoubtedly, as the body moves towards decay it inflicts something of its weakness upon its spiritual companion. But the soul constantly resists, asserting its own separate and vigorous existence. The mind knows that each new effort, instead of exhausting its powers, enlarges them, and that if only the physical conditions necessary to continued exertion are not withdrawn, it will go on continuously making larger and nobler acquirements. So too with the heart, the conscience, the sense of duty. One noble act suggests another: one great sacrifice for truth or duty prompts another. "Be not weary in well-doing" is the language of the Eternal Wisdom to the human will. 2. The spirit is conscious of and values its own existence. This is not the case with any material living forms, however lofty or beautiful. The most magnificent tree only gives enjoyment to other beings; it never understands that itself exists; it is not conscious of losing anything when it is cut down. An animal feels pleasure and pain, but it feels each sensation as it comes; it never puts them together, or takes the measure of its own life, and looks on it as a whole. The animal lives wholly in the present, practically it has no past, nor does it look forward. How different with the conscious, self-measuring spirit of man! Man's spirit lives more in the past and in the future than in the present, exactly in the degree in which it makes the most of itself. And the more the spirit makes of its powers and resources, the more earnestly does it desire prolonged existence. Thus, the best of the heathens longed to exist after death, that they might continue to make progress in all such good as they had begun in this life, in high thoughts and in excellent resolves. And with these longings they believed that they would then exist after all when this life was over. The longing was itself a sort of proof that its object was real; for how was its existence to be explained if all enterprise was to be abruptly broken off by the shock of death? 3. Unless a spiritual being is immortal, such a being counts for less in the universe than mere inert matter. For matter has a kind of immortality. Within the range of our experience, no matter ceases to exist; it only takes new shapes, first in one being, and then in another. It is possible that the destruction of the world at the Last Day will be only a re-arrangement of the sum-total of

matter which now makes up the visible universe. If man's spirit naturally perishes, the higher part of his nature therefore is much worse off than the chemical ingredients of his body. For man's spirit cannot be resolved like his body, into form and material; the former perishing while the latter survives. Man's spirit either exists in its completeness, or it ceases to exist. Each man is himself: he can become no other. His memory, his affections, his way of thinking and feeling, are all his own: they are not transferable. If they perish, they perish altogether. And therefore it is a reasonable and very strong presumption that spirit is not, in fact, placed at such disadvantage, and that, if matter survives the dissolution of organic forms, much more must spirit survive the dissolution of the material forms with which it has been associated. These are the kind of considerations by which thoughtful men, living without the light of revelation, might be led to see the reasonableness, the very high probability of a future life. This teaching of nature is presupposed by Christianity, and it is no true service to our Master to make light of it. At the same time, it is true that, outside the Jewish revelation, immortality was not treated by any large number of men as anything like a certainty. Jesus Christ assumed it as certain in all that He said with reference to the future life. And it is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ—which has in this, as in so many other ways, opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. What has been may be. And thus the Christian faith has brought "immortality to light." And what a solemn fact is this immortality of ours! A hundred years hence no one of us will be still in the body: we shall have passed to another sphere of being. But if the imagination can take in these vast tracts of time, ten millions years hence we shall still exist, each one with his memory, will, and conscious contact, separate from all other beings in our eternal resting-place. II. WHAT CHRIST'S WORDS DO MEAN. Clearly something is meant by "Life" which is higher than mere existence; not merely beyond animal existence, but beyond the mere existence of a spiritual being. We English use "life" in the sense of an existence which has a purpose and makes the most of itself. And the Greeks had an especial word to describe the true life of man, his highest spiritual energy. This is the word employed by our Lord and by St. Paul. This enrichment and elevation of being is derived from our Lord. He is the Author of our new life, just as our first parent is the source of our first and natural existence. On this account St. Paul calls Him the Second Adam. And, in point of fact, He is the parent of a race of spiritual men who push human life to its highest capacities of excellence. When our Lord was upon earth He communicated His Life to men, by coming in contact with them. Men felt the contagion of a presence, the influence of which they could not measure, a presence from which there radiated a subtle, mysterious energy, which was gradually taking possession of them they knew not exactly how, and making them begin to live a new and higher life. What that result was upon four men of very different types of character we may gather from the reports of the Life of Christ which are given us by the evangelists. But at last He died, and arose and disappeared from sight. And it is of this after-time that He says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." How does He communicate His life when the creative stimulus of His visible Presence has been withdrawn? 1. By His Spirit. That Divine and Personal force, whereby the mind and nature of the unseen Saviour is poured into the hearts and minds and characters of men, was to be the Lord and Giver of this life to the end of time. (John xvi. 14; Rom. viii. 9; 2 Cor. v. 17). 2. By the Christian sacraments, the guaranteed points of contact with our unseen Saviour; for in them we may certainly meet Him and be invigorated by Him as we toil along the road of our pilgrimage. Conclusion: 1. It is this new life which makes it a blessing to have the prospect before us that we shall individually exist for ever. 2. Our immortality is certain. But what sort of immortality is it to be? (*Canon Liddon.*) *Life in Christ*:—I. LIFE. We must not confound this with existence. Before the disciples believed in Jesus they existed, and altogether apart from Him as their spiritual life their existence would have been continued. Life, what is it? We cannot tell in words. We know it, however, to be a mystery of different degrees. There is the life of the vegetable. There is a considerable advance when we come to animal life. Sensation, appetite, instinct, are things to which plants are dead. Then there is mental life, which introduces us into quite another realm. To judge, to foresee, to imagine, to invent, to perform moral acts, are not these functions which the ox hath not? Now, far above this there is another form of life of which the mere carnal man can form no more idea than the plant can of the animal, or the animal of the poet. Education cannot raise man into it, neither can refinement

reach it; for at its best, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and to all must the humbling truth be spoken, "Ye must be born again." It is to be remarked concerning our life in Christ, that it is—1. The removal of the penalty which fell upon our race for Adam's sin. 2. Spiritual life. Christ works in us through His Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in us evermore. 3. A life in union with God (Rom. viii. 6–8). Death as to the body consists in its separation from the soul; the death of the soul lies mainly in the soul's being separated from its God. 4. This life bears fruit on earth in righteousness and true holiness, and it is made perfect in the presence of God in heaven. II. LIFE PRESERVED. "Ye shall live also." Concerning this sentence, note—1. Its fulness. Whatever is meant by living shall be ours. All the degree of life which is secured in the covenant of grace, believers shall have. All your new nature shall thoroughly, eternally live. Not even, in part, shall the new man die. "I am come," saith Christ, "that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly." 2. Its continuance. During our abode in this body we shall live. And when the natural death comes, which indeed to us is no longer death, our inner life shall suffer no hurt whatever; it will not even be suspended for a moment. And in the awful future, when the judgment comes, the begotten of God shall live. Onward through eternity, whatever may be the changes which yet are to be disclosed, nothing shall affect our God-given life. 3. Its universality. Every child of God shall live. The Lord bestows security upon the least of His people as well as upon the greatest. If it had been said, "Because your faith is strong, ye shall live," then weak faith would have perished; but when it is written, "Because I live," the argument is as powerful in the one case as in the other. 4. Its breadth. See how it overturns all the hopes of the adversary. You shall not be decoyed by fair temptation, nor be cowed by fierce persecution: mightier is he that is in you than he which is in the world. Satan will attack you, and his weapons are deadly, but you shall foil him at all points. If God should allow you to be sorely tried your spirit shall still maintain its holy life, and you shall prove it so by blessing and magnifying God, notwithstanding all. We little dream what may be reserved for us; we may have to climb steeps of prosperity, slippery and dangerous, but we shall live; we may be called to sink in the dark waters of adversity, but we shall live. If old age shall be our portion, and our crown shall be delayed till we have fought a long and weary battle, yet nevertheless we shall live; or if sudden death should cut short the time of our trial here, yet we shall have lived in the fulness of that word. III. THE REASON FOR THE SECURITY OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. "Because I live." 1. This is the sole reason. When I first come to Christ, I know I must find all in Him, for I feel I have nothing of my own; but all my life long I am to acknowledge the same absolute dependence. Does not the Christian's life depend upon his prayerfulness? The Christian's spiritual health depends upon his prayerfulness, but that prayerfulness depends on something else. The reason why the hands of the clock move may be found first in a certain wheel which operates upon them, but if you go to the primary cause of all, you reach the main-spring, or the weight, which is the source of all the motion. "But are not good works essential to the maintenance of the spiritual life?" Certainly, if there be no good works, we have no evidence of spiritual life. To the tree the fruit is not the cause of life, but the result of it, and to the life of the Christian, good works bear the same relationship, they are its outgrowth, not its root. 2. It is a sufficient reason, for—(1) Christ's life is a proof that His work has accomplished the redemption of His people. (2) He is the representative of those for whom He is the Federal Head. Shall the representative live, and yet those represented die? (3) He is the surety for His people, under bonds and pledges to bring His redeemed safely home. (4) We who have spiritual life are one with Christ Jesus. Jesus is the head of the mystical body, they are the members. What were the head without the body? 3. An abiding reason—which has as much force at one time as another. From causes variable the effects are variable; but remaining causes produce permanent effects. Now Jesus always lives. 4. A most instructive reason. It instructs us to admire—(1) The condescension of Christ. (2) To be abundantly grateful. (3) To keep up close communion with Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Fellowship in Christ's life:*—These words strikingly resemble the declaration of our Lord to John in Patmos (Rev. i. 17, 18). I. THE LIFE OF CHRIST. "I live." 1. Our Lord, as a Divine Person, is possessed of independent, infinite, immutable, eternal life; that is, capacity of action and enjoyment. In Him—was, is, and ever will be, "the fountain of life" (John i. 4; 1 John i. 2; Psa. xxxvi. 9). 2. It is not, however, to this life that reference is made. That is a life in which

none can participate beyond the sacred circle of Deity. The life is the life which belongs to the Son, as God-man, Mediator; and it refers to this life in its state of full development, after His resurrection. 3. He had lived the life of a man in union with God while He was on the earth—of the God-man, commissioned to give life—and many and striking were the demonstrations that He gave of His possession of this life. But, till sin was expiated, this life could not be fully developed nor displayed. That death in the flesh, which was the bearing away of the sins of men, was the procuring cause of that "quickening in the Spirit" which followed. 4. It is, however, to the new development of life which accompanied and followed the resurrection that our Lord refers. "I am alive again," "I have the keys of hell and of death." His life is royal life—the life of "the King of kings and Lord of lords" (Psa. xxi. 1-7; Isa. liii. 10). II. THE LIFE OF CHRIST'S PEOPLE. "Ye shall live also." 1. Christ rose as "the first-fruits of them that sleep in Him," the first-born of the chosen family, their representative and forerunner. 2. Christians are, by faith, so identified with Jesus Christ as to be partakers with Him of that life on which He entered, when, being raised from the dead, He sat down for ever on the right hand of the Majesty on high. They "reign in life with Him"—in Him (Rom. v. 17; vi. 3-11; Eph. ii. 5, 6; Col. iii. 1-4; Gal. ii. 19, 20). This life is—(1) One of holy activity and enjoyment. (2) Immortal. (3) Incomplete now, but destined to be complete at the Resurrection. "We shall be like Him." III. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO. "Because"—1. His life proves that He has done all that is necessary in order to secure life for them. Had He not succeeded in doing this He Himself would not thus have lived. His resurrection and celestial life are undoubted proofs that the sentence adjudging us to death was repealed, and the influence that was necessary to make us live was sent forth. So were we not to live, the great end for which He died and rose would be frustrated. 2. His life shows that He possesses all that is necessary to bestow life on His people. "The Father hath given to Him to have life in Himself; so that He quickeneth whom He will." "It has pleased the Father, that in Him all fulness should dwell," that out of His fulness His people may receive, and grace for grace. Conclusion: 1. This truth is calculated to sustain and comfort Christians amid all the sufferings, and anxieties, and sorrows of life and death. He can "give power to the faint, and to them that have no power He increaseth strength." He can "strengthen the things that remain, and are ready to die." 2. When our nearest and dearest are taken from us, how consoling to think the great God our Saviour lives! He is still their life, still our life. "Because He died, we live; because He lives, we live; because He lives"—because He is the living One—"we shall live also!" Happy, surely, are the living disciples of the living Saviour! Happy in prosperity—happy in adversity—happy in life—happy in death—happy for ever! 3. But the Saviour's unending life is full of terror to His enemies because He ever lives. "Because I live, you must perish for ever." They would not come to Him that they might have life. 4. He is still proclaiming, "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." "I will that they would turn—I will that they would live." (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *The Christian's life force*:—Christ is the basis of—I. PHYSICAL LIFE. He is the Creator, and the life of Adam and Eve after the fall depended entirely on the promise of the Redeemer. His advent postulated the continuance of the race. The birth of the first child was a prelude to the gospel. It may be that Eve saw in the birth of Cain the fulfilment of the promise, for she said, "I have borne the seed, a man, the Lord." II. THE RENEWED LIFE. The plan of redemption depends upon His incarnation and atonement. There is no spiritual life on earth apart from Him. The fact that there are millions of Christians who live by faith in Him under the dispensation of the Spirit, proves the reality of His life, of its continuance and power. Because He lives, we live, and our life is hid with Christ in God. III. THE RISEN LIFE in glory, to all eternity. Because He continues to live, His disciples shall continue to live also. "When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Reflections: (1) Apart from Christ, the Christian can do nothing. (2) The fact that Jesus continues to live, is the assurance that all who believe in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (3) How great will appear at last the guilt of those who reject Christ, when they shall learn that even their bodily life has depended upon Him, and that, being destitute of His Spirit, they are none of His. (*L. O. Thompson.*) *The believer's life*:—"Because I live, ye shall live also." What life is it that Christ speaks of when He here says, "I live?" It is the life which He now has in heaven, and which began at the Resurrection. It is different from all other life, higher and

better than any life with which we are acquainted. It is everlasting life; He has done with death. It is a life of liberty; He has done with servile work, and now reigns on high. It is a life of glory; He has done with shame, and has a name that is above every name. It is a life of favour; He is now very near and very dear to God for ever. He never slumbers nor sleeps; He has all power in heaven and on earth; He is Head over all things to the Church. But what is the believer's life of which Christ speaks, when He says, "Ye shall live also." It is the same as Christ's own life, of which we have been speaking. It springs out of His life, and is fed and maintained by it. True, the believer's natural life is like that of all other men: one of sin, misery, without God, without hope under wrath, on the way to everlasting woe. It is not worthy of the name of life; it is properly death. But this natural life loses its power and dominion when we believe on Christ. It received its death-blow on the cross. Hence the apostle says, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God;" and the believer answers, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." At present this higher life is only in its infancy. It is hindered by its connection with the old life, by the circumstances in which it is placed by its absence from Christ its Fountain. The life of the believer is the same in nature as Christ's; the same in duration. It is the same in the reason for which it is bestowed. Christ got it, because He wrought out the perfect, everlasting righteousness; we get it, because by faith we have received that righteousness. It is the same in its origin. It began in Christ, when God wrought in Him by His mighty power, to raise Him from the dead. It begins in us by the working of the same mighty power. But what assurance have we that this life of Christ will always continue to be imparted to His people? This springs from the relation which He holds to them. He is their Surety, Representative, Covenant Head. (*John Milne.*) *The continued life of Christ the ground of our hope:*—Christ lives—I. IN ALL THE STRENGTH AND TENDERNESS OF HIS AFFECTIONS. A heart which bore the agony, shame, desertion of His disciples must be always warm towards those whose salvation He seeks. II. IN HIS ABILITY TO HELP TO THE UTMOST. "All power is given unto Me" (Eph. i. 20–22). "He ever liveth to make intercession." III. IN A SPECIAL MANNER WITH THE BELIEVER. "I am the Bread of Life;" "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." The Church is His bride. How can we famish or die? IV. TO DESTROY ALL POWER THAT IS OPPOSED TO MAN'S REDEMPTION. (*Ray Palmer, D.D.*) *The living Church:*—1. The life of the Church of Christ is its most distinctive and glorious characteristic. It has changed its forms, varied its circumstances, altered its doctrines, but has maintained in every period of its history its inward life. If justification is the article of a standing or a falling Church, regeneration, or life by the Holy Spirit, is the article of a living or a dead Church. 2. This life is communicated, not by anything that is outward, but entirely by the Holy Spirit of God. The patronage of princes may make a rich or a renowned Church. Eloquence and orthodoxy may make a convinced or an enlightened, but they cannot make a living Church. I. THE EVIDENCES OF THIS LIFE. It is easy to ascertain if a man be dead or living physically; and it is not difficult to ascertain if a man be living or dead spiritually. 1. Life is an internal principle originating outward and visible characteristics. We know not what life is. All that we know is, that there is some principle within that looks through the eye, that hears through the ear, that feels through the touch, that enables me to walk, to speak, and to hold converse with society around me. Now it is so with spiritual life. 2. Life has the power of assimilation. If a man eats a piece of bread, that bread is so assimilated that it is turned into the energy of his physical system. And this spiritual life lays hold upon all the elements of nutriment, as these are laid up in Christ, found in the oracles of truth, and at the communion table. 3. Life is sensible of pain. A dead man does not feel. What pain is to the body, sin is to the spiritual life; and just as our nervous system shrinks from the very touch or contact of pain, so the soul that is in unison with God shrinks from sin as its greatest evil, and the immediate source of all misery. 4. Wherever there is life, we find it has within itself the power of adaptation to varied temperature. Man lives at the Pole, as he lives below the Line. And if there be life in man's soul, that life will adjust itself; will not be conquered by, but will conquer its circumstances. Place the Christian in the palace with Pharaoh, or in the dungeon with Joseph, and he can breathe the atmosphere of the one just as he can the other. 5. Life is progressive, and Spiritual life grows in likeness to Christ. Its progress is illimitable, because the principle itself is infinite. 6. Life is communicative. The proof that a man is no Christian is, that he is no missionary. Monopoly is a word banished from the religion of heaven. The

Christian cannot see pain he does not wish to alleviate; ignorance he does not wish to enlighten; death in trespasses and sins to which he would not communicate a portion of his own spiritual life. II. THERE ARE CERTAIN POINTS TO WHICH THIS LIFE SPECIALLY REFERS. A Christian is alive—1. To the presence of God. "Thou God seest me" is the constant feeling of the Christian. 2. To the favour of God. "Who will show us any good?" is the question with the worldling; but the Christian says, "Lift Thou upon us the light of Thy countenance." 3. To the glory of God. We are prone to think that Christianity is a thing for the Bible, for the Sunday, for the Church merely. But it is meant to be like the great principle of gravitation which controls the planet and the pebble. When you transact business you are bound to do it to the glory of God. In your homes, whether your tables be covered with all the luxuries, or merely with the necessaries of life, "ye are to do all to the glory of God." III. THIS LIFE HAS CERTAIN SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS. It is—1. A holy life. If there be God's life in man's heart, there must be God's holiness in man's conduct. 2. A happy life. Joy is one of the fruits it bears. 3. A royal life. "He has made us kings and priests unto God." We are "a royal priesthood." 4. An immortal life. All systems, hierarchies, and empires shall be dissolved; but the man that has the life of God in his heart has the immortality of God as his prerogative. Conclusion: The history of the Church that has possessed this vital principle has been throughout a very painful but a very triumphant one. That vitality must be a reality since nothing has been ever able to extinguish or destroy it. Systems that chime in with the fallen propensities of man have sunk before rival systems; but Christianity, which rebukes man's pride, which bridles man's lusts, which rebukes man's sins, has outlived all persecution, survived all curse, and seems to commence in the nineteenth century, a career that shall be bounded only by the limits of the population of the globe itself. Is not this evidence of a Divine presence—of a Divine power? Let me make one or two inferences. This life is—1. The true secret and source of ministerial success. 2. The source of all missionary effort. 3. The true distinction between the Church and the world. 4. The true safety of the Church. 5. The great want of the Church to-day. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *Immortality as taught by the Christ*:—1. Science may throw no barrier in the way of belief in immortality; nature and the heart of man may suggest clear intimations of a future life; human society may demand another life to complete the suggestions and fill up the lacks of this; but, for some reason, all such proof fails to satisfy us. It holds the mind, but does not minister to the heart. 2. It is noticeable also that the faith of natural evidence awakens no joyful enthusiasm in masses of mankind. Plato and Cicero discourse of immortality with a certain degree of warmth, but their countrymen get little comfort from it. The reason is evident. The mere fact that I shall live to-morrow does not sensibly move me. Something must be joined with existence before it gets power. 3. We will now consider the way in which Christ treated the subject. I. HE ASSUMED THE RECEIVED DOCTRINE AND BUILT UPON IT. When He entered on His ministry He found certain imperfect or germinal truths existing in Jewish theology. He found a doctrine of God, partial in conception; He perfected it by revealing the Divine Fatherhood. He found a doctrine of sin and righteousness turning upon external conduct; He transferred it to the heart and spirit. He found a doctrine of immortality, held as mere future existence. His treatment of this doctrine was not so much corrective as accretive. Hence He never uses any word corresponding to immortality (which is a mere negation—unmortal), but always speaks of life. He never makes a straight assertion of it except once, when the Sadducees pressed Him with a quibbling argument against the resurrection. Elsewhere He simply assumes it. But an assumption is often the strongest kind of argument. It implies such conviction in the mind of the speaker that there is no need of proof. II. IN HIS MIND THE INTENSE AND ABSOLUTE CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOD CARRIES WITH IT IMMORTALITY, AS IT DOES THE WHOLE BODY OF HIS TRUTH. Within this universe, at its centre, is a world around which all others revolve, the sun of suns, the centre of all systems, whose potency reaches to the uttermost verge, holding them steady to their courses. It is not otherwise in morals. Given the fact of God, and all other truth takes its place without question. Hence, when there is an overpowering, all-possessing sense of God as there was in Christ, truth takes on absolute forms; hence it was that He spoke with authority. It was Christ's realization of the living God that rendered His conviction of eternal life so absolute. We can but notice how grandly Christ reposed upon this fact of immortal life. He feels no need of examining the evidences or balancing proofs. He stands steadily upon life, life endless by its own

Divine nature. Death was no leap in the dark to Him; it was simply a door leading into another mansion of God's great house. It is proper to ask here, "Is it probable that Christ was mistaken? That His faith in immortality was but an intense form of a prevailing superstition?" If we could find any weakness elsewhere in His teachings, there would be ground for such questions. But as a moral teacher He stands at the head, unimpeachable in the minutest particular. Is it probable that, true in all else, He was in fault in this one respect? That a body of truth all interwoven and suffused with life is based upon an illusion of life? If one tells me ninety-nine truths, I will trust him in the hundredth, especially if it is involved in those before. Build me a column perfect in base and body, and I will know if the capital is true. When the clearest eyes that ever looked on this world and into the heavens, and the keenest judgment that ever weighed human life, and the purest heart that ever throbbed with human sympathy, tells me that man is immortal, I repose on His teaching in perfect trust. It is reason to see with the wise, and to feel with the good. Still another distinction must be made; we do not accept immortality because Jesus, the wise young Jew, wove it into His precepts, but because the Christ, the Son of God and of man—Humanity revealing Deity—makes it a part of that order of human history best named as the reconciliation of the world to God. III. HE DOES NOT THINK OF IT AS A FUTURE, BUT AS A PRESENT FACT. As time in the Divine mind is an eternal now, so it seems to have been with Christ. If the cup of life is full, there is little sense of past or future; the present is enough. When Christ speaks of eternal life, He does not mean future endless existence; but fullness or perfection of life. That it will go on for ever is a matter of course, but it is not the important feature of the truth. IV. And thus we are brought to the fundamental fact that HE CONNECTED LIFE OR IMMORTALITY WITH CHARACTER. Life, as mere continuance of being, is not worth thinking about. Of what value is the mere adding of days to days if they are full of sin? Practically such life is death, and so He names it. There can be no real and abiding faith in immortality until it becomes wedded to the spiritual nature. When life begins to be true, it announces itself an an eternal thing to the mind; as a caged bird when let loose into the sky might say, "Now I know that my wings are made to beat the air in flight;" and no logic could ever persuade the bird that it was not designed to fly; but when caged, it might have doubted at times, as it beat the bars of its prison with unavailing stroke, if its wings were made for flight. So it is not until a man begins to use his soul aright that he knows for what it is made. When he puts his life into harmony with God's laws; when he begins to pray; when he clothes himself with the graces of Christian faith and conduct, when he begins to live unto his spiritual nature, he begins to realize what life is—a reality that death and time cannot touch. But when his life is made up of the world, it is not strange that it should seem to himself as liable to perish with the world. Those who believe have everlasting life. Others may exist, but existence is not life. Others may continue to exist, but continuance is not immortality. To lift men out of existence into life was Christ's mission. V. He not only gave us the true law, BUT WAS HIMSELF A PERFECT ILLUSTRATION OF IMMORTALITY, and even named Himself by it—the Life. It is a great thing for us that this truth has been put into actual fact. Human nature is crowded with hints and omens of it, but prophecy does not convince till it is fulfilled. And from the Divine side also we get assurances of endless life; but in so hard a matter we are like Thomas, who needed the sight and touch to assure him. And in Christ we have both—the human omen and the Divine promise turned into fact. In some of the cathedrals of Europe, on Christmas-eve, two small lights, typifying the Divine and human nature, are gradually made to approach one another until they meet and blend, forming a bright flame. Thus, in Christ, we have the light of two worlds thrown upon human destiny. The whole bearing of Christ towards death, and His treatment of it, was as one superior to it, and as having no lot nor part in it. He will indeed bow his head in obedience to the physical laws of the humanity He shares, but already He enters the gates of Paradise, not alone but leading a penitent child of humanity by the hand. And in order that we may know He simply changed worlds, He comes back and shows Himself alive; for He is not here in the world simply to assert truth, but to enact it. And still further to show us how phantasmal death is, He finally departs in all the fullness of life, simply drawing about Himself the thin drapery of a cloud. Conclusion: A true and satisfying sense of immortality cannot be taken second-hand. We cannot read it in the pages of a book, whether of nature or inspiration. We cannot even look upon the man Jesus issuing from the tomb, and draw from thence a faith that yields peace.

There must be fellowship with the Christ of the Resurrection before we can feel its power; in other words, we must get over upon the Divine side of life before we can be assured of eternal life. "Join thyself," says Augustine, "to the eternal God, and thou wilt be eternal." (*T. T. Munger.*) *Living because Christ lives*:—When Luther was in his worst troubles a friend came in to see him, and he noticed that he had written upon the wall in big letters the word "Vivit!" He inquired of Luther what he meant by "vivit?" Luther answered, "Jesus lives; and if He did not live I would not care to live an hour." Yes, our life is bound up with that of Jesus. We are called upon to live of ourselves, that would be death; but we have life and all things in union with Him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 20. **At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.**—*Christ's legacy*:—I. THE LEGACY ITSELF: Knowledge. "Ye shall know." God delivered the Jews to some extent from ignorance by the law, which was their schoolmaster. But in the gospel we are graduates, and know as a matter of history and experience what was only previously known in prophecy and type, in the manifestation of Christ, and the presence of the Spirit. Consider this knowledge as opposed to—1. Ignorance. As there is a profitable ignorance which is a reverent abstinence from searching into God's secrets, so there is an unprofitable ignorant knowledge which puffs us up. And one strange effect of this ignorance is that every man murmurs that some one else has more land or money than he, yet every man thinks that he has more knowledge than all the world beside. Wherefore the prophet (Jer. x. 14) calls this confident believer in his own wisdom a fool, as the greatest reproach that can be fastened upon him. Now, this foolishness is not narrowness of understanding, nor inability to acquire knowledge, for many good men are unlettered and dull. The fool is he who trusteth in his own heart; and against this Christ has left us this legacy of knowledge. 2. Inconsideration. God takes it worse to be neglected than to be injured. Dares an officer who receives instruction from his prince on non-performance say, "I never thought of it?" Dares a subject, a servant, or a son? God shows the inconsiderate man—(1) The book of His creatures. Every ant asks him, "Where had I this providence and industry?" Every flower, "Where had I this beauty, fragrance, medicinal virtue?" (2) The Scriptures, where every merciful promise cries, "Why am I here to meet thee and perform God's purpose towards thee, if thou never consider me?" So with every judgment. (3) The example of Christ, who reconsidered His prayer, "Yet not My will, but Thine, be done." Since, then, our best acts of reading or hearing and praying need consideration, value this legacy. 3. Concealment. It must be published for the benefit of others. Virtue that is never produced into action is not worthy of the name (Philemon 6). II. THE TIME WHEN THIS LEGACY ACCRUES TO US. "At that day." 1. The word itself affords cheerfulness. When God inflicted the greatest plague on Egypt it was at midnight; and when He would intimate both deaths at once He says, "Thou fool, this night," &c. Against all supply of knowledge He calls him fool; against all sense of comfort in the day He threatens night. 2. It was a certain day: "That"—and soon. For after Christ had made His will at this supper, and given strength to His will by His death, and proved His will by His resurrection, and left the Church possessed of His estate by His ascension, within ten days after that He poured out this legacy of knowledge. 3. On that day the Holy Ghost came as a wind to note a powerful working; filled them, to note the abundance; and gave them utterance, to infer the communication of their knowledge to others. But He was poured forth for the benefit of all. The prophets, high as their calling was, saw nothing without the Spirit; with the Spirit simple man understands the prophets. III. OUR PORTION IN THIS LEGACY—the measure of the knowledge of those mysteries which we are to receive. When Felix the Manichæan would prove to Augustine that Manes was the Holy Spirit who should teach all truth, because Manes taught many things of which men were ignorant concerning the frame and nature of the heavens, Augustine answered, "The Holy Ghost makes us Christians, not mathematicians." This knowledge is to know the end and the way—heaven and Christ. Now, in all our journeys, a moderate pace brings a man most surely to his journey's end, and so does a sober knowledge in the mysteries of religion. Therefore, the Holy Ghost did not give the apostles all kind of knowledge, but knowledge enough for their present work, and so with us. The points of knowledge necessary for our salvation are three. 1. The mystery of the Trinity. "I am in My Father." Origin tells us that the principal use of knowledge is to know the Trinity. For to know that there is one God,

natural reason serves our turn. But to know that the Son is in the Father I need the Scriptures, and the light of the Holy Spirit on the Scriptures, for Jews and Arians have the Bible too. But consider that Christ says, "ye shall know," not "ye shall know *how*." It is enough for a happy subject to enjoy the sweetness of a peaceable government, though he knows not the ways by which his prince governs, so it is enough for a Christian to enjoy the working of God's grace, though he inquire not into God's unrevealed decrees. When the Church asked how the body of Christ was in the sacrament we see what an inconvenient answer it fell upon. Make much of that knowledge with which the Spirit hath trusted you, and believe the rest. No man knows how his soul came into him, yet no man doubts that he has a soul. 2. The mystery of the Incarnation—"Ye in Me." For since the devil has taken manhood in one lump in Adam, Christ to deliver us as entirely took all mankind upon Him. So that the same pretence that the devil hath against us, "You are mine, for you sinned in Adam," we have also for our discharge, we are delivered, for we paid our debt in Christ. 3. The assurance of this grows from the third part of our knowledge the mystery of our redemption, in our sanctification. "I in you." This last is the best. To know that Christ is in the Father may serve me to convince another who denies the Trinity; to know we are in Christ may show that we are more honoured than angels. But what worth is this if I know not that Christ is in me. How then is this? Here the question is lawful, for it has been revealed. It is by our obedience to His inspiration, and by our reverent use of His sacrament, when the Spirit visits us with effectual grace, and Christ marries Himself to our souls. (*J. Donne, D.D.*) *The experimental knowledge of the Christian mysteries*:—Our Lord had just been exhorting His disciples to believe that He was in the Father and the Father in Him; and had been gently wondering at the slowness of their faith. Now He tells them that, when He is gone, they shall know the thing which, with Him by their side, they found it so hard to believe. I. The principle that underlies these wonderful words is that CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER OF FUNDAMENTAL CHRISTIAN TRUTH. Observe with what decision our Lord carries that principle into regions where we might suppose at first sight that it was altogether inapplicable. 1. "Ye shall know that I am in My Father." How can such a thing as the relation between Christ and God ever be a matter of consciousness? Must it not always be a matter that we must take on trust? Not so; remember what has gone before. If I have these things I know that it is Jesus Christ that gives them, and I know that He could not give them if He did not dwell in God and were not Divine. These new influences, this revolution in my being, this healing touch, these new hopes, these reversed desires, all these things bear upon their very front the signature that they are wrought by a Divine hand, and as sure as I am of my own Christian consciousness, so sure am I that all its experiences proclaim their author, and that Christ who does them is in God. On the subject of Christ's Divinity, many profound and learned arguments have been urged by theologians, and these are all well and needful in their places, but the true way to be sure of it is to have Him dwelling with us and working on us. 2. In like manner, the other elements of this knowledge flow necessarily from Christian experiences. "That ye are in Me, and I in you." If a Christian man carries the consciousness of Christ's presence, and has Him as a Sun in his darkness, and as a Life-source feeding his deadness with life, then he knows with a consciousness which is irrefragable that Jesus Christ is in him. 3. So, let us learn what the Christian man's experience ought to be, and to do for him. It should make all the fundamentals of the gospel vitally and vividly true; and, certified by what had passed within your own spirits, you should be able to say, "we have the witness in ourselves." And though there will remain much in Christian doctrine which is not capable of that plain and all-sufficing verification; much about which we must still depend on the teaching of others, the central facts which make the gospel may all become elements of our very consciousness which stand undeniable to us, whosoever denies them. II. SUCH A DIRECT WAY TO KNOWLEDGE IS REASONABLE. 1. It is in plain analogy with the manner by which we attain to the knowledge of everything except the mere external facts. How do you know anything about love? You may read poems and tragedies to the end of time, and you will not understand it until you come under its spell for yourself; and then all the things that men said about it cease to be mere words, because you yourself have experienced the emotion. And the only way to be sure, with a vital certitude, of Christ, is to take Christ for your very own, and then He comes into your very being, and dwells there unchanged, the Sun and the

Life. 2. Though such certitude is not available for other people, the fact that so many millions of men allege that they possess this certitude is available for other people. And there is nothing to be said by the unbeliever to this. "Whether this man be a sinner or no, I know not." You may jangle as much as you like about the controversial points that surround the Christian revelation. "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." And we may push the war into the enemy's quarters, and say, "Why! herein is a marvellous thing, that you that know everything do not know whence this Man is. And yet He has opened mine eyes." You want facts; there are some. You want verification; we have verified by experiment, and we set to our seals that God is true. 3. But, you say, that is not a fair account of the way in which Christian men and women generally feel about this matter. Well, so much the worse for the so-called Christian men and women. And if they are Christians, and do not know by this inward experience that Christ is Divine and their Saviour, then either their experience is wretchedly superficial and fragmentary; or, having the facts, they have failed to make their own by reflection the certitudes which are their own. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The Father, Christ, and His people one:*—1. The importance of a definite knowledge and firm belief of the more recondite doctrines of Christianity is greatly underrated. By the infidel they are considered as mystical dreams, scholastic abstractions, characterized by self-contradiction and absurdity. The rationalistic Christian for the same reason explains away the passages that teach them. But there are also men—loud in proclaiming their belief of all these doctrines—whose belief of them is little more than a belief that the propositions in which they are stated, and who plainly consider them as having little connection with the formation of character and guidance of conduct. But I do not worship the Christian God if I do not worship God in Christ; and as Christian worship is rational worship, I cannot worship God in Christ, without knowing what is meant by God being in Christ, and believing it. All Christian motive and comfort flow from Christian doctrine understood and believed. 2. The phrase, "that day," does not seem here to refer to some short fixed period—as the time when our Lord returned to the disciples after His resurrection—or, the time of the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost,—or, the time of the second coming; but to the whole period from our Lord's coming after the Resurrection, to His coming the second time for complete salvation. The phrase is very often so used in the Old Testament (Isa. xii. 1; Zech. xiii. 1; xiv. 9). I. THE DOCTRINES. 1. Christ is in the Father. The sentiment is more fully expressed in vers. 10, 11. Note—(1) The relation between our Lord and the Father as Divine persons? They are, with the Holy Spirit, possessors of the one Divine essence, are of the same perfections and prerogatives. It is the most intimate relation in the universe. The Father and the Son are one. This is a union with the Father common to the Son and to the Spirit; but there is a union with the Father peculiar to the Son. He is the Son of the Father, the Father is His Father. (2) The relation between our Lord as the man Christ Jesus, and the Father? (*a*) The man Christ Jesus is in personal unity with the Divinity. He is related to God as no man ever was, ever will be, ever can be. He was "God manifest in flesh." (*b*) The man Christ Jesus was, from the very moment of His beginning to exist as a man, brought entirely under the influence of the Holy Spirit, through whom the one Divinity does all things. In other relations the Son stands alone. Here He stands, at the head of an innumerable multitude of brethren. (3) The relation between our Lord as God-man, Mediator and the Father. It belonged to the Father, as sustaining the majesty of Godhead, to appoint the Mediator. Our Lord took not this honour on Himself. He was in the Father, as the ambassador is in his prince or sovereign; and the Father was in Him, as the prince or sovereign is in his ambassador. His doctrine was the doctrine of God; His works were the works of God. 2. Christ's people are in Him. (1) By the Divine constitution, every believer is brought into such an intimacy of relation with Jesus Christ, as that he is treated as if he had done what Christ has done. So that in him he is justified, sanctified, and redeemed (1 Cor. i. 30), absolutely secured of a complete salvation, from His connection with Him. (2) Besides, Christ's people are in Him, as the branch in the vine, as the members in the head. As new creatures, in Him "they live, and move, and have their being" (chap. vi. 57). 3. Christ is in His people. They are animated by His Spirit. But that Spirit, enabling them to understand and believe His word, makes them think, will, choose along with Him, walk as He also walked; so that they are His animated images, His living epistles. II. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE DOCTRINES. The apostles had heard them again and again, and they had some

misty general conception of them; but they had no clear apprehension. But the time was approaching when their views should be enlarged, and their faith confirmed, and experience called in to the aid of faith. 1. The Resurrection, to some extent, cleared their minds. They saw that their Master was in the Father. He was thereby powerfully declared to be the Son of God (chap. xx. 28). 2. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit went still farther in extending their views and confirming their faith (see Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost). 3. And all the true followers of our Lord, in every age and country, are all made to know these doctrines by the teaching of His Spirit through the word, and the working of the Spirit in their hearts. They lie at the very foundation of all their hopes, and all their holiness. 4. And at the great day of doom, they shall know more clearly still, and as eternity rolls on, new depths of meaning are found in these unfathomable words. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *The union between Christ and His people:*—It is a union of mutual in-being, not a union of affection only, such as the stones have, when they lie together in a heap; but rather such as is between the wine and the water, when they are put together, saving that they are not mixed together. Christ is not mixed with a Christian, a Christian is not mixed with Christ; Christ is not a Christian, a Christian is not Christ; but there is a union of mutual in-being. Now, you know, when the fire gets into the iron, is united to it, is in it, the properties of the fire are communicated to the iron; the iron forgets his own blackness, and shines with the shining of the fire, and burns with the burning of the fire. And as a coal, though it be never so dark and black a body, when the fire comes, get into it, the properties of the fire are communicated to it, and it burns like the fire itself, and melts like the fire itself, and shines like the fire itself. So, when the Lord Jesus Christ is united to a soul, look what excellencies there are in Christ, what graces in Christ, the same are communicated to it; the soul shines with Christ's shining, and warms with His warming: there is grace answerable for His grace. (*W. Bridge, M.A.*)

Ver. 21. **He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.**—*Love to Christ:*—I. THE REASONS WHICH JUSTIFY ITS EXERCISE. If we love an object, it is because of something amiable in that object. 1. And is there not real excellency in Jesus Christ—"the brightness of His Father's glory," &c. "He is altogether lovely!" 2. Is He not nearly related to us (Heb. ii. 11; Matt. xii. 48–50)? 3. Is He not our Friend, our kindest and best Benefactor? "He gave His life a ransom for us." II. THE PROPERTIES BY WHICH IT IS DISTINGUISHED. It must be—1. Sincere (Rom. xii. 9). 2. Supreme. Love to any object should rise according to its worth. 3. Constant. III. THE TEST BY WHICH IT IS ASCERTAINED. It is good to have the commandments of Christ, to be born in a land of Bibles; but this is not enough. He that hath them, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Him. And what is this keeping the commandments of Christ? Do they keep them—1. Who are ignorant of them, and who discover little concern to become acquainted with them? 2. Who have no relish for them? 3. Who do not obey them? IV. THE REWARD WITH WHICH IT IS CONNECTED. 1. The favour of the greatest Father. 2. The affection of the kindest Saviour. 3. The presence of the best Friend. From the whole, learn—1. The insufficiency of external privileges. 2. The honour which attends real Christianity. 3. The proper use of religious ordinances, and the spirit in which we should attend them. (*T. Kidd.*) *Love to Christ:*—I. THE OBEDIENCE WHICH IS THE SIGN AND TEST OF LOVE. The words are here substantially equivalent to ver. 15. Only the former begins with the root and traces it upwards to its fruits, love blossoming into obedience. Our text reverses the process. Note—1. How remarkably our Lord here declares the possession of His commandments to be a sign of love to Him. "He that hath," &c. There are two ways of having: in the Bible, and in the heart; before my eye as a law that I ought to obey, or within my will, as a power that shapes it. And the latter is the only kind of "having" that Christ regards as real and valid. Love possesses the knowledge of the loved one's will. Do we not all know how strange is the power of divining desires that goes along with true affection, and how the power, not only of divining, but of treasuring, these desires is the thermometer of our true love. Some of us, perhaps, have laid away in sacred, secret places tattered yellow old bits of paper with the words of a dear one on them that we would not part with. "He that hath My commandments" laid up in lavender in the recesses of his faithful heart, he it is "that loveth Me." 2. Obedience: There are two motives for keeping commandments, one, because they are commanded, and one because we love Him that commands. The one is slavery, the other is liberty. The one is like the Arctic regions,

cold and barren, the other is like tropical lands, full of warmth and sunshine, glorious and glad fertility. 3. The form of the sentence suggests how easy it is for people to delude themselves about their love to Jesus Christ. That emphatic "He," and the putting first of the character before He states its root, are directed against false pretentions to love. The love that Christ stamps with His hall-mark is no mere emotion, however passionate and sweet; no mere sentiment however pure and deep. The tiniest dribble that drives a mill is better than a Niagara that rushes and foams and tumbles idly. And there is ever so much so-called love to Jesus Christ that goes masquerading up and down the world; from which the paint is stripped by the sharp application of the words of my text. II. THE DIVINE LOVE AND MANIFESTATION WHICH REWARD OUR LOVE AND OBEDIENCE. Note—1. The extraordinary boldness of that majestic saying: "If a man loves Me, My Father will love him." God regards our love to Jesus Christ as containing in it the germ of all that is pleasing in His sight. And so, upon our hearts, if we love Christ, there falls the benediction of the Father's love. 2. Of course, our Lord here is not beginning at the very beginning of everything. "We love Him because He first loved us" digs a story deeper down than the words of my text. That being understood, here is a great lesson. It is not all the same to God whether a man is a scoundrel or a saint. God's love is a moral love; and whilst the sunbeams play upon the ice and melt it sometimes, they flash back from, and rest more graciously and fully on, the rippling stream into which the ice has turned. God loves them that love Him not, but the depths of His heart and the secret sacred favours of His grace can only be bestowed upon those who love Christ and obey Him. 3. If, then, we seek to know that dear Lord, the path is plain. Walk on the way of obedience, and Christ will meet us with the unveiling of more and more of His love. To live what we believe is the sure way to increase its amount. To be faithful to the little is the certain way to inherit the much. He gives us His whole self at the first, but we traverse the breadth of the gift by degrees. The flower is but a bud when we get it, and as we hold it, it opens its petals to the light. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Obedience the proof of love*:—I. SOME WHO THINK THEY LOVE JESUS ARE MISTAKEN AS TO THE GENUINENESS AND SINCERITY OF THEIR LOVE TO HIM. There is an emphasis on "He it is," singling Him out as the only real lover. Men may be misled as to the reality of their love. 1. By regarding strong, keen and frequent feelings of sorrow and compassion for Christ as an innocent sufferer, as evidence of true love. Such an emotion is an element in, but is not love. 2. By substituting an intellectual and moral admiration of Christ. But many infidels evince this. 3. By counting sufficient an outward and decorous attention to His laws and institutions. This is sufficient to keep from sins of a gross nature; but at the bottom it may be self-love, a bid for the world's good opinion. II. THEY ONLY WHO HAVE AND KEEP CHRIST'S COMMANDMENTS TRULY LOVE HIM. 1. Having Christ's commandments implies—(1) A recognition of them as of binding authority being enforced by His love. (2) An intelligent appreciation of their meaning and spirit. (3) Treasuring them in the head and heart. 2. Keeping them. We may have without keeping them. Practice and knowlege must keep step. 3. Here is—(1) A test of Christian profession (1 John ii. 3–5; v. 1–3). (2) A ground of comfort to doubting Christians. Their Lord does not insist on warm feelings which are fluctuating, but on obedience. (3) An inducement to obedience. (*A. Warrack, M.A.*) *Obedience the sign of love*:—A king in ancient times made some wise laws for his people, and most of them loved and reverenced him as a father, but not all. Some who professed a great affection for him were very unwilling to obey him; and a few complained that his laws were too strict, and, whenever they could do so without fear of punishment, they broke them. Now the king had a country far off where troubles and tumults had arisen, and the governor wrote to ask the king to go and visit his discontented people, and try if his own presence would win them to obedience and love. The king promised to go; but before he left, he gave every family a copy of the laws. He was away a long time, and on his return there were loud rejoicings. But when he came to his council chamber, there were some sad stories of rebellion and disobedience, not among the poor alone, but among the nobles, who had been louder than all the rest in their professions of love and songs of welcome. But when the king, having discovered the offenders, asked for a copy of the laws, and one by one read them to the rebels, they were confused and silent. Some, indeed, had lost the paper he had given them; some had wilfully burnt it, and declared that they would not obey; many had broken one or more of the rules. He was a gentle king, but firm and just; and so he gathered his disobedient subjects together,

and looking sorrowfully at them, he gravely asked each, "If he loved his sovereign?" They all answered "Yes," but on holding up a copy of his laws, they all hung down their heads. "He that hath my laws and keepeth them," he said, "he, and he only, loves me." So with Christ's laws. (*Mrs. Geldart.*) *Christ known only to the loving:*—I. WE CANNOT KNOW CHRIST THROUGH THE INTELLECT. The intellect has tried for ages to find out God, and after all its investigations it has pronounced Him unknowable, "The world by wisdom knew not God." II. WE CANNOT KNOW CHRIST THROUGH THE IMAGINATION. Imagination has filled the world with myths, superstitions and idols, but has never, unaided by the heart, found Christ. III. WE CANNOT KNOW CHRIST THROUGH AN EXCITED CONSCIENCE. Conscience has formulated a god of vengeance. Christ is God and reveals Himself to the loving. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *Character and privilege of true Christians:*—I. THE PECULIAR CHARACTER OF TRUE CHRISTIANS. 1. They love Christ. (1) They love Himself—(*a*) As a Divine person, glorious in moral perfection and loveliness. (*b*) As the incarnate Divinity, the image, of Him whom we should "love with all the heart, and soul, and strength." (*c*) As the God-man Mediator, the Only-begotten of Him whose name and nature is love. (*d*) As the man, Christ Jesus, possessed of every quality which can command esteem and excite love. (2) This love extends to everything in the Saviour—His holiness, as well as His grace; His laws, as well as His promises; the yoke He lays on them, as well as the crown He is to confer; His house, His word, His day, His people, His cause. (3) This love leads them to seek intercourse with Him; they cannot be happy away from Him. (4) This love is common to all the saints. They have not all the same measure of it—that depends on the measure of their knowledge and faith and capacity of affection; but they have all the same kind of love. (5) And as this love is common to all the saints, so it is peculiar to them. To the unbelieving world "He has no form nor comeliness," &c. 2. They have His commandments, words, sayings. These are not to be confined to what was preceptive in our Lord's teaching; they include all His communications. (1) To "have" is something more than to possess the Bible, or even to have a general knowledge of its contents. It is to have it in the mind and the heart. (2) They who receive our Lord's words cannot but love Him, for they, in the degree in which they receive them, know and believe Him to be the proper object of supreme affection. 3. They keep His commandments. As it is by having the words of Christ that men come to love Him, so it is by keeping His words that they manifest and prove their love to Him. They must be kept—(1) As He gives us them. We must not detract from them, nor add to them, nor modify them (Deut. iv. 2). (2) In the mind. There are men who find it disquieting to them, and seek to get rid of it as soon as possible. There are others who, ceasing to give it any attention, suffer it to "slip out of their mind." And there are others who permit, who invite, "the wicked one to come and take away what was sown in their hearts." But the lover of Christ "lets the word of Christ dwell" in his heart, and often reviews it as his most precious treasure. (3) By our having no other opinions on the subjects to which they refer than those unfolded in them, and by fashioning the whole system of our sentiments and judgments with a reference to them. (*a*) The promises are to be kept by firmly believing them in the most trying circumstances. (*b*) The warnings are to be kept by keeping at a distance from their subjects, and by cherishing a habitual holy fear of sin. (*c*) His commandments, with regard to tempers and dispositions, are to be kept by "keeping our hearts with all diligence." (*d*) Those with regard to our general conduct are to be kept by our not following "the course of this world," but walking according to the will of God. (*e*) Those with regard to institutions are to be kept by "observing all things whatsoever He has commanded." II. THEIR PECULIAR PRIVILEGES. 1. They are loved of the Father and the Son. (1) As elected in sovereign love to eternal life. (2) As actually united to Christ by believing. (3) As transformed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. 2. This love is discovered in the Son's manifesting Himself to them, and in the Father and the Son coming to them, and making their abode with them. III. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO. 1. He only who possesses the character can enjoy the privilege. 2. He who possesses the character must enjoy the privilege. 3. The measure in which the character is possessed is the measure in which the privilege is enjoyed. The more a man loves Christ, the more must both God and Christ love him. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *The secret of self-consecration:*—Here is the secret of self-consecration: in our being "possessed" by the love of Christ; and feeling—He loves me more than I love Him. Possessed by this love, I yield myself wholly and joyfully to Him. My hand

is His, redeemed by Him, sacred to Him, and cannot do unholy work; my foot is His, and cannot go on unholy errands; my ear is His, and cannot listen to unholy words; my eye is His, and cannot look upon unholy deeds; my tongue is His, and cannot utter unholy speeches; my mind is His, and cannot think unholy thoughts; my heart is His, and cannot cherish unholy feelings and desires; my whole being is His, redeemed by Him, sacred to Him, and is surrendered to His will. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *Practical religion*:—Since a vestment ornamented with gold is a beautiful and conspicuous object, but seems much more so to us when it is worn upon our own persons, thus also the precepts of God are beautiful when but praised, but appear far more lovely when they are rightly observed, and conspicuous in our own life. (*T. H. Leary, D.C.L.*)

Vers. 22–24. **Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?**—*How may the Lord disclose or reveal Himself to His disciples, and not to others?*—Disclosure, or revelation, is at least a double process. It consists in the presentation of an object of knowledge, and a mental reception of what is presented; a clear manifestation, and an object of this who is capable of apprehending it. Again, different objects of knowledge manifest or disclose themselves through diverse channels of apprehension. There is demonstration through the senses, as when we report, upon the authority of the sense of touch, that an object is hard, soft, smooth, or rough. There is also the declaration of the reason, as when we candidly consider the professions of a political party and decide upon their merits. And there is the revelation of the affections, as when we discern the bitterness of ingratitude or the sweetness of fidelity. Each kind of truth has its own channel and method of getting at the mind. Moreover, different truths or objects manifest themselves in various degrees, according to the capacity of the recipient. Not long ago I visited one of my colleagues in his mineralogical cabinet. Opening one of the drawers, I took in my hands two specimens with the remark, "These are duplicates." "Oh, no," was the reply, "they are quite different minerals." "How do you know that?" I said; "they look just alike." "No," was the response, "they look extremely unlike." To my sight the specimens were identical. To his critical vision, although casting the same rays of light upon his eye as upon mine, and presenting the same surface, they made an incomparably more definite revelation. There are said to be men employed in the wine vaults connected with the London docks who are able by taste not only to distinguish between a sherry, a claret, and a port, but also to tell the district in which a given wine was produced. It is even asserted that in many cases they can name the year of the vintage. To each of us is given the share of revelation which his capacities can apprehend. Men say, "Let us understand these so-called spiritual truths; let them be explained, demonstrated. Let us be convinced." The demand is fair; but the explanation, the demonstration, the conviction, must be to a capacity appropriate to this special kind of truth. A truth has not been revealed to us unless we have experienced the emotions which it is fitted to arouse. Any of us may read accounts of what is seen by the astronomers who are using the Lick telescope, but only they who have gazed through that splendid glass, to resolve nebulæ into clusters of hitherto undistinguished worlds, have known experimentally, have personally received the revelation of these hitherto unknown worlds. To one who does not possess it already, words cannot convey experimental knowledge. They simply name our ideas. Any new knowledge which they seem to give is simply a re-arrangement of ideas previously in the mind. Looking into the kaleidoscope, you see gaudy colours. Turn the kaleidoscope: something new has apparently entered it. In fact the same light is there as before, so are the same bright pieces of glass; but they now have a different arrangement, and therefore reflect and transmit the light in a different way. Words are simply the power to turn the kaleidoscope of our experiences. If we lack the experiences, words cannot give them. All you who are parents had many times heard the words describing parental feelings before you yourself became parents. You thought you knew their meaning; but in fact it was a totally new experience when your first helpless child was placed in your arms. Let us seek to apply all this to the Master's words. The Lord's manifestation becomes revelation to some and not to others, not because of differences in God, or in His manifestations, but because of differences in men. To expect that the result shall be to all of us a revelation, it is necessary to assure ourselves that we have that spiritual sense to which the Lord alluded in His reply to Judas. There must be not only an exhibition of the Divine self, there must

also be the human capability of apprehending this. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The heart is not the sensitive plate upon which the manifestations of the Father can become the visible image, until it is prepared by the chemistry of love. With such preparation, the Divine manifestation meets a human capacity to receive, and revelation is complete. You read in the Bible a passage as familiar to you as the alphabet. Hitherto it has seemed to contain very little meaning, and certainly has been no mediator between you and God. Now, however, it scintillates with new meaning, and seems weighty with unsuspected value. Every high-school scholar is familiar with the experiment by which the agency of the air in the phenomena of sound is proved. A silver bell is suspended upon a spiral spring in a glass globe. The bell is kept in vibration, and its sound is at first clearly heard. But now an air-pump is set in motion beneath the globe. The impact of the bell's tiny tongue upon its sides goes on as before, yet as the air is exhausted the sound grows fainter and fainter, and at last completely dies away. The ocular manifestations are exactly as before, but the receptive medium of the air, without which sound cannot exist, is gone. In the Master's explanation, love is that medium, that condition of the heart, within which alone the manifestations of the Divine presence and of Divine truth can transmute themselves into revelation. The mysticism of this chapter is transcendent realism. There is a touch more delicate than touch, a vision more penetrating than vision, a hearing more acute than hearing. Jesus Christ was not a physical but a spiritual revelation. The physical senses of hundreds of men came into relation with the manifestations of Christ's physical existence, but, for lack of that "eighth sense," of love, discovered in him no divinity. Jesus Christ presents a body of spiritual facts adapted to human apprehension. He is not spiritual fact made discernible by physical faculty. The whole life of Christ, as written in the Scriptures, is the Holy Spirit's canvas. If we go to it sympathetically, the Spirit of God will glorify Himself in us. He will cause us to see and feel and know the facts of spiritual life. It is our right to have just as authentic evidence that the grace of God changes the heart, as stands in the records of the apostles. It is given us to have a spiritual insight for ourselves, and to be able to testify, not that there is an old chronicle which reports that a Pharisee of Tarsus was spiritually blind and somehow gained spiritual eyesight, but to testify that we were blind, yet now see. It is our privilege to know that the Spirit of Christ is the vital power of our spiritual nature, and from immediate knowledge to testify of its operation. (*History, Prophecy, and Gospel.*) *Christ manifesting Himself to His people*:—What a blessed Master Jesus Christ was! How familiar did He allow His disciples to make themselves with Him! He was none of your dignitaries who pride themselves on that dignity; but He talks to His disciples just as a father would to his children—even more kindly than a master might to his pupils. Here is—I. A GREAT FACT: that Jesus Christ does reveal Himself to His people, but He does not unto the world. The fact is implied in the question, and there are many who have a Bible of experience—which teaches us that it is true. 1. The favoured people to whom Jesus Christ manifests Himself. "Us." It appears that they do not belong to the world. They are men who are not worldly in principle, in action, in conversation, in desires, in object, or in end. 2. Special seasons of manifestation. "When." These highly favoured men do not always see Jesus Christ alike. There are special times when God is pleased to reveal Himself to His people. (1) Times of duty. I never found a lazy or indifferent Christian have a manifestation of Jesus Christ; I never heard one who gave himself wholly to business talk much of spiritual manifestations. Those who do but little for Christ, Christ does but little for them in the way of special favours. The men who are the most zealous for their Master discern the most of His lovingkindness, and enjoy His richest blessings. (2) In seasons of trial. Do not complain then; for it is in the time of trouble we see most of Jesus. Previous to trial you may generally expect a season of joy. But when the trial comes, then expect to have delight with it. 3. The wondrous display. Jesus manifests Himself. There are many manifestations of God to His children; but this is the most precious of all. He does this in different ways. You have seen Jesus with the eye of faith hanging on the cross. At other times you have had a manifestation of Christ in His gifts. Then, again, you will see Him in His triumph. 4. The effects of this manifestation. (1) Humility. "God has respect unto the humble, but the proud he knoweth afar off." (2) Happiness; for he must be happy who lives near

to God. (3) Holiness. Some men profess a great deal; but do not believe any man unless you see that his deeds answer to what he says. II. AN INTERESTING INQUIRY. 1. It was suggested by—(1) Ignorance. Judas thought: "If we see Him the world must see Him too. (2) Kindness. He wanted it all to be given to everybody. Ah! we never need be more benevolent than God. (3) Love to his Master. He wished Christ's dominion might be universal. (4) Admiration. "Who are we that we should have it?" 2. The answer. The question was not answered; for it was unanswerable. Is it not enough that He should do so? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Who bring and who repel Christ:*—The real meaning of the question is, "Lord! What has come to pass to induce you to abandon the course on which we entered when you rode into Jerusalem with the shouting crowd?" His question is no better in intelligence, though it is a great deal better in spirit, than the taunt of Christ's brethren, "If Thou do these things, show Thyself to the world." Judas, too, thought of the simple flashing of His Messianic glory, in some visible vulgar form, before else blind eyes. How sad and chilling such a question must have been to Jesus! Slow scholars we all are; and with what wonderful patience He reiterates His lesson. I. WHAT BRINGS CHRIST AND WHAT CHRIST BRINGS. Note two significant changes in the form of expression. 1. He had formerly said, "If *ye* love Me;" now, as against Judas's complacent assumption, He says, "Anybody may have the vision if He observes the conditions." 2. Christ's "Word" is wider than "commandment." It includes all His sayings as in one vital unity and organic whole. We are not to go picking and choosing among them; they are one. And every word of Christ's, be it revelation or be it a promise, enshrines within itself a commandment. Note—1. That Christ will show Himself to the loving heart. (1) Every act of obedience to any moral truth is rewarded by additional insight. Every act of submission to His will cleans the lenses of the telescope, and so the stars are brighter and larger, and nearer. As we climb the hill we get a wider view. (2) But in our relation to Him we have to do not with truths only, but with a Person. There is only one way to know people, that is, by loving them. They tell us that "love is blind." No! There are not such a clear pair of eyes anywhere as the eyes of love. Sympathy is the parent of insight into persons, as obedience is the parent of insight into duty. (3) Our loving obedience has not only an operation inwards upon us, but has an effect outwards upon Christ. Too commonly is it the case that even good Christian people have a far more realizing faith in the past work of Christ on earth than in the present work of Christ on themselves. They think the one a plain truth, and the other something like a metaphor, whereas the New Testament teaches us plainly that there is an actual supernatural communication of Christ, which leads day by day to a fuller knowledge, a larger possession, of a fuller Christ. And one piece of honest loving obedience is worth all the study and speculation of an unloving heart when the question is, "How are we to see Christ?" 2. Jesus shows Himself to the obedient heart in indissoluble union with the Father. Look at the majesty and, except upon one hypothesis, the insane presumption of such words as these: "If a man love Me My father will love him." As if identifying love to Christ with love to Himself. And look at that wondrous union, the consciousness of which speaks in "We will come." Think of a man saying that. Just as in heaven there is but one throne for God and the Lamb, so on earth there is but one coming of the Father in the Son. And this is the only belief that will keep this generation from despair and moral suicide. The world has learned half of that great verse, "No man hath seen God at any time, nor can see Him." If the world is not to go mad, if everything higher and nobler than the knowledge of material phenomena and their sequences is not to perish from the earth, the world must learn the next half, "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Christ shows Himself in indissoluble union with the Father. 3. Christ shows Himself to the obedient love by a true coming. (1) That coming is not to be confounded either with mere Divine Omnipresence, nor of increased perception on our part of Christ's fulness. That great central Sun draws nearer and nearer to the planets that move about it, and, having once been in an almost infinitely distant horizon, approaches until planet and Sun unite. (2) That coming is a permanent residence. Very beautiful is it to notice that our Lord here employs that same sweet and significant word, "In My Father's house are many mansions." Yonder they dwell for ever with God; here God in Christ for ever dwells with the loving heart. It is a permanent abode so long as the conditions are fulfilled, but only so long. In the last hours of the Holy City a great voice said, "Let us depart hence;" and to-morrow the shrine was empty, and the day after it was in flames. Brethren, if we

could keep the Christ in whom is God, remember it is by the act of loving obedience. II. WHAT KEEPS AWAY CHRIST AND ALL HIS BLESSINGS (ver. 24)? 1. "He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings." No love, no obedience. That is plainly true, because the heart of all the commandments is love, and where that is not, disobedience to their very spirit is. No power will lead men to Christ's yoke except the power of love. It was only the rising sunbeam that could draw music from the stony lips of Memnon, and it is only when Christ's love shines on our faces that we open our lips in praise, and move our hands in service. Those great rocking-stones down in Cornwall stand unmoved by any tempest, but a child's finger, put at the right place, will set them vibrating. And so the heavy, hard, stony bulk of our hearts lies torpid and immovable until He lays His loving finger upon them, and then they rock at His will. That makes short work, does it not, of a great deal that calls itself Christianity? Reluctant, self-interested, constrained obedience is no obedience; outward acts of service, if the heart be wanting, are rubbish. 2. Disobedience to Christ is disobedience to God. Paul has to say, "So speak I, not the Lord." And you would not think a man a very sound or safe religious teacher who said to you to begin with, "Now, mind, everything that I say, God says." The personality of Jesus Christ is never, through all His utterances, so separated but that God speaks in Him: and, listening to His voice, we hear the absolute utterance of the uncreated and eternal wisdom. 3. Therefore follows the conclusion, which our Lord does not state, but leaves us to supply. What brings Him is the obedience of love; what repels Him is alienation and rebellion. Conclusion: 1. It is possible for men not to see Christ, though He stands there close before them. 2. Christ's showing of Himself to men is in no sense arbitrary. It is you that determines what you shall see. The door of your hearts is hinged to open from within, and if you do not open it it stops shut, and Christ stops outside. 3. You do not need to do anything to blind yourselves. Simple negation is fatal. "If a man love not;" that is all. The absence of love is your ruin. 4. You ask how can I get this love and obedience. There is only one answer. We know that we love Him when we know that He loves us; and we know He loves us when we see Him dying on His cross. So here is the ladder, that starts down in the miry clay of the horrible pit, and fastens its golden hooks on His throne. The first round is, behold the dying Christ and His love to me. The second is, let that love melt my heart into sweet responsive love. The third is, let my love mould my life into obedience. And then Christ, and God in Him, will give me a fuller knowledge and a deeper love, and make His dwelling with me. And then there is only one step left, and that will land us by the throne of God, and in the many mansions of the Father's house where we shall make our abodes with Him for ever more. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **If a man love Me, he will keep My words.**—*Love and obedience*:—I. THE LOVE OF CHRIST WILL PRODUCE OBEDIENCE TO HIS WORDS. Because—1. It presupposes a sense of the evil of sin and a desire for righteousness. 2. Love desires to please, and ever shrinks from grieving its object. 3. Love is essentially imitative. To love evil is to be debased; to love goodness is to be ennobled. 4. The affections exert a strong influence on the will. The strength of evil lies in the love of it, and so the strength of goodness. II. WHOSOEVER LOVES AND OBEYS CHRIST WILL SECURE TO HIMSELF THE FATHER'S LOVE. 1. This is natural. There is no nearer passage to a parent's heart than to love his child. 2. God loves Christ in a manner and degree of which we can form no conception; and if you love Him, too, although your love may differ in manner it is the same in kind. So you are partakers of the Divine nature, which is love, and as God loves and delights in Himself, He will love and delight in you. 3. To love Christ is to be like Him, and for the same reason that God loves Christ will He love us. God loves us in our unholiness, and if He so loved us when we were enemies as to give His Son to die for us, how much more will He love us now we are His friends? III. LOVE TO THE SON AND THE LOVE OF THE FATHER WILL RESULT IN THE INDWELLING OF BOTH. Love ever seeks to dwell with its object. The effect of its indwelling is—1. Peace and satisfaction. God's presence constitutes the joy of heaven, and where He comes He brings heaven. 2. Hungerings and thirstings after righteousness and God. So sweet is God's love that appetite grows on what it feeds upon. The tasted drop begets a longing for the ocean. 3. Privilege and honour. (*F. J. Sharr.*) *Love the source of obedience*:—1. There is nothing that a sincere Christian more desires than to keep the commandments of Christ. But human nature is human nature still; and lapses occur daily. The more anxious we are to stand in all the ordinances of the law blameless, the more we are convicted

of failure; and failure at last makes us indifferent or despondent. 2. But may it not be that our ill success is due to misunderstanding the philosophy of the subject, and failure to appropriate the forces which would have surely pushed us on toward success? What, then, is this Divine energy, which, were it constantly in our hearts, would, with an authority that we should gladly recognize and yield to, command obedience? It is love to Christ. I. LOVE IS A PASSION. 1. The strongest and most unconquerable forces in human nature are the passions. Like rivers in spring-time, when the snows are melting on the mountains, and the clouds, driven by south winds, are emptying their waters upon the earth, they rise and swell, and overflow, submerging the whole nature. 2. God is the Parent of our passions: He begat love, and said, "It is the fulfilling of the law," *i.e.*, the force out of which all obedience comes, just as we say, "That man's fortune is in his brains." Not that it is in dollars and cents actually there; but that within his brain are the forces that shall win his fortune. 3. Now, Christ, the greatest and wisest of all Teachers, knew the use of passion; for it was His own child. He created man with it. He knew, too, its potency; for, when a man was begotten, He supplied it to him in due measure and force. When He began to teach, He did not go to the conscience, and say, "Convict;" not to the reverential faculty, and say, "Adore;" nor to the reason, and say, "Argue, speculate." No: He went straight and at once to the great central force in nature —to that engine-like power in man, which has power not merely to propel itself, but to start all the long train of faculties that are dependent upon it into motion, and to say, "Love." Christ used it everywhere. In the case of the poor wicked woman, whose tears fell at His feet when He was at dinner with the Pharisee, He made it the measure of forgiveness. He made it the source of all obedience, as in our text. The Apostle John made it the test of regeneration. And, as if he would put it so that all eyes must see it, he wrote, "God is love." II. LOVE REQUIRES A PERSON TO ELICIT IT. 1. Regarded as a sentiment, love is possible in respect to principles; but, regarded as a passion, it is possible only touching a person. A patriot does not lay down his life for liberty in the front rank of battle with the same feeling which fills a frontiersman when he dies fighting at the door of his log-cabin in an heroic attempt to defend his wife and children from the murderous savages. We admire beauty, we reverence virtue, we praise modesty as elements of character; but never until the eyes behold them clothed in physical form do we love them. The qualities we admire, the woman we love. 2. Here, at this point, you see how love educates one in worthy directions. The man loves the woman, the woman the man, and each the qualities that the other represents. Each educates the other into a finer appreciation. They grow to be each more like the other. In this great love of assimilation going on between those who truly love, based on the apprehension of embodied virtues, I find the true source of that gratitude in my heart, that God took flesh and dwelt among us. Before Christ came, God was an abstraction, a collection of powers and principles, august and lovely, known to the reason, the conscience, the reverential faculties, but not to the warm, passionate side of human nature. And may God forgive us, who, having this living, breathing, personal Saviour revealed to us, love Him so little! "If ye love Me," said Christ: not the principles I represent, the truth I teach, My virtue, but "Me." 3. Is it not just at this point that we are able to see why religion is so cold and unexpressive? Our philosophy is at fault. We have put truth in front of Him who revealed it. We keep the principles, but lose the Person, of Christ. We have lost sight of the sun in our eager chase to capture the sunbeams. 4. Whence comes the charm of love and loving life? Is it not grouped around some person, as fragrance around a flower? Does it not come from the eye, the voice, the face, the form, of one beloved? Let the loved form be stricken, the voice silent and where is the charm of your love gone? It has gone out, with the personal life that expressed it; gone as the fragrance goes when you shake the leaves of the rose from their fastenings; gone back to God who gave it; and "your house is left unto you desolate." What is domestic life now? And what is religious life when the face and form of Jesus are gone from the chamber of your heart, but a cold, silent, embarrassed, constrained, and mournful state? 5. You hear people say that the absence of religious emotion in our churches and among the upper classes is due to their culture and refinement. It is not so. The argument proves too much. Love is not subject to such modification. Who would say that a cultivated person cannot love as intensely as a rude one? Must a young man marry an ignorant girl in order to be loved? This sublime passion has but one voice, one touch, the world over. Like some bird,

true to its species, that inhabits every clime, its food, its plumage, its mode of birth and growth, its note, are everywhere the same. III. THE POWER OF LOVE. 1. Obedience is the hardest of all things for those naturally inclined not to obey, to do. It is so with a child. And it is therefore necessary to bring the strongest possible motive to bear upon the child, that he may obey. You say, "My children love me, but they do not mind me. That motive does not make them obedient." But have you ever shown your child the connection between your heart and his wrong conduct? Have you made the little fellow understand how his behaviour hurts you? Have you sought to restrain him as you would a young dog, by the stamp of your foot and the glance of your eye? or as a parent should, by moral education? Some people appeal more to brute fear in their children than they do to human love. 2. Love is the strongest passion known to mortals. It is stronger than hate, for death checks its cry. Leaving the bloody body on the sand, it returns content to its kennel. But love is not checked, is not weakened by death. There is no power like love. It will carry heavier burdens, endure more buffeting, do more service, face more perils, live on under the sense of deepest shame, beyond any other emotion that the heart of man is able to feel. (*W. H. H. Murray.*) *On obeying Christ:*— I. THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO OBEY CHRIST BECAUSE THEY SEE FOR THEMSELVES THAT HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE LOFTY AND GOOD. But this is not the same thing as obeying Christ. 1. If a man over whom you have no authority consults you about a piece of work, and does not take your advice, you may think him a dull or a lazy man, but not a disobedient one. There can be no obedience or disobedience where there is no authority. But if the man is your servant the case is different. He may think that his own way is better than yours, but he has to accept yours. You are his master. So if I recognize the authority of Christ, I shall obey Him before I recognize that His commandments are good and wise. His words are laws to be fulfilled, not ethical treatises the soundness of whose principles I find by study. 2. In the training of children we do not explain everything before we expect obedience. A child of six does not easily understand why he should take offensive medicine, or a child of ten why he should learn the Latin declensions. He has to do it first, and to discover the reasons afterwards. And so if a child be not disciplined to truthfulness, industry, &c., before he can see for himself the obligation of these virtues, he will never see that lying and indolence are vices. Compel him to be industrious and he will discover the obligations of industry. 3. And so if we obey Christ His commandments will shine in their own light. It is not by meditation but by practice that we see the beauty of His words. II. THERE ARE OTHERS WHO ACCEPT CHRIST'S JUDGMENTS ON ALL MORAL QUESTIONS AGAINST THEIR OWN BECAUSE HE KNOWS SO MUCH MORE ABOUT RIGHTEOUSNESS THAN THEY DO. This is a great advance, but it is not enough. It is only faith in Christ's larger moral wisdom, not in His authority. It sometimes happens that a young man finds himself in a position in which it is hard for him to reconcile his personal interests with the claims of others. There are three or four courses open to him; one of them he dismisses as involving quite unnecessary sacrifice; he is perplexed about the rest. He consults an older man in whom he has perfect faith. His friend tells him that he is bound to take the course which he has dismissed from his mind. The young man cannot see why, but trusts his older friend's judgment rather than his own. This is a great proof of confidence, but it is not obedience. Christ does not come asking only for our confidence. He comes asserting authority. III. WE MUST OBEY GOD BECAUSE WE OUGHT. 1. There is a light which lighteth every man, and however broken and obscured is a light from heaven. It is the revelation of the eternal law of righteousness, and whatever obedience I owe that law which is revealed to conscience I owe to God. That God is my Creator, is good, can punish, imposes on me many obligations; but if He were not my God, though I should be bound to be grateful to Him, or should fear Him, yet my conscience would determine the measure of my duty towards Him, and I might not find absolute obedience to be due to Him. But in that He is God, He has an authority over me that is unique and unlimited; and you might just as well ask, Why should I obey conscience? as, Why should I obey God? The only answer in each case is, I ought. There is nothing more to be said. 2. And in Christ God comes and claims my obedience. He is the eternal law of righteousness incarnate. He does not counsel; He commands. IV. THIS POSITION IS CHALLENGED ON THE GROUND THAT EVEN IN CHRIST'S PRESENCE CONSCIENCE IS SUPREME. It is true that conscience must determine whether or not the claims of Christ are valid; but when conscience has once discovered that He is the

personal revelation of the law of righteousness, it has discovered its Master. "But am I to obey Christ against the dictates of my own conscience?" Wait and see whether the conflict arises. It may happen that some of Christ's precepts impose duties which conscience has not discovered, for conscience is not omniscient, and often discovers duties when too late to discharge them. What would we now give if we had recognized filial objections, which are now so clear, thirty years ago? Christ enables us to anticipate experience. He does not command what conscience condemns; but in the early years of Christian life it is very commonly found that He commands many duties which as yet conscience does not enforce. V. THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST PROVOKE not only speculative criticism, but RESENTMENT. 1. It is one thing to submit to an abstract law which conscience discovers, in this there is no humiliation; it is quite another thing to submit to the government of a Person. Nor is the claim resisted, because made by one who has "been made flesh." There are many who suppose they believe in God, but who refuse Him all authority over conduct. They regard Him as nothing more than an hypothesis to account for the universe. While He is nothing more than this the personal life is free; as soon as He claims authority the freedom seems lost. 2. But those to whom the great discovery of God in Christ has come, know that in His service there is perfect freedom. The rule of law is the real tyranny. The law can only command; but when Christ becomes Lord of conduct, He stands by us in every conflict; gives strength as well as defines duty. Christ becomes our Comrade, but yet He is our Ruler, and we are under the government of a higher Will than our own. 3. We have to obey God in Christ. But when the real secret of the Christian revelation is mastered, the obedience assumes an unique character. The fountains of our life are in Him. He is our higher, truer self. Not until we abide in Christ, and He in us, are we able to keep His commandments. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *Loved of God*:—An oak tree, as it stands in the open forest, presents one of the most perfect forms of sturdy independence. So fitted is that tree to stand alone, that the architect of the Bell Rock lighthouse copied the work of a greater Architect, and took as the model of a building that was to resist the sweep of waves and winds the trunk of an oak tree. In striking contrast with this, there are plants in nature, and some of them the most beautiful and fragrant, that cannot stand alone. Yet these are not doomed to be trodden under foot. No; types of him who is strong in his weakness, exalted in his humility, these may overtop the loftiest oak, and laugh at the storm that lays its head in the dust. And how? They are made to attach themselves to other objects; and when they have had no other objects to attach themselves to, they entwine their arms within each other—embrace their own body: like a selfish man, whose affections are all fixed upon himself. As these plants are, so are we; what their tendrils, and arms, and instruments of attachment are to them, our affections are to us. Man is not made to be independent. Constituted as I and you are, we can no more fling off our affections than we can fling off any other part of our nature. Be the object good or bad, be it the earth or be it heaven, man can no more live without loving than he can live without breathing. Obedience to the command "love not the world" had been an impossibility, unless there had been this other command—"love the Lord thy God." I must love something; and if you would put the love of the world out of my heart, you must pour the love of God into it. Note—I. THE FATHER LOVES THOSE WHO LOVE HIS SON. How God should have loved those who hated Him—but that God should love us, so soon as through grace we come to love His Son—I as a father, you as parents, can easily understand. I love all that love my children. Do my child a good, and it has a double value than if it were done to myself; do my child an injury, and I know nothing in this world that would so soon lash and goad a father into madness. I have heard of good people who have been greatly distressed to know whether God loved them. The way to know that is just to see and know, "Am I loving Christ?" Can you appeal to Him who searches all your heart, and taking up the language of a man who, if he belied his Master, afterwards most bravely died for Him. "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee?" Then, you can add, I know that God loves me; and if God loves me, happy am I, I can afford to dispense with the love of others. With my back at the throne of God I can defy the world. And even if they hate me who should love me, I am not miserable: with the sun in the sky, I can afford to dispense with the twinkling stars. The love of God is like the life of God, the covenant of grace standeth sure, and, "whom He loveth He loveth to the end." II. IF WE LOVE CHRIST, GOD AND CHRIST WILL COME TO US. David was so offended at the

cold-blooded murder of Amnon, that although he permitted Absalom to return to Jerusalem, for two years he would not see him. And when the sin of Eden was committed, God was so offended that He withdrew. Intercourse between God and man after the Fall was mainly continued through servants, until at length His Son came, and He came to reconcile them that were at enmity, and has done it. And I take that to be expressed in, "We will come unto Him." That implies that the offence has been removed; that the friendly visits are renewed. Having faith in Christ, we have peace with God. You may ask me how God and Christ come to us. I need not tell you, that they come in the Word, by daily grace, by the communications of the Spirit: so much so, that there are no lovers meet so often as Jesus and His bride; and there is no mother goes so often to her nursery, to see her children, as I believe our Father comes to visit His children upon earth. You see your neighbour once a day; you see your friend or brother once or twice a year; but if you are God's people, there are none you meet so often as God. He comes at the time of prayer; takes the mercy-seat at the family worship; and into that closet where the good man goes, goes along with him. The believer finds every morning a letter from home on his table, in his Bible—a letter from His Father. He may be humble, poor, despised; but there is not a man on earth moves in such high society as the humblest of God's poor ones. III. GOD AND CHRIST WILL ABIDE WITH US. What else will? Who else will? Not your parents, pastors, health, prosperity, family. A good man deprived of His all is left God, his Bible, grace, a throne of grace. Conclusion: Cultivate the love of Christ. It is a fire that will go out unless it is fed; it is a plant that will die unless it is cultivated. There are two sayings that should stir us up to this, "Seeing is believing;" "Out of sight out of mind." Why is it that in heaven they ever love? Because they ever see? Now, as you cannot see Christ, there is the more need that you should make up by faith for want of sight. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The Father's love felt*:—The sun was shining in the heavens, revealing to the world the infinite beauty of form and colour, for untold ages before its rays were analyzed by the prism. It was bringing forth verdure by its warmth for untold ages before it was found out that oceans of hydrogen served upon his surface, and that heat, like light, is a mode of motion. What you and I want, and what you and I have, is not the bare truth that there is a sun, but the sense of its warmth. What we want, and what we have is not an analysis of what the idea of God means, but the sense that there is a Father who loves us, and has communion with us. (*E. Hatch, D.D.*) *Christ and His words*:—I. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS WORDS. 1. Christ and His words are both very fully made known to us. This is not always the case with the teachers of the race. (1) Sometimes we may have a great personality who has stirred his own and subsequent generations, but we have few or none of his words. His secret has died with him, as in the case of Pythagoras, Noah, Enoch, Abraham. (2) We may have great and noble words from a man, but we may know little of his personality—as in the case of Homer, Shakespeare, Plato, Isaiah, and many of those prophets. (3) But in Christ both the personality and the words have been brought out into the clearest and fullest illumination. We should have felt unsatisfied unless we had heard the law of love from His own lips, and our wish is met. And with the words God has given us the life, as never a life was given, by those four, each different, yet each the same, a separate mirror to take in the side presented to it, but all disclosing in life-like harmony the one grand person—each so absorbed in his theme that he himself is forgotten. (4) The words of Christ, then, and Christ Himself, are both fully made known to us. The gospel has its expression in His words, but its power and spirit are in His life. He is Himself "the Word made flesh"—the greatest utterance in the greatest person. 2. There is a perfect harmony between Christ and His words. (1) He and His words are in agreement, else they could not co-exist and coalesce as He says they must do. This is not always the case with a man and His words. (*a*) Sometimes we can love and esteem a man, and yet his words carry neither conviction to the understanding nor moving power to the soul. (*b*) Or, we may admire the words, but we cannot love the man. It is with pain that we turn from the words of Bacon to his life, and from the scorn of worldly ambition by the author of the "Night Thoughts" to his eager pursuit of it in courtly circles. One of the most melancholy contrasts is between the words of the wisest of men and the exemplification which he himself gave of wisdom. How different when we come to Christ! Our deepest moral nature sets the seal of approval on His words. "Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into Thy lips." When

He inculcates humility, He Himself "is among the disciples as one that serveth." When He speaks of purity, "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." When He urges the law of kindness, "He goes about doing good." (2) While the words and life are in harmony, yet the life is greater than the words. A man should always be more than his expression. We feel that whatever some men may say or do, they are capable of something above it. This is pre-eminently true of Jesus. This superiority of the person to the words of Christ is not destructive of harmony; it is the highest reach of it. In all things that perfectly agree there must be a great and a greater, in some such way as God agrees with His universe, which is His expression of Himself, while yet He remains an infinity behind it. It is one of the most important steps a man can take in his spiritual history when he passes from listening to the sayings to looking up into the face of Christ, and learns that the words are only rays from the countenance of the "Eternal Life," the natural breathings from Him who is "the Word made flesh." "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, but because we ourselves know that this is indeed the Christ." II. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LOVING CHRIST AND KEEPING HIS WORDS. Note—1. The central truth of Christian doctrine, viz., that there must be a change of heart before there is a change of life. Christ is the lawgiver of God's world, and before we can obey His laws we must be on terms of amity with Himself. God's friendship must come before God's service. Now, it is frequently taught—that there must be service before there can be friendship, and that peace can only be purchased by obedience. But who can do anything that will bear the look of service in a spiritual sense until the heart is in it? Love to Him, however, can face every duty, dare every danger, endure every sacrifice, when it sees His self-sacrifice to save him from the most terrible of all evils, exclusion from the favour and life of the God. Less than this cannot explain either the Epistles or Gospels, neither can it, in the last extremity, bear the weight of what Christ requires of those who own His allegiance. 2. The Christian philosophy of morality. (1) The superiority of the morality of Christianity, candid men who profess to stand outside generally admit. But what is often overlooked is that this superiority does not consist so much in its details as in its central principle of action. There is no system but Christianity that has gathered all the grand motives to morality round a person, and made the strength and essence of them spring from love to Him. (2) There would be a fatal objection to this if Christ were less than God. For then His claim of implicit obedience would be impious, and if He had done less for man than save him from the lowest depth, He could not require all his nature to be given up to Him. Here, again, the morality of the gospel is seen to be closely connected with its doctrines. The Divinity of Christ forbids the charge of assumption on His part, and His atonement prevents the feeling that there is over-exaction from us. This view makes Christian morality and doctrine cohere; and those men who speak of detaching the gospel morality from the gospel doctrine are as rational as the men who would pluck a blossom from a tree and think to have it come to fruit. Conclusion: There are only three conceivable ways in which morality can be thought of as springing up in man. 1. By instinct. But how feeble, fluctuating, contradictory, this is when left to itself; and if it were perfect, morality by instinct would be morality mechanical. 2. By reason. But reason can never furnish sufficient motive power; it becomes weakest when passion is strongest. Hence reason, in morality, is much more a thing for the philosopher in his closet than for the mass of men in the struggle and strain of life. 3. By love, and love going forth to a person. It is this way that Christianity has chosen. (*J. Ker, D.D.*)

Vers. 25, 26. **These things have I spoken unto you.**—*The mission of the Holy Spirit:*—I. ITS DISTINCTION FROM THAT OF JESUS CHRIST. Both Christ and the Spirit were sent by the Father, and were sent to teach; but they differed in respect of—1. Character. Christ had been sent in the Father's name as the Father's representative; the Spirit was come in Christ's name as Christ's representative. 2. Purpose. Christ had been sent to furnish men with an objective image of God; the Spirit to give an inward apprehension of the same. 3. Duration. Christ came for a season; the Spirit for ever. 4. Results. Christ's mission was imperfectly realized so far as it related to the enlightenment of men; that of the Spirit would attain complete success both in instructing and sanctifying. II. ITS FULFILMENT IN THE CASE OF CHRIST'S APOSTLES. 1. Scripture illumination. A wonderful light began to shine on the Old Testament, which enabled them to see its references to Christ

which had previously been hidden (*cf.* Psa. xvi. 8–11 with Acts ii. 25–28; xiii. 35; Psa. cx. 1 with Acts ii. 34; Psa. ii. 1, 2 with Acts iv. 25; Psa. ii. 7 with Acts xiii. 33; Amos ix. 11 with Acts xv. 16; Zech. ix. 9 with John xii. 16). 2. Quickened recollection. A lively recollection of forgotten words of Jesus began to show itself. Examples: chap. ii. 22; Luke xxiv. 8; Acts xi. 16; xx. 35. In particular, Christ's utterances concerning His relation with the Father (chap. viii. 28). 3. Further revelation. A gradual disclosure of truths which had been concealed in Christ's teaching but not developed as, *e.g.*, the doctrines of—(1) His Divinity (Acts i. 36). (2) His atoning death (Acts iii. 19). (3) His exclusive Mediatorship (Acts iv. 12). (4) Justification by faith (Acts. xiii. 39; Rom. i. 16, 17; iii. 21–26; v. 1). (5) The Catholicity of the New Testament Church (Acts xi. 17; Rom. i. 6–7; ii. 11; Gal. vi. 15; Eph. ii. 14–16). In short, out of this flowed the New Testament. III. ITS RELATION TO THE GENERAL BODY OF BELIEVERS. 1. Negatively. It does not warrant the expectation that new revelations will be imparted to either the Church or individual—a pretension advanced by Rome, which places tradition on a level with the writings of apostles. 2. Positively. Christ's language implies that the Church and the individual have to-day, as the apostles had, a Teacher qualified to lead them into all religious truth (1 John ii. 20). Learn: 1. The high esteem in which the Holy Spirit should be held as the Father's Commissioner, the Saviour's Expositor, the apostles' Remembrancer, the Church's Teacher, the saints' Comforter. 2. The great confidence which should be placed in the Holy Spirit, possessing as He does the twofold stamp and seal of the Father and the Son. 3. The sincere gratitude with which the Holy Spirit should be welcomed, since without His assistance the revealed Christ cannot be understood. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The Teacher Spirit:* —I. THE PROMISED TEACHER. 1. "The Comforter" means literally one who is called to the side of another, primarily for the purpose of being his representative in some legal process; and, more widely, for any purpose of help, encouragement, and strength. 2. This comforting and strengthening office of the Spirit is brought into immediate connection with the conception of Him as a Teacher. That is to say, the best strength that God can give us is by the firm grasp and the growing clearness of understanding of the truths which are wrapped up in Christ. 3. This Divine Teacher is the Holy Ghost. We might have expected, as indeed we find in another context, the "Spirit of Truth" as appropriate in connection with the office of teaching. But there is the profound lesson for us in this, that, side by side with the thought of illumination, there lies the thought of purity built upon consecration. (1) There is no real knowledge of Christ and His truth without purity of heart. The man who has no ear can never understand music. The man who has no eye for beauty can never be brought to bow his spirit before some gem of art. The scholars in Christ's school have to come there with clean hands and clean hearts. (2) On the other hand, the truest motives for purity are found in that great word which is meant much rather to make us good than to make us wise. So, in this designation of the teaching Spirit as holy, there lie lessons for two classes. All fanatical professions of possessing Divine illumination which are not warranted by purity of life are lies or self-delusion. And, on the other hand, cold-blooded intellectualism will never force the locks of the palace of Divine truth, but they that come there must have clean hands and a pure heart. 4. The Holy Ghost is "sent by God" in Christ's name. (1) He acts as Christ's Representative; just as Christ comes in the Father's name and acts as His Representative. (2) He has, for the basis of His mission, and the sphere in which He acts, the recorded facts of Christ's life and death, these and none other. 5. This Messenger is a Person. "He." They tell us that the doctrine of the Trinity is not in the New Testament. The *word* is not, but the *thing* is. In this verse we have the Father, the Son, and the Spirit brought into such close and indissoluble union as is only vindicated from the charge of blasphemy by the belief in the divinity of each. That Divine Spirit is more than an influence. "He shall teach," and He can be grieved by evil and sin. II. THE LESSON. 1. Christ is the lesson book. 2. The significance of this lesson book, the history of our Lord, cannot be unfolded all at once. The world and the Church received Christ, as it were, in the dark; and, like some man that has got a precious gift into his hands as the morning was dawning, each fresh moment that passed revealed as the light grew new beauties and new preciousness in the thing possessed. Christ's words are inexhaustible, and the Spirit's teaching is to unveil more and more the infinite significance that lies in the apparently least significant of them. 3. If this be our Lord's meaning here, He plainly anticipated that after His departure there should be a development of Christian doctrine. The earlier

disciples had only a very partial grasp of Christ's nature. They knew next to nothing of the great doctrine of sacrifice; about His resurrection; that He was going back to heaven; of the spirituality or universality of His kingdom. None of these things were in their mind. They had all been in germ in His words. And after he was gone, there came over them a breath of the teaching Spirit, and the unintelligible flashed up into significance. 4. If Jesus Christ and the deep understanding of Him be the true lesson of the Divine Spirit, then real progress consists, not in getting beyond Christ, but in getting more fully into Him. I hope I believe in the continuous advance of Christian thought as joyfully as any man, but my notion of it—and Christ's notion of it—is to get more and more into His heart, and to find within Him, and not away from Him, "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." All other teachers' words become feeble by age, as their persons become wrapped in oblivion; but the progress of the Church consists in absorbing more and more of Christ, in understanding Him better, and becoming more and more moulded by His influence. III. THE SCHOLARS. 1. The apostles, in all this conversation, stand as the representatives of the Church. For this very Evangelist refers to this promise, when he says, addressing all his Asiatic brethren, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things." And, again, "The unction which ye have of Him abideth with you, and ye need not that any man should teach you." So, then, every believing soul has this Divine Spirit for His Teacher. 2. But let us not forget that the early teaching is the standard. As to the first disciples the office of the Divine Spirit was to bring before them the deep significance of their Master's life and words, so to us the office of the teaching Spirit is to bring to our minds the deep significance of the record of what they learned from Him. "If a man think himself to be spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." Conclusion: (1) Let this great promise fill us with shame. What slow scholars we are! How little we have learnt! How we have let passion, prejudice, the babble of men's tongue's, anybody and everybody take the office of teaching us God's truth, instead of waiting before Him and letting His Spirit teach us! "When for the time we ought to be teachers, have need that one teach us which be the first principles of the oracles of Christ." (2) Let it fill us with desire, diligence, and calm hope. They tell us that Christianity is effete. Have we got all out of Jesus Christ that is in Him? Is the process that has been going on for all these centuries going to stop now? Ah! depend upon it the new problems of this generation will find their solution where the old problems of past generations have found theirs, and the old commandment of the old Christ will be the new commandment of the new Christ. Foolish men both on the Christian and on the anti-Christian side stand and point to the western sky and say, "The Sun is setting." But that which sank in the west rises fresh and bright in the east for a new day. Jesus Christ is the Christ for all the ages and for every soul, and the world will only learn more and more of His inexhaustible fulness. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The teaching of the Holy Ghost:* —I. WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES US. He teaches God's people—1. All that they do. (1) There are some things which you and I can do naturally without any teaching. Who ever taught a child to cry? But you and I could not cry of ourselves till we had received "the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (2) Children have to be taught to speak. We, too, are taught to speak. We have none of us learned, as yet, the whole vocabulary of Canaan. "No man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost?" Those first words which we ever used as Christians—"God be merciful to me a sinner," were taught us by the Holy Spirit; and that song which we shall sing before the throne will be His last lesson. (3) God's people are taught to walk and act by Him. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." To stray is natural; to keep the path of right is spiritual. (4) So with the higher efforts. The preaching of the gospel, when it be done aright, is only accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit. So is it with sacred song. The wings with which I mount towards the skies in sacred harmony and joy are Thy wings, O Holy Dove! The fire with which my spirit flames at times of hallowed consecration is the flame of the Spirit! 2. All they know. We may learn very much from the Word of God morally and mentally, but spiritual things are only to be spiritually discerned. (1) He reproves us of sin. No man knows the exceeding sinfulness of sin, but by the Holy Ghost. (2) Next the Spirit teaches us the total ruin, depravity, and helplessness of self. (3) The character of God. God's goodness and omnipotence are clearly manifested in the works of creation; but where do I read of His grace, mercy, or justice? These are

only revealed to us in this precious Book, and so that we cannot know them until the Spirit opens our eyes to perceive them. (4) Jesus Christ. It is the Holy Ghost who manifests the Saviour to us in the glory of His person; the love of His heart, the power of His arm, the preciousness of His blood, and the prevalence of His plea. (5) Our adoption. Indeed, all the privileges of the new covenant, beginning from regeneration, unto the abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and especially that last point, for "eye hath not seen," &c. II. THE METHODS BY WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES. 1. He excites interest in the mind. He shows them that these things have a personal bearing upon their soul's present and eternal welfare. 2. He gives to the man a teachable spirit. There be men who will not learn. Teach them by little and little, and they say—"Do you think I am a child?" Tell them a great deal at once, and they say—"You have not the power to make me comprehend!" The Holy Spirit makes a man willing to learn in any shape. 3. He sets truth in a clear light. How hard it is sometimes to state a fact which you perfectly understand yourself, in such a way that another man may see it. It is like the telescope; there are many persons who, when they walk into an observatory and put their eye to the glass, expecting to see the rings of Saturn, have said, "I can see nothing at all; a piece of glass, and a grain or two of dust is all I can see!" "But," says the astronomer, "I can see Saturn in all his glory." Why cannot you? Because the focus does not suit the stranger's eye. By a little skill the focus can be altered so that the observer may be able to see what he could not see before. Now the Holy Spirit always gives the right focus to every truth. He sheds a light so strong and forcible upon the Word, that the spirit says, "Now I see it and understand it." 4. He enlightens the understanding. 'Tis marvellous, too, how the Holy Ghost does teach men who seem as if they never could learn. I know some brethren whose opinion I would not take in anything worldly on any account. But those men have a deeper, truer, and more experimental knowledge of the Word of God than many who preach it, because the Holy Spirit never tried to teach them grammar, and never meant to teach them business, but He has taught them the Word of God, and they understand it. But I have perceived, also, that when the Spirit has enlarged the understanding to receive Bible truth, that understanding becomes more capable of receiving other truth. 5. He refreshes the memory. "He shall bring all things to your remembrance." 6. He makes us feel its effect. You may try to teach a child the meaning of the term "sweetness;" but words will not avail, give him some honey and he will never forget it. So the Holy Spirit does not only tell us of Christ's love; He sheds it abroad in the heart. III. THE CHARACTERISTICS AND NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S TEACHING. The Holy Ghost teaches—1. Sovereignly. He teaches whom He wills, when He wills, as He wills. 2. Effectually. He never failed to make us learn yet. 3. Infallibly. We teach you errors through want of caution, over zeal, and the weakness of our own mind. 4. Continually. Whom once He teaches, He never leaves till He has completed their education. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Teacher of the Church*:—I. OUR NEED OF SUCH A TEACHER. It is not enough to assume the necessity of the teaching of the Holy Ghost. All experience shows that an outward revelation of truth is inadequate. Our knowledge is always in advance of our inward conformity to it or our practical compliance with it. But even when men seem to receive and believe the truth, we must not always assume that they really understand it, or that they need no more light than it brings along with it in order to discern the fulness of its meaning. By nature man does not so easily apprehend spiritual truth. II. THE NATURE OF HIS TEACHING. 1. As a Teacher, His work is in reality a continuation of the prophetical office of Christ. Jesus is the great Teacher; but the Holy Ghost is His representative on earth during His personal absence from His Church on earth. Thus we are reminded that the substance of His teaching was not a new revelation, distinct from that which had been already afforded, but an extension, completion, and application of that which had been given by Jesus Christ as His own words clearly show. He was not to speak of Himself, because He was not the Saviour in the exact sense of that word. The Holy Ghost was further to bring all things to the remembrance of the disciples of Christ which He had spoken to them. The words of the Son of God contained the germ of all Christian truth. But His work was not to be a mere helping of the memory. 2. And this work of teaching is carried on now in the Church of Christ by the Holy Ghost as truly as it was in the days of the apostles. The Holy Ghost no longer teaches us in the same manner in which He taught those who waited for His advent. No "cloven tongues as of

fire" rest upon us who preach, or upon you who hear. (1) He teaches us now by the Word which He inspired the apostles to write. (2) So also, He teaches by the instrumentality of the Christian ministry (Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12). (3) But the Holy Ghost also teaches us by inward illumination. He speaks to our hearts by His own personal influence, and casts the rays of His enlightening grace into the darkest recesses of our spirits. (4) And, ought we not to add, He gives us this teaching, whether with reference to things human or to things Divine, whether for our natural or our spiritual life, in answer to prayer. He is an infallible Teacher; and there is no other but He. He is an ever-present Teacher. III. Finally, let me notice TWO ERRORS LYING IN QUITE OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS, WHICH ARE COMMITTED WITH REFERENCE TO THE TEACHING OF THE HOLY GHOST. 1. The first is the error of those who profess to seek and receive the teaching of the Holy Ghost while they reject the means. 2. An error no less common, among you to whom I speak perhaps even more common, is the fault of those who forget the agency of the Holy Ghost in the use of the means of grace. (*W. R. Clark, M.A.*) **And bring all things to your remembrance.**—*The Holy Ghost a Remembrancer*:—I. THE HOLY GHOST TEACHES US, IN A GREAT MEASURE, NOT AT THE MOMENT, BUT IN AND BY THE MEMORY. None of the faculties of the human soul have been given it in vain. Every endowment has its office; and in working out salvation, man may find his whole intellectual and moral nature brought into play. It is so with fear, with hope, with love; so also with memory. 1. There is a very remarkable instance of this in the case of the apostles. Nothing is clearer than that the twelve disciples, at the time, did not and could not comprehend the nature or the teaching of their Lord. When the Holy Ghost came down, then, as He revived in their minds the memory of all that Christ had done and said, they began to see, more and more, who He was. 2. And thus also is it with ourselves. We interpret God's dealings with us, not at the moment, but as we go over them again in memory. Is it not the case that in every man's life occur critical periods, upon which the whole after existence turns, and which yet at the time he understands not? The becoming acquainted with a certain individual, the going for a few weeks to a certain place, have often fixed a man's whole after destiny. You knew not at the time how important the step was; but when you look back, you are able to discern in it the hand of God. It is in memory, that is, that you can trace God's dealings with your soul. 3. In the history of Churches and nations, the same rule will be noticed. How frequently in the progress of a kingdom has the history of centuries turned upon an infant's death, upon a bow drawn at a venture. "If the king had acted otherwise," says the annalist, "the history of the country from that hour would have had to be written differently." Yet to contemporaries it seemed of no consequence which course was taken. What a difference again does the moment of acting make. The same political conduct at one period stops, at another hurries on a revolution; yet the acutest human intellect at the instant discerns not the crisis. By and by a child can often appreciate the error, and trace its results. Nor is it hard to assign a reason why God should thus leave us blind at the moment, and allow us to be enlightened afterwards. It is evident that if, whilst an event was happening, we could see palpably God's hand in it, our freedom of will would be interfered with. II. LET US PASS ON TO OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS. 1. It is a common observation, that argument does no good. All a man's good opinion of himself is armed against you when you try to convince him that he is wrong. And perhaps if the truth is really on your side, there is yet another profounder cause why you are not heard. But you may also have noticed how in after years the same reasoning has made itself felt. When the excitement of the moment is over, the words of wisdom which we put from us will often return to the mind, and force conviction of themselves. 2. Take the case of a young man who laughs to scorn the remonstrances of a father, and pursues headlong his career of sin and self-pleasing. He has always an answer satisfactory to himself, if not to others. Life ebbs away, and those remonstrances seem to be wasted breath; yet not so. Again and again has it happened, that in distant lands and remote years, the reproof of a father and the sighs of a mother have echoed in the silent soul, and, like one risen from the dead, spoken with power. And what is this but the Holy Ghost acting upon the memory, to teach and convert the sinner. 3. And we may not pass over here the strange power which the dead possess in memory. Why should a person exercise an influence when departed out of this world which he did not exercise whilst alive? How many a wayward boy weeps bitter tears, as he recollects by a mother's grave, her earnest longings for his well-doing, her prayers and warnings against sin, and vows amendment which is often

the beginning of a saintly life. The meaning of this is the Holy Ghost using the power of memory to check man's sin, and stir him to repentance. 4. And there is a darker hour yet, when the Holy Ghost turns the faculty of memory to a terrible yet blessed account, when He causes the dying man to see with a fearful distinctness all the lapses of his life past. Conclusion: 1. Memory has no power to convert. It only preserves or recalls the past. But God the Holy Ghost lays hold of man's memory and turns souls unto righteousness. 2. It is on this peculiar working of God the Holy Ghost as a Remembrancer, that may be founded one main argument for early Christian education. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." 3. There remaineth yet a nobler accomplishment of the promise than any yet seen below. The work of the Holy Ghost as a regenerating sanctifying Spirit, will be past and over; but His work as a Remembrancer shall never cease. For in the courts of the heavenly city there shall be a perpetual recurrence of the souls of the redeemed to all that Christ said unto them and did for them on earth. If the thunder of their song shall ever roll with a mightier volume at one time than another, it will be, methinks, as the Eternal Spirit brings to the remembrance of each saved soul, the wonders of the way in which the Lord God led it. (*Bishop Woodford.*) *The Divine Remembrancer*:—I. There is A GIFT OF FORGETFULNESS. What would this world be if it were not given us to forget—if the finger of time had no subduing, and mellowing, and obliterating touches. What a mercy is oblivion! There is not a more gracious revelation of Deity than this—"I will not remember thy sins." It is among the best offices of the Holy Ghost that He can teach us to forget. There are many to whom the greatest lesson which they have to learn in the school of grace is to forget. You should not remember what God has forgotten. But here is our comfort—that if we will let the Spirit work in our hearts, He will secure at once the right memory and the right forgetfulness. II. A GIFT OF MEMORY. 1. Who has not to lament over his religious forgetfulness? Sermons, conversations, which were so interesting and so useful; hymns once learnt; passages of Scriptures, impressions, thoughts and feelings, which seemed engraven upon the mind as with a pen of iron—how have they effaced themselves? What would it be if everything which once lived in our souls were living there now? And if it be really an attribute of the Holy Ghost to bring all these things back again, and not to allow anything to die which was indeed the voice of Christ, what a possession that Spirit must be! And yet, what else can these words mean? 2. There is no doubt that a strong memory is a natural endowment. And he that has it has a wonderful power. But it is a gift—he could not help it. But that with which we have now to deal is something different. It is the prerogative of the Spirit to help the memory on all sacred subjects. And if upon sacred subjects then on all. For if that faculty of the mind be strengthened and increased in one department, surely it cannot fail to be improved in every other, for all memory is one. (1) Did you never know a verse of the Bible, which had been lying dormant in your mind for a long time, awake and come to you with a power and a vividness which quite surprised you? And it, strangely appropriate, just fits the circumstances in which you find yourself, and the state of your own mind. If it had been made for you it could not have suited you better. What is this but the Holy Ghost fulfilling His own mission. (2) Or there is a passage in the Bible with which you are very familiar—but to-day it stands out in such a new light, and carries such a power, never felt before, that it strikes upon you like a new creation. And yet you have read it hundreds of times—no verse more common. Then why is it so salient now? It is memory illuminated by the Holy Ghost. (3) Or, it may be no written word at all. Years and years back, Christ spoke to you by an impression. The rough contact of ten thousand things in this rude world has long since trodden it out. You are now as if that good impression had never been. Why is it there again to-day so distinct and loud? Did you call it up? What has raised it from those sleeping places? I know but one answer—He who quickens all buried things, He who raises dead Christs out of the graves of our dull hearts is bringing back the things of Christ to you. (4) Or, it may not be even as much as this. Who has not felt the mysterious power of association? It may be the smallest possible thing that evokes it—a breath of wind, a colour, the scent of a flower, the accent of a note. But it will make you go through chapters of existence. And what if all these recovered links of being are the waftings of the Spirit's wing, verifying the promise of Jesus. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*)

Ver. 27. **Peace I leave with you.**—*The legacy of legacies:*—The Earl of Dundonald fought with his solitary ship a line of formidable forts in South America, whose fire proved so raking that his men could not be got to stand to their guns. Calling his wife, he asked her to fire one of the guns, and show these men how to do their duty. She did so. Instantly they returned, burning with shame, to their posts, and soon the victory was theirs. The lady, in rehearsing the circumstance, said that the thing that was felt by her to be the most terrible, was not the din of battle, not the raking fire, but the awful calmness that sat fixed on her husband's countenance, as it seemed to carry in itself the sure presage of victory. This we can all understand. Every moral nature feels that settled calmness in the face of dangers and deaths is the loftiest example of the sublime. Of this we have one peerless example in the man Christ Jesus, who, on the eve of His agony, utters these words. We have here a word of—I. FAREWELL. The Old Testament phrase, "Peace be with you!" had now come to be a word of salutation, as it still is in the Oriental "salaam," the modern form of the Hebrew "shalom," or peace. Originally, it was a benedictory prayer. But by this time, in most cases, like our words "adieu," "good-bye," which mean "God be with you!" the deeper and devouter meaning had very much exhaled, leaving only a breath of courtesy or compliment behind. But this is good, so far as it goes: for our religion says, "be courteous," and no gentleman can compare with the Christian gentleman. Christ here commends these forms of courtesy by His august example. But he does a great deal more. Instead of pharisaically leaving these forms, because they are not always what they ought to be, He tells us to take them up and make them what they ought to be. But, as the context shows, He here means a farewell; and this farewell of peace He repeats at the end of the sixteenth chapter, where He brings these valedictory discoursings to a close. II. BEQUEST. "Leave." Even in the case of a human relative, it is much to inherit his peace. We prize more than gold a father's, a mother's dying benediction. But what are such legacies compared with that which Jesus here bequeaths to the humblest of His disciples. If we have Christ's peace, no matter for any one's curse, no matter what wrath may surround our head. Peace is here used twice, and occurs first in its general sense. Peace within, in the calm serenity of a pardoned and reconciled soul; peace without, in every needed temporal blessing; peace in storms and afflictions, in the precious gift of a "heart established, trusting in the Lord"; peace in persecution; yea, "perfect peace," blessing them that curse us, doing good to them that hate us; peace in death; for "mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace"; peace in the grave, for there the body is stretched out in repose, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest"; and the consummation of all peace in heaven. And as Christ is the Testator, so He is Himself the Executor. "My peace." Yes; what the Saviour leaves He gives: what He died to procure, He rose and reigns to bestow. III. GOSPEL. This peace is a peace particularly Christ's own; that which He Himself possesses and feels, as having finished His work and wrought out our salvation. Would you see something of it? Go to Calvary. The pallid lips give forth the victory-shout, "It is finished;" and the words, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit"; and then the triumphant soul of the Redeemer rises in peace and rapture to the bosom of His Father and His God. It is the climax of peace. Now the peace which was then our Saviour's own He imparts to the humblest of His disciples. We believe in Him and become pardoned, accepted, and sanctified in the Beloved. IV. GOOD CHEER. "Not as the world giveth," &c. "There is no peace saith my God to the wicked." But let the wicked only forsake his way, and this peace straightway breathes down upon him like a scented vivifying gale from the delectable land. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." How suggestive the contrast! 1. It is vain to seek peace—(1) In the world's objects of attraction, such as pride, pleasure, and ambition, which bring with them no end of thorny care. (2) In the world's friendships, which at best are but fleeting, and which too often promise only to falsify and forget. (3) In the world's wisdoms, which are folly. (4) In the world's religions, which are worse. 2. But our Saviour's words seem to refer mainly to the manner of the giving. (1) The world gives conventionally, Christ gives sincerely. (2) The world gives superficially, Christ gives substantially. (3) The world gives partially, Christ gives perfectly. (4) The world gives capriciously, Christ gives constantly. (5) The world gives temporarily, Christ gives eternally. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The legacy of Christ*:—That the Son of God might become the "merciful and faithful High Priest" of His Church, "it behoved Him to

be made in all things like unto His brethren." Hence we see Him influenced by the same affections that influence ourselves, and manifesting the same dispositions. When His end drew near, He made, as it were, His will, and would not suffer the last interview with His disciples to close before He had reminded them of the precious gifts which He purposed to bestow. I. THE BLESSING WHICH CHRIST BEQUEATHS. "Peace." If there is any word which can excite pleasing sensations in the human breast, it is this. It is as sweet to the children of men, as the long-wished for shore to the mariner who is wearied with the labours of the ocean. It is as reviving as the warm breezes of the spring to the man who has just risen from a bed of sickness. How welcome are the tidings of returning peace to a nation which has been long accustomed to the sound of war! How beautiful the feet of them who publish it! But it is not amongst mankind only that peace is thus highly esteemed. It is declared by the great Jehovah Himself to be among the things which He calls good. To bring down this blessing was the great object of our Saviour's appearing. Hence the prophecies spoke of Him as "the Prince of Peace." Hence, when He was born, peace on earth was proclaimed by the rejoicing angels. Hence, too, when He was about to leave His beloved disciples, peace was the precious legacy he left, and it was His first blessing after He rose. What, then, is this peace? Is it an exemption from the calamities of life, from sorrow and affliction? No. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Is it peace with the world, an exemption from its hatred and persecution? No. "The world hateth you." It is—1. Peace with God. The man who inherits this precious legacy was once the enemy of the Lord. But now the enmity of his carnal mind has been subdued. He has gone, as a repentant prodigal, to the throne of his heavenly Father, and has received a welcome and a pardon there. "Being justified by faith, he has peace," &c. 2. Peace in the soul. This is a blessing which none but Christ can give, and none but His renewed people receive. Others may seek it, may perhaps find something which they mistake for it; but until a man's heart has been "sprinkled from an evil conscience," he must remain as far off from true peace of mind as he is from God. 3. Christ's peace. It is the same peace that He Himself enjoys; that kept His soul tranquil in the midst of all His sorrows, and into which He is now entered in His Father's kingdom above. II. THE MANNER IN WHICH IT HAS BEEN GIVEN. 1. By bequest. (1) The property which a man conveys by a will or testament must be his own estate and property; and he must also have a right of transferring it to others. Thus this peace was Christ's own, and which He had the power of disposing of by will. He was the only Being in the universe rich enough to purchase reconciliation. (2) This peace could never have been inherited if the great Giver of it had not died. A man may leave to his friends abundant riches, but these gifts will profit them nothing till after he is dead. (3) "Not as the world giveth." The blessings which Christ has left are widely different from those things which men leave to their friends. They are—(*a*) More valuable. Men may leave behind them riches, mansions, titles; but they cannot make a man happy, even in the day of prosperity; while the legacy of Christ, even in the darkest night of adversity, can "satisfy the longing soul, and fill the hungry soul with goodness." (*b*) More permanent. They will remain precious as ever, when every earthly treasure shall be heard of no more. Conclusion: 1. The security and stability of the Divine promises. Peace is not only promised, but bequeathed. The Testator is now dead; the testament is in force. 2. A man may have a precious legacy bequeathed to him, and he may be so infatuated as to refuse to accept it, or so indolent as to neglect the proper means of possessing himself of it; but still the legacy is his. The very same causes, united with "an evil heart of unbelief," may keep you strangers to the peace of God. 3. But before we can have a title to this legacy, we must be united to Christ by a living faith. "There is no peace to the wicked." (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The legacy of Christ:*—Our Lord, being about to die, makes all the accustomed preparations, and discharges all the functions of a dying man. He charges His friends with His last commands, delivers to them His last advices, prays for them a last and touching prayer, institutes for them an expressive and affecting ordinance—the great Christian keepsake to be observed "in remembrance of Him"—and compensates them as much as possible for their deprivement of Himself, by bequeathing them all that He had to dispose of—this precious and peculiar blessing of peace. I. THE THING ITSELF. The legacy is "peace." 1. It fulfils the first great condition of peace, by harmonizing the inward feelings with the outward experience; in other words, it establishes peaceful relations between the soul and its proper objects.

(1) Between the soul and its God. These had been violated. The primitive intercourse between man and his Maker was loving and intimate. When he sinned, such intercourse became impossible. "How can two walk together unless they be agreed?" The holy anger of the offended God is met by the hostile feeling of the offending man. In this condition of enmity Christ becomes "our peace." By His Cross He appeases the anger of God. By His Spirit He subdues the enmity in man. He makes pardon possible on God's part by bearing our sins; He makes it to be desired on ours by renewing our hearts. (2) Between the soul and its moral duty. Corruption opposes our duty to God, selfishness our duty to man, and their antagonism is destructive of peace. But under the influence of the gospel both are destroyed. (*a*) Duties to God are discharged with delight. The service is love, the principle is gratitude. (*b*) Nor are duties to man less cordial. We are taught to "love as brethren," and are conformed to a noble example. This peace comes into individual hearts, and, eradicating selfishness and bitterness, produces charity; it comes into our homes, and it adds the brotherhood of grace to the brotherhood of nature. It comes among nations, and it teaches that righteousness is exaltation, affection, and felicity. (3) Between the soul and its providential experiences. When did irreligion acquiesce in providential trials? But the gospel gives us revelations of the purpose of God's providence, new recognitions of its real character, and thus harmonizes our feelings with even its deepest adversities. (4) Between the soul and its destiny; peace in anticipation of the future life. The believer has no longer a "fearful looking for of judgment"; he "knows in whom he has believed"; he is "begotten again to a lively hope." This is more than reconciliation—it is assurance; more than peace *with* God—it is peace *in* God; more than peace with his lot—it is rejoicing over it. 2. It is competent to produce harmony among the inward feelings themselves—a condition palpably as essential as the former—essential in order *to* the former. For, while there is internal discord, there cannot be external harmony. Sin destroyed the peace of the inward heart, as effectually as it destroyed the peace of its outward relations. There can be no peace among passions of equal intensity and independence, unless subject to some common and absolute rule. To meet this need, we "receive the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." Every affection is taught to recognize Him. Every gratification is found in His will. Every passion is thus made to harmonize. Every desire is solicited to a common tendency. Every energy is directed to a common result. II. THIS BEQUEATHMENT THE SAVIOUR IDENTIFIED WITH HIMSELF. 1. "My peace." He had secured it to them. It was purchased by His atonement, and wrought by His Spirit. 2. It is peace like His own; the peculiar and surpassing peace which, as a man, He had enjoyed. (1) Peace with God. (2) The peace of perfect and conscious obedience. (3) The peace of perfect affiance. No endurance made Him murmur; no extremity provoked His impatience; no deprivation shook His confidence. (4) The peace of blissful anticipation. He knew that when His work was done He should be "raised to glory and honour." In all these elements the peace of the Redeemer and the peace of His followers are identical. III. THE PECULIARITY OF THE BESTOWMENT. "Not as the world giveth." 1. The method of the world in giving peace is by a careful adjustment of external things, sweetening such as are bitter, smoothing such as are rugged. It mistakes a peaceful lot for peaceful feelings; totally neglectful of feelings within, it attends solely to circumstances without; it seeks to remove anxiety, not by trusting in Providence, but by heaping up wealth to make us independent of Providence. It seeks to satisfy inordinate craving, not by moderating desire, but by scraping up gratifications until desire be satiated. It builds up around a man its vain fortifications; but let its defences be carried, and the untutored and effeminate soul is a helpless and hopeless prey. Broadly contrasted with this is the peace of Jesus Christ. It is not dependent on things without; it arises from sources within. It requires not that there should be ease and indulgence; it may exist amid the utmost privation and self-sacrifice. It is not the peace of compromise, but of conquest. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace." 2. Identifying peace with indifference, the world would school the heart into an insensibility. Thus the men of the world seek peace; they would freeze the sea of affection, that no storm may agitate its waves; they would petrify the heart, that no grasp of anguish may mark it. And in like manner would they deal with spiritual things; they would quiet all religious solicitudes by utterly banishing them; peace with God they would have by forgetting Him; peace with their consciences by stifling them; peace with the claims

of duty by refusing to listen to them; peace with their future destiny by never thinking about it. "They make a solitude, and call it peace." (*H. Allon, D.D.*) *Christ's legacy:*—I. THE NATURE OF THE BLESSING BEQUEATHED. 1. The enjoyment of actual reconciliation with God. 2. A sweet composure and calmness of mind, arising from the sense of reconciliation impressed by the Spirit of God on our hearts. II. THE PECULIAR CONNECTION WHICH HE STATES THIS BLESSING TO HAVE WITH HIMSELF. "My peace." 1. Reconciliation to God exclusively arises from the merit of His sacrificial sufferings as being our Redeemer. "It is in consequence of the work of the Saviour that the Spirit has been sent actually to apply the blessing of reconciliation to the heart and to the conscience of man. III. THE POINTS OF CONTRAST EXISTING BETWEEN THIS BLESSING AND THE COMMUNICATIONS OF THE WORLD. "Not as the world giveth." 1. That which is given to us by the world is empty; that which is given to us by Christ is substantial. 2. What the world gives is pernicious, and that which Christ gives is beneficial. 3. That which is given to us by the world is changeable, and must perish; and that which is given to us by Christ is immutable, and must endure for ever. IV. THE INFLUENCE WHICH THE POSSESSION OF THIS BLESSING OUGHT TO POSSESS ON OUR MINDS. "Let not your heart be troubled." (*J. Parsons.*) *Christ's legacy:*—When Christ left the world, He made His will. His soul He bequeathed to His Father, and His body to Joseph. His clothes fell to the soldiers, His mother He left to the care of John. But what should He leave to His poor disciples, who had left all for Him? Silver and gold He had none; but He left them what was far better—His peace. (*M. Henry.*) *The legacy of peace:*—I. THE FIRST REQUISITE, IN ORDER TO THIS PEACE, IS HAVING, SEALED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, A CERTIFICATE OF JUSTIFICATION. One has said, "If you wish for peace with God, do your duty. Try to be as good as you can." But I have not been as good as I could. God has not had the first place in my love, and the first obedience in my life. Through Christ's intervention, however, the writ once against me is now null, for the sentence for treason is crossed through under sanction of the law itself, and I have in my very soul the certificate of justification, sealed by the Comforter. II. CHRIST'S PEACE COMES FROM CHRIST'S LIFE. You mistake if you fancy that this peace is a dull composure. It means more life, not less! The Spirit of Christ, in giving this peace, numbs no nerve, stifles no primitive impulse, mesmerises no faculty. On the contrary, His tendency is to make us spring up, broad awake, feeling alive all over. He makes, through this change in us, a change in everything around us. He makes old Christian truths, that once had become almost insipid by familiarity, break out into meanings and charms, bright as morning and fresh as the spring. To be spiritually-minded is "life," the cause; "peace," the effect. III. PEACE IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH SIN. A person may be in the root of his life a Christian, and yet his Christianity may be little more than a root. He may have "a name to live," and may pass as an average professor of faith in Christ, yet might know but little of this Divine peace. There is no peace for the shot limb while the bullet is in it. A person has been drinking some deadly thing, tempted by its inspiriting flavour, but now it maddens him, and there is no peace for the poisoned system while the poison is in it. There is no peace to the fever-stricken sufferer until the fever is out of him. You remember the storm that Jonah caused, and how it had to be quieted. If you would have peace, first find out, and then cast out your Jonah—the Jonah of that sheltered sin, of that crooked policy, of that secret, whatever it may be, that stops a blessing from coming on you who carry it. IV. THE PEACE OF CHRIST HAS ITS SEAT, NOT IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT IN THE HEART. "Let not your heart be troubled." It is a truism to say that disquiet belongs to this world, for every one knows this, though he may know little else; and it belongs in a particular degree to this particular age. Disquiet connected with the disputes between labour and capital; from questions connected with the money market; made by the "battle of books," by the conflicts of theological thought; seen from the post of political outlook. But having Christ as our own life, we can say, though our surroundings may be like the disquiet of an earthquake, "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed," &c. We have peace in our heart, for the Giver of peace is there. Without, there may be excitement; indeed, our own physical life may be excitable, for grace does not turn one body into another; yet there is a Divine calm down under the surface, such as no man can know who knows not the true life. V. CHRIST'S PEACE IS HERE ASSURED TO US IN TERMS OF PECULIAR SIGNIFICANCE. "Peace I leave." This is the language of legacy, and implies—1. That He would live after He had died. A.

legacy implies death (Heb. ix. 16). 2. The principle of grace. He gives. "Grace" is not the name of wages for work, nor of reward for merit; nor of gain by conquest; nor of what we receive on the principle of "so much for so much." 3. The deity of the Giver. Reconsider what is meant by the peace of Christ, and then ask yourself if a man could give it. 4. "Not as the world giveth." The world can only give what it has to give. The world gives fitfully, and there is no dependence on the world; the world gives in order to get; the world gives to take away again; grudgingly and delusively. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Peace*:—I. THE NATURE OF THE PEACE THAT JESUS GIVES. 1. It is peace in the mind. There is a state of the mind answering to the surging sea, or the agitations of the atmosphere; when a man has not clear perception of important truth; when the mind is swayed by apprehension, and driven by scepticism from every resting-place for its convictions. The opposite of that is certitude, the repose of enlightened conviction upon ascertained principle. Jesus Christ gives that to His people. 2. Peace of conscience. If a man have not that, all the flattery of nations will not make him happy. The Psalmist says, "Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken [or dislocated] may rejoice." Man's moral nature is the skeleton of his soul. David felt that his conscience was dislocated, and he could not know happiness until God had reset and restored it. Well, Christ gives peace of conscience; He restores it to its functions, and causes the man that has this peace to rejoice. 3. Peace of heart. Man may know, see, say, and sing a great deal, but if his heart is not keyed to spiritual harmony, if there are jarring affections, forbidden passions, corrupt emotions in the soul, he cannot be happy. 4. Peace in all the relationships in which a man stands. There is no solid peace if there is not peace with God, but where there is there will be peace with man, and he who enjoys it will be a peacemaker; he will delight in diffusing that happiness which he enjoys. 5. It is Christ's peace—(1) As distinguished from—(*a*) The peace of indifference. There are some persons who, on the subject of religion, have really no trouble at all. This is a peace like that of the poor Indian sleeping in his canoe while rolling him onwards to the cataract. (*b*) The peace of self-deception: the peace of the patient that takes the hectic flush of his cheek as a sign of health, of the sailor who swaggers along the deck while the leak is in the keel. That is not the peace of Christ. (2) Positively it is the peace that arises from a knowledge of man's state and the remedy that he needs. I have seen a patient quite relieved by being told the very worst of his case. At the same time he was assured by a physician that there was a specific remedy for that disease which had cured thousands. II. How HE GIVES THIS PEACE: "Not as the world giveth." 1. The world could not give such a thing at all; the world can only give what it gets, and it neither has nor knows that peace. The world may give a man wealth; the heart may be writhing in agony under the blaze of diamonds. The world may give a man fame, but a celebrated actor died of sorrow whilst the city was ringing his praise. The world may give a man pleasure, but that can only ripple the surface. 2. The world gives what it has—(1) With a hope of getting again. (2) As little as it can. 3. Is soon tired of giving on any principle, even of giving to its friends. (*J. Graham, D.D.*) *The blessedness of peace*:—A lady who passed through the terrors of the Vicksburg siege wrote the night after the surrender: "It is evening. All is still. Silence and night are once more united. H—— is leaning back in his rocking-chair. He says, 'G——, it seems to me I can hear the silence and feel it too. It wraps me like a soft garment; how else can I express this peace?'" (*H. O. Mackey.*) *False peace and true peace*:—I. THE WORLD'S PEACE. 1. It is not sound and sincere, but hollow (Psa. lv. 21). It professes friendship, and yet it is ready to sell its friend for a mess of pottage. 2. Selfish. 3. Mercenary. When it gives, always expects an equivalent. 4. Fragile. How soon is the trading man's peace, our domestic peace, our civil peace, our peace of mind, broken! How long can you calculate upon keeping your peace? 5. Unserviceable. The world's peace never stands by our side in the hour of sorrow, tribulation, or temptation. It will do for the summer, but not for the winter. 6. Temporary. II. THE PEACE OF CHRIST. 1. Its nature. It is peace—(1) with God; (2) with ourselves; (3) with our fellowmen. 2. Its characteristics. (1) It is sincere; (2) disinterested; (3) gratuitous; (4) indissoluble; (5) serviceable. (*J. Ralph, M.A.*) *False peace*:—Once, as a poet was thinking of Napoleon's defeat when he tried to win Moscow, he had a dreadful dream of peace. Under the spell of his dream, he found himself in a dim, still, snowy wilderness; many horsemen, covered with cloaks, their cloaks covered with snow, were sitting motionless; dead fires were seen, with grenadiers, white

with snow, stretched motionless around; waggons, crowded with snow-shrouded, motionless figures, seemed to stop the way, the wheels fixed by a river-side, in ruts of water which the frost had struck into steel; cannon were there, heaped over with snow; snow lay on banners unlifted, on trumpets unblown. Was the seer of such a sight moved to cry "Peace, peace!" Better face the intense white flame that bursts from guns, better face the terrible iron rain, better face the worst of war, than face a scene of peace like that! Yet much that passes for peace in the region of the soul, and in relation to God, is not much better. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Divine peace:*—It may, perhaps, have befallen some of us to stand by the side of one of those brawling mountain streams which descend from our southern and western coasts into the sea. It rushes with its noisy waters down its stony channel; every pebble rattles in the torrent; every ripple makes a murmur of its own. Suddenly the sound ceases: a deep stillness fills the banks from side to side. Why? It is the broad sweep of the advancing tide of the ocean that has checked the stream and occupied the whole space of its narrow channel with its own strong, silent, overwhelming waters. Even so it is with all the little cares, difficulties, and distractions which make up the noise and clatter of the stream of our daily life. They go on increasing and increasing, and engross our whole attention, till they are suddenly met and absorbed by some thoughts or objects greater than themselves advancing from a wider and deeper sphere. So it is in human things: so it is when in private life we are overtaken by some great personal joy or sorrow. The very image which I have just used of the brook and the sea has been beautifully employed by our greatest living poet to express the silencing of all lesser thoughts and aims by the death of a dear friend. So it is often felt in public concerns, when all petty cares and quarrels have been drowned in the tide of public joy or sorrow which has rolled in upon us from the great world without. All the streams of common life under such circumstances, descending from their several heights, deep or shallow, turbid or clear, have been checked at one and the same moment, have been hushed at one and the same point, by the waters broad and vast sweeping in from the ocean, which encompassed us all alike. Every lesser controversy has then stood still; every personal murmur at such moments has been silenced by the grander and deeper interest which belonged alike to us all. What that figure of the brook and of the tide is in the natural world, what great joys and sorrows are in personal life, what great public events are in the life of a nation, that to every human being ought to be the thought of eternity, the peace of God. From a thousand heights the streams of life are ever rushing down. All manner of obstacles meet their course—the rough rock, the broken bough, the smooth pebble, the crooked bank. Each and all are enough to ruffle those shallow waters, and to obstruct those narrow torrents. But there is, or there may be, for ever advancing into each of these channels a tide from that wide and trackless ocean to which they are all tending; and deep indeed is the peace which those tides bring with them into the inland hills wherever their force extends. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Jesus leaving peace to His disciples:*—Though all Christ's conduct is godlike, nevertheless the last scenes of His life shine with peculiar splendour. In proportion as He draws nearer to its close, His charity appears to burn with a warmer flame, His divinity to shed forth brighter beams through the clouds which enshrouded it. I. JESUS CHRIST GIVES PEACE TO HIS FOLLOWERS; or in other words, He has opened for them sources of tranquillity and joy amidst all the calamities and afflictions of life. This will be established if we can prove these two points—1. He has given us the most adequate supports under all the woes to which we are exposed; and, 2. He has bestowed on us positive grounds of tranquillity. That is to say, with the one hand He gives us an antidote against every sorrow, and with the other reaches forth to us the richest benedictions. (1) Look at your life and heart, and you will find two great enemies of peace and tranquillity, sins and afflictions; and in vain will the heart sigh for rest, till in some mode the sting of sin is taken away and the bitterness of affliction removed. While the conscience is burdened by the guilt of sin, and the mind harassed by the apprehension of that punishment to which it exposes us, we in vain hope for peace. No, no! there is no other grief that can be compared with the anguish of the soul, that is enlightened to behold the spotless purity and inflexible justice of God, and the depth of the abyss dug by its own crimes and iniquities. Where, then, shall we seek for relief to these torments which arise from a sense of guilt? In the sacrifice of Immanuel we behold all cause of terror removed, and the most satisfying joys presented to our hopes and expectations. Could you find it in the amusements and gaieties of the world? Alas! in

the midst of jocoseness and pleasantry your heart was bleeding. Human philosophy, worldly wisdom! alas, can these wash out the stain of the smallest sin from the conscience? Could you find it in the endearments of friendship and affection? Christ has been no less careful in affording proper supports under those trials, those crosses, and afflictions, of which human life is full, and which we mentioned as the second great enemy to peace. All the schools of antiquity, discordant and clashing in everything else, were united only in presenting unsubstantial comforts, which were too airy to support those under the pressure of real grief, or else in irritating instead of healing the wounds of the soul. But when we turn from these ineffectual consolations of the brightest ornaments of Greece and Rome, to the Divine Instructor who "spake as never man spake," what different sentiments are excited! He proposes such grounds of peace and tranquillity as will hush every painful passion, will compose every rising grief, will drive back every starting tear, or convert it into a tear of joy, and render us not patient merely, but triumphant in affliction. He gives us such instructions concerning the author, the intent, and the issue of afflictions, as, if they be properly realized, will cause the sorrows of life to vanish "like the morning cloud," and the pains of mortality to dissolve "like the early dew." (2) That He has conferred on them positive grounds of tranquillity so powerful, so cheering, as to be sufficient to keep their souls in sacred peace amidst all the storms of sorrow with which they may be assailed. Jesus Christ secures peace and tranquillity for His followers, by giving them an intimate communion with God. But this is only the first of His benedictions. He confers also the Holy Spirit, that bond and ligament connecting God and the soul of the believer. As the enlightening Spirit He presents to our minds those great truths of religion which affect, which interest and delight us. But this Spirit which enlightens is also the renewing Spirit; and how much tranquillity and satisfaction does the exercise of this part of His office give to the soul. To find harmony restored to our irregular affections, to see the passions formerly untamed submitting to the yoke of religion; to behold our native depravity losing its reigning power, and the image of God re-impressed upon us: is not this a desirable, a delightful contemplation? And finally, it is part of the office of this same Spirit, by His consoling influences, to dissipate the cloud of sorrow and cause the sunshine of heaven to break in upon the soul. Finally, Jesus is ready to confer on believers, and will confer on them, if they be not wanting to themselves, the earnests of future glory, the pledges of eternal felicity. II. THAT HE GIVES IT NOT AS THE WORLD DOES. 1. When the world exclaims to us, Peace be unto you! this exclamation is often void of sincerity. How often are proffers of service, and desires for our happiness, uttered by the mouth that has just been employed in stabbing our reputation, and that in a few minutes will load us with slanders, and hold us up to ridicule! 2. When the world exclaims to us, Peace be unto you, it is not always insincere and deceitful; but even when it most strongly desires our felicity, it is weak, and without power to afford us a complete felicity. Man is feeble, indigent, unhappy. Thus, unable to find full happiness from the world, shall we, my brethren, entirely despair of attaining it? No; for Jesus gives peace not as the world does; His wishes can all be accomplished, for His power is irresistible. 3. The peace which the world gives is limited in its duration. Inconstant and variable, men frequently change their sentiments and opinions. (*H. Kollock, D.D.*) *Spiritual peace*:—This blessed legacy our Lord has left might be considered as being peace—1. With all the creatures. God has made a league of peace between His people and the whole universe. "For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field," &c. "All things work together for good to them that love God." 2. Among the people of God toward one another. 3. With God, for He "hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." 4. In the conscience. Peace with God is the treaty; peace in the conscience is the publication of it. I. ITS GROUNDWORK. It is not built upon imagination, but on facts. 1. Faith in the blood of Christ. 2. A sense of pardon. 3. An intimacy with Christ. 4. The possession of the title-deeds of heaven. 5. An assurance of the faithfulness and covenant fidelity of God our Father. II. ITS NOBLE CHARACTER. The peace of other men is ignoble and base. Their peace is born in the purlieus of sin. Self-conceit and ignorance are its parents. Our peace is—1. God's own child, and God-like in its character. 2. Divine in its nourishment. The daintiest morsels that ever carnal sense fed upon would be bitter to the mouth of this sweet peace. Ye may bring your much fine corn, your sweet wine, and your flowing oil; your dainties tempt us not, for this peace feeds upon angels' food, and it cannot relish any food that grows on earth. If you should give

a Christian ten times as much riches as he has, you would not cause him ten times as much peace, but probably ten times more distress; you might magnify him in honour, or strengthen him with health, yet neither would his honour or his health contribute to his peace, for that peace flows from a Divine source, and there are no tributary streams from the hills of earth to feed that Divine current. 3. A peace that lives above circumstances. 4. Profound and real. III. ITS EFFECTS. 1. Joy. The words "joy" and "peace" are continually put together. 2. Love. He that is at peace with God through the blood of Christ is constrained to love Him that died for him. 3. Holiness. He that is at peace with God does not wish to go into sin; for he is careful lest he should lose that peace. 4. It will help us to bear affliction. "Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." 5. It gives us boldness at the throne. IV. INTERRUPTIONS OF PEACE. All Christians have a right to perfect peace, but they have not all the possession of it. These interruptions may be owing to—1. The ferocious temptations of Satan. 2. Ignorance. 3. Sin. God hides His face behind the clouds of dust which His own flock make as they travel along the road of this world. We sin, and then we sorrow for it. 4. Unbelief. Conclusion: If ye would keep your peace continual and unbroken—1. Look always to the sacrifice of Christ. 2. Walk humbly with your God. 3. Walk in holiness; avoid every appearance of evil. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ's peace*:—"Peace be unto you" was, and is, the common Eastern salutation, both in meeting and parting. It carries us back to a state of society in which every stranger might be an enemy. It is a confession of the deep unrest of the human heart. Note—I. THE GREETING, WHICH IS A GIFT. Christ gives His peace because He gives Himself. It comes with Him, like an atmosphere; it is never where He is not. 1. The first requisite for peace is consciousness of harmonious relations between me and God. The deepest secret of Christ's peace was His consciousness of unbroken communion with the Father. And the centre and foundation of all the peace-giving power of Jesus Christ is that in His death He has swept away the occasion of antagonism, and so made peace between the Father and the child, rebellious and prodigal. 2. We must be at peace with ourselves. There is no way of healing the inner schism of our anarchic nature except in bringing it all in submission to His merciful rule. Look at that troubled kingdom that each of us carries about within himself, passion dragging this way, conscience that; a hundred desires all arrayed against one another, inclination here, duty there, till we are torn in pieces like a man drawn asunder by wild horses. But when He enters the heart with His silken leash, the old fable comes true, and He binds the lions and the ravenous beasts there with its slender tie and leads them along, tamed, by the cord of love, and all harnessed to pull together in the chariot that He guides. There is one power, and only one, that can draw after it all the multitudinous heaped waters of the weltering ocean, and that is the quiet silver moon in the heavens, which pulls the tidal wave, into which melt and merge all currents and small breakers, and rolls it round the whole earth. And so Christ, shining down lambent and gentle, but changeless, from the darkest of our skies, will draw, in one great surge of harmonized motion, all the else contradictory currents of our stormy souls. 3. Peace with men. The reason why men are in antagonism with one another is the central selfishness of each. And there is only one way by which men's relations can be thoroughly sweetened, and that is by the Divine love of Jesus Christ casting out the devil of selfishness, and so blending them all into one harmonious whole. 4. Peace with the outer world. It is not external calamities, but the resistance of the will to these, that makes the disturbances of life. Submission is peace, and when a man with Christ in his heart can say what Christ did, "Not My will, but Thine, be done," then some faint beginnings, at least, of tranquillity come to the most agitated and buffeted. II. THE WORLD'S GIFT, WHICH IS AN ILLUSION. "The world" may mean either mankind in general or the whole material frame of things. 1. Regarding it in the former sense, the thought is suggested—Christ *gives;* men can only *wish*. How little we can do for one another's tranquillity! how soon we come to the limits of human love and human help! 2. And then, if we take the other signification, we may say, "Outward things can give a man no real peace." The world is for excitement; Christ alone has the secret of tranquillity. III. THE DUTY OF THE RECIPIENTS OF THAT PEACE OF CHRIST'S, "Let not your heart be troubled," &c. 1. Christ's gift of peace does not dispense with the necessity for our own effort after tranquillity. There is very much in the outer world and within ourselves that will surge up and seek to shake our repose; and we have to coerce and keep down the temptations to anxiety, to undue agitation of desire, to

tumults of sorrow, to cowardly fears of the unknown future. All these will continue, even though we have Christ's peace in our hearts. And it is for us to see to it that we treasure the peace. 2. It is useless to tell a man, "Do not be troubled and do not be afraid," unless he first has Christ's peace as his. Is that peace yours because Jesus Christ is yours? If so, then there is no reason for your being troubled or dreading any future. If it is not, you are mad not to be troubled, and you are insane if you are not afraid. 3. Your imperfect possession of this peace is all your own fault. Conclusion: I went once to the side of a little Highland loch, on a calm autumn day, when all the winds were still, and every birch tree stood unmoved, and every twig reflected on the stedfast mirror, into the depths of which Heaven's own blue seemed to have found its way. That is what our hearts may be, if we let Christ put His guarding hand round them to keep the storms off, and have Him within us for our rest. But the man that does not trust Jesus is like the troubled sea which cannot rest. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christ our peace in trouble*:—In India, where there are many venomous serpents, there is an animal—a kind of weasel—which is, as it were, appointed by God to destroy them. Put one of these creatures and the deadliest snake together, and let them begin the battle. Presently the weasel will be bitten by the serpent, and it will dart off into the next bush, will find the antidote to the poison, and will return to the fight. And so, again and again, till at last it seizes the snake and destroys it. That is strange in itself; but a thing yet stranger is this: A very large reward has been offered by the Government for the discovery of this antidote. If an animal can find it out, much more easily, one would think, can a man discover it. But it is not so. This creature has been watched again and again, but no one has ever yet been able to learn the remedy. God has given to it the knowledge, which He has denied to us. And so the true servant of Christ knows where to go for a cure against all the troubles that may befall him; where to seek peace in all the storms that beset him. (*J. M. Neale, D.D.*) *Christ's peace in the dying hour*:—A poor soldier was mortally wounded at the battle of Waterloo. His companion conveyed him to some distance and laid him down under a tree. Before he left him, the dying soldier entreated him to open his knapsack and take out his pocket Bible, and read to him a small portion of it before he died. When asked what passage he should read, he desired him to read John xiv. 27. "Now," said he, "I die happy. I desire to have peace with God, and I possess the peace of God which passeth all understanding." A little while after one of his officers passed him, and seeing him in such an exhausted state, asked him how he did. He said, "I die happy, for I enjoy the peace of God which passeth all understanding," and then expired. The officer left him and went into the battle, where he was soon after mortally wounded. When surrounded by his brother officers, full of anguish and dismay, he cried out, "Oh! I would give ten thousand worlds, if I had them, that I possessed that peace which gladdened the heart of a dying soldier, whom I saw lying under a tree; for he declared that he possessed the peace of God which passeth all understanding. I know nothing of that peace! I die miserable! for I die in despair!" (*New Testament Anecdotes.*) *Christian peace*:—I. The peace of FORGIVENESS—the peace of the evening. II. Peace in SERVICE—the peace of the morning. III. Peace in SORROW—peace of dark hours. (*S. S. Times.*) *Christian peace*:—"Peace." It was no new word. It was and is the common form of salutation and farewell; and the Master used it because it was old and familiar. This peace is threefold. I. Peace with OURSELVES. Every one knows what it is to be at peace with ourselves, and not at peace. 1. We may be perfectly prosperous, and yet there is a secret pang, a bitter thought. 2. On the other hand, we may be in suffering, and yet be in perfect peace because doing our duty. Peace of conscience is the peace of the Holy Spirit of Christ. II. Peace with ONE ANOTHER. In Christ Jew and Gentile, &c., are one. He gathered round Him the most opposite characters. His peace therefore does not mean that we are all to speak, think, act, in the same way. The world of nature derives its beauty and grace from its variety. And so in the world of man. We differ but no difference, but that of sin should become separation. The chief priests of ancient Rome were called Pontiffs—"bridge-makers." It is the duty of every Christian to throw bridges over the moral rents or fissures which divide us. Sometimes you will find opinions shading off one into the other: these are branches that are entwined over the abyss. Seize hold of them! Sometimes there are points of character the very counterparts of our own: these are stepping-stones. Sometimes there are concessions made: to all such give the widest scope. There are, no doubt, occasions when truth and

justice must be preferred to peace, and differences which are widened by saying, "Peace, peace when there is no peace;" but we must be careful not to multiply them. You receive an angry letter; do not answer it. You observe a quarrelsome look; take no notice of it. You see the beginning of a quarrel; throw cold water on it. Churches need not be united in order to be at peace. The peace of the Holy Spirit of Christ is deeper than outward diversities. III. Peace with GOD. Our hearts are torn with scruples and cares even in duty; our sins rise up against us. Where shall we find a haven of peace? In the thought of God. Think of God the Father, perfectly just and merciful. Think on Christ who stilled the tumult of the natural storm, and who came to reconcile us to the Father. Think of the Holy Spirit who broods over chaos, and of it can make eternal order and peace. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Peace undisturbed:*—All the peace and favour of the world cannot calm a troubled heart; but where the peace is that Christ gives, all the trouble and disquiet of the world cannot disturb it. Outward distress to a mind thus at peace is but as the rattling of the hail upon the tiles to him that sits within the house at a sumptuous feast. *Perfect peace in Christ:*—There was a martyr once in Switzerland standing barefooted on the fagots, and about to be burnt quick to the death—no pleasant prospect for him. He accosted the magistrate who was superintending his execution, and asked him to come near him. He said, "Will you please to lay your hand upon my heart. I am about to die by fire. Lay your hand on my heart. If it beats any faster than it ordinarily beats, do not believe my religion." The magistrate, with palpitating heart himself, and all in a tremble, laid his hand upon the martyr's bosom, and found that he was just as calm as if he was going to his bed rather than to the flames. That is a grand thing! To wear in your button-hole that little flower called "heart's-ease," and to have the jewel of contentment in your bosom—this is heaven begun below: godliness is great gain to him that hath it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Not as the world giveth.**—*The world's peace:*—They cry "peace" when there is no peace, and make fair weather when such a storm of God's wrath is ready to be burst as shall never be blown over. They compliment and wish peace when war is in their hearts, as when the Pope sent away Henry III., in peace, but it was, saith the historian, not such as Jesus left His people. (*J. Trapp.*) *Unwilling givers:*—The great ocean is in a constant state of evaporation. It gives back what it receives, and sends up its waters in mists to gather into clouds; and so there is rain on the fields, and storm on the mountains, and greenness and beauty everywhere. But there are many men who do not believe in evaporation. They get all they can and keep all they get, and so are not fertilisers, but only stagnant, miasmatic pools. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The world bestows meagrely:*—It promises much and gives but little. When the richest man, who has died in New York, within my memory was on his dying-bed, he asked his attendants to sing for him. They sang the familiar old revival hymn, "Come, ye sinners, poor and needy." The dying millionaire said to them, in a plaintive tone, "Yes, please sing that again for me. I am poor and needy." Ah! what could fifty millions of railway securities and bank stocks do for him on the verge of eternity? One verse out of the fourteenth chapter of John could bring him more peace than all the mines of California multiplied by all the bonds in the National Treasury. "Poor and needy" was he? I count that one of the most pathetic sayings that ever fell from dying lips. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) **Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**—*Words of peace:*—The acceptableness and the force of advice depend upon our feelings with respect to the adviser. Now the Counsellor in this case is the Lord Jesus; entirely informed, thoroughly concerned, full of truth as well as full of grace, and so disinterested that He has for us already laid down His life. Look at—I. THE WORDS THEMSELVES. They imply—1. The possession of a power of control over our own hearts. Now how is the heart to be controlled? You cannot govern it directly; it is to be governed by means of the thoughts. If you would change the emotions, you must change the thoughts. To think only of our grievous and not of our joyous circumstances—only of the cloudy side of our grievous circumstances (and every cloud over us Christians has a silver lining), is to let our heart be troubled and be afraid. But to call off the thoughts from the circumstances which are grievous to those which are joyous, to think of God "as our refuge, and strength, and present help in the time of trouble," is to check the sorrow and to quench the fear. 2. Responsibility as to the exercise of such control. This is a power which you may not leave dormant. That which, in this case, we can do, we ought to do, because God requires it, and because the doing of it is essential to our well-being and right con-

duct. The difficulty does not lessen our obligation. God calls us all to do difficult things. The human being who never attempts a difficult thing is but half a man. 3. They do not require that we should harden our hearts against the due influence of grievous circumstances, or shut our eyes to danger or to threatening sorrow; but they do forbid and condemn—(1) The sorrow which confuses and discomposes a man—which hinders the performance of duty and prevents the use of consolation, and mars the enjoyment of present mercies. A man may be sad, and yet do his work. "He that goeth forth and weepeth bearing precious seed." Weeping is not to hinder working. (2) Fear. A girls' school in New York took fire, and all the children were thrown into the greatest state of excitement. But there sat upon a form one little girl who remained perfectly still. When the excitement was over the teacher said to her, "How is that you sat so still?" "Oh," said the little one, "my father is one of the firemen, and he told me that if ever I was in a building when an alarm of fire was given, to sit still." Your Father is employed in extinguishing the fire that would consume you. And you have been told to be quiet; and this because you can afford to be quiet. 4. Now the whole of this advice proceeds on the assumption that the disciple of Christ has sources of joy counteractive of his sorrows, and that he has no ground for fear. (1) The Saviour has charge of us individually. (2) The Father loves us. (3) A place is prepared for us. (4) A Comforter is sent to abide with us for ever. (5) Jesus gives us His peace. II. CASES TO WHICH THEY PARTICULARLY APPLY. 1. Some may be expecting bereavement. Death hath no sting to that loved one, and the grave can gain no victory. 2. Others are now bearing the anguish of the separation which death creates. Special promises are made to you; and He, who superintends the fulfilment of these promises, says, "let not your heart be troubled," &c. 3. Some are anticipating change—change of residence—emigration. Whither can you go from your Saviour's Spirit — or from your best Friend's presence? 4. A few are stretched and tortured on the rack of suspense. The uncertainty is only in your mind. Above, all things are arranged, and will work together for your good. 5. Many are enduring the pains of disappointment. But still there are hopes founded upon rock, of which no man can ever be ashamed. The hope of salvation, of eternal life, of paradise. 6. Diseases, like worms at the roots of plants, are surely bringing many of us to death and the grave—and their destructive work will one day be fully wrought. But death is only the beginning of new life. 7. Poverty, like an armed man, is beating down others. There is but one shield against this armed man—faith; but one weapon—lawful endeavour; and but one cordial and stimulant—prayer. And if you pray poverty, turning your face Christward, you will hear Christ in His sweetest whispers say, "Take no thought for to-morrow," &c. 8. Does persecution rage around some of you as a tempest? "Fear not them that kill the body." (*S. Martin.*)

Vers. 28–29. **If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father.**—*The death of the good a reason for joy*:—Note the view which Christ had of His death. "I go." 1. Whence? From the world. 2. Whither? To the Father, not to destruction, eternal solitude, nor to fellowship with minor souls. 3. How? Not driven. Other men are sent to the grave; Christ freely went. The general truths of the text are these:—I. THAT GENUINE LOVE REJOICES IN THE HAPPINESS OF ITS OBJECT. We find illustrations of this in—1. Creation. Love made the universe in order to diffuse happiness. 2. Christ's mission. Christ came to make happy the objects of infinite love. 3. Christian labour. Happiness is the end of all church work. II. THAT THE HAPPINESS OF MEN DEPENDS UPON FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER. 1. Happiness is in love. 2. The love, to produce happiness, must be directed to the Father. His perfection delights in it; His goodness reciprocates it. 3. Love for the Father yearns for fellowship with Him. Love always craves the presence of its object. III. THAT DEATH INTRODUCES THE GOOD INTO A SPECIALLY CLOSE FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER. There were obstructions to the fellowship of the Man Christ Jesus with the Father. 1. The body with its infirmities. 2. The sinful world. 3. The influence of principalities and powers of darkness. These interfere with the fellowship of good men and God, and in addition they have what Christ had not. (1) Worldly cares. (2) Inward depravity. (3) Corrupt habits. At death, however, all these are removed, and the soul of the good man goes into the immediate presence of God. We need not, then, sorrow for the departed good. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Joy and faith the fruit of Christ's departure*:—I. THE DEPARTURE OF THE LORD IS A FOUNTAIN OF JOY TO THOSE WHO

LOVE HIM. 1. Christ's going is Christ's coming. The word "again" is a supplement, and somewhat destroys the true flow of thought. But if you strike it out and read the sentence as being what it is, a description of one continuous process, you get the true idea. "I go away, and I come to you." There is no moment of absolute absence. To the eye of sense, the "going away" was the reality, and the "coming" a metaphor. To the eye enlightened to see things as they are, the dropping away of the visible corporeal was but the inauguration of the higher and the more real. 2. Christ's going is Christ's exaltation. Hitherto we have been contemplating Christ's departure simply in its bearing upon us, but here He unveils another aspect of it, and that in order that He may change His disciples' sadness into joy. (1) What a hint of self-sacrifice lies in this thought, that Christ bids His disciples rejoice with Him because the time is getting nearer its end, and He goes back to the Father! And what shall we say of the nature of Him to whom it was martyrdom to live, and a supreme instance of self-sacrificing humiliation to "be found in fashion as a man"? (2) The context requires that for Christ to go to the Father was to share in the Father's greatness. Why else should the disciples be bidden to rejoice in it? or why should He say anything about the greatness of the Father? The inferiority, of whatever nature it may be, to which He here alludes, falls away when He passes hence. Now these words are often quoted triumphantly, as if they were dead against the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ. But the creed which confesses that is not to be overthrown by pelting this verse at it; for this verse is part of that creed, which as fully declares the Father is greater than the Son as it declares that the Son is One with the Father. We can dimly see that the very names "Father" and "Son" imply some sort of subordination, but as that subordination is in the timeless and inward relations of Divinity, it must be supposed to exist after the Ascension, as it existed before the Incarnation; and, therefore, any such mysterious difference is not that which is referred to here. What is referred to is what dropped away from the Man Jesus Christ when He ascended up on high. As Luther has it, "Here He was a poor, sad, suffering Christ"; and that garb of lowliness falls from Him, like the mantle that fell from the prophet as he went up in the chariot of fire, when He passes behind the brightness of the Shekinah cloud that hides Him from their sight. Therefore we, as His followers, have to rejoice in an ascended Christ, beneath whose feet are foes, and far away from whose human personality are all the ills that flesh is heir to. 3. On both these grounds Christ's ascension and departure is a source of joy. (1) There can be no presence with us, man by man, through all the ages, and in every land, unless He, whose presence it is, participated in the absolute glory of Divinity. (2) And surely if our dearest one was far away from us, in some lofty position, our hearts and our thoughts would ever be flung thither, and we should live more there than here. And if we love Jesus Christ, there will be no thought more sweet to us than the thought of Him, our Brother and Forerunner, who has ascended up on high; and in the midst of the glory of the throne bears us in His heart, and uses His glory for our blessing. II. HIS DEPARTURE AND HIS ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS DEPARTURE AS THE GROUND AND FOOD OF FAITH (ver. 29). He knew what a crash was coming, and with exquisite tenderness He gave Himself to prepare the disciples for the storm, that, forewarned, they might be forearmed. And when my sorrows come to me, I may say about them what He says about His departure. Aye! He has told us before, that when it comes we may believe. But note—1. How Christ avows that the great aim of His utterances and of His departure is to evoke our faith. And what does He mean by faith? (1) A grasp of the historic facts, His death, resurrection, ascension. (2) The understanding of these as He Himself has explained them. (3) And, therefore, as the essence of faith, a reliance upon Himself as thus revealed, sacrifice by His death, victor by His resurrection, King and interceding Priest by His ascension—a reliance upon Himself as absolute as the facts are sure, as unfaltering as His eternal sameness. 2. These facts, as interpreted by Himself, are the ground and the nourishment of our faith. How differently they looked when seen from the further side and when seen from the hither side. "We trusted," said two of them, with such a sad use of the past tense, "that this had been He which should have redeemed Israel." But after the facts were all unveiled, there came back the memory of His words, and they said to one another, "Did He not tell us that it was all to be so? How blind we were not to understand Him!" 3. Faith is the condition of the true presence of our absent Lord. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Love's importance*:—1. Jesus' love makes Him use the disciples' love to Himself as a comfort for themselves when they are

distressed about His going away. 2. He appeals to the warmest feeling in their hearts in order to raise their spirits. 3. It is well when grace has put within us principles which are springs of consolation. From our text learn—I. THAT WE SHOULD TRY TO SEE THINGS IN CHRIST'S LIGHT. 1. He sees the whole of things. He says not only, "I go away," but also, "I come again unto you." 2. He sees through things. He does not say, "I die," but He looks beyoud, and says, "I go unto the Father." 3. He sees the true bearing of things. The events which were about to happen were in themselves sad, but they would lead to happy results. "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice." To see facts in His light we must dwell with Him, live in Him, grow like Him, and especially love Him more and more. II. THAT OUR LOVE SHOULD GO FORTH TOWARDS HIS PERSON. "If ye loved Me." All about Him is amiable; but He Himself is altogether lovely (Song of Sol. v. 16). He is the source of all the benefits He bestows. Loving Him:—1. We have Him, and so His benefits. 2. We prize His benefits the more. 3. We sympathize in all that He does. 4. We love His people for His sake. 5. Our love endures all sorts of rebuffs for His sake. 6. The Father loves us (chap. xiv. 23.) 7. We are married to Him. Love is the sure and true marriage-bond whereby the soul is united to Christ. Love to a person is the most real of emotions. Love to a person is the most influential of motives. Love to a person is, in this case, the most natural and satisfying of affections. III. THAT OUR SORROW OUGHT NOT TO PUT OUR LOVE IN QUESTION. Yet, in the case of the disciples, our Lord justly said, "If ye loved Me." He might sorrowfully say the same to us—1. When we lament inordinately the loss of creatures. 2. When we repine at His will, because of our severe afflictions. 3. When we mistrust His wisdom, because we are sore hampered and see no way of escape. 4. When we fear to die, and thus display an unwillingness to be with our Lord. Surely, if we loved Him, we should rejoice to be with Him. 5. When we complain concerning those who have been taken from us to be with Him. Ought we not to rejoice that Jesus in them sees of the travail of His soul, and has His prayer (chap. xvii. 24) answered. IV. THAT OUR LOVE SHOULD MAKE US REJOICE AT OUR LORD'S EXALTATION, THOUGH IT BE OUR PERSONAL LOSS. 1. It was apparently the disciples' loss for their Lord to go to the Father; and we may think certain dispensations to be our loss—(1) When we are tried by soul-desertion, while Christ is magnified in our esteem. (2) When we are afflicted, and He is glorified, by our sorrows. (3) When we are eclipsed, and in the result the gospel is spread. (4) When we are deprived of privileges for the good of others. (5) When we sink lower and lower in our own esteem, but the kingdom of God comes with power. 2. It was greatly to our Lord's gain to go to His Father. Thus He—(1) Left the field of suffering for ever. (2) Reassumed the glory which He had laid aside. (3) Received the glory awarded by the Father. (4) Became enthroned for His Church and cause. Conclusion: 1. It will be well for us to look more to our love than to our joy, and to expect our joy through our love. 2. It will be well for us to know that smallness of love may dim the understanding, and that growth in it may make us both wiser and happier. 3. In all things our Lord must be first. Yes, even in those most spiritual delights, about which it may seem allowable to have strong personal desires. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **For My Father is greater than** I.—*Christ's equality with and subordination to God*:—It is contended that our Lord here abandoned any pretension to be a person internal to the essential life of God. But this saying can have no such force if its application be restricted, as the Latin Fathers do restrict it to our Lord's manhood. But even if our Lord is here speaking, as the Greeks generally maintain, of His essential Deity, His words express very exactly a truth recognized and required by the Catholic doctrine. The subordination of the everlasting Son to the everlasting Father is strictly compatible with the Son's absolute Divinity; it is abundantly implied in our Lord's language: and it is an integral element of the ancient doctrine which steadily represents the Father as alone unoriginate, the Fount of Deity, in the eternal life of the ever-blessed Trinity. But surely an admission on the part of One in whom men saw nothing more than a fellow-creature, that the everlasting God was greater than Himself, would fail to satisfy a thoughtful listener that no claim to Divinity was advanced by the Speaker. Such an admission presupposes some assertion to which it stands in the relation of a necessary qualification. If any good man of our acquaintance should announce that God was greater than himself, should we not hold him to be guilty of something worse than a stupid truism? And should we not peremptorily remind him that the life of man is related to the life of God, not as the less to the greater, but

as the created to the Uncreated, and that it is an impertinent irreverence to admit superiority of rank, when the real truth can only be expressed by an assertion of radical difference of natures? And assuredly a sane and honest man, who had been accused of associating Himself with the Supreme Being, could not content himself with admitting that God was greater than himself. Knowing himself to be only human, would he not insist again and again with passionate fervour upon the incommunicable glory of the great Creator? (*Canon Liddon.*)

Ver. 30. **Henceforth I will not talk much with you.**—*Christ as a conversationalist:*—I. CHRIST'S GREATEST WORK WAS DONE BY CONVERSATION. 1. In the four Gospels there are but five discourses properly so called—that in the synagogue at Nazareth, that upon the Mount, that on the Bread of Life in the synagogue at Capernaum, that on the seashore, when He practically traced the future of His kingdom, and that at Jerusalem respecting His second coming. All the rest is conversation, sometimes drifting into monologue. It is significant that the two greatest teachers—Christ and Socrates—taught chiefly in this way. 2. Here is an open door for you all! You cannot write books or preach; but there is no better way into a human heart than by conversation. I write my article and send it to the newspaper. I know not who looks upon it. I stand here and talk, and look into your faces. Some of them answer me back. This is better work than that of the pen. But the best of all is conversation when you open your soul to me, and I open mine to you. In this lies the largest part of our influence. What might we not do with it! II. Notice, as a characteristic of every good conversationalist, and pre-eminently of Christ, HIS QUICK AND CATHOLIC SYMPATHIES. 1. We open this Gospel and find Him talking on the same plane with a Jewish rabbi. We turn the page and behold Him condescending to the level of the depraved Samaritan. Further on we see Him in conversation with His enemies; and, lastly, here with His disciples—in every case alike in sympathy, in touch—what we call tact. What is tact? The touch of one soul with another. I can talk music a little with the musician, for I am fond of music; less of art with the artist, for I know less; about theology with the theologian if he is not too far removed from me theologically; but if I cannot talk with the car conductor, the day labourer, it is because my sympathies are narrow. 2. Christ's sympathies were as quick as they were catholic. His soul was receptive as well as distributive. The musician plays on the keys of the organ. They are inert, and answer to his touch. But when the speaker plays on a human soul, he must be keys as well as fingers—he must respond as well as move. There is no flash of thought, question of perplexity, or sorrow anywhere that Christ does not instantly meet. III. Because He had this quick and catholic sympathy HE DREW MEN OUT. He made them express themselves; oftentimes against their will—evoked their doubts, sins, difficulties. Witness His treatment of Philip, Thomas, and Jude in this conversation. This is rare power: worth more than eloquence or poetry. He knew what was in man; and more than once He saw them doubting among themselves, and phrased His answer to their doubting. IV. HE HAD THE GIFT OF TURNING EVERYTHING TO ACCOUNT. He asks for a drink of water, and this suggests the water of life; He fed a multitude with bread, and then talked naturally about the bread of life. A friend of mine, on entering a train, asked the brakesman, "When shall we get to Albany?" "I do not know," surlily replied the man, "there is nothing certain on a train." "Nothing but death," said my friend. "Well, that is so." "Yes, and therefore we ought to be ready for it." "That is a fact," said the brakesman. If my friend had gone out of his way to preach he would not have got an answer. V. CONVERSATION WITH CHRIST WAS ALWAYS THE INSTRUMENT OF DIVINE MINISTRY. Christ never declined an invitation; but wherever He went, He carried His message of love and goodness, and turned the least incidents into moral lessons, He was always master of the conversation. He was not carried by its drift wherever it might go, but, like a skilful pilot with his hand on the helm, guided it in what direction He would have it go. (*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*) *We must prize our opportunities:*—Make we the best of our Christian friends while we have them: as we would do of a borrowed book or tool that we knew not how soon may be sent for by the right owner. (*J. Trapp.*) *Interruption:*—Christ thus closed the conversation to intimate to His disciples—I. THE VALUE OF WHAT HE HAD SPOKEN IN THE PAST. 1. As their rule of life. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." 2. As teaching them to draw instruction from every source. 3. As being the means of life. II. THE NEED OF CONCENTRATION IN AN APPROACHING CONFLICT. A time of peace was followed by a time of trial. Christ was ready for it, and concentrated every faculty

for a final struggle with the devil, who was worsted by Him in the wilderness, and left Him then for a season. II. THAT THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF FREEDOM FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF SIN GIVES THE GREATEST POWER TO WITHSTAND THE ASSAULTS OF SATAN. There was no ledge in Christ on which the devil could stand, nothing at which he could clutch. Our weaknesses Satan knows too well. He has something in us. But we may rejoice in freedom from condemnation. Doubt as to this is what Satan loves to take hold of; and it is frequently a sincere Christian's weakest point—IV. THAT HE HAS RESOLVED TO MAINTAIN PURITY. "*Shall* have." Christ had no doubt about the issue: nor need there be any in those whom Christ upholds. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Against the Church the gates of hell shall not prevail. V. THAT THE DISCIPLES MIGHT LEARN MORE FROM SEEING THAN HEARING. It is not what a man says, but what he does, that influences others. Christ has said: "Whosoever taketh not up his cross," &c. Did He shrink from taking it up Himself? Christ ceases to talk, and allows His life to speak. VI. CHRIST'S SORROW THAT HIS INTERCOURSE WITH HIS DISCIPLES HAD TO BE INTERRUPTED. All are subject to all sorts of interruptions here. We must be prepared for breaks in life, gaps in the family, vacant chairs. Still we may, with Christ, take up the joyful life. Death possesses nothing permanent in us.—*Homiletic Magazine.*) **The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me.**—*The coming struggle*:—I. THE ENEMY—the prince of this world. 1. Of large dominions (Matt. iv. 8). 2. Of many subjects (Eph. ii. 2). 3. Of great power (Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12). 4. Of subtle craft (Gen. iii. 1; Rev. xii. 9). 5. Of evil mind (1 John ii. 13; iii. 8; viii. 44; Rev. xii. 10). II. THE ONSET. The prince of this world cometh. 1. Its proximity. Judas was at hand, and in him Satan was drawing near. 2. Its violence. Quite an army had the devil put in force against the Saviour. 3. Its aim. It was directed against heaven's purpose of redemption. It was meant by destroying Christ to confound the counsel of salvation. 4. Its skill. The campaign had on Satan's side been planned with ingenuity. Judas, an apostle, had been persuaded to become a traitor. The ecclesiastical authorities had been turned against God's Son. The Roman power had been secured to lend assistance in affecting His arrest. All signs augured well for the success of his infernal scheme. III. THE DEFEAT. The prince of this world hath nothing in Me. 1. The seeming victory. Outwardly, Satan was to triumph. Yet it was not to be because of any power which Satan possessed; but to be of Christ's free will (chap. x. 18). 2. The actual overthrow (Heb. ii. 14; Col. ii. 15). Learn—1. That Christ is wiser than Satan. 2. That as He conquered so shall His people. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*)

Ver. 31. **But that the world may know that I love the Father.**—*Christ's departure*:—1. It is well that "we do not know when the last time is the last: unconsciously and without premonition we leave our door, we retire to bed, we grasp the hand of our friend for the last time: and by and by it is said, "He is not, for God hath taken him." How much of mercy there is in this veiling of the future, this sparing of farewells, we may understand from the flutter and pain with which forseen and calculated things are done for the last time. We leave home, friends, church, and, even though it be for improved conditions, there is a laceration in the parting proportioned to the length of association. 2. We are differently constituted. Some can change their homes with as little thought or feeling as they can change their clothes. They have lived in half a dozen houses, worshipped in half a dozen churches. They strike no deep roots, and feel no parting sorrow deeper than good natural regret. Hardly is this the finest type of human feeling. To merely be put down on a surface and strike no roots difficult or painful to pull up, is a grave implication of either the plant or the soil. In this departure—I. CHRIST WAS IMPELLED BY HIS SUPREME SENSE OF DUTY. "As the Father gave Me commandment." No self-interest, no sentiment, was ever permitted to interfere with this sense of duty. While yet a youth it was the supreme law of life—"Wist ye not," &c. As a man it dominated all impulses of filial affection. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" 1. In all great lives the sense of duty is dominant. Sometimes God gives reasons for what He requires of us; but if the only reason is that God has demanded it we may not hesitate. As with an army or a child, the commander and father may not be able to give reasons, nevertheless duty is imperative. God has many purposes we cannot understand. 2. In many of us the sense of duty is weak. We consult our convenience, advantage, likings. How rarely we choose unpleasant work because of its importance! 3. No strong or

noble character can come out of this. A man who will not for the sake of duty do an arduous thing will never build up his moral strength or glorify God. II. ANOTHER IMPULSE WAS TO PRODUCE THE IMPRESSION OF HIS FILIAL AFFECTION. "That the world may know." 1. Love is the inspiration of all high duty. Duty is not mere measured service. A son who weighed the literal word of command could hardly be called dutiful. 2. Our Lord attached great importance to the impression which His loving duty made upon men. He would have the world see it so that it might inspire love. What shall I do to show my love to God? Let selfishness or sentiment come in, and how narrowed becomes the sphere of duty, and how poor its motive! There can be no blessing upon it. III. TO MAINTAIN DUTY AND LOVE THE MASTER TOOK NO COUNT OF EASE OR SAFETY. "Arise," &c. He went forth to His forseen passion and death. We often hesitate to run a risk for Him. He laid down His life for the sheep. To maintain duty He broke up the tenderest fellowship with His own. (*H. Allon, D.D.*) *Reflections on departure* (on removing to another place of worship):—Let us apply these words. I. TO THE SON OF GOD IN THE SOLEMN MOMENT WHEN THEY WERE UTTERED. He was going to the garden, to that great and awful conflict in which the prophecy was to be fulfilled, that He should present His soul an offering for sin, and bear the burden of the world's atonement. This was the last night of the Redeemer's life. He had been eating the passover with His disciples. He could use these words with ideas and anticipations, of which they knew nothing. The traitor had gone, and made his arrangements; and our Lord saw this: yet there was nothing, either like fainting under the prospect, or rashness, or precipitancy, or passion: but all was calm and tranquil. II. TO SEVERAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROVIDENCE AS THEY OCCUR TO OURSELVES. 1. To local removals of place and of habitation, when the voice of Providence and of God calls us from scenes and situations where we have been surrounded by kindred and congenial society; from our father's house, from a particular habitation which we may have long occupied, where we may have felt and experienced much of the blessing of God; where we may have passed through many afflictions; and we feel we must say to ourselves, "Let us go hence," there are many emotions which come upon the heart; and I should never envy that man his feelings, who had never experienced such emotions. 2. To moral circumstances, when we may be called to depart from circumstances of enjoyment, comfort, and tranquillity, and to enter upon scenes of adversity and misfortune, when we are called to experience what is painful and distressing to our mind and heart. 3. To what is spiritual. I cannot help thinking of the resolutions which have often been made, when these words have been carried home to the heart of a man by the Spirit of God; when he has determined to arise and go to his Father. 4. To the matter of death. That word "departure" conveys a grand truth: it is not extinction, but the going, the passing from one place to another; the continuance of consciousness, of every capacity, faculty, and feeling; and the passing of the intelligent spirit into another place, and another state. III. TO OUR OWN PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES. If we are permitted to see another Sabbath, we hope to be worshipping in another sanctuary, rendered necessary by the Providence of God. We are going from a place interesting to our minds, hallowed to our remembrances—1. By the purposes to which it has been devoted. 2. By events which have transpired within it. Here souls have been born to God. Over this scene angels have rejoiced over sinners that have repented. 3. By relative recollections of interest and importance. Here many of you have the recollection of a pious ancestry; here you have been led by them; here perhaps you were dedicated in baptism; and here your parents have borne you upon their hearts. 4. By personal recollection. You rejoice, and give God thanks, that you were led here to hearken to the voice of the man of God, in exhibiting that truth by which you trust you were saved and sanctified. And many of you have peculiar recollections of seasons, in which the truth hath been peculiarly appropriate to your personal circumstances. 5. Painful recollections. You have to look back upon services neglected, and Sabbaths misimproved; when you have heard with indolence, or a critical and improper feeling; when you have conversed on what you have heard with flippancy, instead of retiring with it to pray. (*T. Binney.*) *The calmness of Christ*:—Christ's calmness here in prospect of Gethsemane and the cross is in keeping with the whole tenor of His life, and suggests—I. HIS CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE RECTITUDE OF HIS CHARACTER AND PROCEDURE. Had He been conscious of any wrong against God or man, His conscience would have disturbed Him. Or had He had any misgiving as to the rectitude of His procedure He might have been disturbed. His calmness was not stoicism or indifference—for Christ was

exquisitely sensitive and emotional. II. A SETTLED SENSE OF HIS SUBLIME SUPERIORITY. Well He knew the ignorance and depravity of those who opposed Him, and He rose above it all. Their stormy insults awoke no ripple upon the deep translucent lake of His great nature. III. AN INWARD ASSURANCE OF HIS ULTIMATE SUCCESS. He had an end to accomplish, and had laid His plans. He had calculated on all the opposition He had to encounter, and knew that He would "see of the travail of His soul," &c. IV. THE HARMONY OF ALL HIS IMPULSES AND POWERS. Because in us there are two elements warring—flesh and spirit—we are constantly being disturbed. Right wars against policy, conscience against impulse, and we get like the troubled sea. Not so with Christ, all the elements of His soul moved as harmoniously as do the planets. He was at one with Himself, as well as with God and the universe. V. HIS COMMANDING CLAIM TO OUR IMITATION in the crisis of life and in death. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *A watchword*:—We cannot be long in one stay. A voice ever sounds in our ear, "Arise, let us go hence." Even when we have conversed on the sweetest themes, or have enjoyed the holiest ordinances, we have not yet come to our eternal abode; still are we on the march, and the trumpet soundeth, "Arise, let us go hence." Our Lord was under marching orders, and He knew it: for Him there was no stay upon this earth. Hear how He calls Himself, and all His own, to move on, though bloody sweat and bloody death be in the way. I. OUR MASTER'S WATCHWORD. "Arise, let us go hence." By this stirring word—1. He expressed His desire to obey the Father. "As the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." (1) He was not hindered by expected suffering. (2) He did not start back, though in that suffering there would be the special element of His Father's forsaking Him. (3) He did not hesitate though death was in near prospect. (4) He was eager to do the will of the Father, and make all heaven and earth know how entirely He yielded Himself to the Father. 2. He indicated His readiness to meet the arch-enemy. "The prince of this word cometh. Arise, let us go hence." (1) He was prepared for the test. He "hath nothing in Me." (2) He was eager to overthrow His dominion. 3. He revealed His practical activity. All through the chapter observe our Lord's energy. He is ever on the move. "I go. I will come again. I will do it. I will pray. Arise, let us go hence." (1) He prefers action to the most sacred rites, and so leaves the supper table with this word on His lips. (2) He prefers action to the sweetest converse. "I will not talk much with you. Arise, let us go hence." 4. He manifested His all-consuming love to us. (1) He was straitened till He had accomplished our redemption. (2) He could not rest in the company of His best-beloved till their ransom was paid. (3) He would not sit at God's right hand till He had felt the shame of the Cross, and the bitterness of death (Heb. xii. 2). II. OUR OWN MOTTO. "Arise, let us go hence." Ever onward, ever forward, we must go (Exod. xiv. 15). 1. Out of the world when first called by grace (2 Cor. vi. 17). How clear the call! How prompt should be our obedience! Jesus is without the camp, we go forth unto Him (Heb. xiii. 13). We must arouse ourselves to make the separation. "Arise, let us go hence," 2. Out of forbidden associations, if, as believers, we find ourselves like Lot in Sodom. "Escape for thy life" (Gen. xix. 17). 3. Out of present attainments when growing in grace (Phil. iii. 13, 14). 4. Out of all rejoicing in self. There we must never stop for a single instant. Self-satisfaction should startle us. 5. To work, anywhere for Jesus. We should go away from Christian company and home comforts to win souls (Mark xvi. 15). 6. To defend the faith where it is most assailed. We should be prepared to quit our quiet to contend with the foe (Jude 3). 7. To suffer when the Lord lays affliction upon us (2 Cor. xii. 9). 8. To die when the voice from above calls us home (2 Tim. iv. 6). Conclusion: 1. Oh sinner, where would you go if suddenly summoned? 2. Oh saint, what better could happen to you than to rise and go hence? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

CHAPTER XV.

VER. 1. **I am the True Vine.**—*The origin of the allusion*:—Most of our Lord's figurative discourses were obviously suggested by some outward thing. What was the visible object here? It could hardly have originated in a thought about "the fruit of the vine," represented by what He had been pouring from the

cup; nor is it satisfactory to say that He pointed to a vine in the garden; for the garden was not a vineyard. You will notice that although the words, "Arise, let us go hence," occur in chap. xiv. 31, the words that fill up chapters xv., xvi., and xvii. were spoken before we come to the entrance into the garden. Now, for these long utterances to have been spoken in this walk is to me inconceivable. Some think however, that when Christ said, "Arise, let us go hence," they rose, and that the words filling the next three chapters were spoken while they were still standing, just as a leader, after he has signified that the meeting is over, may say at the door, "Stop, a new thought strikes me," and may then linger to utter unpremeditated things. But it is inconceivable that Christ should leave His longest and most important parting instructions until the audience had, at His own request, all risen to go. My own opinion is that Jesus on His way to the garden went to take a farewell glance at the Temple, and that for the purpose of teaching the disciples lessons founded on its golden vine. Nations have often taken certain plants or flowers for their heraldic devices, such as the rose, the thistle, and the shamrock. If not as a matter of heraldry, as a matter of fact, the vine appeared to be the device on the shield of Israel. Striking passages might be quoted in proof, from the prophets (Isa. xxvii. 6; Jer. ii. 21; Ezek. xv. 2; xvii. 8; Psa. lxxx. 8–11). The Master then took the scholars up to the famous national emblem displayed over the porch of the sanctuary, and with that before them, prepared them to understand that now the sacred nation was about to lose its ancient place, and to be superseded and fulfilled by the nation of saved souls; teaching them to withdraw their trust in that vine, and to place their trust in Him alone, henceforth to be one with Him, as are branches with the tree they spring from. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *The True Vine*:—I. THE VINE. 1. The method of Christ's teaching seems to have depended largely on chances and occasions. Seeds of truth were blown from Him who is the Truth by every breeze of circumstance, like thistledown by the wind. This allegory was suggested, perhaps, by a portion of a trellised vine outside, peeping in through the latticed window, rustling in the evening breeze, or showing through its veined, transparent leaves the golden light of the setting sun; or, more probably still, the wine-cup before Him on the supper-table. 2. But while the form of Christ's teaching was determined by the accident of the moment, it fell in with the general analogy of Scripture teaching. The vine is one of the most familiar images in the Old Testament. No less than five of our Lord's parables refer to it. 3. The Land of Promise was a land of vineyards; and Judæa especially, with its temperate climate, and elevated rocky slopes, was admirably adapted for the culture of the vine. A vineyard on a terrace or brow of a hill is the first object that strikes the eye of the traveller when he approaches Judæa from the desert. A vineyard on a hill, fenced and cleared of stones, was the natural emblem of the kingdom of Judah; and this heraldic symbol was engraved on the coins of the Maccabees, on the ornaments of the Temple, and on the tombstones of the Jews. It is not without significance that the vine should be thus peculiar to Judæa. One of the most perfect of plants, it belongs to one of the most perfect of countries as regards its physical structure. Contrast the grapes of Eshcol with the variegated scenery of that valley, and its geological conformation, with the hard dry woody fruits of the parched plains of Australia: a low type of fruit with a low type of country. There is a close typical relation between the character of a country and the character of its productions; and this relation ascends even into the world of man. As the monotonous plains and innutritious fruits of Australia reared the lowest savages; so the picturesque mountain scenery, and the rich nutritious grapes, pomegranates and olives of Palestine developed the noblest of the human races. II. THE FITNESS OF THE VINE FOR OUR LORD'S PURPOSE. 1. He wished to represent —(1) The permanent spiritual union of His disciples with Himself; and therefore a perennial and not an annual plant must be selected, a dicotyledonous tree with branches, and not a monocotyledonous tree without branches. The image of the lily suited Him when His own personal loveliness, purity, and fragrance, and His own short-lived single life on earth were intended to be shadowed forth; and the image of the palm-tree, which has no branches, suited the disciples when their own individual excellence was portrayed. (2) The fruitfulness of Christ and of believers in Him; and hence the plant that can do this adequately must be a cultivated one—not a mere herb of the field, like corn, yielding fruit only on the top of a stalk, but a tree yielding fruit on every branch. (3) The subordinate relation to and dependence of Christ upon His Father in the days

of His flesh; and this idea manifestly excludes all fruit-trees that are capable of standing alone and unsupported, such as the apple—the pomegranate, or the fig-tree. (4) Believers exhibit, with general features of resemblance, considerable personal differences; and the plant which is to represent this quality must admit of considerable variability within certain distinct and well-recognized limits. All these qualifications meet in the vine, and in the vine alone. 2. The vine belongs peculiarly to the human period, and was planted in the earth shortly before its occupancy by man. It came into the world along with the beautiful rose, and the fruitful apple, and the fragrant mint, and the honey-laden bee, to make an Eden of nature for man's use and enjoyment. The former ages were flowerless; green, monotonous tree-ferns and tree-mosses, destined to become fuel for man, alone covered the land. Prophesied by all previous vegetable forms, whose structure approached nearer and nearer to its type, the vine appeared in the fulness of the earth's time; just as He whom it shadowed forth was announced in type and prophecy from the foundation of the world, and appeared in the fulness of human history when the world was ready for His reception. And thus the symbol and the Person symbolized belong peculiarly to the human world, and were destined specially for human nourishment and satisfaction. 3. A strict correlation exists between the culture of the vine and the intellectual and spiritual development of humanity. Wherever the grape ripens, there flourish all the arts that chiefly tend to make life nobler and more enjoyable. The spread of the Christian religion, as a general rule, has been co-extensive and synchronous with that of the vine, so that wherever the allegory of our Saviour is read, there the natural object may be seen to illustrate it. 4. In the symbol of the vine our Lord recognizes the prefiguration in plants of animal forms and functions. In the stem, branches, and foliage of the vine, we discern the ideal plan on which our own bodies are constructed: the stem being the spinal column; the branches the ribs and members: the leaves the lungs; while the sap-vessels, filled with their nourishing fluid, correspond with the veins and their circulating blood. The functions, too, which all these parts and organs in the vine perform are precisely analogous to those which similar parts and organs perform in the economy of man. III. CHRIST THE TRUE VINE. 1. St. John's Gospel has several peculiar terms—such as the Word, the Light, the Life, the Truth, the World, Glory, Grace—which, perhaps more than all others, bear upon them the clear stamp of the Divine signet. To these may be added the word "true," which occurs no less than twenty-two times in this Gospel, as against five times in all the rest of the New Testament. By us the word is commonly employed to represent, and so confound, two distinct ideas; viz., the true as opposed to the false, and as distinguished from the typical or subordinate realization. Our forefathers recognized this distinction, and expressed the former idea by "true," and the latter by "very." The man who fulfilled the promise of his lips was a *true* man; but the man who fulfilled the wider promise of his name was a *very* man, a man indeed. God is the true God, in the sense that He cannot lie; but He is the true God, inasmuch as He is all that the name of God implies, in contradistinction to false gods. The phrase is still retained in the Nicene creed, "very God of very God." In Greek the distinction is clearly indicated by the use of two words, *alethes* true, and *alethinos* very, which are never used indiscriminately. The word here is *alethinos*, and should be rendered "very," for it indicates the contrast, not between the true and the false, but between the imperfect and the perfect—between the shadowy and the substantial, the type and the archetype, the highest ideal and a subordinate realization or partial anticipation. And in this connection it is interesting to notice that the Saxon word "tree" is etymologically cognate with "true," signifying that which is firm, strong, or well-established. 5. Israel was *a* vine, but not the *true* vine of God. Though not altogether false and fraudulent, it was an inferior and subordinate realization, a partial and imperfect anticipation of the truth. It did not come up to God's ideal of a vine. But Christ was the True Vine of God; He fulfilled to the utmost the purposes of His existence. The vineyard of Israel was to be taken from the wicked husbandmen. But out of this Jewish vineyard was to grow one Vine, which should endure when all the peculiar institutions of Judaism had perished, and become the starting-point of a new and higher religious growth. While the Law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. 3. Christ is also the "True Vine," as distinguished from the false or counterfeit vine. There are many species of vine, but there is only one grape-vine; so error is multiform, but truth is one. And just as the wheat is imitated by the tares—the poisonous darnel—which closely resemble it in every respect; so the

True Vine is imitated by the vine of Sodom, with its poisonous fruit. 4. But there is another aspect still in which the phrase may be viewed. It is as if Christ had said, "I am the unconcealed Vine." (1) Israel was a concealed vine. Its full significance was not known until Christ, the True Vine, revealed it. And—(2) The natural vine is a concealed vine. Men could not understand its symbolical meaning; they misinterpreted its lessons; they thought that it had no higher uses than the mere material, utilitarian ones. It was only when Christ appeared that the parable was explained, and the mystery, hid from ages and generations, revealed. Our Lord's first miracle at Cana was effected by the direct and immediate agency of the True Vine. It revealed the power which enables the natural vine in the vineyard to change the rains and dews of every summer into wine in its grapes. And what is thus asserted of the vine is equally applicable to bread, to light, to water—to every natural object. They all had a concealed meaning—a reference to Christ—from the beginning. Our Lord does not say, "I am *like* the vine." That would have been to use a mere metaphor, or figure of speech. But He says, "I *am* the True Vine;" and this declares that the vine is the actual shadow of His substance. IV. THE QUALITIES IN CHRIST WHICH ARE ADUMBRATED BY THE VINE? 1. The vine is the most perfect of plants. (1) Some plants possess one part, or one quality, more highly developed; but for the harmonious development of every part and quality—for perfect balance of loveliness and usefulness, there are none to equal the vine. It belongs to the highest order of the vegetable kingdom. Painters tell us that to study the perfection of form, colour, light, and shade, united in one object, we must place before us a bunch of grapes. It is perfectly innocent, being one of the few climbing plants that do not injure the object of their support. It has no thorns—no noxious qualities; all its parts are useful. Its foliage affords a refreshing shade from the scorching sunshine. Its fruit was one of the first oblations to the Divinity, and, along with bread, is one of the primary and essential elements of human food. In common with other plants, it purifies the air—feeding upon what we reject as poison, and returning it to us as wine that maketh glad the heart, and in the process maintaining the atmosphere in a fit condition for our breathing. (2) In all these aspects the vine is the shadow of Him who is altogether lovely—who unites in Himself the extremes of perfection—who is continually doing good—who beautified our fallen world by His presence, changed its wilderness into an Eden, and made the polluted atmosphere of our life purer by breathing it, and is now transforming our evil into good, and our sorrow into a fruitful and strengthening joy. 2. The words distiguish between nature and that which is above it. To Pantheism nature is God. The pronoun "I" in it leads us up to the Personal Origin of all creation, shows to us that creation is not eternal, but springs from a Person. How, then, can any one expect to be able to interpret the meaning of the vine, without the personal knowledge of the Living Being who is working and speaking to us through its instrumentality? Without the knowledge of His person we cannot have the knowledge of His work in its fulness. But once united to Him by a living and loving faith, we have the proper view-point of the universe. (*H. Macmillan, D.D.*) *The True Vine*:—Christ selected this metaphor because of—I. THE ABUNDANCE OF ITS FRUIT; for which reason it is used by David to express great fertility (Psa. cxxviii. 3). Hence this tree is especially appropriate as a type of Christ, through whose life and passion the abundant fruits of holiness are brought forth by believers. II. THE PLEASANTNESS AND THE GRATEFUL CHARACTER OF ITS FRUIT, as the fruits produced by the indwelling of Christ are those which are accordant with and pleasing to man's highest nature. III. THE STRENGTH AND JOY WHICH WINE PRODUCES within the heart of man (Judges ix. 13; Psa. civ. 15; Prov. xxxi. 6, 7). IV. THE WIDE EXTENT OF THE BRANCHES stretching on all sides, and furnishing a striking figure of the growth and expansion of the Church, which is the body of Christ (Psa. lxxx. 11). V. ITS TYPICAL CHARACTER, wine symbolizing the blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) *The True Vine*:—I. THE VINE IN THE VITAL UNITY OF ALL ITS PARTS. We shall best understand this thought if we recur to some of those great vines in royal conservatories, where, for hundreds of yards, the pliant branches stretch along the espaliers, and yet one life pervades the whole, from the root, through the crooked stem, right away to the last leaf at the top of the furthest branch, and reddens and mellows every cluster. This great thought of the unity of life between Jesus Christ and all that believe upon Him is the familiar teaching of Scripture, and is set forth also by the metaphor of the body and its members. Personality remains, but across the awful gulf of the individual consciousness, which parts us from one another, Jesus Christ assumes

the Divine prerogative of passing and joining Himself to each of us. A oneness of life, which is the sole cause of fruitfulness and growth, is taught us here. This is a oneness which results—1. In a oneness of relation to God. In this relation He is the Son, and we in Him receive the standing of sons. He has access ever into the Father's presence, and we through Him and in Him have access with confidence and are accepted in the Beloved. 2. In relation to men, if He be Light, we, touched with His light, are also, in our measure and degree, the lights of the world; and in the proportion in which we receive the power of His Spirit, we, too, become God's anointed—"As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. 3. In regard of character, this union results in a similarity of character, and with His righteousness we are clothed. 4. In regard to the future, we can look forward and be sure that we are so closely joined with Him, that it is impossible but that where He is, there shall also His servants be. And as He sits on the Father's throne, His children must needs sit with Him on His throne. 5. Therefore the name of the collective whole is Christ. And, as in the great Old Testament prophecy of the servant of the Lord, the figure fluctuates between that which is the collective Israel and the personal Messiah; so the "Christ" is not only the individual Redeemer, but the whole of that redeemed Church, of which it is said, "it is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." II. THE HUSBANDMAN, AND THE DRESSING OF THE VINE. The one tool that a vinedresser needs is a knife, and the one kind of husbandry spoken of here is pruning—not manuring, not digging, but simply the hacking away of all that is rank and dead. 1. Fruitless branches mean all those who have a mere superficial adherence to the true vine. If there be any real union, there will be some life, and therefore some fruit. And so the application is to those nominal adherents to Christianity, who, if you ask them to put down in the census paper what they are, will say that they are Christians, Churchmen, or Dissenters, as the case may be, but who have no real hold upon Jesus Christ, and no real reception of anything from Him; and the "taking away" is simply that God makes visible, what is a fact, that they do not belong to Him with whom they have this nominal connection. The longer Christianity continues in any country, the more does the Church get weighted and lowered in its temperature by the aggregation round about it of people of that sort. And one sometimes longs and prays for a storm to come, of some sort or other, to blow the dead wood out of the tree, and to get rid of all this oppressive and stifling weight of sham Christians that has come round every one of our churches. 2. The pruning of the fruitful branches. We all, in our Christian life, carry with us the two sources—our own poor, miserable self, and the better life of Jesus Christ within us. The one flourishes at the expense of the other; and it is the Husbandman's merciful, though painful work, to cut back unsparingly the rank shoots that come from self, in order that all the force of our lives may be flung into the growing of the cluster which is acceptable to Him. III. THE BRANCHES ABIDING IN THE VINE AND THEREFORE FRUITFUL. 1. Union with Christ is the condition of all fruitfulness. There may be plenty of activity and yet barrenness. Works are not fruit. We can bring forth a great deal "of ourselves," and because it is of ourselves it is naught. 2. There is the great glory and distinctive blessedness of the gospel. Other teachers come to us and tell us how we ought to live, and give us laws, examples, reasons, motives. The gospel comes and gives us life, and unfolds itself in us into all the virtues that we have to possess. What is the use of giving a man a copy if he cannot copy it? Morality comes and stands over the cripple, and says to him, "Look here! This is how you ought to walk." But Christianity comes and bends over Him, and lays hold of his hand, and says, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." 3. Our reception of that power depends upon our own efforts. "Abide in Me and I in you." Suppress yourselves, and empty your lives of self, that the life of Christ may come in. A lock upon a canal, if it is empty, will have its gates pressed open by the water in the canal and will be filled. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

False vines:—There are "strange vines" which bring forth "wild grapes" in perilous abundance, planted in the soil of our human nature by "an enemy." Their nature is deadly, their grapes, however luscious and inviting, are noxious; their very shadow and foliage, like the fabled Upas tree, are redolent of destruction and death. There are grapes of gold, for which the grower sells his soul, and Mammon is the spirit that drives the ruinous bargain. There are the grapes which being pressed into the goblet do sparkle and coruscate, and Pleasure's fascinating beauties are reflected in the flowing cup; but a serpent lies coiled below the ruby draught and stingeth like an adder the victim she allures. There are grapes of

which the smooth-tongued vine-dresser says that "they are much to be desired to make one wise." "Eat," quoth he, "and ye shall be as gods. Yes. There are vines, vineyards, vine-dressers, and wine-vats in this deluded and deluding world. Pleasant is their shadow, graceful and winsome their festoonings, attractive are their supplies either from the cluster or the flagon, and, alas! those who are deluded by them "know not that the dead are there," and that the shaded and enticing paths that lead men thither are "steps that take hold on hell." "Their vine is of the vine of Sodom and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, &c. It was a "wild vine" which produced the fruit gathered in mistake by the servant of Elisha, so that there came to be "death in the pot" into which the deceptive grapes were shed; and so with all the false trusts and hopes of humanity. (*J. Jackson Wray.*) *Christ the true Vine in His Divine humanity:*—It is in His manhood that Christ is the true Vine. It was of the essence of His Mediatorial work, of the Daysman, who should lay His hands upon both, that as on the one side He could say, "I and My Father are one," so upon the other, "I and My brethren are one;" but while the vine and the vine branches must thus both be partakers of the same nature (Heb. ii. 11), He will presently challenge for Himself a share in the work of the husbandman. He, too, has power to "purge" or cleanse through His word (ver. 3). His humanity was a Divine humanity, for so only could it have become a life-giving humanity to the world. (*Archbishop Trench.*) *Union with Christ:*—I. ITS NATURE. 1. An actual joining of each branch to the vine. When Madame Guyon was ten years old, she learned that Madame de Chantal had written the characters of the holy name of Jesus upon her bosom with a red-hot iron. She sought to imitate, so she sewed on her breast a piece of stiff paper containing the name of Christ. Never has there been good in such folly. Union to the Saviour does not consist in tacking on a badge of mere profession of love for Him. You might as well nail a branch to a trellis, and call that grafting. 2. A living joining of each branch to this Vine. We have often seen flowers bound to sticks with a bit of wire, so that they seemed growing on long stems; but there was no life in the merely mechanical contact. 3. The reciprocal joining of every branch to the vine, and of the vine to every branch. II. ITS PURPOSES. That it may produce after its kind for the enrichment of the husbandman the fruits he loves. These fruits are—1. Good views. It never profits any one to sneer at creeds, and cry out for deeds instead; for no good deed was ever done unless there was a good thought behind it. The shallowness of much of our modern piety is owing to want of real conviction. Our religion has always been "a faith," and so has had an intellectual basis. 2. Good deeds. For all genuine ideas force themselves out into conduct. Mere admiration for the character, or mystic affection for the person, of a Saviour like ours would not be enough. A pretty little honeysuckle in the garden might as well twine itself up around a trellis, and try for a whole season to look like a vine; grape-time would show the sham. 3. Good feelings. Some people doubt the power of a religious duty to start the enthusiasm of a large soul. And yet many of the finest minds and purest hearts have drawn their inspirations from the spiritual intercourse they kept with the life and the words of Jesus. While Claudius Buchanan was missionary in India, he translated and issued the Syriac Testament. Macaulay says that once in his presence he stopped and suddenly burst into tears. When he recovered himself the great man said, "Do not be alarmed, I am not ill; but I was completely overcome with the recollections of the delight I have enjoyed in this exercise." It is thus that good Christians have often gone to the stake for the love they bore for this Redeemer of men. 4. Good graces. Vines feel no shame for being beautiful. Excellencies of character are what the Lord loves (Gal. v. 22, 23). III. CHRIST'S CARE FOR IT. The Husbandman is God the Father. He cleanses the vines. In the East dressers wash the leaves and shoots and tendrils and clusters, each by itself in turn, so as to clear off the dust and mould. They cut away, also, the dead branches, and keep the whole vine under discipline. 1. The branch may be too feeble in its growth. Then, of course, it must be made to draw more strength from the vine which supports it. In the union of Christ to each soul these quickenings are efficaciously wrought by the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. The believer seeks them by prayer, and openly welcomes them with thanksgiving and trust. A female teacher in Persia was seated on a mat in the middle of the earthen floor of the church greatly fatigued, and as she was endeavouring to catch a moment's rest, one of the native women seated herself directly behind on the same mat. In a quiet whisper she begged her to lean back. The missionary just suffered her weight to fall against her knee; but the generous

Christian drew her nearer and then whispered again, "If you love me, lean hard." Never was a truer imitation of Christ. Those who are weak show more love by leaning harder. 2. The branch may be too perverse in its growth. Sometimes it appears as if it had become wilful. It thrusts its rings and tendrils off as if a petulant rebelliousness against the trellis had awakened its spite, and it had determined to grow out of order. It will lay hold of twigs below it in the grass, and trees above it in the orchard, always endeavouring to defeat the husbandman's purpose. For this there is no remedy but one: the knife comes suddenly, and now remains only the fire. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Union with Christ*:—I. THIS UNION. 1. It is compared—(1) By Peter (ii. 5, 6) to the connection between the foundation-stone and the building, and the relation thus suggested is one of dependence. (2) By the Lord Himself to the union between the branches and the vine, the connection is seen to be one of life. (3) By Paul (Ephes. iv. 15, 16) to the union between the head and the members, where the connection is one of subjection. (4) By the same Apostle (Ephes. v. 22, 23) to the union between husband and wife; and there the idea of affection is the predominating one. Now, putting all these together, we get this result, that believers are one with Christ, as represented by Him, dependent upon Him, living in Him, subject to Him, and loving Him with tenderest affection. But in the figure of our text there is further suggested the idea that believers are supported by Christ. The branches are sustained by the sap, which the vine supplies; and so His people are animated by the Spirit which Christ bestows. 2. How this union is entered into. The analogy of the vine does not help us here. The branches are in the vine, whether they will or no. But men have wills; and so this union is, on their part, a voluntary thing. 3. Then, when we are thus united to Him, His strength and grace flow into us. When the car is coupled to the engine, the motion of the engine is communicated to, and shared with, the car; and when we are one with Christ in love and trust, His Spirit comes into our hearts and makes us more responsive to Himself. II. THE END FOR WHICH THE UNION EXISTS (vers. 2, 8). Fruit, the character of which may be gathered from Eph. v. 9; Gal. v. 22, 23; 2 Pet. i. 6–8. Then this fruit is—1. A personal thing. It is not the effect on others of some effort which we put forth, but the appearance in ourselves of the graces of holiness. 2. Not a single grace, but a whole circle. The spiritual vine, like the natural, brings forth its fruit in a cluster, and only when each of the members of that cluster is fairly and symmetrically developed is there true fruitfulness. (*Christian Age.*) *Union with Christ*:—The fruitful source of all the Christian's blessings. Constantly felt and remembered tends to dignify and fructify his life. Leads to—(1) Purity. (2) Safety. In Christ. (3) Glory. I. UNION IN ITS NATURE. 1. Mysterious. 2. Mutually agreed. 3. Spiritual. 4. Living. II. PERMANENCE OF THE UNION. III. FRUITFULNESS OF THE UNION. "Bear much fruit." 1. Expected. It is a vine—a vineyard under care. "Father is the husbandman." 2. Only possible in union. Human nature. "No fruit of itself," "for without Me ye can do nothing." Linked to Christ by faith. "Much fruit." 3. To the highest end. Heavenward. "Glory to God" (ver. 8). Earthward. "So shall ye be My disciples" (ver. 8). The great want of earth—true disciples. God claims the glory. 4. Sign of life. "Bringeth forth"—out of—grow—result of the Divine life within. (*E. Wickliffe Davies.*) *The true spiritual life in man* is—I. DERIVED FROM CHRIST. Religion is not a mere creed or form; it is a life, and the life is a "branch" of Christ's life. It grows out of Him. There is no true spiritual life where Christ's spirit is not the inspiration. II. DEVELOPED IN FRUITFULNESS. The production of fruit is what is required; it is not to pass off in foliage and blossom. Unless we yield fruit we are worthless and doomed to destruction. What is the fruit? "Love, joy peace," &c. III. THE JOINT AGENCY OF GOD AND MAN. 1. Man must seek an abiding connection with Christ. Cut the branch from the tree, it will wither and rot. 2. God must act the part of the Great Husbandman. The mere abiding in Christ will not do of itself. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Ver 2. **Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit.**—*Believers branches in the true vine*:—I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN BEING A BRANCH IN CHRIST, AND WHO ARE PROPERLY BRANCHES IN HIM. 1. In order to be such, we must be cut off from the stock, which is wild by nature (Rom. xi. 24). This stock is our natural and sinful state (1 Pet. i. 18). Growing in this stock, we bring forth evil fruit. We begin to be cut off from it when we are convinced of our sin, and brought to repentance. Hence we begin to die to all dependance on our own wisdom, righteousness, and strength; to all love of the world and sin (2 Cor. vi. 17). 2. We must be ingrafted into Christ

(Rom. xi. 24). The usual way of ingrafting is not to insert a wild scion into a good stock, but a good scion into a wild stock. 3. Hence it appears evidently who are branches in Him—(1) Negatively; not all who have been baptized, and are reckoned members of the visible Church (Rom. ii. 25–29), who profess to know God, and to have religion (2 Tim. ii. 19; 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3). (2) Positively. They are those who have experienced true repentance and faith, and are in Christ new creatures (2 Cor. v. 17). II. WHAT IS THE FRUIT WHICH SUCH ARE EXPECTED TO BEAR. This implies the cultivation of truth, justice, mercy, charity (Heb. xiii. 16; Tit. iii. 8; Phil. i. 10, 11). Such must also cultivate, and maintain towards themselves, temperance in all its branches, chastity, self-denial, purity, universal holiness (Heb. xii. 14). III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEARING, OR NOT BEARING, THIS FRUIT. 1. If we do not bring forth this fruit, our grace, not being exercised, is withdrawn and lost. We are actually cut off from Christ, as an unfruitful branch is lopped off from a vine. We wither in our fruits, our blossoms, and our very leaves; in our works, graces, and gifts. 2. If we do produce fruit,—we are purged, or purified, by the Spirit, through the Word (chap. xvii. 17), which is believed, and obeyed (Acts xv. 9; 1 Pet. i. 22); by affliction (Heb. xii. 4–11). IV. HOW WE MAY BE ENABLED TO BEAR THIS FRUIT. 1. By abiding in Christ, and Christ in us (ver. 5). We shall not otherwise be fruitful (ver. 4), for otherwise we shall want life, inclination, knowledge, and power. 2. We abide in Him by abiding in faith, in God, in His revealed will, in His Gospel and its truths, in Christ, in the promises (John vi. 47–58; Gal. ii. 20; Heb. x. 38; and especially Rom. xi. 16, 24). By continuing in love (John xv. 9; Gal. v. 6). Hence arise deadness to the world, and power over sin. By continuing to obey (John xv. 10; xiv. 23, 24.) In order to these, the use of all prescribed means is necessary, as the Word, prayer, watchfulness, self-denial. (*J. Benson.*) *Useless branches!*—In the natural world branches of the vine which are not good for that to which they were specially ordained, viz., for the bearing of fruit, are good for nothing. There are trees which may be turned to secondary uses, if they fail to fulfil their primary. Not so the vine. As timber it is utterly valueless (Ezek. xv. 3, 4). It is with it exactly as with the saltless salt, which, having lost its savour, is fit only to be cast out of doors; both of them being meet emblems of the spiritual man who is not spiritual, who is good neither for the work of this world nor of a higher. (*Abp. Trench*). *Character and doom of unfruitfulness*:—I. THE POSITION YOU OCCUPY. The Saviour speaks of those who are in Him. This, in a sense, is true of you; not in the highest sense, indeed; by the supposition, you are not in Him by that vital union which faith produces, and which secures fruitfulness, but you are so in a real, though a subordinate sense. You have some relation to Christ, are not like those to whom His name is unknown; you have heard of Christ, whence He came, what He did, how He suffered, how He is able and willing to "save to the uttermost"—a fact by which, while your ears are blessed, you are also involved in responsibility. To Him you were dedicated in Christian baptism; by parental piety, in His Church, His name was named upon you, and His blessing invoked. More than this. You have been trained and nurtured amid Christian influences: Inefficacious as these may have proved, they have existed; you can remember them. The possibility of such outward and visible union, as distinct from the inward and spiritual, is variously illustrated. "Have not I chosen you twelve? and one of you is a devil." "Demas hath forsaken us, having loved the present world." Such, then, is your position. II. YOU ARE UNFRUITFUL. What do we mean by this? Not that you have no capacity for fruitfulness. You might have been so different, as different from your present self as light from darkness, life from death. Not that you have been unfruitful in all senses. Your intellect, perhaps, has been active, become acute and strong; your judgment has become matured; your affections have budded, blossomed, and brought forth fruit; your character, so far as this can be perfected without the motives and principles of Christian life, has become developed and firm. It may be, too, that in the years we are now reviewing and charging with unfruitfulness, you have done much, been a philanthropist, a patriot, a projector of useful schemes. In what, then, are you chargeable with unfruitfulness? By lacking such principles as these. Love to God. Faith in Christ. Obedience. Humility and repentance, too. It might be supposed that sense of deficiency would have produced at least these. Have they? Has your heart been broken for sin? Have you offered the sacrifice which God will not despise, the broken and contrite spirit? Thus you see, there are fruits which you have not borne, the most important fruits, and those without which all others God esteems, if not "abomination," yet certainly most

subordinate. III. SOME OF THE AGGRAVATIONS OF THIS UNFRUITFULNESS. You have had great advantages. Consider, too, the time you have wasted. How insufficient the causes, too, which have produced your infertility. It were wise for you seriously to inquire what these have been. Decree, fate, providence, necessity—you cannot charge these with the future. Your conscience is too enlightened for that. No! the cause is not from above. Nor from beneath altogether. Satan has no compulsory power over us. Where, then, is the cause to be found? In yourself only; in your yielding to outward influences. It is a further aggravation of your sin, that all the time of your unfruitfulness you have been positively injurious. Think, for example, of the incomparable mischief a father does in his family all the time he is living a worldly and careless life. IV. THE DOOM OF THE UNFRUITFUL BRANCH. It is one proof, among many, of God's willingness to save, that he announces punishment before He executes it. None are led blindfold to justice. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away." This is fulfilled variously. It is sometimes in the loss of capacity. Then there is Death. This is common to man as the penalty of sin; but to different men, how different! Whatever heaven is, and its glory is inexpressible, such are taken away from it; whatever hell is, and its dolefulness, as described by Christ, no darkness can paint, they are taken away to it. (*J. Viney.*) **Every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it.** *A sharp knife for the vine-branches*:—I. THE TEXT SUGGESTS SELF-EXAMINATION. It mentions—1. Two characters who are in some respects exceedingly alike; they are both branches, and are in the vine: and yet for all this, the end of the one shall be to be cast away, while the end of the other shall be to bring forth fruit. 2. The distinction between them. The first branch brought forth no fruit; the second branch bore some fruit. We have no right to judge of our neighbours' motives and thoughts, except so far as they may be clearly discoverable by their actions and words. The interior we must leave with God, but the exterior we may judge. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Paul has given us a list of these fruits in Gal. v. 23. Say, professor, hast thou brought forth the fruit "love?" &c. It is so easy for us to wrap ourselves up in the idea that attention to religious ceremonies is the test, but it is not so, for "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees," &c. 3. The solemn difference between them leads to a solemn result. (1) Sometimes God allows the professor to apostatise. (2) Or else he is allowed to fall into open sin. (3) Some have been taken away in a more terrible sense by death. II. CONVEYS INSTRUCTION. The fruit-bearing branches are not perfect. If they were, they would not need pruning. Whenever the sap within them is strong, there is a tendency for that strength to turn into evil. The gardener desires to see that strength in clusters, but alas! instead it runs into wood. When the sap comes into a Christian to produce confidence in God, through the evil that is in him, it often produces confidence in himself. When the sap would produce zeal, how very frequently it turns into rashness. Suppose the sap flows to produce self-examination, very generally, instead of the man doubting himself, he begins to doubt his Lord. How often have I seen even the joy of the Lord turned into pride. That love which we ought to bear towards our neighbours, how apt is that to run into love of the world! Gentleness often turns to a silly compliance with everybody's whim, and meekness, which is a fruit of the Spirit, how often that becomes an excuse for holding your tongue, when you ought boldly to speak! 2 Pruning is the lot of all the fruitful saints. It is generally thought that our trials and troubles purge us: I am not sure of that, they certainly are lost upon some. It is the word (ver. 3) that prunes the Christian. Affliction is the handle of the knife, the grindstone that sharpens up the Word; the dresser which removes our soft garments, and lays bare the diseased flesh, so that the surgeon's lancet may get at it. Affliction makes us ready to feel the word, but the true pruner is the word in the hand of the Great Husbandman. Sometimes when you lay stretched upon the bed of sickness, you think more upon the word than you did before, that is one great thing. In the next place, you see more the applicability of that word to yourself. In the third place, the Holy Spirit makes you feel more, while you are thus laid aside, the force of the word than you did before. 3. The object in this pruning is never condemnatory. God chastises, but He cannot punish those for whom Jesus Christ has been already punished. You have no right to say, when a man is afflicted, that it is because he has done wrong; on the contrary, just the branch that is good for something gets the pruning knife. It is because the Lord loves His people that He chastens them. 4. The real reason is that more fruit may be produced. (1) In quantity. A good man, who feels the power of the word pruning him of this

and that superfluity, sets to work to do more for Jesus. Before he was afflicted he did not know how to be patient. Before he was poor he did not know how to be humble, &c. (2) In variety. One tree can only produce one kind of fruit usually, but the Lord's people, the more they are pruned the more they will produce. (3) In quality. The man may not pray more, but he will pray more earnestly. 5. What greater blessing can a man have than to produce much fruit for God? Better to serve God much than to become a prince. III. INVITES MEDITATION. 1. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the wicked appear?" 2. What a mercy it is to the believer that it is pruning with him and not cutting off! 3. Think how gently the pruning has been done with the most of us up till now, compared with our barrenness. 4. How earnestly we ought to seek for more fruit. 5. How concerned should every one of us be to be efficaciously and truly one with Christ! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Hard times, God's pruning knife* (Thanksgiving Sermon):—I. TO-DAY WE SHOULD BE THANKFUL because—1. Hard as the times are, they might be worse. 2. The times are not so hard as we deserve. 3. They are not so hard as we represent. II. WHAT WE CALL HARD TIMES ARE THE BEST FOR US. 1. Good for man's physical nature. The frugality and self-control they induce are precisely what the athlete practices. 2. Good for his intellectual nature. No great genius ever daudled into inspiration. 3. Good for his moral nature. They remove the excrescences of—(1) Covetousness. (2) Luxury. (3) Indolence. III. THE RESULT WILL BE BETTER FRUIT. 1. A new style or higher type of manhood. 2. A higher type of politics. Hard times teach befooled people to think, and to rise above party dictations. 3. A higher type of religion. God has ever developed the higher Christian life in times of trial. IV. AFTER ALL, THE PRUNING KNIFE IS ONLY ONE OF THE IMPLEMENTS OF CULTURE. Soft rain and genial sunshine are the larger experience of the vine. And so even in hard times our afflictions are not one to a thousand of our blessings. (*C. D. Wadsworth, D.D.*) *Pruning, a reason for gratitude*:—Brambles certainly have a fine time of it, and grow after their own pleasure. We have seen their long shoots reaching far and wide, and no knife has threatened them as they luxuriated upon the commons and waste lands. The poor vine is cut down so closely that little remains of it but bare stems. Yet, when clearing-time comes, and the brambles are heaped for their burning, who would not rather be the vine? (*Ibid.*) *Means of fruitfulness*:—The word translated "purgeth" is *kathairo*, which includes all the means that are necessary to develop the fruitfulness of the plant, and the removal of all hindrances. It means to purify the ground and prepare it for sowing, by removing weeds and rubbish—to winnow the corn, to separate the chaff from the wheat. Its root-idea is purity, freedom from all that is foul, false, useless, or noxious. It is interesting to notice the close resemblance that exists between the word *kathairo*, to purge, and *kathaireo*, to destroy. The addition of one letter makes the one word to mean a very different thing from the other. And so there is a resemblance between the purging of the fruitful branches and the taking away of the unfruitful ones. In the garden during spring, the process of digging the ground, cutting the roots and branches, seems purely a process of destruction; but in the added beauty of summer and the richer fruitfulness of autumn, it is seen to be a remedial and constructive process. And so the means which God employs to promote the fertility of His own people seem so like those which He employs to punish the wicked, that the righteous are not seldom perplexed. In considering the means of fruitfulness, let us look at—I. THE NATURE OF THE SOIL in which believers are planted. 1. Some of the finest grapes are produced on volcanic soil. From the rich red mould into which lava is disintegrated when long exposed to the weather, the vine draws the juices that form the largest and most generous clusters. The passion of the soil, as it were, passes into the produce. Palestine, the native country of the vine, exhibits, for its size, more than any other country, evidences of extraordinary geological convulsions. These features were paralleled by the historical revolutions which were intended to make Israel the true vine of the Lord. And so it is in the experience of every nation that is intended to produce much fruit. Africa, with its uniform geology and its monotonous history, has done little for mankind compared with Europe, whose geology and history are exceedingly varied and complicated. It is as true of individuals as of nations, that because they have no changes, they do not fear God or prosper. But God plants His vines amid fiery trials, where they are exposed to constant temptations, lava-floods of the wrath and malice of the Adversary and of wicked men. Since the ground beneath them is insecure, and liable to constant convulsive shocks, they are thereby induced to set their affections

more firmly on things above, and to walk as pilgrims and strangers on earth. 2. The influence of external circumstances upon objects so plastic as plants is confessedly very powerful, leading often to great modifications of form, structure, and substance. Hence the endless variety of grapes and wines of different countries. A similar modification in the character of the growth and fruit of the Christian is caused by the circumstances in which God's providence places him. One thing, amid all the changes of his circumstances, the Christian can command if he will—and that is the sunlight of God's countenance. He does not, however, always avail himself of it. And hence, as the spice-trees in our hot-houses are destitute of aromatic taste, because we cannot supply them with the brilliant direct sunshine of their native skies, so the Christian, amid all the privileges of the Church, is often destitute of the rich aromatic fragrance of spiritual joy, because he seeks to make up, by the heat of forced spiritual emotion originating in himself, for the full, bright, joyous sunshine that beams from God's face. 3. Under this head may be noticed the discipline of life's daily work as one of the means of developing Christian fruitfulness. Like the vine, the Christian requires to be trained along the trellis of formal duties and orderly habits. 4. I may also notice the fact, that God's tenderest vines are often placed in the most trying circumstances. It seems a strange appointment of nature, that the growing points of all trees should be their weakest and most delicate parts. So it is with God's own people. Many of the most delicate and sensitive of them have to bear the full brunt of life's storms. Tender women have often to withstand the severest shocks of circumstances. The sorest trials often meet the Christian at the beginning of his course. He puts forth the tenderest growths of his nature often into the biting air of doubt, and fear, and despondency. But it is good thus to bear the yoke in our youth. The elasticity and hopefulness of the young Christian can overcome trials which would crush the more aged and less buoyant. And the very patience and tenderness of those sensitive ones, who have to bear greater hardships and evils, disarm these evils of their bitterness, and turn them to profitable uses. II. PRUNING IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON METHODS BY WHICH INCREASED FRUITFULNESS IS PRODUCED. No plant requires more pruning than the vine. So bountiful is its sap, so vigorous its vital force, that we are amazed at the abundance of superfluous growth which it annually produces. In order to adapt it to our conditions of cultivation we must systematically cripple and restrict it in every part. 1. The head, or leading shoots, are carefully broken off; and the long, luxuriant, lateral shoots are cut back to a few joints. 2. But besides the pruning of the suckers on the branch the branch itself is sometimes pruned. In almost every branch, owing to deficiency of light and heat, or overcrowding, many of the buds that are put forth every year become dormant. Some of these torpid buds retain a sufficient amount of vitality to carry them forward through the annually-deposited layers of wood and bark; so that they still continue to maintain their position visibly, year after year, on the outside of the bark. In most instances, however, they are too feeble to keep pace with the onward growth of the branch; and, in that case, they fall behind, necessarily sink below the surface, and become buried beneath succeeding annual deposits of wood and bark. The branch, instead of developing them, employs the sap which ought to have gone for that purpose, into growing fresh shoots. But the gardener comes, and with his sharp pruning-knife lops off these useless suckers; and the consequence is, that in a little while the sap goes back to the dormant buds and stimulates their slumbering vitality. And so God prunes every branch in the True Vine for two reasons; first, in order to remove rank and useless qualities; and, secondly, to develop latent graces. In no Christian is there an harmonious spiritual growth, a perfect expansion from a perfect germ in childhood. On the contrary, growth in grace in us is always unsymmetrical. Solid and valuable qualities are united with weak, worthless ones; graces that charm by their beauty lie side by side with defects that repel by their deformity. Some graces, also, are dormant in the soul, repressed by unfavourable circumstances of continued prosperity, or starved by the over-development of other graces. Some besetting sins, such as irritability, covetousness, worldliness, pride, impatience, are allowed to grow up and exhaust in their noxious growth the life of the soul. Now, to repress the evil and stimulate the good qualities of His people, God subjects them to the pruning of His providence. But, the pruning of God's providence would be very unsatisfactory did it only lop off noxious qualities, mortify easily-besetting sins. Such injurious growths may be repressed by affliction, but unless the discipline develops the opposite good qualities, they will spring up anew, and make matters worse than before. Spiritual graces

must be developed in their room. In order to get rid of worldly-mindedness, spirituality of mind must be cultivated; covetousness will only yield to a larger experience of the Love that for our sakes became poor: anger will only be extirpated by meekness, and pride by humility. 3. But we must be guarded against the idea that affliction of itself can develop the fruitfulness of the Christian life. We find that in the fruit-tree the pruning is only of use when there are latent or open buds to develop. And so, unless we have Christian life and Christian capabilities, affliction, so far from doing us good, will only harden and injure us. But, while affliction cannot impart spiritual life, there are instances in which God uses it to quicken the soul dead in trespasses and sins. And here, too, we find an analogy in nature. The buds of plants almost always grow in the axil—the vacant angle between the leaf and the stem, where the hard, resisting bark which everywhere else invests the surface of the plant, is more easily penetrated, and allows the growing tissues to expand more easily. The axil is, so to speak, the joint in the armour of the stem. Now, "a wound is virtually an anxil, for the continuity of the surface is there broken, and consequently, the resistance of the external investiture diminished." Now, we all invest ourselves with a strong, resisting envelope of pride, worldliness and carelessness. Our property, our friends, our reputation, our comfort, all form a kind of outer crust of selfishness, which prevents our spiritual growth. But God removes our property or our friends, blights our reputation, destroys our carnal ease, and by the wound thus made in our selfish life an axil is formed, from whence springs up the bud of a new and holier growth. 4. There is one process of unusual severity which the gardener has recourse to in cases of obstinate sterility. The barren branch is girdled or ringed—that is, a narrow strip of its bark is removed all round the branch. The juices elaborated by the leaves are arrested in their downward course, and accumulated in the part above the ring, which is thus enabled to produce fruit abundantly; while the shoots that appear below the ring, being fed only by the crude ascending sap, do not bear flowers, but push forth into leafy branches. The prophet Joel says, "He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig-tree." Many Christians are ringed to prevent the earthward tendencies of their souls, and enable them to accumulate and concentrate all the heavenly influences which they receive in bringing forth more fruit. Their present life is separated from their past by some terrible crisis of suffering, which has altered everything to their view, which has been in itself a transformation, and has accomplished in a day, in an hour, in a moment, what else is effected only by the gradual process of years. The lot that is thus halved may be more useful than in its full and joyful completeness. Ceasing to draw its nourishment from broken cisterns of earthly love, the lonely branch, separated from its happy past, depends more upon the unfailing due and sunshine of heavenly love. 5. Sometimes even the roots of the vine require to be dug about and cut short. There is a correspondence between the horizontal extension of the branches in the air and the lateral spreading of the roots in the earth. For this reason the roots require pruning no less than the branches. If they are allowed to develop too luxuriantly, the branches will keep pace with them, only they will be barren. We are prone to root ourselves too firmly in the rich soil of our circumstances, to spread our roots far and wide in search of what shall minister to our love of ease and pleasure. But God digs about us. Our circumstances crumble away about our roots; the things and the persons in which we trusted prove as unstable as a sand-heap on a slope. But, from roots bare and exposed, or cut off and circumscribed by uncongenial soil, we should seek to develop a higher beauty and richness of character. 6. The leaves also need sometimes to be taken away, as superabundant foliage would shade the fruit and prevent the sunshine from getting access to it to ripen it. So the fruit of the Christian is sometimes prevented from ripening or filling out properly by the superabundance of the leaves of profession. There may be more profession than practice, more of the rustling foliage than of the silent fruit. The most common fault of believers is letting their profession of the Christian life run ahead of their experience. Not more necessary are the leaves of a natural tree to the production of the fruit, than the profession of a Christian is to the formation of the Christian character. But God, by some appropriate discipline, regulates what leaves of profession should be stripped off and what leaves should remain. 7. Many of the tendrils of the vine require to be nipped off, in order that no sap may be wasted, or diverted from the fruit. If left to itself, the vine would put forth a tendril at every alternate joint; for it would seek to climb to the top of the highest tree. In like manner, it is necessary that the excessive upward tendency of some

Christians should be restricted, in order that the common duties, and the homely concerns of ordinary life—which in their own sphere are equally important—may not be neglected. 8. The fruit itself must be thinned. The gardener prunes the cluster of grapes when young and tender, in order that the berries which are allowed to remain may be larger and finer. In the Christian life there must be concentration of effort, conservation of force. Much moral energy is spent without effect on a multiplicity of objects, which, if husbanded and focussed on a few of the most important, would lead to far greater results. 9. It has been observed that the hues of the sunbeam which the growing plant does not reflect at one time are absorbed, like a stream running underground for a while, and re-appear in some after part. So is it with God's discipline of His people. Much of it may seem to be void and lost—to make no adequate return; but in some part or other of the life the effect of it is seen. If it fails to manifest itself in the leaf, it comes out in the blossom or fruit. 10. It may happen, however, that the purging, whose various forms and relations I have thus considered, may be here, and the fruition in eternity. Christians are placed in an unfavourable climate. Tropical by nature, they have been carried, like a wind-wafted seed, into a temperate zone, and have striven in vain to grow and flower among the hardy plants around them. But it is a comforting thought, that what bears about it here the marks of incompleteness, and to our eyes the appearance of failure, belongs essentially to some vaster whole. III. ANOTHER METHOD OF PURGING THE BRANCH IS FREEING IT FROM ITS ENEMIES. The natural vine, owing to its rich productiveness, is peculiarly exposed to the attacks of numerous foes which prey upon it. 1. A species of vegetable parasite not unfrequently assails it, called the "dodder." This strange plant is a mere mass of elastic, pale-red, knotted threads, which shoot out in all directions over the vine. It springs originally from the ground, and if it finds no living plant near on which to graft itself, it withers and dies; but if there be a vine or any other useful plant within its reach, it surrounds the stem in a very little time, and henceforth lives on the fostering plant by its suckers only, the original root in the ground becoming dried up. The dodder is exceedingly injurious to the plants it attacks, depriving them of their nourishment, and strangling them in its folds. Can we imagine a more striking natural emblem of the law of sin and death with which the believer has to contend, and from which he longs for deliverance? We can only hope to prevent the dodder growing and spreading by perpetually breaking and dividing its stalks before they have time to fruit; and we can only hope to keep down the remains of corruption within us by incessant effort, watchfulness, and prayer; not allowing them to develop into fruit and seed. How blessed will be the deliverance when this terrible despoiler of our peace and usefulness is finally and completely removed from us, when we are saved for ever from the power and presence of that sin from whose guilt the blood of Christ has freed us! 2. Every one has heard of the terrible grape-mildew which, on its first appearance, utterly destroyed the vineyards in many parts of the world, and still annually re-appears to levy its tax upon the vine-grower. In consists of a fungus, whose growth spreads a white, downy mould over the surface of the grape, checking its development, and converting its pulp into a sour and watery mass of decay. But it does no harm unless the conditions of its germination exist—which are cold, wet seasons, with little sunshine—in which case it starts into life, and grows with inconceivable rapidity, spreading ruin on every side. To a species of moral mildew the fruit of the Christian is also exposed. In cold seasons, when clouds of unbelief rise up between the soul and the Sun of Righteousness, intercepting His light, this mildew is peculiarly destructive. It is a very solemn thought, that the spiritual atmosphere is full of the devices of the Prince of the power of the air—that the existence of another world of evil beyond our own world, makes all remissness on our part most dangerous. 3. In this country, the greatest pest of the vinery is the little red spider, whose movements over the leaves and fruit are exceedinglw nimble, and which makes up by its vast numbers for its individual weakness. It punctures the fruit, sips its juice, and thus injures its appearance and quality. In the East, the land of the vine, the special foe of the vineyard is the fox. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes"—or small grapes just out of blossom—says the beautiful Song of Solomon. These are fitting symbols of some weakness or infirmity of believers—some sin of temper or tongue—which, although it may not endanger their safety, will, nevertheless, greatly mar their peace. Peevishness, irritability, &c., may seem so small and trifling as to be hardly entitled to be called sins at all. They may be extenuated and explained away, but

they are in reality red spiders—little foxes, that spoil the tender grapes of the soul. 4. There is a disease called "rust," which makes its appearance on the berries of the vine a few days after they are out. It is supposed to be caused by handling the berries while thinning them. Our vines have indeed tender grapes. The beauty of holiness is easily blurred: self-consciousness rusts it; affectation brushes off the fine edge—the delicate beauty of the various graces. 5. Another disease known to gardeners is "shanking," which makes its appearance just as the grapes are changing from the acid to the saccharine state, and arrests the transformation at once; the berry remaining perfectly acid, and at length shrivelling up. It begins in the decay of the little stem or shank of the berry, and is supposed to be caused by the roots of the vine descending into a cold, wet subsoil. How often, alas, is it true of the believer, that his fruit is shanked, remaining sour when it should become sweet and palatable! (*H. Macmillan, D.D.*) *Spiritual pruning:*—What is pruning? Whatever it be, two things are observable. It is effected by the husbandman, and applied to each. It is a pleasant thought that all the discipline by which we are exercised is from the hand of "our Father." There may indeed be subordinate instruments, the "wicked" being God's "sword," but it is still "the Lord's doing." A work so important as the spiritual culture of His people He commits wholly to none. "He pruneth," nor are any exempt. "Every branch" is the subject of pruning. As all need, so all have, discipline. In the deepest trial there has nothing happened to you but what is "common to man." And why this? For greater fruitfulness. Not "willingly," for wantonness, for pleasure, for any benefit the husbandman secures, but for fruit. The subject, then, is, Fruit as the result of affliction. Affliction! What a scene does this word open to view. It is well to bear in mind that it is confined to earth. There are whole races of beings who experimentally know not the meaning of the word, who never felt a pain, never breathed a sigh, never wept a tear; others to whom it is a thing of the past. How truthful in this, as in all other respects, is the Bible. How large a portion of the Scriptures is occupied with scenes and truths bearing on affliction! The terms by which it designates it, how various—"adversity," "correction," "chastisement," "calamity," "distress," "grief," "judgment," "stripes," "smiting," "trouble," "visitation," are some of the literal expressions; while the figures of "fire," "water," the "rod," the "yoke," "gall," "wormwood," "rough wind," "sackcloth," "ashes," and many others, are significantly employed as its symbols. You know, too, how deeply all the histories of the Bible are tinged by it: Job in the ashes, Jacob mourning his children, Joseph in the pit, Moses in the desert, David in the wilderness, the youths in the furnace, Daniel in the den—what are all these familiar tales of life, but scenes of affliction, showing how it was experienced and borne? It is not of affliction, however, whether in fact or description, we have now to think, but of its fruit, the "more fruit," which it is designed to produce, the "peaceable fruit" which "afterward" it yields. 1. Affliction deepens on the mind a sense of the reality of eternal things. It is said that after an earthquake, men tread more warily. The foundations having been shaken, a sense of insecurity is felt, which produces solemn impression. 2. Another valuable result of affliction is increased sense of the value of religion. When Israel passed through the desert they learnt, as they never otherwise could have done, the worth of many things—water, manna, guidance. As the dove beaten by the tempest to the sheltering ark, as the tossed disciples to the mighty One who walked on the billows, we repair to Christ. Certain colours require certain lights to show them. There are views of Christ as a Saviour, a Friend, a High Priest, an Example, which only the shadow of affliction could enable us to discern, but which, when once seen, remain for ever upon the vision of the soul. So with God's Word. To enjoy plaintive music or a minor key, a certain state of mind is requisite; and who but one in trial can fully enter into the deep bass of sorrow and wailing in the Lamentations or the Psalms. Prayer is another exercise of which affliction teaches the value. "I will go and return unto My place till they seek My face, in their affliction they will seek Me early." 3. Another valuable effect of affliction is the cultivation and growth of the passive virtues. The importance and value of these we are apt to overlook. Constitutionally active, we are all prone to honour the more stirring graces rather than the gentler ones. By far the larger proportion are passive virtues. What are these? Patience, submission, acquiescence. To take away wilfulness, waywardness, self-determination, and suchlike natural excrescences, and thus secure the opposite growth, He prunes even the fruitful branch. 4. Another fruit of affliction is increasing fellowship with Christ. There are communications for which affliction

is indispensable, and which the Saviour reserves for this season. To see the stars we require darkness. Certain flowers open only at night. The sweetest song is heard in the dusk. The most beautiful effect of colour requires a camera obscura, a darkened chamber. It is even thus with affliction. Would Abraham have heard the angel had it not been for the outstretched knife? And it is worth while to be afflicted to have such fruit as this. Is it necessary to pass through spiritual darkness and desertion in order to know the unchanging love of Christ. 5. Another result of sanctified affliction is increased desire for heaven. Such are some of the fruits of sanctified affliction. *Some*, not all. Each affliction comes with its special message, as well as its general one. "Every branch" has its own particular deformities, and these the pruning-knife first cuts. It may be, too, that affliction sometimes comes specially with reference to others—is rather relative than personal. Trial may be vicarious. The child suffers for the parent, the sister for the brother, the minister for the people. Learn, then, to estimate affliction aright. Seek earnestly to get the benefit of affliction. Look through affliction to that which is beyond. (*J. Viney.*)

Ver. 3. **Now are ye clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you.**—*Further cleansing necessary*:—Now are ye clean through the Word, and yet needing to be cleansed. We have a hint here of the mystery of that double relation in which every believing man stands to God, of that double relation which is more fully and dogmatically stated in some of the Epistles; but which is yet distinctly anticipated here and at chap. x. 10. The faithful in Christ Jesus are "clean," being by faith justified from all things, and having thus a standing ground before God; which yet is in some sort an ideal one—their actual state, although ever approximating to this, yet still failing to correspond to it—they therefore needing by the same faith to appropriate ever more and more of that sanctifying grace, those purifying influences, which continually stream forth from Him on all them that are His; and by aid of which He is bringing them to be all that, which for His sake His Father has been already willing to regard them, however the absolute identity of what they are and what they are counted to be, is reserved for another state of existence. (*Archbishop Trench.*) *The Christian's present condition as compared with the past*:—At Munich the custom is said to prevail that every child found begging in the streets is arrested, and carried to a charitable establishment. The moment he enters, and before he is cleaned, and gets the new clothes intended for him, his portrait is painted in his ragged dress, and precisely as he was found begging. When his education is finished, this portrait is given him, and he promises by an oath to keep it all his life, that he may be reminded of the abject condition from which he has been rescued, and of the gratitude he owes the establishment which raised him from misery, and taught him how to avoid it for the future. Let the Christian often compare thus his former condition, as a sinner unsaved, with his state as a renewed believer, that his love and gratitude may be excited, and his affections drawn to Him who has wrought the change.

Ver. 4. **Abide in Me, and I in you.**—*Abiding in Christ*:—I. TO WHOM THE COMMAND IS GIVEN. To those who are already in Him. 1. We are at first in nature, possessed merely of the powers of nature, as understanding, will, affections; but we must be in grace, which raises us above nature, purifies all our faculties, and directs them to a proper end. 2. We are naturally in the flesh influenced and governed by the body, its appetites, and senses (Gen. vi. 5; John iii. 5, 6). We must be in the Spirit under the influence and government of His motions and graces. 3. We are naturally in Belial (Eph. ii. 2; 1 John v. 18); inspired, deceived, deluded, corrupted by him; but we must be in Christ. 4. How? (1) By the knowledge of Him (Phil. iii. 8); (2) by faith in Him; (3) love to Him; (4) an interest in Him (Phil. iii. 9). II. WHAT THIS COMMAND IMPLIES. 1. It implies that we are to retain this knowledge, faith, love, interest, union with Christ; which may be lost (Col. i. 23; John xv. 9, 10; Rom. xi. 22; Heb. x. 38). Now, we retain these—(1) When we abide in Him in our thoughts; not only thinking highly of Him, but having our thoughts stayed upon Him. (2) When our desires, our designs, our will, both in its choice and resolution, and our affections, are set upon these things. (3) When we dwell upon them in our conversation, and manifest that we love Him, and cleave to Him in our behaviour. 2. To illustrate this: we must abide in Christ, as a branch in a tree, which is supported by it, adheres to it, grows in it, and becomes verdant and fruitful by the virtue derived from it; as a hand in

a body, from which it receives its warmth, life, activity, and usefulness; as a man-slayer in the city of refuge, for he would be safe only while abiding in the consecrated city; so we are in danger of being overtaken by the curse and wrath of God, unless we have fled to Christ and continue in Him; as a besieged citizen in a garrison, for we are surrounded and attacked by various enemies; as passengers in a ship, for we are on the sea of this world, tossed with the winds and waves, proceeding on our voyage for the port of eternal bliss, and our safety depends on being in the ship. III. THE PROMISE MADE TO THOSE THAT KEEP IT; AND THE ADVANTAGES RESULTING THEREFROM. 1. Christ will abide in us—(1) By His word, teaching, instructing, directing, strengthening, supporting, encouraging, comforting us (Rom. xv. 4). (2) By His Spirit, in His witness as a Spirit of adoption, and in His fruits, which are "love, joy, peace," &c. (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. v. 22, 23). (3) By the efficacy of His body and blood (John vi. 56, 57). (4) By His indwelling presence, as our "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). (5) By permitting us to have followship with Him (Rev. iii. 20). 2. Hence we shall have pardon, acceptance, adoption, safety, access. All our prayers shall be heard (ver. 7; Mark xi. 24). We shall abound in the fruits of righteousness (ver. 5, 6; 2 Cor. ix. 8). IV. How WE MAY BE ENABLED TO KEEP THE COMMAND. 1. By abiding in a belief of His word, and holding fast all the doctrines, precepts, promises, and threatenings of the Scripture. By continuing to attend the ordinances, public, domestic, social, and private. 2. By guarding against hypocrisy, formality, and lukewarmness, in the use of all ordinances, and maintaining sincerity, spirituality, and fervour therein. 3. By conscientiously keeping His commandments, carefully shunning sins of commission and omission, and whatever is calculated to grieve His Spirit. 4. By guarding against an evil heart of unbelief (Heb. iii. 12), and "holding fast our confidence." By guarding against the love of this present world. (*J. Benson.*) *Christ the True Vine:*—"I am the True Vine." I. Christ sets forth the GENUINENESS of His union with His disciples. II. In the REALITY AND COMPLETENESS of His life-giving power Christ infinitely excels all His forerunners and types. III. This relationship is much NEARER than that of the shepherd with the sheep. IV. This union is COMPREHENSIVE, embracing many besides those who are usually recognized as believers. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit." V. Our union with Christ should be CONSTANT. Twelve times in this allegory the word "abide" is used. They were in danger of unfaithfulness and apostasy. Christ sought to fortify them. He assured them that He would keep them if they would trust Him. VI. This communion is one of LOVE (vers. 9–16). "As the Father hath loved Me, even so have I loved you." "Abide in My love." The believer lives in the love of Christ. Christ loves all men; but He manifests His love in a peculiar manner to those whose hearts are given to Him. If we love God, we will delight in His character, we will be drawn by those Divine attributes which Jesus reveals. Love of a holy Being implies hatred of sin. The Spirit convicts the loving heart of sin. Is my fruit recognized as Divine fruit, such fruit as Christ bore? 1. One of the fruits of union with Christ according to this lesson is patience under discipline (vers. 1–3). "My Father is the Husbandman." "He purgeth it," &c. "Ye are clean through the Word," &c. The lot of Jesus was one of severe trial." He was made "perfect through suffering." Those who become Christ-like must expect Christ-like trials. The believer can maintain his union with Christ only by uncompromising opposition to every form of evil. 2. Another result of this union is the spirit of dependence on Christ (vers. 4, 5). "Apart from Me ye can do nothing." This sense of dependence on Christ, instead of paralyzing human energy, becomes the source of its power. It enables the soul to look up and confidently exclaim with the apostle, "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth Me." 3. This suggest another fruit of union with Christ, namely, life (vers. 6–8). "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." Christ came that we might have life. All the vital juices of the branch and its power to bear fruit come from the vine. So, for every good desire we ever formed, or good word we ever spoke, or good deed we ever did, evidencing a renewed life in us, we are indebted to Christ. He "is our life." (*G. H. Cheney.*) *Abiding in Christ:*—"Believe on Christ" is the gospel to the world. "Abide in Christ" is the gospel to the Church. We cannot think too much of Christ for us, but we may think far too little of Christ in us; yet for perfect salvation we need both. Notice that this is—I. A CALL TO CONSCIOUS VITAL UNION WITH OUR LORD. This implies—1. A realization that of ourselves we can do nothing, that we are mere dead branches apart from Him! We live too much as though we were trees, as though by our own power we were to do God's will, and we have striven, and

then groaned over the inevitable failure. Now, says Christ, be satisfied to be a branch. 2. An assurance that the fulness of Christ is ours. That is involved in the figure, and is stated in the chapter. He goes on to say (as its consequence) that what He has, they share. They are to share—(1) His joy—"that My joy might abide in you"; (2) His love—"that ye love one another as I have loved you"; (3) His knowledge—"all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you"; (4) His rights—"that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you"; (5) His persecutions—"if they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you"; (6) His work—"the Spirit shall bear witness of Me, and ye also shall bear witness"; (7) His glory—"the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them." 3. A surrender of ourselves to Christ for His purposes. For the branch exists for the tree. II. THE FIGURE OF THE VINE SUGGESTS HOW THIS CALL MAY BE FULFILLED. The words show that the responsibility is with us. Christ can only bless according to our willingness; and willingness is proved by readiness to seek the blessing. "Abide in Me, and I in you" is a command; it is ours, therefore, to fulfil it. And we ask How? Remember there are degrees in this union; some are more closely joined to Christ than others, and receive more of His life; and this is due to their growth into Him, they have struck the fibres of their spiritual being deeper and yet deeper into His being, and thus are close knit to Him. 1. We need the cords of meditation and prayer to bind us to Him more firmly. The formal prayer, the ill-studied Bible, the almost deserted closet, are the destruction of the hopes held out in the text. The weather soon loosens the old cords, and through perpetual communion they must be perpetually renewed. 2. We need the putting away of whatever would come between Christ and us. Sin hinders Christ giving, for He will not give to sin. Sin weakens our desire and faith, that is, our power of receiving. So everything in any degree contrary to Christ must be put away. 3. We need the ceaseless drawing by faith on His fulness. III. FROM THIS WOULD COME THAT SPIRITUAL FRUIT-BEARING WHICH IS GOD'S WILL. There would be—1. The natural growth of personal holiness. It is a common thought that before Christ can enter into us we must put out evil. That is not the order. Let Christ in and He will put out the evil, as light puts out darkness. 2. A heart at rest. The poverty of our resources is our perpetual fear; loneliness and care are with some a perpetual grief. But would not that be altered if we consciously abode in Christ? 3. Christ's power working through us. Think of being the channel for the will of Jesus. (*C. New.*) *Mutual abiding*:—I. THE DUTY ENJOINED. 1. Abide in Me. It has been justly said, that the command is not abide *with* Me—*near* Me—or *under* Me; but, *in* Me. The fruit-bearing branch is not only in the same place with the vine—near it, under its shadow—it is in it, and it abides in it. The ideas suggested are, residence and continuance. It is as if he had said, "Think as I think; feel as I feel; will as I will; choose as I choose; and let My views of all objects and all events be yours, because they are Mine; let My feelings, My volitions, My choices, all be yours, and let them be yours because they are Mine. Prosecute My ends—use My means—rely on Me, entirely on Me. Let My wisdom be your wisdom—My righteousness your righteousness—My strength your strength. Come out of yourselves. Come out of the creature. Come into Me." It is faith that thus unites us to the Saviour, and it is continued faith which keeps us thus united to the Saviour. 2. Let Me abide in you. What is meant by Christ's abiding in His people? The best answer is at the seventh verse, and 1 John iii. 24. Christ abides in His people, by continuously making them, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, and the instrumentality of His word, understood and believed under His influence, think along with Him—feel, choose, enjoy along with Him. Christ is so "formed in them" that it is not so much they who live, as Christ who lives in them. 2. What is the import of the injunction, "Let Me dwell in you"? Christ never does come into any man, so as to dwell in him, against the man's will. Were the thing possible, it would be to degrade man into a mere machine, and involve the incongruity, than which none can be greater, that He who of old inhabited His own eternity, and has heaven for His throne and earth for His footstool, should, as if in want of a house, force an entrance where He was not desired. But His language is, "Behold, I stand at the door," &c. 3. The two parts of the injunction are closely connected. Christians will abide in Christ just in the degree in which they let Christ abide in them. II. THE MOTIVES BY WHICH THE INJUNCTION IS ENFORCED. 1. Compliance with the injunction is necessary to prevent unfruitfulness and its fearful consequences. A vine branch by itself can bring forth nothing, not even blossoms or leaves. All men are naturally

unholy and unprofitable. There is no way in which they can be made fruitful, except by being cut off from their original stock, the first Adam, and being grafted into Him who is the True Vine. When men are awakened to a sense of the dangers of a state of spiritual barrenness, they often endeavour to become "fruitful of themselves." They go about to make themselves holy by the works of the law: but the thing is impossible. There is no good fruit but what is the product of Divine influence; and no channel for Divine influence to flow into the human heart, but the mediation of Jesus Christ. It is not, "Without Me ye can do little"; it is, "Without Me ye can do nothing." It is not, "Without Me ye will do nothing"—that is true too—but it is, "Without Me ye can do nothing." It is not, "Without Me you can accomplish—finish—nothing"; it is, "Without Me ye can do nothing." 2. Compliance with this injunction alone can, and certainly will, secure fruitfulness, with all its blessed results. No stream without a fountain; no fountain, unless obstructed, without a stream. Three effects are mentioned by our Lord—(1) The answer of whatever prayers we present to God; (2) The glorification of God; (3) The clearly proving to ourselves and others that we are really the disciples of Christ. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *Branches not mechanically in the vine*:—It is, of course, possible to attach a bough or branch either to the stem of a vine or the trunk of any other tree by artificial means, and so to secure a kind of external union therewith. A length of cord or iron wire may accomplish a poor and pitiful result like that; but the stem knows it not and the branch is withered, however painfully and skilfully art may struggle to endorse the lie. In the same way we may be mechanically and externally united to the visible Church of Christ. That is entirely an affair of contrivance, a mere matter of ligature or glue. It is altogether and at most a concern of nomination, register or ceremonial. But let it be remembered that this is in itself stark naught. Never a rotten branch on the floor of a forest, a branch that breaks and crackles beneath the foot of a passer-by, is more dead than we are, if the hasp and staple of Church membership, if the hook and eye of registration, if the glue of mere sectarian adhesion, if the paint of mere external profession are all that holds us on to the Christ of God. (*J. J. Wray.*) *Union with Christ the means of salvation*:—Of the precise origin of the late civil war in America I am not quite sure; but I am told it was a perverse misunderstanding on the subject of slavery. The North was against the slave-trade, the South for it; and so both parties appealed to arms. But be that as it may, one thing is clear: not many months passed before the question of slavery was swallowed up in the most important question of the Union—the Union of the States. Who is for or against the slave? There the conflict began. Who is for or against the Union? There it finished. Neither am I quite certain of the first cause of the prolonged controversy between earth and heaven, man and God. A rumour was afloat in my native neighbourhood that it all began in a slight misunderstanding touching a certain apple-tree in the garden of Eden. But be that as it may, the question of the apple-tree has been long ago swallowed up in the more important question of the union—the union with the Son. Salvation hinges not on such questions as what was the first sin, or who is the greatest sinner? but upon the simple straightforward question—Who is for or against the union with Jesus Christ? Do you believe in the only-begotten Son? (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *Union with Christ and fruitfulness*:—The villages in Persia may be devided into two classes: those of the plains, treeless, sterile and poor; and those of the mountains, where the springs and torrents encourage the growth of plane, mulberry, poplar trees, and orchards, and allow channels for the nourishment of plantations. Elevation means fertility here. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *The reciprocities of personal salvation*:—I. CHRIST IN THE BELIEVER. 1. How. 2. When. 3. Why. II. THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST. 1. How. 2. When. 3. Why. (*S. S. Times.*) *Union with Christ*:—1. A spiritual union (1 Cor. vi. 17; xii. 13; 1 John iii. 24; iv. 13). 2. A vital union (John xiv. 19; Gal. ii. 20). 3. It embraces our entire persons, our bodies through our spirits (1 Cor. vi. 15, 19). 4. It is a legal or federal union, so that all of our legal or covenant responsibilities rest upon Christ, and all of His legal or covenant merits accrue to us. . . . 5. This union is between the believer and the person of the God-man in His office as mediator (John xiv. 23; xvii. 21, 23). (*A. A. Hodge.*) *Abide in Christ*:—Be like Milton's angel, who lived in the sun. Abide in Christ, and let His words abide in you. Closer, closer, closer, this is the way to spiritual wealth. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The entire dependence of sanctity on Christ*:—1. "Without Me," in ver. 5., should rather be rendered, "Apart from Me," "separate from Me," "in state of independence on Me." "Without" the assistance of a

strong person, a weak one cannot lift a heavy weight; but the dependence of the weak on the strong in order to lift the weight, is not the dependence which the word here employed indicates. "Apart from" the soul the body is motionless, and cannot stir a finger. This is the sort of dependence indicated here. 2. The subject brought before us is, that the sanctification of the Christian, like his justification, is entirely dependent upon our Lord. As regards our justification, this is clearly seen (at least in the Reformed Churches) and generally admitted. But it is thought that, unlike justification (which is something that passes on the sinner externally to him, a sentence of acquittal in consideration of Our Lord's merits), sanctification is an achievement mastered—much as a lesson is mastered—by a variety of exercises, prayers, almsdeeds, sacraments, &c., and when mastered, a sort of permanent acquisition, which goes on increasing as the stock of these spiritual exercises accumulates. It is not regarded in its true light as a momentary receiving out of Christ's fulness grace for grace, as the result of His inworking in a heart, which finds the task of self-renewal hopeless, and makes itself over to Him, to be moulded by Him. 3. Let us take two illustrations—(1) His own. "As the branch", &c. The circulating sap, which is the life of the tree, is indeed in the vine-branch, so long as it holds of the stem; but in no sense whatever is it from the vine-branch. Cut off the branch from the stem, and it ceases instantaneously to live, for it has no independent life. Even so the fruits of the Spirit, while of course our hearts are the sphere of their manifestation, are in no sense from our hearts; but a righteousness outflowing continually from the fulness of grace which is in Christ. (2) When we walk abroad on a beautiful day, our eye catches a variety of colours lying on the surface of the landscape,—there is the yellow of the golden grain, the green of the pasture-land, the dark brown of those thick-planted copses, the silver gleam of the stream which winds through them, the faint blue of distant hills seen in perspective, the more intense blue of the sky, the purple tinge of yonder sheet of water—but none of these colours reside in the landscape. Now, apart from the sunlight no object has any colour; as is shown by the fact that, as soon as light is withdrawn from the landscape, the colours fade from the robe of nature. The difference of colour is produced by some subtle difference of texture or superficies, which makes each object absorb certain rays, and reflect certain others in different proportions. Now Christ is the Sun of righteousness, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, the fair colour of every grace and Christian virtue. When Christ is shining upon the heart, then these virtues are manifested there, by our Christian graces of one description, by another of another, according to their different receptivity and natural temperament. The great secret, then, of bringing forth much fruit, or of all advance in holiness, is a constant keeping open the avenues of the soul towards Him. If a vine-branch is to sprout, the tube by which it communicates with the stock of the tree must adhere tightly to the stem, and be well open for the passage of the sap. If you desire to see the colours of furniture in this room, whose shutters are closed, throw open the shutters, and admit the full flood of sunlight. And if you desire to see the dead heart, put forth the energies of spiritual life, and the dark heart illumined by the fair colours of spiritual grace, throw wide open the passage of communication between Christ and it, and allow the Life which is in Him, and the Light which is in Him, to circulate freely through it. I. Take heed, first, that YE ABIDE IN ME. This is done by faith. As we first consciously entered into fellowship with Christ by faith, so there is no other way to abide in Him, than by repeated exercises of the same faith. The faith which enables the soul to abide in Christ is nothing else than an assured trust and confidence that, as He has already wrought out for us our acceptance with God, so He will work in us every gracious disposition which is necessary to qualify us for glory. It is not enough to supplicate these graces; we must lean upon Him for them, and fix the eye of expectation upon the promise of His new covenant: "I will put My laws into their mind," &c. And as without holiness no man shall (or can) see the Lord, must not Christ be much more earnestly anxious to make us holy, than we can be to be made so? If we do not believe in this earnest anxiety of His, do we believe in His love at all? Ah! what if these struggles to be holy should themselves be in a certain sense a token of unbelief? What if the poor bird imprisoned in the cage should be thinking that, if it is ever to gain its liberty, it must be by its own exertions, and by vigorous and frequent strokes of its wings against the bars? If it did so, it would ere long fall back breathless and exhausted, faint and sore, and despairing. And the soul will have a similar experience, which thinks that Christ has indeed won pardon and accept-

ance for her, but that sanctification she must win for herself, and under this delusion beats herself sore in vain efforts to correct the propensities of a heart which the Word of God pronounces to be "desperately" wicked. That heart,—you can make nothing of it yourself;—leave it to Christ, in quiet dependence upon His grace. Suffer Him to open the prison-doors for you, and then you shall fly out and hide yourself in your Lord's bosom, and there find rest. II. LET ME ABIDE IN YOU. Christ thus teaches us that ordinances, as well as faith, form part of His religion. In order to fruitfulness the sap must rise from the vine-stock, and pass into the branch, this is the abiding of the vine in the branch. Similarly Christ must continually send up into our heart a current of holy inspirations, new loves, good impulses, devout hopes—*i.e.*, communicate Himself to the soul by the continual influx of the Holy Ghost. And this is made specially in the Supper of the Lord. Of course the Divine allegory quite precludes the supposition that without faith in the recipient the Holy Supper will avail anything. The vine-stock may push upwards its sap in strong current, at the first outburst of the genial spring; but what will that avail the branch, which does not hold closely to the tree, which is half broken off from the stem, and the fracture filled up with dust, or corroded by insects? Christ may offer Himself to us in the Lord's Supper; but, if the soul cleaves not to Him, if the avenues of the heart are not open towards Him, how can He enter? (*Dean Goulburn.*)

Ver. 5. **I am the Vine, ye are the branches.**—*The true branches of the True Vine:*—No wise teacher is ever afraid of repeating himself. The average mind requires the reiteration of truth before it can make that truth its own. One coat of paint is not enough, it soon rubs off. I. THE FRUITFULNESS OF UNION. 1. "I am the Vine" was a general truth, with no clear personal application. "Ye are the branches" brought each individual listener into connection with it. How many people there are that listen in a fitful sort of languid way, interestedly, to the most glorious and solemn truths and never dream that they have any bearing upon themselves! The one thing most needed is that truth should be sharpened to a point and the conviction driven into you, that you have got something to do with this great message. "Ye are the branches" is the one side of that sharpening and making definite of the truth in its personal application, and the other side is "Thou art the man." All religious teaching is toothless generalities, utterly useless, unless we can force it through the wall of indifference and vague assent. 2. Note next the great promise, "He that abideth in Me, and I in Him," &c. Abiding in Christ, and Christ's abiding in us means a temper and tone of mind very far remote from the noisy, bustling distractions too common in our present Christianity. We want quiet, patient, waiting within the veil. The best way to secure Christian conduct is to cultivate communion with Christ. Get more of the sap into the branch, and there will be more fruit. We may grow graces artificially and they will be of little worth. First of all be, and then do; receive, and then give forth. That is the Christian way of mending men, not tinkering at this, that, and the other individual excellence, but grasping the secret of total excellence in communion with Him. Our Lord is here not merely laying down a law, but giving a promise, and putting His veracity into pawn for the fulfilment of it. 3. Notice that little word which now appears for the first time: "much." We are not to be content with a poor shrivelled bunch of grapes that are more like marbles than grapes, here and there, upon the half-nourished stem. God forbid that I should say that there is no possibility of union with Christ and a little fruit. A little union will have a little fruit; but the only two alternatives here are, "no fruit," and "much fruit." And I would ask why it is that the average Christian man of this generation bears only a berry or two here and there, like such as are left upon the vines after the vintage, when the promise is that if he will abide in Christ, he will bear much fruit. 4. This verse, setting forth the fruitfulness of union with Jesus, ends with the brief solemn statement of the converse—the barrenness of separation. There is the condemnation of all the busy life of men which is not lived in union with Jesus Christ; it is a long row of figures which, like some other long rows of figures added up, amount just to Zero. "Without Me, nothing." II. THE WITHERING AND DESTRUCTION OF SEPARATION FROM HIM (ver. 6). 1. Separation is withering. Did you ever see a hawthorn bough that children bring home from the woods, and stick in the grate; how in a day or two the fresh green leaves all shrivel up and the white blossoms become brown and smell foul, and the only thing to be done with it is to fling it into the fire and get rid of it? Separate from

Christ, the individual shrivels, and the possibilities of fair buds wither and set into no fruit. And no man is the man he might have been unless he holds by Jesus Christ and lets His life come into Him. And as for individuals, so for communities. The Church or the body of professing Christians that is separate from Jesus Christ dies to all noble life, to all high activity, to all Christlike conduct, and, being dead, rots. 2. Withering means destruction. Look at the mysteriousness of the language. "They gather them." "They cast them into the fire." Who have that tragic task? The solemn fact that the withering of manhood by separation from Jesus Christ requires, and ends in, the consuming of the withered, is all that we have here. We have to speak of it pityingly, with reticence, with terror, with tenderness, with awe lest it be our fate. Be on your guard against that tendency of this generation, to paste a bit of blank paper over all the threatenings of the Bible. One of two things must befall the branch, either it is in the Vine or it gets into the fire. And if we would avoid the fire let us see to it that we are in the Vine. III. THE UNION WITH CHRIST AS THE CONDITION OF SATISFIED DESIRES (ver. 7). Our Lord instead of saying, "I in you," says "My words in you." He is speaking about prayers, consequently the variation is natural. The abiding of His words in us is largely the means of His abiding in us. 1. What do we mean by this? Something a great deal more than the mere intellectual acceptance. Something very different from reading a verse in a morning, and forgetting all about it all the day long; something very different from coming in contact with Christian truth on a Sunday, when somebody else preaches what he has found in the Bible to us, and we take in a little of it. It means the whole of the conscious nature of a man. His desires, understanding, affections, will, all being steeped in those great truths which the Master spoke. Put a little bit of colouring matter into the fountain at its head and you will have the stream dyed down its course for ever so far. See that Christ's words be lodged in your inmost selves, and all the life will be glorified and flash into richness of colouring and beauty by their presence. 2. The main effect of such abiding of the Lord's words with us is, that in such a case, my desire will be granted. If Christ's words are the substratum of your wishes, then your wishes will harmonize with His will, and so "Ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." IV. THIS UNION AND FRUITFULNESS LEAD TO THE NOBLE ENDS OF GLORIFYING GOD AND INCREASING DISCIPLESHIP (ver. 8). 1. Christ's life was all for the glorifying of God. The lives, which are the life of Christ in us, will have the same end and the same issue. We come there to a very sharp test. How many of us are there on whom men, looking, think more loftily of God. And yet we should all be mirrors of the Divine radiance, on which some eyes, that are too dim and sore to bear the light as it streams from the sun, may look, and, beholding the reflection, may learn to love. 2. And if thus we abide in Him and bear fruit we shall "become His disciples." The end of our discipleship is never reached on earth; we never so much are, as we are in the process of becoming, His true followers and servants. If we bear fruit because we are knit to Him, the fruit itself will help us to get nearer Him, and so be more His disciples and more fruitful. Character produces conduct, but conduct reacts on character and strengthens the impulses from which it springs. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Growth from within*:—This growing is to be the growth of a branch: not by accretion, by adding to the surface, but by strength and development from within. You may make a molehill into a mountain by bringing a sufficiency of material to it, to swell the rising pile; but trees and branches expand from within: their growth is the putting forth of a vital but unseen force. The life-power in the stock, being also in the bough, compels an outward exhibition of results in progressive keeping with the vigour and strength of the supplies. So the believer "grows up" into Christ into ever-increasing holiness, influence and grace through the Divine afflatus which is at work within his soul, for it is thus that "God worketh in you" more and more "to will and to do of His good pleasure." By this inner power the branches of a tree have a wonderful power of assimilation. They take hold upon all surrounding forces and turn them to advantage. The dew that falls, the gases of the atmosphere, the descending rain, the chemistry of the sunlight, all are drawn into it; all are made a part of itself, are made to serve its purpose and to nurse its health. The very storms that blow, the alternations of weather that test and try it and ofttimes seem to work it damage, are all made to consolidate its fibres, to quicken the action of its sap, and send new energy through every vein, a stronger life-thrill into every leaf. So grows the righteous soul into higher, stronger, more mature religious life. "All things are yours," says the apostle

Paul. That is to say, all events, all experiences, all the providences of God, all the circumstances of life, as well as all the riches of promised grace, are made by the goodness and wisdom of God to serve the Christian's interests and help his soul to grow. The dew of the Spirit, the sunshine of God, the aids of the sanctuary, the society of the good, the exercise of Christian toil, the business of life, the storms and tempests of sorrow and toil—all things, by reason of the subtle power of the inner life, are made to help the Christian, to deepen his piety, to strengthen his soul, to beautify his character, to mature and ripen his graces, and to give him a stronger grip upon his God. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Neither is there any limit to the attainments possible to the godly soul. Under the influence of the Divine life it is placed amid an exhaustless store of nourishment, it is grafted into the Vine whose Root is the Godhead and whose resources are infinite and eternal. (*J. J. Wray.*) *Religion in diverse places*:—I saw a vine growing on the fertile plain of Damascus with "boughs like the goodly cedars" (Psa. lxxx. 10). One "bough" of that vine had appropriated a large forest tree; it had climbed the giant trunk, it had wound itself round the great gnarled arms, it had, in fact, covered every branch of the tree with garlands of its foliage, and bent down every twig with the weight of its fruit. And I saw another branch of the same vine spread out along the ground, and cover bushes and brambles with foliage as luxuriant and fruit as plentiful as those on the lordly forest tree. So is it in the Church. Some branches of that heaven-planted vine climb to the very pinnacles of human society. They appropriate and sanctify the sceptre of the monarch, the dignity of the peer, the power of the statesman, the genius of the philosopher, and they shed a lustre upon each and all greater and more enduring than can ever be conferred by gemmed coronet or laurel crown. While other branches of the same vine find a congenial sphere in humbler walks, they penetrate city lanes, they creep up wild mountain glens, they climb the gloomy stair to the garret where the daughter of toil lies on her death-bed, and they diffuse wherever they go a peace and a joy and a halo of spiritual glory, such as rank and riches cannot bestow, and such too as poverty and suffering cannot take away. Peer and peasant, philosopher and working man, king and beggar, have equal rights and rewards in the Church. They are united to the same Saviour on earth, and they shall recline on the same bosom in heaven. (*J. L. Porter, LL.D.*) *Variety of Christian growth*:—There may be a hundred branches in a vine; their place in reference to each other may be far apart; they may seem to have but a very distant connection with each other; but having each a living union with the central stem, they are all members of the same Vine, and every one of them therefore is a member one of the other. Some of the branches are barely above the ground; some peer higher than all the rest; some are weighted with fruit, much fruit rich and fine; some bear but little fruit and that only small and inferior; some occupy important and central positions; some are seemingly insignificant, and look as though they might readily be dispensed with; as though, indeed, the tree would be healthier and more graceful without them; some are old and well grown, thoroughly strong and established; others are young, delicate, and need development. But whatever variety there may be among the branches in size, circumstance, or state, they all form a part of one complete, harmonious and like-natured whole. The vine-stem is the common centre, and in it all partake of a common life. (*J. J. Wray.*) *The Christian individuality*:—The discoveries of vegetable physiology have shown that every branch is, in fact, a tree perfectly distinct and complete in itself: a tree which, by means of roots struck into the parent tree, derives its life, and sends out its leafage. The common idea is, that every tree in the ground has in itself the same kind of individual existence that a man has, and that, just as in the body limbs and various organs are component parts of a man, so the bole, the boughs, and the leaves are component parts of a tree. But the common idea is wrong; a tree is, in truth, a colony of trees, one growing on another—an aggregate of individuals—a body corporate, losing nothing, however, and merging nothing of its own individuality. It is charming to study a scientifically written biography of a tree, giving an account of its cells and pores and hairs, telling the tale of its evolution and its education; its infinite relations with all the elements, and how it is affected by the chemistries of nature; tracing it from its first faint filament to its full wealth of foliage and its final sweep of extension; thereby revealing through this miracle of the forest the glory of God. But, for the reasons suggested by some of the thoughts just confessed, interesting as is the story of a tree, a Christian will find the life-story of a mere branch

scarcely less interesting, for it teaches him how to connect the ideas of total dependence and perfect individuality. I am a branch, yet I am a true tree—a tree growing on another tree—even on the Tree of Life. I see it all now, and also see the harmony between this particular Scripture and other Scriptures, better than formerly. It is scientifically true that I am a branch in the Vine, yet that I am a tree, answering to the description, "Rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *The buds*:—A Sunday-school teacher was trying to make his class understand this lesson. "Jesus is the Vine," said he, "we are the branches; we get all our life and happiness from Him." "Yes," said a little fellow in the class, "Jesus is the Vine, grown up people are the branches, and we young ones are the buds." In the natural vine the buds do not bear any fruit. But in Jesus, the Spiritual Vine, even the buds can be fruitful; the youngest can make themselves useful. (*J. L. Nye.*) *The condition of fruitfulness*:—I saw a little twig scarcely an inch long, so tender an infant hand could break it; rough and unseemly without comeliness, and when I saw it there was no beauty that I should desire it. It said: "If I were comely and beautiful, like those spring flowers I see, I could attract, and please, and fulfil a mission." It said: "If I were like yonder oak or cedar, I could afford shelter to God's weary sheep at noonday, and the fowls of heaven should sing among my branches." It said: "If I were even strong, I might bear some burden, or serve a purpose as a peg, a bolt, or a pin, in God's great building that is going up. But so unsightly, so weak, so small!" A voice said to it: "Abide in Me, and I in you, He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." And so it rested. It was not long until a glory of leaves crowned it, and in God's time I saw the heavy fruit it bore. **Without Me ye can do nothing.**—*Without Christ—nothing*:—No saint, prophet, apostle would ever have said this to a company of faithful men. Among the virtues of a perfect man we must certainly reckon modesty. It is impossible to conceive that Jesus of Nazareth, had he not been more than man, could ever have uttered this sentence. We have here—I. AN ASPIRATION OF HOPE. From such a root what a vintage must come! Being branches in Him, what fruit we must produce! That word "do" has music in it. Jesus went about doing good, and, being in Him, we shall do good. There is the hope of doing something in the way of glorifying God by bringing forth—1. The fruits of holiness, peace, and love. 2. Fruit in the conversion of others. 3. Fruit of further blessing will ripen for this poor world. Men shall be blessed in us because we are blessed in Christ. II. A SHUDDER OF FEAR. It is possible that I may be without Christ, and so may be utterly incapacitated for all good. 1. What if you should not be so in Christ as to bring forth fruit? If you are without Christ, what is the use of carrying on that Bible-class; for you can do nothing? 2. What if you should be in Christ, and not so in Him as to abide in Him? It appears from our Lord's words that some branches in Him are cast forth and are withered. What if you are off and on with Christ! What if you play fast and loose with the Lord! What if you are an outside saint and an inside devil! What will come of such conduct as this? III. A VISION OF TOTAL FAILURE. 1. A ministry without Christ in its doctrine will do nothing. Preachers aspire to be leaders of thought; will they not command the multitude and charm the intelligent? Add music and architecture, and what is to hinder success, and what has been done?" The sum total is expressed in the text—"Nothing." 2. Without acknowledging always the absolute supremacy of Christ we shall do nothing. Jesus is much complimented, but He is not submitted to. Certain modern praises of Jesus are written upon the theory that, on the whole, the Saviour has given us a religion that is tolerably suited to the enlightenment of the nineteenth century, and may be allowed to last a little longer. It is fortunate for Jesus that He commends Himself to the "best thought" and ripest culture of the period; for, if He had not done so, these wise gentlemen would have exposed Him as being behind the times. Of course they have every now and then to rectify certain of His dogmas; He is rectified and squared, and His garment without seam is taken off, and He is dressed out in proper style, as by a West-end clothier; then He is introduced to us as a remarkable teacher, and we are advised to accept Him as far as He goes. Now, what will come of this foolish wisdom? Nothing but delusions, mischief, infidelity, anarchy, and all manner of imaginable and unimaginable ills. 3. You may have sound doctrine, and yet do nothing unless you have Christ in your spirit. In former years many orthodox preachers thought it to be their sole duty to comfort and

confirm the godly few who by dint of great perseverance found out the holes and corners in which they prophesied. These brethren spoke of sinners as of people whom God might possibly gather in if He thought fit to do so; but they did not care much whether He did so or not. When a Church falls into this condition it is, as to its spirit, "without Christ." What comes of it? The comfortable corporation exists and grows for a little while, but it comes to nothing. 4. But above all things we must have Christ with us in the power of His actual presence. The power lies with the Master, not with the servant; the might is in the hand, not in the weapon. 5. We have, then, before us a vision of total failure if we attempt in any way to do without Christ. He says, "Without Me ye can do nothing:" it is in the doing that the failure is most conspicuous. You may talk a good deal without Him; you may hold conferences and conventions; but doing is another matter. The most eloquent discourse without Him will be all a bottle of smoke. You shall lay your plans, and arrange your machinery, and start your schemes; but without the Lord you will do nothing. IV. A VOICE OF WISDOM, which speaks out of the text, and says to us who are in Christ—1. Let us acknowledge this. 2. Let us pray. If without Christ we can do nothing, let us cry to Him that we may never be without Him. 3. Let us personally cleave to Jesus. 4. Heartily submit yourselves to the Lord's leadership, and ask to do everything in His style and way. He will not be with you unless you accept Him as your Master. 5. Joyfully believe in Him. Though without Him you can do nothing, yet with Him all things are possible. V. A SONG OF CONTENT. "Without Me ye can do nothing." Be it so. Do you wish to have it altered, any of you that love His dear name? I am sure you do not: for suppose we could do something without Christ, then He would not have the glory of it. Who wishes that? If the Church could do something without Christ she would try to live without Him. As I listened to the song I began to laugh. I thought of those who are going to destroy the orthodox doctrine from off the face of the earth. They say our old theology is decaying, and that nobody believes it. It is all a lie. If His friends can do nothing without Him, I am sure His foes can do nothing against Him. I laughed, too, because I recollected a story of a New England service, when suddenly a lunatic started up and declared that he would at once pull down the meeting-house about their ears. Taking hold of one of the pillars of the gallery, this newly-announced Samson repeated his threatening. Everybody rose; the women were ready to faint. There was about to be a great tumult; no one could see the end of it; when suddenly one cool brother produced a calm by a single sentence. "Let him try!" Even so to-day the enemy is about to disprove the gospel and crush out the doctrines of grace. Are you distressed, alarmed, astounded? So far from that, my reply is this only—Let him try! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Nothing without Christ*:—I. AS TO THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE. There is much in the Bible which all must understand and admire; but as to its moral spirit and purpose what can be done without Christ? How slow of heart to believe were the disciples till Christ opened their understandings (Luke xxiv. 48). Of the Old Testament Christ said, "They are they which testify of Me." The first words of the New are, "The Book of the Generations of Jesus Christ;" and its last, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. He is the Alpha and Omega, and of the whole Bible John xx. 31 may be said. II. AS TO RECONCILIATION WITH GOD. That man needs this is not to be questioned; but how is it to be effected? God cannot change; His laws cannot be set aside. Sin is eternal separation from God. How, then, can man be reconciled? Only through Christ (Rom. iii. 19–25; Col. i. 21; 2 Cor. v. 19: Rom. v. 11). III. AS TO PROGRESS IN THE DIVINE LIFE. From first to last the Christian is dependent on Christ. His life is derived from, developed by, devoted to Christ. IV. AS TO SUCCESS IN EVANGELISTIC WORK. (*W. Forsyth, M.A.*) *None but Christ indispensable*:—In this world no man is necessary. There are many men who, if they were taken away, would be missed. But there is no man but what we may say of him, that useful and valuable as he may be, we might come to do without him. It is a truth this which we do not like to admit. We like to fancy that things would not go on exactly the same without us as with us. But this world has never seen more than one Being who could say that it was absolutely impossible to go on when separated from Him. The little child fancied, when its mother died, that without her it could "do nothing;" but the grown-up, busy man, hardly seems ever to remember at all her whom the heart-broken child missed so sorely. And the mother, when her little one is called to go, may fancy that without that little one she "can do nothing;" but time brings its wonderful easing, and,

though not forgetting, she gets on much as before. And it is the same way in every earthly relation. The husband comes to do without his dead wife; and the wife to do without the departed husband. The congregation that missed their minister for a while, come at length to gather Sunday after Sunday with little thought of the voice it once was pleasant for them to hear. The state comes to do without its lost political chief, and the country without its departed hero: and we learn in a hundred ways, that no human being is absolutely necessary to any other human being. We may indeed fancy so for a while, but at length we shall find that we were mistaken; we may indeed miss our absent friends sadly and long; but we shall come at last to do without them. (*A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.*) *Man's greatest need*:—No man lives a true and useful life who lives without Christ. The good man feels his need of Him, and of all of Him always. 1. His eye to guide him. 2. His hand to uphold him. 3. His arm to shield him. 4. His bosom to lean upon. 5. His blood to cleanse him. 6. His Spirit to make him holy and meet for heaven. Christ is the one only Saviour who can make a sinner a saint, and secure to him eternal life. Usefulness is suspended upon holiness, and we are made holy by Christ's cleansing blood, and in no other way. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *The union between Christ and His people*:—Apart from Christ—I. THERE IS NO MERIT FOR OUR ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD. "There is none righteous, no, not one." "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." But in Christ there is all-sufficient merit. Believing in Him, we are justified and accepted. Not through His merit together with what we ourselves can do. Dr. Chalmers', when awakened to his condition as a sinner, for a time "repaired to the atonement to eke out his deficiencies, and as the ground of assurance that God would look upon him with a propitious eye." But the conviction was at length "wrought in him that he had been attempting an impossibility . . . that it must be either on his own merits wholly, or on Christ's merits wholly, that he must lean; and that, by introducing his own righteousness into the ground of his meritorious acceptance with God, 'he had been inserting a flaw, he had been importing a falsehood into the very principle of his justification.'" II. WE CAN DO NOTHING TO OVERCOME THE POWER OF INDWELLING SIN. The evil propensities within us are not the same in each one; it may be the love of money or the lust of power in one, vanity or pride, malice or guile, in another. Does not the Christian have frequent experience that the corruption of his heart is too strong for him? He made good resolutions, and broke them; after repeated failures he is driven almost to despair, and is ready to ask, "Can my corruptions ever be conquered, or must I become more and more their slave?" But if we be brought by Divine grace to cleave in faith to the Saviour, we shall have His Spirit to dwell in us, and in His strength we shall prevail. In ancient fable we read that one of the great labours imposed upon Hercules was to cleanse the foul Augean Stable. This mighty task he accomplished by turning the river Alpheus through it, thus performing with ease what before had appeared impossible. That stable is a true picture of the heart defiled by countless sins. The streams of that fountain opened in the house of David, turned by a living faith to flow into it, alone can cleanse it. III. WE CAN DO NOTHING TO BUILD UP A CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. In a building there is not only a foundation, but also a superstructure. Apart from Christ we cannot build aright. Christian character may be likened unto a tree growing. "Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue," &c. Here is a noble, well-developed growth; But these spiritual graces will not appear if we do not abide in constant communion with Christ. IV. WE CAN DO NOTHING TO PROMOTE THE TRUE INTERESTS OF OTHERS. What are all the provisions for the alleviating and removing of the wants and sufferings of men—the hospitals, orphanages, almshouses, and other philanthropic institutions—but the results of Christian effort, the products of the Christian spirit! All noble enduring, legislative acts also, such as that for the emancipation of the slaves, have been brought about by men under the influence of the religion of Christ. Who likewise have filled Wales and other countries with the gospel? Is it not men with the love of Christ as a holy fire burning within them? (*J. R. Owen.*) *The necessity of supernatural grace in order to a Christian life*:—I. WHAT WE MEAN BY THE SUPERNATURAL GRACE AND ASSISTANCE OF CHRIST. Whatever natural power we have to do anything is from God, but God, considering the lapsed condition of manhind, sent His Son to recover us out of that condition, but we, being without strength, our Saviour hath in His Gospel offered an extraordinary assistance of His Holy Spirit, to supply the defects of our natural strength. And this supernatural grace of Christ is that alone which can enable us to perform what He

requires of us. And this, according to the several uses and occasions of it, is called by several names. As it puts good motions into us, it is called preventing grace; because it prevents any motion or desire on our parts; as it assists and strengthens us in the doing of anything that is good, it is called assisting grace; as it keeps us constant in a good course, it is called persevering grace. II. TO THIS GRACE THE SCRIPTURE DOTH CONSTANTLY ATTRIBUTE OUR REGENERATION, SANCTIFICATION, AND PERSEVERANCE IN HOLINESS. III. THERE IS GREAT REASON TO ASSERT THE NECESSITY OF THIS GRACE AND ASSISTANCE TO THESE PURPOSES. If we consider—1. The corruption and impotency of human nature. When the Scripture speaks of the redemption of Christ, it represents our condition not only as miserable, but helpless (Rom. v. 6). 2. The strange power of evil habits and customs. The other is a natural, and this is a contracted impotency. The habits of sin being added to our natural impotency, are like so many diseases superinduced upon a constitution naturally weak, which do all help to increase the man's infirmity. Evil habits in Scripture are compared to fetters, which do as effectually hinder a man from motion, as if he were quite lame, hand and foot. By passing from one degree of sin to another, men became hardened in their wickedness, and insensibly bring themselves into that state, out of which they are utterly unable to recover themselves. 3. The inconstancy and fickleness of human resolution. 4. The malice and activity of the devil. IV. THIS SUPERNATURAL GRACE AND ASSISTANCE DOES NOT EXCLUDE, BUT SUPPOSES THE CONCURRENCE OF OUR ENDEAVOURS. The grace of God strengthens and assists us. Our Saviour implies that by the assistance of grace we may perform all the duties of the Christian life; we may bear fruit, and bring forth much fruit. When the Apostle says, "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me," he does not think it a disparagement to the grace of Christ to say, he could do all things by the assistance of it (Phil. ii. 12, 13). V. THIS GRACE IS DERIVED TO US FROM OUR UNION WITH CHRIST. Inferences: 1. If the grace of God be so necessary to all the ends of holiness, obedience, and perseverance, then there is great reason why we should continually depend upon God, and every day earnestly pray to Him for the aids of His grace. 2. We should thankfully acknowledge and ascribe all the good that is in us, and all that we do, to the grace of God. 3. Let us take heed that we resist not the Spirit of God, and receive not the grace of God in vain. 4. The consideration of our own impotency is no excuse to our sloth and negligence, if so be the grace of God be ready to assist us. 5. The consideration of our own impotency is no just ground of discouragement to our endeavours, considering the promise of Divine grace and assistance. (*Archbishop Tillotson.*)

Ver. 6. **If a man abide not in Me he is cast forth.**—*Jesus and the only means of righteousness:*—God is the author of righteousness, and Jesus is the Son of God, because He gives the method and secret by which alone righteousness is possible. And that He does give this, we can verify from experience. It is so! try, and you will find it to be so! Try all the ways to righteousness you can think of, and you will find no way brings you to it except the way of Jesus, but that this way does bring you to it. This is a thing that can prove itself, if it is so; and it will prove itself, because it is so. (*Matthew Arnold.*) *Five steps to judgment:*—Just as abiding in Christ infers grace for grace, fruit for fruit, so not abiding in Christ draws after it the judgment of being rejected, the successive steps to which are presented to us in the words: cast forth, wither, gather, cast into the fire, burn. These are the five steps in the judgment; the complete execution of which is, by God's long-suffering, delayed. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) *Cast forth:*—One year when I was travelling towards my usual winter resting-place I halted at Marseilles, and there was overtaken by great pain. In my room in the hotel I found it cold, and so I asked for a fire. The porter came in, and he had in his hand a bundle of twigs. I called to him to let me look at it. He was about to push it into the stove as fuel with which to kindle the fire. As I took the bundle into my hand, I found it was made of vine branches—branches that had been cut off now that the pruning time was come. I solemnly thought, will this be my portion? Here I am, away from home, unable to bear fruit, as I love to do. Shall I end with this as my portion? Shall I be gathered for the fire? Those vine shoots were parts of a good vine, no doubt, branches that once looked fair and green; but now they were fuel for the flame. They had been cut off and cast off as useless things, and then men gathered them and tied them in bundles, and they were ignobly thrust into the

fire. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **And is withered.**—*Withered*:—The cast-out branch withers; whatever remains of sap it might have had so long as it hung on ever so slightly to the vine, now quickly dries up; it becomes a hard piece of wood, which can no longer be bent, only broken. A man may refuse to be bent by grace, but he cannot hinder himself from being broken by wrath. Judas is a fearful example of this: he withered in one day. We may indeed place a cast-off branch in water, and by that means keep it for a time from completely withering; but it is of no lasting good: so it is no use for a man inwardly dead and forsaken by the Holy Ghost to force forward for a while the appearance of a pious life from his own strength; it cannot last long, seldom until his end, and then his withered state is manifest. (*R. Besser, D.D.*)

Ver. 7. **If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you.**—*The conditions of prevailing prayer*:—I. WHAT IS REQUIRED OR SUPPOSED. 1. What is meant by our abiding in Him? This is called partaking of Him (Heb. iii. 14), and implies in it our—(1) Being in Him (Rom. viii. 1; 2 Cor. v. 17). (*a*) By faith (Phil. iii. 8, 9). (*b*) Obedience (Gal. v. 24). (*c*) Being members of His mystical body (Col. i. 18; Eph. v. 30). (2) Continuing in Him as a branch in the vine (vers. 1–6). Continuing in the profession of His doctrine (chap. viii. 31), and hearty endeavours after perfection (Col. i. 28). 2. What is meant by His words abiding in us? (1) His words are that doctrine that He came to deliver in His Father's name (John vii. 16; xii. 49; xvii. 8; Mark i. 22; Luke iv. 23). (2) These words abide in us by our—(*a*) Knowing them (chap x. 4, 5). (*b*) Believing them (John viii. 45; xiii. 19; xvii. 8; Matt. xxiv. 35; Rom. x. 10; Heb. iv. 2). (*c*) Remembering them (ver. 20). (*d*) Persevering in the observance of them (Mark xiii. 13; Luke viii. 15; Rev. ii. 26). (3) The effect of their abiding in us. (*a*) They purify us (John xv. 3; xvii. 17; 2 Cor. v. 17). (*b*) They bring forth fruit in us (Matt xiii. 23; John xv. 5). II. WHAT IS PROMISED (Matt. vii. 7). Such as abide in Christ shall be sure not to meet with disappointment, because—1. They will only according to God's will (1 Sam. iii. 18); herein following the example of their blessed Lord (Matt. xxvi. 39, 42); submitting with those in Acts xxi. 14; and praying as our Lord directs (Matt. vi. 10). 2. They ask according to His will, and so are sure to be heard upon this account (1 John v. 14, 15). Particularly, they ask—(1) Nothing but what is lawful (Matt. vii. 11); avoiding the folly mentioned in Psa. 1. 21, 22. (2) And only to a good end (James iv. 3). 3. They take a right method in asking: praying—(1) In faith (Matt. xxi. 22; James i. 5–7). (2) With fervency and devotion (Rom. i. 9; 1 Cor. vi. 20). (3) In humility (Luke xviii. 9, &c.; Psa. cxxxviii. 6). (4) From a clean heart (Isa. i. 11, 16–18; 1 Tim. ii. 8). (5) With constancy and perseverance (Luke xviii. 1; xi. 8–10; Eph. vi. 8). (6) In the name and through the merits of Christ (chap. xiv. 13, 14). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *The secret of prevailing prayer*:—I. THE NATURE OF THE CONDITIONS LAID DOWN. 1. "If ye abide in Me," as the branches abide in the vine: union with and reception of the whole Christ by faith, as Saviour, Teacher, Example. If we accept Him in one aspect and not in another, we fail to fulfil the condition. 2. "If My words abide in you." (1) Christ's words are His whole teaching, not the part of it which we most like. (2) These words are to abide in us—not merely in our memories as words, nor in our understandings as facts, nor in our reasons as truths, nor in our feelings as sentiments; but pervading our whole spiritual being as principles of life and action, just as we assimilate food, which does not profit unless changed into blood, bone, sinew, &c. If we have Christ's words thus abiding in us, we shall have Christ Himself, and that being so we shall breathe His Spirit and be transformed into His likeness. II. THE CERTAINTY, IN THE FULFILMENT OF SUCH CONDITIONS, THAT ALL OUR PETITIONS WILL BE GRANTED. If we fulfil such conditions in the very fulfilment all our best desires are already granted. What more can we have than to be in Christ and to have Christ in us? The branch is already most fruitful if it is actually the branch of the most fruitful vine. But note the grounds on which this certainty rests. 1. God honours simplicity of trust. For what is this trust? It is to feel that truth cannot lie, that faithfulness cannot deceive, that wisdom cannot err, that power cannot fail, that holiness cannot blight the hope that perfect love has inspired. On the contrary, unbelief is absurd. Think of casting a shadow of doubt on infinite excellence, omnipotence, and wisdom. Let a man doubt that there is not enough light in the sun to enable him to see, or enough water in the sea to float his vessel. Besides, trust has naturally a drawing power on the heart of love. 2. Only such blessings will be sought for as

are within the range of God's promise. All the Christian's hopes and yearnings are bounded by this. What lies beyond? Unholy honours, pleasures, &c.; but the Christian does not want these, he has done with these trifling or injurious toys. What lies within? Whatever is calculated to make us wiser, holier, happier, and more useful. 3. There is purity of desire in supplicating spiritual blessings. Prayer for other things necessarily arises from mixed motives. 4. We have further in this state of soul complete submissiveness to the Divine will. (*J. M. Charlton, M.A.*) *Ask great things from God*:—Sir Walter Raleigh one day asking a favour from Queen Elizabeth, the latter said to him, "Raleigh, when will you leave off begging?" To which he answered, "When your Majesty leaves off giving." Ask great things of God. Expect great things from God. Let His past goodness make us "instant in prayer." (*W. Baxendale.*) *Christ's work for us the secret of successful prayer*:—All the promises in the Bible are so many bills of exchange drawn by God the Father in heaven upon His Son Jesus Christ, and payable to every pious bearer,—to every one that comes to the mercy-seat, and offers the promise or bill for acceptance, and pleads in the way of obedient faith and prayer. Jesus, the High Treasurer of heaven, knows every letter of His Father's handwriting, and can never be imposed upon by any forged note. He will ever honour His Father's bills: He accepts them all. It is for His Father's honour that His bills never fail of acceptance and payment. (*J. Beaumont, M.D.*) *The necessity of specific prayer*:—In order to be prevailing our prayers must be pointed and personal. The old woman who interrupted an "eloquent" supplication, in which the attributes of God were being stated at great length, by saying, "Ask Him for something," may teach us a much-needed lesson. (*S. Pearson, M.A.*)

Ver. 8. **Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.**—*God glorified in His people*:—The great majority of Christ's illustrations were drawn from the world of nature, which teaches us that there is a profound connection between the natural and spiritual worlds. For Christ did not introduce His teaching into nature, but showed men the lessons concerning God and the spiritual which it had been silently teaching for ages, but which they had been too blind to see. For years had the vines of Palestine been uttering glorious things about the union of man to God: prophets had seen something of the mystery; but it was reserved for the greatest of the prophets to gather all their finest teachings into one beautiful discourse. And because the principle on which Christ taught is ever true, we may learn most solemn lessons from the beauty of God's world. The great teaching of the text is this: Man's greatest power for glorifying God is a life of Christ-like action, and in order to illustrate its full force we must trace it back to its first principles. I. THE INWARD LIFE IN UNION WITH CHRIST MUST SHOW ITSELF OUTWARDLY IN CHRIST-LIKE ACTION. 1. All profound emotions must display themselves in action. Whenever a deep love or a strong conviction enters a man's heart, it impels him to utter it. If it be unspoken in word, it will change his whole being, and burning itself into speech in his deeds, give its meaning a tongue, and manifest its secret fire; or if it cannot express itself it will perish in its own concealment. So the ruling emotion of love to Christ must utter itself to men in the language of Christ-like words and life, or it will pine and perish in its secrecy. And not only so, but all deep love must transform the soul into the image of the beloved, and thus reveal its energy. 2. The inner Christian life has a power to overcome the hindrances to its manifestation. It has been said that "circumstances make the man"; but do circumstances hinder the man who is resolved to be rich? On the contrary, he turns them to his own end. Did circumstances make Napoleon? He made them steps to his throne. Circumstances make weak men, but strong men make circumstances. There we have the answer to the timid assertion that it is impossible in such a world as this to manifest the power of a living Christianity. As the vine, by the inward force of life, draws from the sun and air and soil those elements that give it beauty and vigour, so the Christian life causes all outward states to minister to its growing power. The sight of sin is an opposing circumstance—to the real Christian it is transformed into a mighty lesson. The slanders of men are an opposing circumstance—they form the noblest school for Christian patience. The sufferings and sacrifices of life may seem to be hindrances—in reality they make the soul strong in faith and prayer. If the life of love be in a man he will live Christ everywhere, and, like the oak, grow stronger in storms. Hence the conclusion arises unanswerably, that the inner life in union with Christ must reveal itself in Christ-like deeds. II. THE LIFE OF CHRIST-LIKE

ACTION IS MAN'S GREATEST POWER OF GLORIFYING GOD. 1. A Christ-like life is the strongest manifestation of God to the world. The men of this world do not perceive the signs of a present God. They may have an indistinct belief in an awful Power existing somewhere in the universe. They read the Bible as an old book, not as a testimony to a living Lord: they find a beauty in nature, but that beauty is not to them the evidence of its invisible King. But a Christ-like man brings the Divine so directly into the sphere of his own daily life, that they cannot help perceiving it there and then. That man's life becomes a Bible, which in the clearest tones proclaims the presence of his Lord. 2. A Christ-like life is the greatest human influence to bring men near God. When Christ said to His disciples, "Go and bear fruit, go and reproduce My life in your life," He laid hold of the two great forces that mould all human society—influence and example. For the power of social influence is constant and irresistible, while all direct efforts for God are of necessity limited, and awaken opposition. Men hear the appeals of the preacher, and apply them only to their neighbours. But the ceaseless, silent influence of a Christ-like life enters with its resistless majesty into hearts that are barred and bolted in self-complacency against the preacher's voice, and, like the light, makes their darkness visible. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *God requires that His vines be fruitful*:—A vine would never be so stupid as to examine itself thus, but suppose it should, and should call out, "Roots, do you enjoy being down there in the soil?" "Yes, we enjoy being here in the soil." "Stem, do you like to be out there in summer?" "Yes, I like to be out here in summer." "Leaves, are you fond of waving in the sun and air?" "Yes, we are fond of the sun and air;" and, satisfied, it says, "I am an excellent vine." The gardener, standing near, exclaims, "The useless thing! I paid ten dollars for the cutting, and I have pruned and cultivated it, and for years looked for the black Hamburg grapes it was to bear, but it has yielded only leaves." He does not care that the roots love the soil, and the stem the summer. It makes no difference to him though every leaf spread itself broad as Sahara in its barrenness. It is fruit that he wants. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Much fruit*:—They say that at Mentone the citron harvest lasts from the 1st of January to the 31st of December. Women may be seen almost every morning of the year stepping down the rocky mountain paths with large baskets upon their heads filled with the fruit. Pastors may well wish that their Churches were always in such bearing order, and Sabbath-school teachers may sigh for such perpetual fruit. To come nearer home, may not each one of us long for like perpetuity of fertility in our own souls? It would be a grand thing to be evermore working and at the same time planning new effort, and preparing material for new enterprises. Mentone owes its lemons to its warm sun, and to its sheltered position close under the great rocks. Here is a secret for us all. To dwell in communion with Jesus is to abide in the sunshine, and to rest in His great love and atoning sacrifice is to nestle under the Rock of Ages, and to be shielded from every withering blast. "Nearer to God" is the way to greater fruitfulness. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christian fruitfulness*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. It consists in a visible exhibition of Christian feeling and principle. I say visible; for though your heart was as tender as that of a child, and warm as that of a seraph, you bring forth no fruit unto God unless your internal feelings are manifested in appropriate acts of obedience. Those who in ancient times retired from all connection with the world may have been persons of piety, but they were prevented by the very circumstances of their condition from bringing forth fruit unto God. To be a fruitful Christian it must be seen that you are a living, active Christian. 2. It demands that we discharge with fidelity the appropriate duties of our respective stations. If we neglect these and attempt to perform others that do not belong to us or for which we are not qualified, we dishonour rather than glorify God—just as the planets would if they should quit their proper orbits and rush into spheres in which they were not appointed to move. Christians are all the servants of Jesus Christ, and each one has his proper work assigned him; they are all soldiers of Jesus Christ, and each one has his post allotted him. Some are ordained to serve as ministers, some as magistrates, some as heads of families, some as masters, some as servants. Some are rich, and are appointed to be the Lord's stewards, to honour Him with their substance; some in an inferior station are called to serve Him like Dorcas by making coats and garments for the poor. 3. Christian fruitfulness, in order to glorify God, must be abundant. The glory of the husbandman does not arise from his fields or vines bearing fruit but much fruit. A few ears of corn in the one nearly choked with weeds, or here and there a branch or berry on

the other, much blighted and shrivelled, rather dishonours than honours him. Thus a little religion often dishonours God more than none. An indecisive halting between God and the world causes His name to be evil spoken of much more than the excesses of the openly wicked. The husbandman is not dishonoured by the unfruitfulness of a wild tree upon which he has bestowed no culture, but the barrenness of what is planted in his garden or in his enclosed field reflects on himself, and he will therefore cut it down and cast it out as an incumbrance. II. ITS MEANS. Very analogous are the means of Christian fruitfulness to those of common husbandry. 1. A good soil, *i.e.*, a good heart. This is indispensable. You do not expect a harvest from seed sown upon a rock or in sand. And what but such is the heart unsanctified by grace? Never till it is softened and warmed into spiritual life by an influence from above will it yield any fruit that is pleasing to God. Hence vital union to Christ is asserted to be indispensable to Christian fruitfulness. "Abide in Me, and I in you," &c. Union with Christ is the animating principle of all holy obedience, infusing spiritual life and vigour into the soul, and quickening all its powers into activity for the glory of God. No culture will make us fruitful till we are brought into vital union with Christ. 2. Good seed, *i.e.*, the truths of God's Word lodged in the mind by a just apprehension and cordial faith of them. As well might you expect a harvest of wheat from a field sowed with tares, as the fruits of righteousness from a mind vacant of religious truth or filled with error. Doctrinal, experimental, and practical religion are all necessarily connected; they cannot exist apart or separate from each other. 3. Careful cultivation. Fruitfulness unto God is not a growth of chance. It does not spring from indolence, unwatchfulness, or carelessness, much less from sinful conformity to the world or deadening absorption in its cares and pursuits. No; it is the result of a tender, conscientious keeping of the heart in the love of God; it is the growth of diligence and care in the use of such means as God has appointed for our advancement in the Divine life. Whatever be the state of your heart at any given time, or however excellent the seed sown in it, if you allow the cares, the riches, and pleasures of the world to enter in and choke the Word, no fruit will be brought forth to perfection. 4. Rain and sunshine, *i.e.*, the influences of the Holy Spirit. The most careful labours of the husbandman cannot avail to produce a single ear of corn or blade of grass. So in things spiritual. Means of themselves have no efficacy to produce spiritual life or Christian fruitfulness. "Paul may plant," &c. Here comes in the necessity of prayer; and a beautiful arrangement it is which connects our endeavours to grow in Christian fruitfulness with dependence on help from God. III. ITS MOTIVES. By bearing much fruit you—1. Glorify your Heavenly Father. As the works of creation show forth the glory of the Lord, because they illustrate His perfections exerted in their formation; so His rational creatures glorify Him when some resemblance of His moral excellence is discerned upon their hearts and manifested in their lives. In this sense every Christian, however humble his station, or circumscribed his sphere of action, may attain to the high privilege and honour of glorifying God his Maker. Professed disciples of Jesus, if you take a just view of your character and obligations, you will regard yourselves in a most important sense as representatives of the Divine Majesty among your fellow-men. Their eyes are upon you, and they will form their opinion of the religion you profess and of the God you adore very much from the conduct you exhibit from day to day. 2. Prove to yourselves and to others the reality of your professed discipleship. The question is often asked, How may I know that I am a Christian? The answer is by bearing fruit to the glory of God. In the absence of such fruitfulness all other evidence is worthless. You see a tree in the season of winter stripped of its leaves and fruit, and you find it difficult to decide what tree it is. But look at it when it is covered with foliage and loaded with fruit, and you are at no loss for a moment on the subject. Just so in judging of your own character. (*J. Hawes, D.D.*) *Union with Christ the sole condition of fruitfulness*:—Our only possibility of bearing any fruit worthy of our natures and of God's purpose concerning us is by vital union with Jesus Christ. If we have not that, there may be plenty of activity and mountains of work in our lives, but there will be no fruit. Only that is fruit which pleases God and is conformed to His purpose concerning us, and all the rest of your busy doings is no more the fruit that a man should bear than cankers are roses, or than oak-galls are acorns. They are but the work of a creeping grub, and diseased excrescences that suck into themselves the juices that should swell the fruit. Open your hearts to Christ and let His life and His Spirit come into you, and then you will "have

your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christ the True Vine*:—I. FRUITFULNESS IS THE OBJECT OF DISCIPLESHIP. To bear fruit is the purpose for which the vine was planted and the branches grown. No husbandman plants vines for wood or shade or beauty, but for fruit. Christ's disciples are of value according to their fruitfulness. II. THE FRUITFULNESS OF THE DISCIPLE CONSISTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISTINCTIVELY CHRISTIAN QUALITIES. It is not first or mainly in its usefulness or fruitfulness of service, though this is the sense in which probably the text is most often read and expounded. It is not usefulness, but character, which is the first and great end of the Husbandman. We are called, not to be missionaries first, but to be saints; not to be apostles, but first to be disciples—learners first, and afterwards men sent to teach and preach. It is not by discipling others so much as becoming more and more disciples ourselves that we bear fruit and glorify our Father. We have compared fruitfulness with usefulness as an aim. But we must not forget that the very fruitfulness of the branch is its usefulness. It had never thought of anything but growing, developing what was in it, coming to its perfection and maturity. That was all its aim: to throw its life into the fruitage. But so it found its usefulness. So it did its work for God and men. For the fruit contains both food and seed. The starving eats and is refreshed. The invalid with failing appetite tastes and is revived. It graces the tables of the rich and inexpensively supplies the needs of the poor. The owner stands by well pleased, and invites all to feast themselves. It only tried to grow, but growing found its means and opportunity of service. It is so with the Christian. His best usefulness is that which comes out of his simple obedience to the laws of the vineyard, out of his simple purpose to grow into that to which His Lord has called him. He may exhort, but his life speaks louder than his lips. He may set out with intent to serve, and his best service may have been before his setting out. He may be reproaching himself with his unfaithfulness even while his faithfulness is winning men to Christ. To grow is more important than to go. Suppose the branch, just started from the vine, begins to feel the burden of its mission to do good more than the compulsion to bear fruit. In sees yonder a porch which it might shade and so be a blessing to a household, and its stretches away to reach and cover it. It strains away over the intervening space, and twines itself over the vacant trellis. It has succeeded, but, alas! where is the shade? It has grown so fast, the stem has almost run away from the leaves—a foot apart they stretch along the spindling vine; small and but half-grown, they have neither shade nor beauty, and not a bunch of grapes. If it had simply grown and sought to fill the fruit which it had set, a season later and the fragrant clusters would have hung within reach of those resting under its shade and delighting in its beauty. Have you never seen something like that among the disciples? "Grow in grace" is the first law of the Christian life. All else comes under that law and out of it. The fruit, too, has in it the seed: that by which it is perpetuated; the more fruit, the more seed. The branch might think that if it could, by some process of layering, multiply plants, it would be doing good service. But so it can never accomplish as much as by the natural way: filling its fruit, so making seed. Nothing so tends to the perpetuation of the Christian faith as the fidelity to the Christian standard of those who bear the name of Christ. The Divine order is—first, fruitfulness; and, second, usefulness. It is fruitfulness only which ever come to the hundredfold of useful service. III. THE FRUITFULNESS OF THE DISCIPLE DEPENDS UPON HIS RELATION TO HIS DIVINE TEACHER AND LORD. The branch gets its life through the vine from which it grows. It has no life in itself: cut it off, it dies. Does this Scripture tell us plainly in what this abiding in Christ consists? It does. 1. It is abiding in His words, in His commandments, and having them abide in us. It is in keeping His commandments, not simply obeying them—that, but not only that; it is in guarding them as a sacred treasure, and protecting them from violation not only, but from the slightest disrespect. 2. It is abiding in His love: and that is not living so that He shall continue to love us, but abiding in the love of Him, proving that love by lovingly keeping His commandments; abiding also in a love like His to others, and proving that by a spirit of self-sacrifice whose measure is a willingness to lay down our lives if so we can serve or save them. 3. It is abiding in that fellowship with Him which finds its natural expression in prayer; that is, communion with Him. Thus the channels of communication are kept open between the vine andthe branches, and the life-blood flows freely from the one to and through the other. (*George M. Boynton.*) *Fruitfulness the true proof of the tree's excellence and the gardener's skill*:—I

remember going over the garden of a friend who had taken up with immense enthusiasm some new system of growing dwarf trees. He exhibited his garden to me with great pride as a model of what a garden ought to be. "I presume," said I, "that you get a large quantity of fruit." "Fruit?" was the reply—"fruit? Why, I scarcely think about that;" and I found that my friend had so delighted himself with his new scheme, and with the beauty of the small trees all standing in rows, and the delightfulness of their leaves, so bewildered himself in his enthusiasm for his new method of gardening, that he had deceived his own self and was satisfied with leaves, and forgot that which seemed to me, as a looker-on, to be the only proof of success. (*Bp. Harvey Goodwin.*) *Christian fruitfulness*:—The analogies existing between Nature and Grace are striking and beautiful. Nor is it at all surprising that so they should be. He who formed the one kingdom formed also the other. Nature is designed as the type, the symbol of Grace. It was ever thus the Saviour looked at it. To Him, Nature was always illustrative, typical of higher truths, sublimer realities than appeared on its surface. He never rested in anything short of the spiritual. On few subjects is this analogy more frequently indicated than on that of "fruit"—fruit in Nature betokening fruit in grace. "First fruits;" "the fruits of the Spirit;" "the fruits of righteousness;" "fruit in its season;" "His fruit;" "fruits of the valley," &c. Note—I. THAT FRUIT-BEARING IS THE GREAT END OF ALL GOD'S DISPENSATIONS. Fruit is the great object sought in all agricultural arrangements. It is not otherwise with the Great Husbandman, the "Lord of the Vineyard." His arrangements who can conceive! They span eternity, embrace worlds, include the gift of His Son, the Mission of His Spirit, the revolutions of Providence, the breathing of inspiration. His purpose is our fruitfulness. This too was the Saviour's object. For this He was born, lived, died; for this He endured sorrow; for this He still lives, pleads, gives His Spirit, conducts His entire moral government. The Holy Spirit too works for this, and uses all the appliances He has created and sustains. Means and opportunities, Bibles and ordinances, sanctuaries and Sabbaths, all exist for this. II. THE ONLY FRUIT WE CAN BEAR, THAT IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, COMES FROM A SOURCE EXTERNAL TO OURSELVES. Much instruction is conveyed in the figure here employed—"fruit." What is it? It is result, sequence, an effect, not a cause. It must be thus with ourselves. What we are in spirit, life, character, must come from a hidden source, an inner nature; from something "back of itself." And what is the source of this life? There are beautiful fruits borne by unsanctified humanity. Generosity, amiability, benevolence, honour, kindness. Unregenerate nature cannot produce such fruit as is acceptable to a holy God. It follows, that in order to acceptable fruit, there must be renovation of nature—a new principle of life. Regeneration is spiritual grafting, the introduction of a new life, the modification of the old tree to such an extent that, though it does not alter its physical qualities, its natural capacities, it altogether renovates its moral nature, and makes it a new creation, capable henceforth of bearing acceptable fruit. This Divine and blessed influence, this grace of the Holy Spirit, comes alone from Christ. Had sin not entered our world and tainted our nature, it had come direct from our Father. As it was in paradise, so it would have been since, God's nature would have flowed into man's with an unimpeded current. Sin checked this, and now the sacred influence, the Holy Spirit's energy and grace flows through another, even Christ. The whole spiritual being with all its new capacities and instincts unfolding to Christ. "Abiding"—not a state expressed by fits and starts, spiritual and worldly by turns; but continuing; in all conditions of sorrow and joy, like the branch in the tree—"abiding." Is this all? No. The branch thus abiding cannot be without the reception of influence. It does not give, it receives; and assuredly the great Saviour, the Celestial Vine, will not allow any of His branches thus to abide in Him for nothing. Are you thus abiding? Then you know there comes from Him sap, nurishment, energy, spiritual power, which, flowing into you, makes you at once to adhere more closely, and also to "bear fruit." "He that abideth in Me, and I in him." The latter is more than the former, though the first is indispensable to the second. It it important to observe here, too, the point of contact. What is this? On our part it is faith crystallizing into prayer. On His the Word, the medium of His Spirit. Such is the philosophy of Christian fruit-bearing. As the pomegranate, the peach, the grape, the fig, are the results of elements, drawn from sources external to themselves, so all the fruits borne by the Christian are the result of a true life first given, then sustained by Him who said, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." III. THE RESULTS OF SUCH FRUIT-BEARING ARE MOST VALUABLE. How great the value even of material

fruits! "As the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself," what a mint of wealth does she annually yield to ungrateful and sinful man. Fields of golden corn, orchards of russet apples, mountains of purple grapes, what an immense money value they express; sufficient to tell upon the national exchequer, to regulate the markets of the world. The "fruits of righteousness" which are by Jesus Christ, how great their value! They glorify God. "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." God is "glorified" variously. All His works praise Him, His saints bless Him. Their praise is voluntary, conscious, intelligent, therefore higher in its nature, more acceptable, and worthy. They render it according to their fruitfulness. It vindicates and honours Christianity. This is often aspersed, vilified, scorned. While, thus, the gospel has brought forth fruits fully adequate to vindicate its claims as a system, it is only as its friends do this personally that those claims will be adequately recognized. Oh, the value of a fruitful, practical course of Christian life in this respect. It vindicates the gospel. It may be silent, but it is not dumb. A tree laden with fruit, whether a sapling or giant stem, is an object which speaks for itself. More than this, it speaks for the soil in which it grows, the garden in which it is, the husbandman by whom it is trained. These clusters of themselves show what needs to be known, so that "we need not to speak anything." Fruit-bearing ministers to joy. Christ would have His disciples joyful. It is most experienced when the soul is most fruitful. Consciousness of improvement in anything, most of all in self-culture and moral excellence, ministers to satisfaction. Fruitfulness is of inestimable value for the joy it secures. It gives efficacy to prayer. The Saviour recognizes this intercourse when He says, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Abiding in Me, My Spirit through My Word flowing into you, the branch and the Vine will become one. My grace will be the source of your fruitfulness, My Spirit the inspirer of your prayers. The purport of all that has been said is simple and practical. It says to each and all, be fruitful, and see the way in which you may become so. If hitherto unfruitful, it says to you, You are defeating the great end of your being, of God's purpose in reference to you, of Christ's coming into this world. Let me entreat you to do this at once, lest you lost the capacity for it. The unfruitful tree becomes less and less likely to improve, till at last it withers and dies. (*J. Viney.*) *Defective fruitfulness*:—How many of the professed disciples of our blessed Lord and Master are there, who, while they possess and manifest certain indubitable excellencies, and clearly exhibit certain Christian graces, do, nevertheless, appear to much and serious disadvantage by reason of the total, or almost total, absence of other essential Christian virtues. Their moral defects cause so many gaps in the cluster, that, like a ragged, ill-shapen, and sparsely furnished bunch of grapes, they fail effectively to manifest the fruit aright which they actually do produce; and if they do not bring their religious honesty and sincerity into serious doubt, do unquestionably fall far short of what they ought to be, and what they might be, and what they must try to be, if they are to be really well-written epistles, setting forth the true character of the Master, known and read of all men. In these defective fruit-bearers there is no proportion, no symmetry, no sign or promise of that ultimate holiness which will make them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Whatever of good there is in them is largely discounted in moral value as the representations of the Christly character, and as influences for good on those who dwell within their circle. They are the subject of sore anxiety and discomfort to their godly comrades, and unfavourably impress "them that are without the knowledge of God," and whom it is their sacred duty to win to Christ. One exhibits the fruit of benevolence, but his temper is fitful, uncertain, and at times is altogether unrestrained. Another bears the fruit of fidelity; nobody can question his integrity or the purity of his motives; but he is cold, hard, morose, ungentle. A third is full of energy, courage, action, but these excellent fruits are spoiled by lack of patience, and his longsuffering is conspicuous by its absence. A fourth, again, is genial, gentle, sunny and kindly almost to a fault, but he is altogether deficient in firmness, strength of principle, stability of character, and is easily led away: and so on through all the defective combinations possible to an ill-formed Christian character. It is to be feared that, too often, the absence of certain fruits of the Spirit not only becomes chronic, but has a very noxious and destructive influence on such as do exist, and imperils the whole religious life. In full consciousness of this the apostolic teachers ever urge the followers of the Perfect Man to strive after moral completeness. They are to "perfect that which is lacking;" they are to grow into the "full stature of a man in Christ Jesus;" "they are

to seek to be "sanctified wholly;" and to be "perfect and entire, lacking nothing." (*J. J. Wray.*) *Fruit-bearing the test of discipleship:*—I. How is God glorified? It cannot be that we can add anything to His intrinsic excellence. We can glorify a man by office, by honours, in various ways; but nobody can add anything to God. We can glorify Him only by revealing in some degree what His excellencies are. No man can glorify the sun; but when the day has hung drooping, and by and by the clouds begin to fold and spread, and here and there sun-bursts come in, and at last the every-increasing light sweeps out of the whole heaven every cloud, we do not create the sun, and we do not burnish it; but the wind reveals it. And we cannot in any way increase the glory of God; but in our lives and dispositions we can make known to men the quality of Divine attributes. One drop of water is enough to teach us what liquid is, but one drop of water would not be enough to teach us what the Atlantic ocean is if we had not seen it; and so one single development of love reveals the glory of the God of love, although the ocean, the tides, the infinities that belong to the Divine Nature we shall not know until we behold them from a higher point of vision, even if we do then. II. If we bear much fruit we glorify God. What the fruit is we know already. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," &c. These are very precious fruits, and the more we bring forth the more we reveal the nature of God. A diamond is nothing in itself; and yet, having the power of refraction and reflection, it in every facet gives brilliance and colour from light. So it is with those who are really God's gems and jewels. The light that flashes from their lives from day to day reflects Him, and makes men easily to know Him. Call back the example of Christ. He was perpetually endeavouring to teach that the development of a beautiful life was the power that He sought to establish. It was not an order of the priesthood or philosophy, new institutions or methods that He was seeking to build up; it was to take man by man, and develop in him the kingdom of God. That is the lever, and the sight of the highest form of manhood is the instrument by which the world is to be converted—has been, is, will be. III. Inferences. If this be, then, the substance of Christ's teaching—bear much fruit; so shall ye glorify your Father—then I remark—1. That the growth of the Church is not by the numbers that are in it, but by the graces, the beauty, variety and ripeness of Christian character. Whatever tends to make men, looking upon you, revere you, love you, whatever lifts their conception of your spiritual excellence, gives strength to the Church. 2. The courses which glorify God and make the Church rich are within the reach of everybody. There is an impression that the men who have great gifts, great knowledge, are the glory of the Church. No; it is the man who has the most fruit of the Spirit of God; and the qualities that constitute fruit are those that are open—to the child, to the ungifted, to the ignorant. Everybody knows, or may know, how to be gentle. Everybody knows how to use his tongue, not as a sword, but as an instrument of pleasure, profit, and instruction to other men. There be Christians that say, "I never speak in meeting; I can't." Very well, that is all right. To be dumb when you ought not to speak is a very good Christian grace. "But I am of very little account. I only wish I could pray as I hear brethren pray. I should be glad to rise in the meetings sometimes; but I know nobody wants to hear me." You are not fit to exhort; and nobody wants to hear you explain Scripture; but if God has brought you out of sorrow, and you have a word of testimony as to how in some gracious hour the heavens cleared, and your soul was lifted on high, then you will be listened to with interest. No eloquence is like that of a fact of soul experience. The power of the Church lies not in its ordinances, not in its creed, but in the life of its members. It is not a declaration that creeds or organizations are valueless. A fence is a very good thing on a farm for the sake of the crops that grow inside of it; but there are any number of Christian farms that have high fences, and that have not a thing growing in them but weeds. 3. God saves by few rather than by many. One single electric light in a hall is better than five hundred candles. So one glowing and eminent Christian life is better than a whole church full of tolerable Christians; and usually I think it will be found that in the activities of the Church it is the few and not the many that give it quality, influence, power. I do not think there is anything on earth more beautiful than a vine. But some Christian vines have not a solitary grape on them. They are empty vines. But there are some that have two or three clusters, here and there. There are one or two things which they do that are conspicuous and excellent; how many Christians are there whose branches are loaded with the choicest fruit, that fills the air with its aroma, and delights the eye, and much more the tongue, if one be privileged to

pluck and eat? "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." 4. Faith in Christ is like faith in any master. If one, conscious of ignorance in music, goes to some celebrated pianist to take lessons, he has faith in him, showing it by the fact that he accepts him as a teacher, and then puts forth all his exertions to do the thing he is taught to do. If a man goes to some great master to study art, he has faith in him. Knowing what his reputation is he betakes himself to his instruction, and attempts to develop form, grouping, colour, sentiment. Now faith in Christ consists in putting yourself into His hands, that you may be what He was—you according to the measure of your nature what He was according to the measure of His nature. "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." Put on the graces that made Jesus Christ pre-eminently the Man of all time—the God-man; and whoever accepts Christ, and every one of all the attributes then eventuated in His life, has faith in Him. 5. The tendency to judge of revivals is, I am afraid, becoming more materialized. Men glorify God that a great outpouring of His Spirit has filled the Churches. With what? Some rivers, when they come down in freshets in spring, bring sand, and destroy the meadows over which they spread themselves; while some bring loam, and refresh all the meadows where the detrius settles down, increasing the soil. And a revival is beneficial not by the number of persons supposed to be converted, but by the quality of the conversion they have gone through. The boy preacher, Harrison, informed me that there were twenty-six hundred persons converted in one city where he was. Twenty-six hundred gardens of the Lord! Well, I would like to see those gardens. I would like to see what they bring forth. If they simply say they are in the Church, and have a through ticket paid up to heaven, and go back and live just as they always have lived, I do not very much esteem that; but if there could be twenty-six hundred persons that break out with the blossom and fruit of the Lord's garden in their hearts, and they could all be brought into the Church in one company, the millennium would be the next step, right outside the door. Communities could not stand such a cloudburst as that. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Vers. 9–11. **As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you.**—*Divine love:*—The principle of Divine love constitutes the essence of true religion. Upon the golden link of love hangs not only the gospel, but also the law and the prophets. Meditate—I. Upon THE MAGNITUDE OF CHRIST'S LOVE TOWARD US. The love of Christ to us may be regarded as resembling the love of God to His Son. 1. As to its strength. The intensity of the love of Christ may be fairly exhibited by human affection; yet the Saviour's love is infinitely stronger than all human love combined. 2. In its freeness. 3. In its durability. 4. In its harmony with all the trials and sorrows of earth. II. THE CLAIMS CHRIST'S LOVE HAS UPON US. "Continue," &c. It should be realized and manifested. 1. The fact that Jesus loves us should be realized believingly. 2. It should be realized joyfully. 3. Should prompt us to manifest our love to Him in return. (*G. Philips.*) *The Divine measure of love:*—1. In John's Gospel we have God's love to man, and in his Epistles man's love to God. 2. Each of the apostles had his mission—Paul to expound the Divine decrees, James to hoist the standard of Christian duty, John to proclaim Divine love. So the first propagators of Christianity represented the various phases of Christ's character. 3. In his treatment of love John elevated it. The poet, historian, dramatist, found it the most inspiring subject. But alas! the Divine passion which left the portals of immortality whiter than snow was dragged through the culverts of human debasement; but John took it to the foot of the cross, where its stains were cleansed, and led it back to the gate of heaven whiter than before. I. THE DECLARATION. "As the Father," &c. This was—1. Old love. The question of Pharaoh is of frequent occurrence, "How old art thou?" The historian asks it of the archives of nations, the antiquarian of ancient monuments, the geologist of primæval formations. Nature is venerable and has a calender which contains this record, "In the beginning God created the heavens," &c.; but the date when He began to love the Son is not there. Of the old things of life, old friendship is the sweetest. You say "These are very old friends of mine." After an absence of years with what a hearty shake of hands old friends greet each other! But the oldest began to love; Christ's is an everlasting love. 2. Great love. If God so loved the world of imperfect beings how intense His love to His Son must have been; and Christ is fuller of love to us than the sun is of light, or the sea of water. 3. Enduring love (Zech. iii. 17; John xiii. 1). II. THE ADVICE. "Continue," &c. Christ's love is—1. The source of Christian discipleship. The fol-

lowers of Christ were many, and were actuated by a variety of motives; some because of the loaves and fishes, some out of admiration, some out of sympathy, some because of His irresistible charm. But how quickly these sources of attraction dried up! There are many religious influences at work, but only one abides to-day. During winter and spring the rills overflow their beds, and the villagers have no need to go far for water; but when summer comes all these cease flowing. The village well, however, is inexhaustible. Religious life has its rills, but the fountain is Jesus. Young converts should take heed to the word "abide." 2. The only sphere is which the Christian should turn. "Love one another, so shall ye be My disciples." Christians strive hard to love one another and fail. The only secret of success in this direction is to love Christ. 3. The only condition of safety. Behold the helpless babe. Its safety is not in its own strength, but in its mother's love. A mother once said about her youngest son, "I am not afraid of his going astray; he is so fond of home." Do you want to be safe? Abide in Christ's love. A mother begged her daughter to stay at home one day; she refused, and embarked on the ill-fated *Princess Alice*, and was lost. Young Christian, allow the pleasure-boats of sin to pass by, and stay at home in Christ's love. (*T. Davies, Ph.D.*) *Christ's love for His disciples*—I. IS LIKE THE LOVE THE FATHER HAS FOR HIM. No being in the universe is so dear to the Infinite heart as Christ; yet—1. As really as the Father loved Him He loves us. The reality of the Father's love for Him was a grand reality attested by His own consciousnesss. He could not doubt it. It was proved to Him in a thousand ways, in every faculty and fact of His life. But not less really did He love His disciples. His love for them was a mighty, ever operating force within Him. 2. As disinterestedly. The Father's love for Christ was absolutely and spontaneously unselfish, so was Christ's love for His disciples. There was nothing in them to merit His affection, nothing in them to render Him more glorious or more happy. II. IS PERPETUATED BY OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMANDS. "If ye keep My commandments," &c. How does Christ retain the love of His Father? By working out His will. It would seem as if the Father's love, great though it be, would wane and die if the Son ceased to obey. So with Christ's love towards His disciples. Its continuance depends upon a practical fulfilment of His will. It seems almost a law of mind that love must work to live. If it remain in the mind merely as a sentiment or emotion, it will perish. The mother's love is kept alive by working for her children. When the work ceases the maternal affection wanes. If we would keep the love of Christ strong in the heart we must keep His commandments. No emotion of the soul will strike root, live and grow, except as it is translated into acts. Love only lives in deeds. III. YEARNS TO MAKE ITS OBJECTS HAPPY (ver. 11). It is the essence of love to glow with desires for the happiness of its object. See this in the unwearied services of parents, and in the countless efforts of genuine philanthropy. In Christ's love for man this desire is unquenchable and ever operating. To make men happy was the grand object of His advent to earth. "I am come that ye might have life." "He came to heal the broken-hearted," &c. Christ wishes His disciples not only to be happy, but to be full of happiness. "That your joy may be full." All saddening emotions are foreign to Christliness. Christliness is sunshine, music, rapture. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Abiding in love*:—The last of these verses shows that they are to be taken as a kind of conclusion of the parable of the vine. They have three words as their keynotes—love, obedience, joy. I. THE LOVE IN WHICH IT IS OUR SWEET DUTY TO ABIDE. What shall we say about these mysterious and profound words? They carry us into the very depths of Divinity. 1. Christ here claims to be, in a unique fashion, the object of the Father's love, and to be able to love like God. As deeply, purely, fully, eternally, and with all the unnameable perfectuesses which must belong to the Divine affection, does Christ declare that He loves us. 2. In this affection He exhorts us to abide. The command to abide in Him suggests much that is blessed, but to have all that mysterious abiding in Him resolved into abiding in His love is infinitely tenderer, and draws us still closer to Himself. What is meant is not our continuance in the attitude of love to Him, but rather our continuance in the atmosphere of His love to us. But then, whosoever thus abides in Christ's love to Him will echo it back again in an equally continuous love to Him. 3. This continuance is a thing in our power since it is commanded. What a quiet, blessed home that is for us! The image, I suppose, that underlies dwelling in Christ, in His joy, in His words, in His peace, is the image of some safe house in which we may be secure. II. THE OBEDIENCE BY WHICH WE CONTINUE IN CHRIST'S LOVE. The analogy, on which He has already

touched, is still continued. "If ye keep My commandments," &c. Note—1. That Christ here claims for Himself absolute and unbroken conformity with the Father's will, and consequent uninterrupted and complete communion with the Father's love. It is the utterance of a nature conscious of no sin, of a humanity that never knew one instant's film of separation between Him and the Father. No more tremendous words were ever spoken than these. 2. Christ here, with His consciousness of perfect obedience and communion, intercepts our obedience and diverts it to Himself. He does not say, "Obey God as I have done and He will love you;" but He says, "Obey Me as I obey God and I will love you." Who is this that thus comes between the child's heart and the Father's? Does He come between? or does He rather lead us up to the Father, and to a share in His own filial obedience? 3. By keeping His commandments, we shall continue in that sweet home and safe stronghold of His love. (1) Of course the keeping of the commandment is something more than mere outward conformity by action. It is the inward harmony of will, and the bowing of the whole nature. (2) He will love us better the more we obey His commandments, for although His tender heart is charged with the love of pity and of desire to help towards all, He cannot but feel a growing thrill of satisfied affection towards us, in the measure in which we become like Himself. (3) The obedience which we render for love's sake will make us more capable of receiving, and more blessedly conscious of possessing, the love of Jesus Christ. The lightest cloud before the sun will prevent it from focussing its rays to a burning point on the convex glass. And the small, thin, fleeting, scarcely visible acts of self-will that sometimes pass across our skies will prevent our feeling the warmth of that love upon our shrouded hearts. You cannot rejoice in Jesus Christ unless you do His will. You will have no real comfort and blessedness in your religion unless it works itself out in your daily lives. (4) We shall continue in His love by obedience, inasmuch as every emotion which finds expression in our daily life is strengthened by the fact that it is expressed. The love which works is love which grows, and the tree that bears fruit is the tree that is healthy and increases. 4. So, note how all these deepest things of Christian teaching come at last to a plain piece of practical duty. We talk about the mysticism of John's Gospel, about the depth of these last sayings of Jesus Christ. Yes! They are mystical, they are deep, but connected by the shortest possible road with the plainest possible duties. It is no use talking about communion with Jesus Christ, and abiding in Him, the possession of His love, and all those other properly mystical sides of Christian experience, unless you verify them for yourselves by the plain way of practice. III. THE JOY WHICH FOLLOWS ON THIS PRACTICAL OBEDIENCE (ver. 11). 1. A strange time to talk of His "joy." In half an hour he would be in Gethsemane. Was Christ a joyful Man? He was a man of sorrows. But it is said of Him, "Thou hast loved righteousness, . . . therefore God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." Absolute surrender and submission in love to the beloved commands of a loving Father made Him, in spite of the baptism with which He was baptized, the most joyful of men. 2. This joy He offers to us. There is no joy to compare with that deep, solid, continuous sunshine which floods the soul, that is freed from all the clouds and mists of self and the darkness of sin. Self-sacrifice at the bidding of Jesus Christ is the recipe for the most God-like gladnesses. Our joy will remain if His joy is ours. Then our joy will be up to the measure of its capacity, ennobled, and advancing ever towards fuller possession. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Continuing in Christ's love*:—I. THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THE PRECEPT IS BASED. "As the Father hath loved Me," &c. The particle "as" of course does not indicate equality, but similitude; and even the similitude indicated is not absolute. From the very nature of the objects—the one, the Son—infinite—the other, Christians—finite—the love borne by the Father to the Son must, both in nature and degree, exceed the love which the Son bears to His people; and there is at least one point in which there is not resemblance, but strong contrast. Like the love of the Father to the Son, the love of the Son to His elect ones is—1. Unbeginning. There never was a period when the Father began to love His Son. The only begotten Son was, from eternity, in the Father's bosom (Prov. viii. 22, 23, 30). In this respect the Son loved His chosen people, predestinated, as they were, in Him before the foundation of the world. There was a time when they did not love Him—for they did not exist; at a time when, though they might have loved Him, they did not—they would not; but there never was a time when He did not love them. 2. Infinite. The excellences of the Son, which are the ground of the Father's love, are infinite; and so is—so must be—the Father's love.

The love of the Son to His people cannot be, in this sense, infinite; but we can set no bounds to it. 3. Active. How it manifested itself when there was nothing but Deity in the universe, we cannot tell. The declaration in reference to one of the economies is true of them all. "The Father loveth the Son, and"—*i.e.*, therefore—"He hath put all things into His hand." The love of the Son to His people is also active. It has proved itself stronger than death. Whether we fix our minds on the value of the innumerable blessings it bestows, or on the cost of these blessings to Him, surely we must say, this love has "a height and a depth, a length and a breadth, that passeth knowledge." 4. Unchanged and unchangeable. Immutability is equally the attribute of the Father and the Son; and therefore it is impossible that there should be any change in the affection with which the one regards the other. In like manner does the Son love His people. He "rests in His love"—Jesus is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The invariableness of His love to them wants one of the foundations on which the invariable love of the Father to Him rests. He never changes; but they often do. 5. Unending. While the Father and the Son continue to exist, they must continue to regard each other with infinite love; and, as a token of His everlasting love, the Father has given the Son an everlasting kingdom. The love of the Son to His people is also everlasting, and proves itself in the bestowal of eternal blessings. But there is one point in which the contrast is as striking, as the resemblance. The love of the Father to the Son was richly merited. But as for the objects of the love of the Son, as creatures standing at an infinite distance from Him who is God over all, blessed for ever, it would have been wonderful if the Son had loved man, in His best estate, as the Father loved Him (Psa. viii. 4). But how much more does the contrast come out when we remember what they are. The Father's love to the Son was love to dignity, moral beauty, innocence, excellence, perfection; but the Son's love to men, fallen men, is love to the degraded, the deformed, the condemned, the (but for His love) hopelessly lost (Rom. viii. 8). II. THE DUTY ENJOINED. "Continue in My love," or, as Jude has it, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." To continue in Christ's love is to continue in cherishing those affections, and doing those actions, which are well-pleasing in His sight; and to continue in the enjoyment of an humble assurance, that He continues to regard us with complacential satisfaction. The subject teaches us—1. How we should regard official station or personal standing in the Church of Christ. We should regard it as the being made branches of the True Vine; as a token of the love of Christ. To be a minister or a member of the Church is a far higher honour than to be a member or office-bearer in the most distinguished literary or political societies in the world. 2. What is the duty of those who, through the love of Christ, have been placed in such circumstances. It is to continue in His love. The branch is put forth by the vine, or grafted into it, not for its own honour, but that it may grow, and blossom, and bring forth fruit, to the glory of the vine, and the vine-dresser. III. THE MANNER IN WHICH COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRECEPT IS TO BE YIELDED. By keeping our Lord's commandments, as He kept His Father's commandments. The following may be considered as among the most comprehensive and important of our Lord's commandments: Matt. xvi. 24; vi. 19, 20, 33; x. 8; Luke xii. 15; John xiii. 34. Now, when a disciple, from regard to His Lord's authority, and from love to His person, yields a cheerful habitual obedience to these commandments, he cannot but continue in His love. The eye of the Saviour cannot but rest complacently on him. And this is the only way in which a disciple can continue in his Master's complacential love. When the Father manifested His love to His Son, by constituting Him His great agent in the restorative economy, He gave Him a commandment (Psa. xl. 7. 8). He fully conformed Himself to this law; and, in doing so, he continued in His Father's love. Our obedience must have the same leading characters as our Lord's had. His obedience was the obedience of—1. Love, and so must ours be. 2. In consequence of its being the result of love, it was cheerful. So we must run in the way of His commandments with enlarged hearts. 3. Universal—it extended to every requisition of the law. And in our obedience there must be no reserves, no allowed omissions or violations. 4. Persevering. He was faithful to death, and it is He who endures to the end, that so continues in the Saviour's love as to be saved. IV. MOTIVES TO COMPLY WITH THE INJUNCTION. By continuing in Christ's love, by keeping His commandments—1. You will be conformed to Him, your Lord and Master. Ought not the "disciple to be as His teacher," &c. It is the great design of the Father of the whole family, that the younger members, the many brethren, should all be conformed to their elder brother. 2. You will minister

to the Lord's enjoyment. His joy in us will remain, if, keeping His commandments, we continue in His love (ver. 11). The disciple whom Jesus loved breathed the Spirit of Him on whose bosom he had been accustomed to lean, when he said, "I have no greater joy," &c. (3 John 4.) And Paul (Phil. 20). Our Lord had joy in His disciples, &c. (Matt. xi. 25.) His joy in them was proportioned to the degree in which they were made holy, useful, and happy, through the influence of His word and Spirit. 3. You will promote your own happiness. While Christ's joy in us remains, our joy in Him will be full. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *Obedient love bringing fulness of joy*:—I. LOVE IN ITS BIRTH. Christ loved us first, and this was after the model of the Father's to Him. It was, therefore—1. A free love. 2. An eternal love. 3. A deep and infinite love. To believe in, and to receive Christ's love, awakens in our hearts reciprocal love to Him. II. LOVE IN ITS CONTINUANCE. The law of continuance in love is obedience: obedience to Christ after the model of His obedience to the Father. 1. What are we to obey? The moral law which is Christ's, and His special evangelical laws. 2. Why? Out of gratitude to Him, as the condition of His continued love to us. 3. How? As Christ obeyed God: cheerfully, heartily, unreservedly, even unto death. Thus will our love be sustained: not otherwise. III. LOVE IN ITS FRUITION. 1. This obedience leads to fruitfulness in doing good to others—which pleases God. 2. It occasions joy to the soul that loves and obeys. Conclusions: 1. How to be happy? By loving Christ. 2. How to foster love to Christ? By diligently doing His commandments. (*T. G. Horton.*)

Ver. 10. **If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love.**—*The condition of abiding in Christ's love*:—What is implied in that keeping of His commandments, which is essential to abiding in His love? The keeping of all those commandments of His—I. WHICH REFER TO THE MAINTAINING OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION WITH HIMSELF. He kept constantly all such commandments of His Father, and so continued in His Father's love. If we would abide in Christ's love, we must imitate Him and make an earnest use of the means of grace. There are those who neglect these, and thus plainly do not keep God's commandments. There are others who do not quite neglect them, and yet do not use them as Christ's commandments require, and therefore not so as to benefit by them. II. WHICH REQUIRE US TO BE LIKE HIMSELF IN SPIRIT. We must seek after the wisdom, truthfulness, delicacy of feeling, purity of heart, disinterestedness, patience, humility, charity, piety, and all those other excellencies which were included in His perfection. What a number of people there are so engrossed in business that they can find no time for moral, or mental, or spiritual culture! Others, again, feel that Christ has claims upon them, and that they should be at work in His service; but they are not thoughtful, and do not realize how much of Christ's work is inward, not outward. There is a great deal of so-called "doing good" which is very worthless and comes to nothing, because it does not flow naturally from real inward goodness. *Be* good and you will *do* good, without having to go out of your way to seek to do it. III. WHICH REFER TO THE ORDINARY COMMON DUTIES OF DAILY LIFE—to the relationships in which we are placed by nature and Providence; and if we would continue in Christ's love, we must be careful to obey these. The Christian life is to fill and beautify our whole existence. It is not by what a man does on special occasions in public, or to those who seldom come into contact with him, that you can form an accurate estimate of him, but by his daily ordinary life—by knowing what sort of son or brother he has been, or what sort of a husband he is. Love to Christ will show itself much better there than anywhere else. It is especially through these that God seeks to train into order and obedience, into nobleness and freedom, the souls of the children of men. IV. WHICH POINT US TO A LIFE OF ACTIVE BENEFICENCE; and if we would continue in His love, we must do good to all men. Christ's death for all men pledges us to the love of all men. To abide in the love of Christ, we must seek to lessen pain and suffering, ignorance and crime, wrong and injustice, and to make all to whom our influence can reach better and happier. Thus living in love to our brethren, for whom Christ died, we shall live in the love of Christ, who died for them as well as for us. (*R. Flint, D.D.*)

Ver. 11. **These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you.**—*Christ's things to make His disciples happy*:—A revelation of—I. HEAVEN (chap. xiv. 1-5) as—1. A Father's house. 2. Capacious. 3. Prepared. 4. Taken to by Himself. II. THE FATHER. 1. Christ tells them that they have a Father.

That was the great want of their souls. 2. He tells them that those who have seen Him have seen the Father. All the love, faithfulness, tenderness, wisdom of the Father was in Him. Therefore they might trust Him. III. The SPIRIT (chap. xiv. 12–31). He tells them that He would not leave them comfortless. The Spirit would—1. Give them power to do wonderful works. 2. Qualify them to pray successfully. 3. Abide with them for ever. IV. UNION WITH HIMSELF (vers. 1–11). He showed that this union was—1. Vital. 2. Fruitful. 3. Necessary. (*R. V. Pryce, LL.B.*) *Christ's joy* :—The greatest of sufferers was the happiest of men. He exulted in the prospect of Gethsemane and the Cross. I. HIS OWN JOY. It was the joy—1. Of uninterrupted communion with the Father (chap. iv. 31, 32). 2. Of accomplishing His Father's will (Heb. x. 7; Psa. xl. 6; Luke xxii. 41). 3. Of anticipating the result of His great work (Isa. xiii. 11; Heb. xii. 2). II. THE BELIEVER'S PARTICIPATION IN THE JOY. 1. It is the Saviour's joy. Is it possible to have this? Yes; we may partake of the joys of fellowship, obedience, hope. Present service is ours, and future victory will be. 2. It is a joy that may be full, or fulfilled. A man has joy as soon as he becomes a believer, but it is not filled up. Jesus wishes it to be, and puts into his hand a cup of joy which overflows. It is a paradox; but the Christian, though sorrowful, is always rejoicing (2 Cor. i. 3–6; vi. 9, 10; Phil. ii. 17; iv. 4). 3. It is a joy which none can take away (chap. xvi. 22). It is not in the power of the world to rob a Christian of his joy. (*T. Stephenson.*) *The sources of Christ's joy* :—I. THE BEAUTY AND PERFECTION OF HIS OWN CHARACTER. 1. As an innocent child. 2. As a righteous man. II. HIS EXQUISITE SENSE OF THE MEANING AND BEAUTY OF NATURE. No artist, or poet, or psalmist so revelled in the glories of creation. He might well do so; for He knew it with the knowledge not of a spectator or student, but of a Maker. III. HIS TESTIMONY OF HIS FATHER, DECLARING HIS NAME AND WONDROUS LOVE. If a Newton cannot tell his discoveries without being over-joyed; if a reformer cannot but be enthusiastic about his mission, what must Christ have felt, whose work was to reveal the Father? IV. HIS LIFE OF SERVICE AND SELF-SACRIFICE (Heb. xii. 3). (*J. T. Stannard.*) *Christ's inner joy* :—I. ITS SOURCES. 1. The consciousness of the abiding presence of the Father. Harmony of Spirit with heaven. 2. The obedience and attachment of the disciples. Great is the joy of a tutor or parent when the scholar or child manifests proficiency and perseverence. 3. The beneficent effects of His working. It was His joy to take this up, and his meat to finish it. 4. The foresight of the working of His truth in the world, and its ultimate results. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." "He shall see of the travail of His soul." II. ITS CHARACTERISTICS. 1. It was not like the joy of the world, which is often mere levity, never lasts, and is quenched by death. 2. It was—(1) A steady joy. All through His life, from His infancy to His Cross, we see calm joy and obedience. (2) A joy in the prospect of death (Heb. xii. 3). (3) A lasting joy, not variable, like that of many of us—grasping at the clouds one day, and the next in the depths of despair. (4) A shared joy. He lived not for Himself, but for others. Those who seek to bless others are always the most happy. III. ITS INFLUENCE. Strength-inspiring, health-giving. Sterne said every smile tends to lengthen out the fragment of our lives. No wonder, with this inspiration, the apostles became what they did. What manner of men ought we to be? (*Homiletic Magazine.*) *The fellowship of Christ's joy the source of true blessedness* :—This saying is strange, because our idea of Christ is that of the man of sorrows. Only on one occasion are we told that He rejoiced. But the saying seems stranger still when we look at the circumstances under which it was uttered —in sight of the agony and the Cross. Then remember to whom it was spoken: to men for whom He had predicted martyrdom. I. WHAT WAS THE BLESSEDNESS OF CHRIST? Note—1. That the blessedness of the infinite God is essentially incomprehensible. The thought of God is necessarily the thought of One infinite and eternal, without limit or change. But we can only conceive of blessedness as a change from the less to the more blessed. We know the light by knowing the darkness, and joy only by its changes. We are obliged, therefore, to think of God as rejoicing in His world, and as rising to a higher gladness when He had peopled His universe with creatures. In these two contradictory thoughts, both of which we must think and yet cannot reconcile, lies the mystery of the ever blessed God. 2. In God revealed in Christ, the mystery is yet deeper. How, if one with the Infinite, could His joy ever fail? Why, if foreseeing the results of His mission, could He sorrow? But observing Christ on His human side, His blessedness as the God-Man must be in some measure comprehensible. He humanity was as per-

fect as His divinity, and the emotions of the human Christ we can partly understand; and this will lead us to a comprehension in part of His Divine joy. 3. The elements of His joy were twofold. It came, He tells us—(1) By keeping the Father's commandments. It was the feeling that He did not live for Himself—that He existed as Man to reveal the full glory of eternal love, that every toil and sorrow were helping on the Divine plan for man's redemption—that formed His joy. (2) By abiding in the Father's love. Men might desert Him—this never did. His human nature might tremble, but His eye pierced beyond the sorrow into the sunshine of the Divine law behind it, and that was a mighty joy. Hence His frequent hours of prayer. (3) Combining these two elements, we may understand how it was that He spoke of it so soon after His Spirit was troubled. For His blessedness and suffering arose from one source: the doing of the Father's will. The consciousness of complete self-surrender gave Him gladness; yet the surrender produced the sorrow. II. CAN THAT JOY BE COMMUNICATED? We find the answer in the preceding verse. Like their Master, the disciples were to surrender life to be the organ of God's will, and then the consciousness of His love would dawn. In a sense, joy and sorrow are incommunicable. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," &c. But they are communicable just as we are one in sympathy and purpose with a friend. I know nothing of the joy of a stranger; but I do know the joy of a man with whom I am bound by the deep sympathies of love. So to enter into Christ's joy we must become Christ-like. Amid anxiety and sorrow, a man first gives up his all to God; and amid His suffering there flashes the conviction, "God loves me," and there steals over his heart a blessedness which is the joy of the Lord. III. THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST'S BLESSEDNESS IS THE ONLY SOURCE OF PERFECT JOY. Perfect joy has two conditions. 1. In its source it must be self-surrender to the highest love. All inward discord destroys joy, and that discord only ceases when a man loses the thought of self in devotion to something he regards as greater. The man who toils for wealth is never satisfied, because in the pursuit he is trying to lose the sense of self. The pleasure-seeker plunges into every excitement that will drown reflection. The ambitious man loses the thought of self in the intense yearning for future achievement. In fine, man pants for the Infinite—for a boundless something to which he may yield his heart and be conscious of himself no more. This explains the idea of final absorption into the Deity, and the belief in the eternal sleep of death. But fellowship with the eternal joy of Christ furnishes the only anodyne to the unresting sense of self. 2. Real enjoyment must be independent of outward changes. The longing to attain a state of life superior to the accidents of time and change shows this. The wisest men have spoken of following the right, in the face of all consequences, as the source of the highest joy. The fellowship of Christ's joy gives this. It gave it to Paul, who was enabled thereby to glory in infirmity. Even death, which damps the joy of all other men, consummates the blessedness of those who, through fellowship of life, are partakers of the joy of Christ. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *The abiding joy*:—I. ITS SOURCE. "These things have I spoken unto you." He referred them especially to what He had just said. Union with Christ. "I am the Vine," &c. 1. To be one with Christ is to enjoy the peace of God. 2. To be one with Christ is to walk in the right path—the path of truth, virtue, and honour. He is the Way. 3. To be one with Christ has its prospects. The crown is beyond the Cross. "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you." II. ITS CONTINUANCE. "That My joy may remain in you." The promise implies a state of heart which is never without sources of joy. Christians are subject to natural and moral grief; but when the clouds obscure the light and make the atmosphere cold, the sun is, nevertheless, in the heavens. Christian joy is perpetual, because—(1) Jesus is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, without change. The streams never dry while the fountain is full. (2) Intercommunion never fails. He has ordained means which are infallible. This is a bold saying; but as the sun cannot fail to give life, the promise cannot fail to give comfort, prayer cannot fail to bring the blessing, and the communion of saints cannot fail to generate love. III. ITS EXPANSIVENESS—"That your joy might be full." The growth of the child, or the increased light of the sun until the perfect day, or the journey of the pilgrims Zion-ward, represents the advancing state of grace. (1) Full in respect of its object. We have only touched the hem of His garment as yet. As faith is turned into sight, our joy increases. (2) Full in respect of the subject. It is possible only when all fear of sin and death is removed. "Rejoice evermore"; that is, rejoice on to rejoicing, for sources of anxiety are left behind, and you and Christ

are one. (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *The Christian's joy*:—1. Jesus spoke these words to those who were about to be His representatives in the world. It was no easy mission on which He was sending them; but it was His will that they should go, not as soldiers on a forlorn hope, with the courage of despair, but in that holy joyous tone of spirit which means the courage of confident victory. And what He means for one set of disciples He means for all. 2. Note three elements of Christ's joy. I. HIS FILIAL JOY. We are brought into the presence of it in chap. xvii. Now it is His will that we should share the joy of sonship. We may do this by faith in His name and the possession of the Spirit of Adoption which He gives. What joy can equal that of even the greatest sufferer who trusts and delights in his Father in heaven? II. THE JOY OF SERVICE. "I delight to do Thy will." Even beyond results, beyond the luxury of doing good, there is a joy in the very serving itself. To gather the wanderers, to win the young, to alleviate suffering, drives away a thousand black thoughts, and fills the individual heart and the Church with joy. What a joyful ring there is in "Neither count I My life dear unto Myself, that I might finish My course with joy." The self-same joy is open to us. Instead of being self-seekers, let us simply ask, "What is the will of God for *me*?" The narrow, dissatisfied, unhappy, will find their cure here. III. THE SAVIOUR-JOY. There are many passages in which this comes into view—*e.g.*, when Jesus saw the poor and lowly gathering around Him, He "rejoiced in spirit"; and then, when the publican and sinner drew near, He likened Himself to the shepherd, who in rescuing the lost sheep, called his friends together, saying, "rejoice with me." This is the joy for which He endured the Cross and despised the shame. Now He will have all Christians share in that very joy, and be glad in the fruits of the travail of His soul. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *The nature and sources of Christian joy*:—This Divine joy is planted in the soul by the Holy Spirit. It is therefore an inward and spiritual joy; it is deep-rooted in the heart; it is solid and well founded; it is abiding and lasting; it is a satisfying joy, and purifying in its effects. It is a joy that flourishes most in adversity. It is a communicative joy. A man has not tasted what religion is if he does not seek to impart this joy to others. It is the joy of communion with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a humble joy; but it causes a man "to triumph in Christ." (*R. Cecil, M.A.*) *Happiness and joy*:—Christ enters the world bringing joy: "Good tidings of great joy." So now He leaves it, bestowing His gospel as a gift of joy. This testament of His joy He also renews in His parting prayer: "These things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves." "Man of sorrows" though we call Him, still He counts Himself the Man of joy. It is an impression that the Christian life is one of hardship and suffering: Christ, you perceive, has no such conception of it, and no such conception is true. I. To clear this truth, it is necessary, first of all, to exhibit THE MISTAKE OF NOT DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN HAPPINESS AND JOY. 1. There is a distinction represented in the words themselves. (1) Happiness is that which *happens* or comes by an outward befalling. It is what money yields, or will buy—settlement in life or rank, political standing, victory, power. All these stir a delight in the soul, which is not of the soul, but from without. Hence they are looked upon as happening to the soul, and, in that sense, create happiness. The Latin word "fortune" very nearly corresponds with the Saxon. For whatever came to the soul, bringing it pleasure, was considered to be its good chance, and was called fortunate. (2) But joy differs from this, as being of the soul itself. And this appears in the original form of the word, which, instead of suggesting a "hap," literally denotes a "leap" or "spring." Here again, also, the Latin had "exult"—a "leaping forth." The radical idea, then, of joy is that the soul has such springs of life opened in its own blessed virtues, that it pours forth a sovereign joy from within. It is not the bliss of condition, but of character. 2. And we have many symbols of joy about us from which we might take the hint of a felicity higher than the mere pleasures of fortune or condition: the sportive children, too full of life to be able to restrain their activity; the birds pouring out their music, simply because it is in them. Precisely, too, history shows us the saints of God singing out their joy together in caves and dens of the earth, and the souls of martyrs issuing, with a shout, from the fires that crisp their bodies. II. It is necessary, in order to a right conception of Christian joy, as now defined, that we discover HOW TO DISPOSE OF CERTAIN FACTS, WHICH COMMONLY PRODUCE A CONTRARY IMPRESSION. 1. Thus, when the Saviour bequeaths His joy to us, He lives a persecuted life, and passes through an agony to His death. Where, then, is the joy of which He speaks? To this I answer that He was a Man of sorrows in the matter

of happiness; that is, in the outward condition of His earthly state; still He had ever within a joy, a spring of good, which was perfectly sufficient. Indeed, He reveals the victorious power of joy in the Divine nature itself; for God, in the contradictions of sinners, suffers a degree of abhorence and pain that may properly be called unhappiness; and He would be an unhappy Being were it not that the love He pours into their bosom is to Him a welling up eternally of conscious joy. And exactly so He represents Himself in the incarnate person of Christ. In His parable of the shepherd calling in his neighbours to rejoice with him over the sheep he has found, He opens the joy He feels as being that Shepherd. And then, how much does it signify when, coming to the close of His career, He says, glancing backward in thought over all He has experienced, "My joy," bequeathing it to His disciples as His dearest legacy. What, then, does it signify of real privation or loss to become His follower! 2. But it requires, you will say, painful thought to begin such a life—sorrow, repentance, self-renunciation, and to pass through life under a cross. How can the Christian life be called a life of joy? It is not, I answer, in these things, taken simply by themselves. But consider what labours, cares, self-denials, all men have to suffer in the way of what is called success—in scholarships, *e.g.*, and in war. Are these made unhappy because of the losses they are obliged to make? Are they not rather raised in feeling on this very account? But how is this? The solution is easy, viz., that the sacrifice made is a sacrifice of happiness, a sacrifice of comfort of condition; and the gain made is a gain of something more ennobling, a gain that partakes of the nature of joy. The man of industry and enterprise says within himself, These are not gifts of fortune; they are my conquests, tokens of my patience, economy, application, fortitude, integrity. In them his soul is elevated from within. And it will be found that even worldly men despise mere happiness. None but the tamest will sit down to be nursed by fortune. In such a truth you may see how it is possible for the repentances, sacrifices, self-denials, and labours of the Christian life to issue in joy. III. THE POSITIVE REALITY ITSELF. We notice—1. The fact that, in a life of selfishness and sin, there is a well-spring of misery which is now taken away. No matter how fortunate the external condition of an unbelieving, evil mind, there is yet a disturbance, a sorrow within, too strong to be mastered by any outward felicity. The whole internal nature is in a state of discord. And this discord is the misery, the hell of sin. How much, then, does it signify that Christ takes away this? For Christ is the embodied harmony of God, and he that receives Him settles into harmony with Him. Just to exterminate the evil of the mind, and clear the sovereign hell which sin creates in it, would suffice to make a seeming paradise. 2. Besides, there is a fact more positive: the soul is no sooner set in peace with itself than it becomes an instrument in tune, discoursing heavenly music; and now no fires of calamity, no pains of outward torment, can for one moment break the sovereign spell of its joy. 3. But we must ascend to a plane that is higher. Little conception have we of the soul's joy, or capacities of joy, till we see it established in God. It dares to call Him Father without any sense of daring. It is strong with His strength. It turns adversity into peace, for it sees a friendly hand ministering only good in what it suffers. In dark times it is never anxious, for God is its trust, and God will suffer no harm to befall it. To a mind thus tempered, fortune can add little, and as little take away. 4. The Christian type of character is a character rooted in the Divine love, and in that view has a sovereign bliss welling up from within. No power is strong enough to forbid love, none therefore strong enough to conquer the joy of love; for whoever is loved must be enjoyed. Besides, it is a peculiarity of love that it takes possession of its neighbour's riches and successes, and makes them its own. Loving him, it loves all that he has for his sake. It understands the declaration well, "For all things are yours." Having such resources of joy in its own nature, the word that signifies *love*, in the original of the New Testament, is radically one with that which signifies *joy*. According to the family registers of that language, they are twins of the same birth. Love is joy, and all true joy is love. And Christ is an exhibition to us of this fact in His own Person, a revelation of God's eternal joy, as being a revelation of God's eternal love, coming down thus to utter in our ears this glorious call, "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord." He finds us hunting after condition. He says, "Behold My poverty, watch with Me in My agony, follow Me to My Cross. Coming up into love, you clear all dependence of condition, you ascend into the very joy of God; and this is My joy. This I have taught you; this I now bequeath to your race." IV. SOME OF THE INSPIRING AND QUICKENING THOUGHTS THAT CROWD UPON US IN THE

SUBJECT REVIEWED. 1. Joy is for all men. It does not depend on circumstance or condition; if it did, it could only be for the few. 2. The reason why men have it not is that they do not seek it where it is—in the receiving of Christ and the spirit of His life. They go after it in things without, not in character within. 3. It is important that we hold some rational and worthy conception of the heavenly felicity. How easy it is for the Christian, who has tasted the true joy of Christ, to let go the idea of joy and slide into the pursuit only of happiness or the good of condition. No getting into heaven as a place will compass it. You must carry it with you, else it is not there. Consider only whether heaven be in you now. For heaven is nothing but the joy of a perfectly harmonized being filled with God and His love. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *The difference between worldly mirth and Christian joy*:—Mirth comes from external things which tickle the senses and please the appetite; but joy comes from the happy spirit within us. If this be so, a poor sickly man may not be full of mirth, but he may be full of joy; while a rich man may be sinful and mirthful, and yet have no joy. Mirth comes from outward things, and it therefore lasts only for a short time; but joy springs from an inward eternal force of blessedness. The other day, in London, a kind friend called at my hotel and left me a bouquet of beautiful flowers. I had them put in water, and I said, "I will take these flowers home with me"; but they faded, and the sweet perfume was gone; they were beautiful and fragrant only for a time. So mirth is pleasant while it lasts, but very soon it is gone like a dream; but the joy that comes from trusting God and doing His will has no end; it is an increasing eternal delight. What is more beautiful than a baloon rising in the sky? but what is more unsightly than the beautiful thing emptied and lying, an unshapely mass, upon the ground? Mirth may well be compared to fireworks. How grand they are! why, they put out the light of the stars! but, then, you know, when the fireworks have finished their explosive din, the stars keep on shining for ever. Equally enduring shall be the joy of the believer and doer of God's will; he shall be like a light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Let me remind you of the martyr, John Bradford. When the morning dawned on which he was to be put to death, he had such peace within him that he swung upon the rail of the bedstead in his dungeon, and while he swung he cried, "Oh, I am so happy! We shall light a fire to-day that will never be put out!" Then he went forth, smiling and joyful, to the stake in Smithfield, glorifying God; and so he died. Can you find anything in sinful pleasure to give a joy like that? Will you find it in the intoxicating cup? In gambling? In any of the sinful indulgencies of life? No, no; they are not solid; they let you down at the critical moment when they ought to sustain you. You find that they give no help, and you are left alone like a boy on the ice when it gives way, and he cries for a friend and deliverer, and there is none. (*W. Birch.*)

Ver. 12–17. **This is My commandment, that ye love one another.**—*The great commandment of Christ*:—I. THE LOVE OF CHRIST. Remember—1. How free it was. We did not merit it, ask for it, nor even desire it. And here is the wonder of it. It is love which found nothing to draw it forth. It was entirely self-moved. Disinterestedness then must be one main ingredient in the love we are to bear our fellow-men. It is not to stop and ask, "Why should I love that man? What has he done for me?" That is a love like Christ's, which rises up spontaneously. It does not wait to be bought or won. 2. How costly. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor." Moved by His grace, He paid for our redemption the price that His law demanded. And what a price! Oh to find a man who will break through any thing but the law of God for his fellow-man! That is the man, who embodies this precept of our Lord; a self-denying man, one who even in his love is willing to take up his cross and follow Christ. 3. How compassionate and tender! In looking at its greatness, we often lose sight of this. But the softness of a mother's love never equalled our Lord's. Read His life. It is not here and there that His compassion comes out, it is everywhere. And this is the point in which the love of many real Christians is most deficient. Our neighbours want our hearts as well as our hands. There is tenfold more sorrow in men's minds, than pain in men's bodies, or sickness and poverty in men's houses. Would you show it mercy? Then carry a feeling heart through it. This will do more for the world's comfort than the richest purse. 4. How bountiful! "No good thing will He withhold from us." "Freely ye have received, freely give." The measure of what our love is to do for others and give

to others, is simply this, the measure of our ability to give and do. That is Christ's standard in His love; it must be our standard in ours. 5. How extensive! It is discriminating. It took almost as many forms as love could take. The love of country was strong in Him, and the love of kindred and the love of friends. But then look, at the same time, at its extent. Who was excluded from it? His enemies? No, with His last breath He prayed for the very men who murdered Him. Or the world? There is not a guilty being on the wide earth whom He does not pity, and load daily with benefits. His love is like the sun in the heavens—they who are the nearest to it are warmed and gladdened by it the most, but they who are the farthest off from it behold its light. And this is the unfailing character of all true Christian love. Worldly love is narrow, and generally becomes more so as we grow older. This is expansive. No one object can absorb it; no one house or family can hold it; no sect or party can confine it. II. THE CHARGE OUR LORD GIVES US TO IMITATE HIM IN HIS LOVE. 1. There is a commandment in the case. It is remarkable that our Lord, who seldom uses this word on other occasions, uses it again and again in reference to this love. Here, you observe, is authority pressing down on us. We are to be without this love at our peril. We little think what we are doing when we keep back the helping hand or the pitying heart from a suffering brother. We are setting up once more for our own masters. 2. It is Christ's commandment. He stamps it with His own authority. Viewed in this light, there is an appeal in this charge to our gratitude and affection. When our Lord calls it a commandment, He says, "Dread to dispise it;" and when He calls it His commandment, He urges us by His mercies towards us to obey it. And there may be a reference here to a custom of the times. Each of the different sects among the Jews had some particular tenet or practice to distinguish it. "Now I," says our Lord, "fix on this as the mark and badge of My followers—mutual love. You shall be as well known by this love, as the priests of the Temple are by their garments, or the Roman soldiers by their standards." 3. It is His last and great commandment. Herein He shows us—(1) The amazing tenderness of His own love. His love for them triumphs over every other feeling and desire. (2) The importance in itself of this mutual love. Our all-wise Lord would not have spoken thus emphatically of a trifle. St. Paul says that this love is "the fulfilling of the law," and "the end of the commandment." Just so our Lord speaks of it (ver. 17). (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *Brotherly love:*—I. HAS THE HIGHEST MODEL. "As I have loved you." How did Christ love?—1. Disinterestedly. There was not a taint of selfishness in His love. He looked for no compensation, no advantage. 2. Earnestly. It was an all-pervading, all-commanding passion. It was a zeal consuming Him. 3. Practically. It was not a love that slept as an emotion in the heart, that expended itself in words and professions; it was a love that worked all the faculties to the utmost, and led Him to the sacrifice of Himself. This is the kind of love we should have one toward another. This is the brotherly love that—(1) Unites Christ's disciples together. (2) Honours Christ. (3) Blesses the world with the most beneficient influences. II. FORMS THE HIGHEST FRIENDSHIP. "Ye are My friends," &c. 1. It not only establishes a friendship, but a friendship between them and Christ. A true friendship between man and man is the greatest blessing on earth. 2. A friendship between man and Christ is the consummation of man's well being. If Christ is my friend what want I more? III. HAS THE HIGHEST SOURCE. "Ye have not chosen Me," &c. We did not choose to love Christ first, but He chose to love us. His love to us generates our love to Him. He chose His first disciples from their worldly avocations and called them into His circle; this inspired them with His love. Men will never love one another properly until Christ sheds abroad His love in their hearts. He is to all His disciples what the sun is to the planets; around Him they revolve and from Him derive their life and unity. They are united one to another by the bonds that unite them to Christ. IV. REALISES THE HIGHEST GOOD. 1. Spiritual fruitfulness. "Ordained you," appointed you, "that ye bring forth fruit." The fruit involves two things—(1) The highest excellence of character. (2) The highest usefulness of life. Rendering others the highest service. 2. Successful prayer. "Whatsoever ye shall ask," &c. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christians bound to love one another:*—I. THE DUTY. 1. Mutual love. There is a love which all men owe to all men. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:" but the love which is the subject of our Lord's precept, is obviously much more comprehensive in its elements, and much less extensive in its range, than this. It is the love of which none but a disciple can be either the object or the subject. Its component elements are esteem, complacency, benevo-

lence, and its appropriate manifestations,—highly valuing each others' Christian gifts and graces,—delighting in such association with each other as naturally calls forth into exercise all that is peculiarly Christian in the character,—defending each other's Christian reputation when attacked,—sympathising with each other's Christian joys and sorrows,—promoting each other's personal Christian holiness and comfort.—and cordially co-operating with each other in enterprises calculated to promote the common Christian cause, the cause of God's glory, and man's improvement and happiness. 2. Love like that of our Lord. "As I have loved you." (1) Discriminative. (2) Sincere. (3) Spontaneous. (4) Fervent and copious. (5) Disinterested. (6) Active. (7) Self-sacrificing. (8) Considerate and wise. (9) Generously confiding and kindly forbearing. (10) Constant. (11) Enduring. (12) Holy and spiritual. (13) Universal. II. THE MOTIVES. 1. The commandment of Christ. There is no duty which the apostles, more frequently, or more authoritively, enjoin. To enable us to form some estimate of the force of this motive we have only to propose and answer the question, Who is this who speaketh? This is a commandment which Christ claims as His own, in a peculiar sense; and it is addressed to a class who stand in a peculiar relation to Him. 2. The example of Christ. How did Christ love—(1) He was just about to give them the greatest proof of friendship which can be given. "Greater love hath no man than this," &c. (2) He had made them the objects of His peculiar complacent regard, as persons who were really desirous of doing whatever He commanded them. "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (3) He had treated them as "friends," by unfolding to them, so far as they were capable of apprehending it, the whole truth respecting the wonderful communication He had come from heaven to earth to make, and the wonderful work He had come from heaven to earth to perform—the economy of salvation. "Henceforth I call you not servants," &c. (4) He had selected them, and appointed them to a great, important, salutary work, their success in which was assured by all nesessary assistance in it being secured in answer to believing prayer. "Ye have not chosen Me," &c. (*J. Brown, D.D.*) *The Cross the means of perpetuating Christian love*:—The fire of charity is never extinguished, but will always be rekindled by the wood of the cross. (*St. Ignatius.*) *The oneness of the branches*:—The union between Christ and His disciples has been set forth in the parable of the vine. We now turn to the union between the disciples, which is the consequences of their common union to the Lord. There are four things suggested. I. THE OBLIGATION. 1. The two ideas of commandment and love do not go well together. You cannot pump up love to order, and if you try you generally produce sentimental hypocrisy, hollow and unreal. Still we can do a great deal for the cultivation and strengthening of any emotion. We can cast ourselves into the attitude which is favourable or unfavourable to it. We can look at the subjects which will create it or at those which will check it. 2. This is an obligation—(1) Because He commands it. He puts Himself here in the position. (2) Because such an attitude is the only fitting expression of the mutual relation of Christian men, through their common relation to the vine. However unlike any two Christian people are in character, culture, circumstances, the bond that knits those who have the same relations to Jesus Christ is far deeper, more real, and ought to be far closer, than the bond that knits them to the men or women to whom they are likest in all these other respects, and to whom they are unlike in this one central one. Let all secondary grounds of union and of separation be relegated to their proper subordinate place; and let us recognize this, that the children of one father are brethren. And do not let it be said, that "brethren" in the Church means a great deal less than brothers in the world. II. THE SUFFICIENCY OF LOVE. 1. Our Lord has been speaking in a former verse about the keeping of His commandments. Now He gathers them all up into one: the all comprehensive simplification of duty—love. 2. If the heart be right all else will be right; and if there be a deficiency of love nothing will be right. You cannot help anybody except on condition of having an honest and benevolent regard towards him. You may pitch him benefits, and you will neither get nor deserve thanks for them; you may try to teach him, and your words will be hopeless and profitless. As we read Cor. xiii.—the lyric praise of charity—all kinds of blessing and sweetness and gladness come out of this. 3. And Jesus Christ, leaving the little flock of His followers in the world, gave them no other instruction for their mutual relationship? He did not talk to them about institutions and organizations, about orders of the ministry and sacraments, or Church polity. His one commandment was "Love one another," and that will make you wise. Love one another and you will shape yourselves into the right forms. III. THE PATTERN OF

LOVE. "As I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this," &c. 1. Christ sets Himself forward here, as He does in all aspects of human conduct and character, as being the realized ideal of them all. Reflect upon the strangeness of a man thus calmly saying to the whole world, "I am the embodiment of all that love ought to be." The pattern that He proposes is more august than appears at first sight. A verse or two before our Lord had said, "As the Father hath loved Me so I have loved you." Now He says, "Love one another as I have loved you." 2. But then our Lord here sets forth the very central point of His work, even His death upon the cross for us, as being the pattern to which our poor affection ought to aspire, and after which it must tend to be conformed. That is to say, the heart of the love that He commands is self-sacrifice, reaching to death if death be needful. And no man loves as Christ would have Him love who does not bear in his heart affection which has so conquered selfishness that, if need be, he is ready to die. It is a solemn obligation, which many well make us tremble, that is laid on us in these words, "As I have loved you." Calvary was less than twenty-four hours off, and He says to us, "That is your pattern!" 3. Remember, too, that the restriction which here seems to be cast around the flow of His love is not a restriction in reality, but rather a deepening of it. The "friends" for whom He dies are the same persons as the Apostle, in his sweet variation upon these words, has called by the opposite name when he says that He died for His "enemies." There is an old wild ballad that tells of how a knight found, coiling round a tree in a dismal forest, a loathly dragon breathing out poison; and how, undeterred by its hideousness and foulness, he cast his arms round it and kissed it on the mouth. Three times he did it undisgusted, and at the third the shape changed into a fair lady, and he won his bride. Christ "kisses with the kisses of His mouth" His enemies, and makes them His friends because He loves them. "If He had never died for His enemies," says one of the old fathers, "He would never have possessed His friends." And so He teaches us, that the way by which we are to meet even alienation and hostility is by pouring upon it the treasures of an unselfish, self-sacrificing affection which will conquer at the last. IV. THE MOTIVE. "As I have loved you." The novelty of Christian morality lies here, that in its law there is a self-fulfilling force. We have not to look to one place for the knowledge of our duty, and somewhere else for the strength to do it, but both are given to us in the one thing, the gift of the dying Christ and His immortal love. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Love the means of unity:—In the early spring, when the wheat is green and young, and scarcely appears above the ground, it springs in the lines in which it was sown, parted from one another and distinctly showing their separation, and the furrows. But, when the full corn in the ear waves on the autumn plain, all the lines and separations have disappeared, and there is one unbroken tract of sunny fruitfulness. And so when the life in Christ is low and feeble, His servants may be separated and drawn up in rigid lines of denominations, and churches, and sects; but as they grow the lines disappear. If to the churches of England to-day there came a sudden accession of knowledge of Christ, and of union with Him, the first thing that would go would be the wretched barriers that separate us from one another. For if we have the life of Christ in any mature measure in ourselves, we shall certainly have grown up above the fences behind which we began to grow, and shall be able to reach out to all that love the Lord Jesus Christ, and feel with thankfulness that we are one in Him. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 13. **Greater love hath no man than this.**—Let us consider the unparalleled greatness of Christ's love. I. IN THE OBJECTS OF HIS REGARD. 1. In the vastness of their number. He, indeed, knows their number, but it is beyond all human calculation. We admire local charity and extended philanthropy; but the widest range of human benevolence falls far short of the love of Christ, which flows through all nature, worlds, and generations. We are apt to limit the range of this love; but the love of the Redeemer could not be satisfied with a less number than that which no man could number. 2. In the depth of their degradation. If we could fathom the bottomless pit, we might tell the depth of human depravity and degradation. In such objects there was nothing attractive, but everything repulsive. Their moral pollution was contracted by acts of aggression against this Redeemer. 3. In their utter helplessness. No human power could have subdued their depravity. No human mercy could have removed their guilt. No human arm could have rescued them from their degradation. II. IN THE MAGNITUDE OF HIS SACRIFICES. 1. That which He relinquished. "Being

in the form of God He made Himself of no reputation." He threw aside His original glory. Human conception is inadequate to the greatness of this sacrifice. 2. What He assumed. He condescended to be made one of us. If a man, having the power, were to assume the nature and form of a beast to deliver the brute creation from the "groaning" to which they are subject by reason of man's sin, that would be an admirable sacrifice; but there would be no parallel between it and the love of Christ in this respect. 3. That which He sustained. Our sorrows, infirmities, sins. III. IN THE ACTIVITY OF HIS SOLICITUDES. He was not idle—He went about doing good. Mark—1. The intensity of His designs. He sought the salvation of strangers, aliens, enemies. 2. In the fervour of His zeal. In a thousand instances the spark of our desire is never fanned into the flame of zeal. It was not so with the Redeemer. 3. In the constancy of His exertions. He shrunk not back in the day of battle. Once, and once only, for a moment, His nature seemed to shrink from the violence of the storm, when He said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me!" But when His time was come, impelled by love, "He steadfastly set Himself to go to Jerusalem;" nay, He was "straitened" till His work was accomplished. IV. IN THE DEPTH OF HIS HUMILIATION. 1. He stooped to the lowest grade of human society. 2. To be charged with the lowest crimes of human delinquency, thus bearing the reproach of His people. 3. To endure the vilest and most painful death that ever was inflicted on the lowest criminal. But though He died, He lives again: His love was stronger than death. He lives to execise it still; and we see its unparalleled greatness. V. IN THE AMPLITUDE OF ITS BESTOWMENTS. 1. Upon the guilty unlimited pardon. 2. Upon the necessitous unlimited supplies. 3. Upon the redeemed unlimited glory. VI. IN THE RICHES OF ITS ANTICIPATIONS. We anticipate—1. The absolute perfection of our intellectual and moral nature. 2. The uninterrupted enjoyment of the Redeemer's presence. 3. The everlasting beatitudes of God himself. Improvement: 1. What a ground of encouragement to the true penitent! 2. What a stimulus to the accepted believer! 3. What an aggravation of guilt is incurred by those who obstinately persist in sin! (*J. Hunt.*) *Love's crowning deed:*—I. LOVE'S CROWNING DEED. There is a climax to everything, and the climax of love is to die for the beloved one. This is the *ultima thule* of love; its sails can find no further shore. 1. This is clear if we consider, that when a man dies for his friends, it proves—(1) His deep sincerity. Lip-love is a thing to be questioned; too often is it a counterfeit. All are not hunters that blow the horn, all are not friends who cry up friendship; all is not gold that glitters, so it is not all love that feigneth affection. But we are sure he loves who dies for love. (2) The intensity of his affection. A man may make us feel that he is intensely in earnest when he speaks with burning words, and he may perform many actions which may all appear to show how intense he is, and yet for all that he may but be a skilful player, but when a man dies for the cause he has espoused, you know that he is no superficial passion. (3) The thorough self-abnegation of the heart. If I profess to love a certain person, and yet in no way deny myself for his sake, such love is contemptible. After all, the value of a thing in the market is what a man will give for it, and you must estimate the value of a man's love by that which he is willing to give up for it. Greater love for friends hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for them. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us." 2. Death for its object is the crowning deed of love because—(1) It excels all other deeds. Jesus Christ had proved His love by dwelling among His people as their Brother, by participating in their poverty as their friend, by telling them all He knew of the Father, by the patience with which He bore with their faults, by the miracles He wrought on their behalf, and the honour which He put upon them by using them in His service; but none of these can for a moment endure comparison with His dying for them. These life-actions of His love are bright as stars, but yet they are only stars compared with this sun of infinite love. (2) It comprehends all other acts, for when a man lays down his life for his friend he has laid down everything else. Give up life, and you have given up wealth, position, enjoyment. Hence the force of that reasoning, "He that spared not His own Son," &c. (3) After a man has died for another, there can be no question raised about his love. Unbelief would be insane if it should venture to intrude itself at the cross foot, though, alas! it has been there, and has there proved its utter unreasonableness. Shame on any of God's children that they should ever raise questions on a matter so conclusively proven! II. THE SEVEN CROWNS OF JESUS' DYING LOVE. Men's dying for their friends—this is superlative—but Christ's dying for us is as much above man's superlative as that could be above

mere commonplace. 1. Jesus was immortal, hence the special character of His death. Damon is willing to die for Pythias; But suppose Damon dies, he is only antedating what must occur, for they must both die eventually. A substitutionary death for love's sake in ordinary cases would be but a slightly premature payment of that debt of nature which must be paid by all. Jesus needed not die at all. Up there in the glory was the Christ of God for ever with the Father everlasting. He came to earth and assumed our nature that He might be capable of death, yet His body need not have died; as it was it never saw corruption, because there was not in it the element of sin which necessitated death and decay. "No man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself," &c. 2. In the cases of persons who have yielded up their lives for others they may have entertained the prospect that the supreme penalty would not have been exacted. Damon stood before Dionysius, willing to be slain instead of Pythias; but the tyrant was so struck with the devotion of the two friends that he did not put either of them to death. A pious miner was in the pit with an ungodly man at work. They were about to blast a piece of rock, and it was necessary that they should both leave the mine before the powder exploded; they both got into the bucket, but the hand above was not strong enough to draw the two together, and the pious miner, leaping from the bucket, said to his friend, "You are an unconverted man, and if you die your soul will be lost. Get up in the bucket as quickly as you can; as for me, if I die I am saved." This lover of his neighbour's soul was spared, for he was found in perfect safety arched over by the fragments which had been blown from the rock. But, such a thing could not occur in the case of our Redeemer. Die He or His people must, there was no other alternative. 3. He could have had no motive in that death but one of pure, unmingled love. You remember when the Russian nobleman was crossing the steppes in the snow, the wolves followed the sledge. The horses needed not the lash, for they fled for their lives from their howling pursuers. Whatever could stay the eager wolves for a time was thrown to them in vain. A horse was loosed: they pursued it, rent it to pieces, and still followed, like grim death. At last a devoted servant, who had long lived with his master's family, said, "There remains but one hope for you; I will throw myself to the wolves, and then you will have time to escape." There was great love in this, but doubtless it was mingled with a habit of obedience, a sense of reverence, and emotions of gratitude for many obligations. If I had seen the nobleman surrender himself to the wolves to save his servant, and if that servant had in former days sought his life, I could see some parallel, but as the case stands there is a wide distinction. 4. In our Saviour's case it was not precisely, though it was, in a sense, death for His friends. Though He called us "friends," the friendship was all on His side at the first. Our hearts called Him enemy, for we were opposed to Him. God commendeth His love to us in that while we were yet sinners in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 5. We had ourselves been the cause of the difficulty which required a death. There were two brothers on board a raft once, upon which they had escaped from a foundering ship. There was not enough of food, and it was proposed to reduce the number, that some at least might be able to live. They cast lots for life and death. One of the brothers was drawn, and was doomed to be thrown into the sea. His brother interposed and said, "You have a wife and children at home; I am single, and therefore can be better spared, I will die instead of you." "Nay," said the brother, "not so," and they struggled in mutual arguments of love, till at last the substitute was thrown into the sea. Now, there was no ground of difference between those two brothers whatever. But in our case there would never have been a need for any one to die if we had not been the wilful offenders; and the offended one, whose injured honour required the death, was the Christ that died. 6. There have been men who died for others, but they have never borne the sins of others; they were willing to take the punishment, but not the guilt. Those cases which I have already mentioned did not involve character. But here, ere Christ must die, it must be written—"He made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin," &c. 7. The death of Christ was a proof of love superlative, because in His case He was denied all the helps and alleviations which in other cases make death to be less than death. I marvel not that a saint can die joyously; for he sees his heavenly Father gazing down upon him, and glory waiting him. But ah, to die upon a cross without a pitying eye, surrounded by a scoffing multitude, and to die with this as your requiem, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!" III. MANY ROYAL THINGS OUGHT TO BE SUGGESTED TO US BY THIS ROYAL LOVE. How this thought of Christ's proving His love by His death—1. Ennobles self-denial. 2. Prompts us to heroism.

When you get to the cross you have left the realm of little men: you have reached the nursery of true chivalry. Does Christ die?—then we feel we could die too. But mark how the heroic in this case is sweetly tinctured and flavoured with gentleness. The chivalry of the olden times was cruel. We want that blessed chivalry of love in which a man feels, "I would suffer any insult from that man if I could do him good for Christ's sake." 3. There seems to come from the cross, a gentle voice that saith, "Guilty sinner, I did all this for thee, what hast thou done for Me?" and yet another which saith, "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Self-sacrificing love:*—A little child six years old, went out one autumn afternoon to play with a companion younger than himself, Johnnie Carr, the little hero whose name deserves to be written in gold, rambled about with his smaller playmate till the houses were left behind, and they were in the country. Presently they found that they had lost their way, and the night was coming on, cold and stormy. The younger child, chill and hungry, began to cry, and his brave companion cheered him on, now carrying him for a few steps, now anxiously searching for the way home. At last the night fell dark and cold, the children were lost, and lay down for shelter in a field. But the ground was wet and chilly, and the younger cried for home and his mother. Then Johnnie Carr, who was only six years old, remember, could not bear to see his playmate crying with the cold, and he stripped off his own jacket and made a bed for his companion, and placed the rest of his clothes to cover the child. Then, with only his shirt and socks, the little hero lay down beside him. Their childish prayers were said, and Johnnie Carr knew not that in his sublime act of self-sacrifice he had taken part in the mightier sacrifice of Jesus. When the morning came, the anxious friends, who had been searching through the night, found the children lying. The younger was soon restored to health and strength, but no care could save the life of the child-hero who had given himself for his friend. (*H. J. W. Buxton*). *The death of Christ our only stay:*—If the thought of sin, death, and judgment be so terrible, as in truth they are to every soul of man, on what shall we stay ourselves when our time is at hand? I. UPON THE LOVE OF GOD, IN GIVING HIS SON TO DIE FOR US (John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 10; Rom. v. 8). Whatever be doubtful, this is sure. Light does not pour forth from the sun, with a fuller and directer ray than does perfect and eternal love overflow from the bosom of God upon all the works that He has made. The love of God is the sphere in which the world is sustained, every living soul is encompassed by that love, as stars by the firmament of heaven. And from this blessed truth flows all manner of consolation. Not only does God hate sin, but He hates death; not only does He abhor evil, but the peril and perdition of so much as one living soul—of one, even the least of all things He has made. The Lord hath sworn by Himself, saying (Ezek. xviii. 32). What do we further need to assure us that He desires our salvation? Does a child bind his father by promises to give him bread, or a mother to foster him in sickness? Surely the character of God is enough. "God is love." What more do we ask! What more would we receive? "He cannot deny Himself." And therefore when He was "willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel," He "confirmed it by an oath." But for us God has done still more: He has, beside His promise, found a pledge to give us. He has given us "His only begotten Son." He gave Him up to suffer all humiliation, agony, and death; all that the Divine nature most abhors; and He gave Him to be ours in so full a right, that we might offer Him as our own in sacrifice for our sins. II. THE LOVE OF THE SON IN GIVING HIMSELF FOR US. When we remember who He is that gave Himself, and for whom, and to die what death, we cannot find capacity of heart to receive it. If He had saved us by a new exertion of His creative will, it would have been a miracle of lovingkindness. If He had spoken once more the first words of power, and creating us again in light, it would have been a mystery of sovereign grace. If He had redeemed us by the lowliness of the Incarnation, still revealing Himself in majesty, though as a man, and lightening the earth with His glory, as Saviour, God, and King, it would have seemed to us a perfect exhibition of the Divine compassion to a sinful world. How much more when He came to suffer shame and sorrow, all that flesh and blood can endure, to sink, as it were, into the lowest depths of creation, that He might uplift it from its farthest fall? If He so loved us as to die for us, what will He not grant or do? If He gave His whole self, will He keep back any partial gift? Will He not save us, who Himself died for us? If He loved us when we loved Him not, will He not love us now that we desire to love Him again? III. Christ's death upon the cross is not only a revelation of Divine

love to us; it is also a DIVINE ATONEMENT FOR OUR SIN. How it is so, we may not eagerly search to know. That by death He has destroyed "Him that had the power of death," and taken away "the sin of the world," is enough. In that death were united the oblation of a Divine person and the sanctity of a sinless man; the perfection of a holy will and the fulfilment of a spotless life; the willing sacrifice of the sinless for the sinful, of the shepherd for the sheep that was lost, of life for the dead. How this wrought atonement for the sin of the world we cannot say further than is revealed. God "made Him to be sin for us." "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree." "By His stripes we are healed." "He hath tasted death for every man." "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (*Archdeacon Manning.*) *Demonstration of friendship, Divine and human:*—I. CHRIST DEMONSTRATES HIS LOVE TO MAN BY DYING, Here He states—1. The utmost limit of human love. Nothing is felt by man to be more precious than his life. Everything he has he will sacrifice for this. A love that will lead to the sacrifice of this is love in its highest human measure. 2. Christ's love transcended this limit, He laid down His life for His enemies. There is nothing in history approaching this. This transcendent love is—(1) The love of compassion. There could be neither gratitude nor esteem in it, for the subjects are all wicked. (2) The love of disinterestedness. He had nothing to gain by it; for His glory and happiness admitted of no entrancement. II. MAN DEMONSTRATES HIS LOVE BY OBEYING. Surely all men ought to love Christ, and when they do they will obey. This obedience will be marked by—1. Heartiness. 2. Cheerfulness. When this love is obedience to Christ is the highest gratification of the soul. When the heart is enlarged it runs in the way of Christ's commandments. 3. Entireness. Love does not sort duties, or weigh or measure them. Whatever the object wishes shall be done, even unto death. Conclusion: The subject—(1) Supplies the test of Christian piety. Christian piety is not ritualism, however becoming; not a theology, however Scriptural; it is obedient love to Christ. 2. Indicates the true method of preaching—to so exhibit Christ's love as to awaken the love of human souls. (*Swain.*) *A friend's love:*—During the Civil war in America, a farmer was drawn to be a soldier. He was much grieved about it, not because he was a coward, but on account of his motherless family, who would have no bread-winner or caretaker in his absence. The day before he had to march to the town where the conscripts' names were called over, and their clothing and weapons given them for the campaign, young Mr. Durham, a neighbour, came, saying, "Farmer Blake, I will go instead of you." The farmer was astonished so much so as to be unable to reply for some time. He stood leaning one hand on his spade and wiping the sweat from his brow with the other. It seemed too good to be true! At length he took in the deliverance, as if it were an angel of light in a dark dungeon, and he grasped the hand of young Durham and praised God. The young fellow went, feeling that he was doing a noble thing, and all the village came out and bid him "God speed." It may be that he had "glory" before him—the sash of a general, the chair of the President. Whatever his ideas, he nobly took the place of his fellow-man; but alas! in the first battle he was shot and killed! When the farmer saw in the newspaper the name of Charles Durham in the list of "missing," he at once saddled his old horse and went off to the battle-field, and after searching for some time, found the body of his friend. He brought it to his village, to the little churchyard in which they had so often walked together to the house of God; and from the quarry up on the hill he cut out a plain marble tablet, on which he carved an inscription with his own hand. It was roughly done, but with every blow there fell a tear from his eyes. There, in the little churchyard, he placed the body of his devoted friend and substitute, and covered the grave with grass sods from his garden. Then, while his tears dropped, he put the marble tablet on the grave, and when the villagers stooped to see the little monument they also wept. It did not say much, but it really touched them; it said, "C. D. He died for me." (*New Testament Anecdotes.*)

Ver. 14–17. **Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.**—*Christ's friends:*—Notice—I. WHAT CHRIST'S FRIENDS DO FOR HIM (ver. 16). In the former verse, "friends" means chiefly those whom He loved. Here it means mainly those who love Him. 1. He lingers on the idea, as if He would meet the doubts arising from the sense of unworthiness, and from some dim perception of how He towers above them. How wonderful that stooping love of His is! Every form of human love Christ lays His hand upon. "He that doeth the will of My Father, the same is My brother,

and sister, and mother." That which is even sacreder, the purest and most complete union that humanity is capable of, receives a new sweetness when we think of the Bride, the Lamb's wife. And, passing from that Holy of Holies out into this outer court, He lays His hand on that more common and familiar, and yet precious and sacred, thing, the bond of friendship. The Prince makes a friend of the beggar. 2. This friendship lasts to-day. The pecularity of Christianity is the strong personal tie which binds men to this Man that died nineteen hundred years ago. We look back into the wastes of antiquity: the mighty names rise there that we reverence; there are great teachers from whom we have learned, and to whom we are grateful. But what a gulf there is between us and the best and noblest of them! But here is a dead Man, who to-day is the object of passionate attachment, and a love deeper than life to millions of people, and will be till the end of time. 3. There are no limitations in that friendship, no misconstructions in that heart, no alienation possible, no change to be feared. There is absolute rest for us there. Why should I be solitary if Jesus Christ is my Friend? Why should I fear if He walks by my side? Why should anything be burdensome if He lays it upon me, and helps me to bear it? What is there in life that cannot be faced and borne—aye, and conquered—if we have Him, as we all may have Him, for the Friend and the Home of our hearts? 4. But notice the condition, "If ye do what I command you." Note the singular blending of friendship and command, involving on our parts absolute submission and closest friendship. For this is the relationship between love and obedience, in regard to Jesus Christ, that the love is the parent of the obedience, and the obedience is the guard and the guarantee of the love. II. WHAT CHRIST DOES FOR HIS FRIENDS (ver. 15.) The slave may see what his lord does, but he does not know his purpose in his acts. "Their's not to reason why," If the servant is in his master's confidence he is more than a servant. But, says Christ, "I have called you friends"; and He calls them so before in act, and and He points to all His past relationsbip, and especially to the heart outpourings of the upper room, as the proof. 1. Jesus Christ, then, recognizes the obligation of absolute frankness, and He will tell His friends everything that He can. When He tells them what He can the voice of the Father speaks through the Son. 2. Of course, to Christ's frankness there are limits. He will not pour out His treasures into vessels that will spill them. And though here he speaks as if His communion was perfect, we are to remember that it was necessarily conditioned by the power of reception on the part of the hearers. 3. That frank speech is continued to-day. By the light which He sheds on the Word, by many a suggestion through human lips, by many a blessed thought rising quietly within our hearts, and bearing the token that it comes from a sacreder source than our poor, blundering minds, He still speaks to us, His friends. 4. Ought not that thought of the utter frankness of Jesus make us for one thing very patient of the gaps that are left in His communications and in our knowledge? There are so many things that we should like to know. He holds all in His hand. Why does He thus open one finger instead of the whole palm? Because He loves. A friend exercises the right of reticence as well as the prerogative of speech. "Trust Me! I tell you all that is good for you to receive." 5. And that frankness may well teach us the obligation of keeping our ears open and our hearts prepared to receive the speech that comes from Him. Many a message from your Lord flits past you like the idle wind through an archway, because you are not listening for His voice. If we silenced passion, ambition, selfishness, worldliness, if we took less of our religion out of books and from other people, and were more accustomed to "dwell in the secret place of the Most High," and to say, "Speak, Friend, for Thy friend heareth," we should more often understand how real to-day is the voice of Christ to them that love Him. III. How CHRIST'S FRIENDS COME TO BE SO, AND WHY THEY ARE so (ver. 16.) 1. In all the cases of friendship between Christ and men, the origina ion and initiation come from Him. "We love Him because He first loved us." The apostle said, "I was apprehended of Christ." It is because He lays His seeking and drawing hand upon us, that we ever come to love Him. His choice of us precedes our choice of Him. The Shepherd always comes to seek the sheep that is lost. We come to be His friends: because, when we were enemies, He loved us, and gave Himself for us, and ever since has been sending out the messengers of His love to draw us to His heart. 2. And the purpose is twofold—(1) It respects service or fruit. "That we may go." There is deep pathos and meaning in that word. He had been telling them that He was going; now He says to them, "You are to go! We part here. My road lies upward; yours runs

onward. Go into all the world." "That ye may bring forth fruit." "Keeping His commandments" does not explain the whole process by which we do the things that are pleasing in His sight. We must also take this other metaphor of the bearing of fruit. There must be the effort; for men do not grow Christlike in character as the vine grows its grapes, but there must be, regulated and disciplined by the effort, the inward life, for no mere outward obedience and tinkering at duties and commandments will produce the fruit that Christ desires and rejoices to have. "That your fruit should remain." There is nothing that corrupts faster than fruit. There is only one kind of fruit that is permanent, incorruptible. The only life's activity that outlasts life and the world is the activity of the men that obey Christ. (2) It respects the satisfying of our desires, that "whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name He may give it you." Make your desires Christ's, and Christ's yours, and you will be satisfied. IV. THE MUTUAL FRIENDSHIP OF CHRIST'S FRIENDS (ver. 17.) This whole context is enclosed within a golden circlet by that commandment which appears in ver. 12, and re-appears here at the close, thus shutting off this portion from the rest of the discourse. Friends of a friend should themselves be friends. We care for the lifeless things that a dear Friend has cared for. And here are living men and women, in all diversities of character and circumstances, but with this stamped upon them all—Christ's friends, lovers of and loved by Him. And how can we be indifferent to those to whom Christ is not indifferent? We are knit together by that bond. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The friends of Jesus:*—There is no title surely that excels in dignity that which was worn by Abraham, who was called "The friend of God." Lord Brooke was so delighted with the friendship of Sir Philip Sydney that he ordered to be engraved upon his tomb nothing but this, "Here lies the friend of Sir Philip Sydney." There is beauty in such a feeling, but yet it is a small matter compared with being able to say, "Here lives a friend of Christ." I. Note—WHAT OBEDIENCE CHRIST REQUESTS FROM THOSE WHO CALL THEMSELVES HIS FRIENDS. It must be—1. Active. "If ye do." Some think it is quite sufficient if they avoid what He forbids. Abstinence from evil is a great part of righteousness, but it is not enough for friendship. It would be a poor friendship which only said, "I am your friend, and to prove it, I don't insult you, I don't rob you, I don't speak evil of you." Surely there must be more positive evidence to certify friendship. In that memorable twenty-fifth of Matthew nothing is said about negative virtues; but positive actions are cited and dwelt upon in detail. Fine words, again, are mere wind, and go for nothing if not backed up with substantial deeds. Friendship cannot live on windy talk, it needs the bread of matter of fact. 2. Continuous. He does not say, "If you sometimes do—if you do it on Sundays, in your place of worship"; no, we are to abide in Him, and keep His statutes even unto the end. 3. Universal. "Whatsoever." No sooner is anything discovered to be the subject of a command than the man who is a true friend of Christ says, "I will do it," and he does it. He does not pick and choose which precept he will keep and which he will neglect. The smallest command of Christ may often be the most important. Here is the proof of your love. Will you do the smaller thing for Jesus as well as the more weighty matter? The reality of your subjection to your Lord and Master may hinge upon seemingly insignificant points. A servant might place the breakfast on the table, and feel that she had done her duty, but if her mistress told her to place the salt at the corner, and she did not, she would be asked the cause of her neglect. Suppose she replied, "I placed the breakfast before you, but a little salt was too trifling a matter for me to be troubled about." Her mistress might answer, "But I told you to be sure and put out the salt-cellar. Mind you do so to-morrow." 4. To Christ Himself. Put the emphasis on the I. We are told to do these things because Jesus commands them. Does not the royal person of our Lord cast a very strong light upon the necessity of obedience? 5. Out of a friendly spirit. Obedience to Christ as if we were forced to do it under pains and penalties would be of no worth as a proof of friendship. He speaks not of slaves, but of friends. II. THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY HIM ARE NO FRIENDS OF HIS. A man who does not obey Christ—1. Does not give the Saviour His proper place, and this is an unfriendly deed. If I have a friend I am very careful that, if he has honour anywhere, he shall certainly have due respect from me. 2. Is not of one mind with Christ. Can two walk together except they be agreed? Christ is for holiness, this man is for sin. 3. He may be a very high and loud professor, and for that reason be all the more an enemy of the Cross. Through the inconsistent conduct of our Lord's professed friends, His cause is more hindered than by anything else. 4. A disobedient friend would be a

great dishonour to Christ. A man is known by the company he keeps. III. THOSE WHO BEST OBEY CHRIST ARE ON THE BEST OF TERMS WITH HIM. 1. You cannot walk in holy converse with Christ unless you keep His commandments. 2. Some Christians will never get into full fellowship with Christ because they neglect to study His word and search out what His will is. Half the Christian people in the world are content to ask, "What is the rule of our Church?" That is not the question: the point is, "What is the rule of Christ?" Some plead, "My father and mother before me did so." I sympathize in a measure with that feeling; but yet in spiritual things we are to call no man "father," but make the Lord Jesus our Master and Exemplar. Take your light directly from the sun. Let holy Scripture be your unquestioned rule of faith and practice. 3. Under all the crosses, and losses, and trials of life, there is no comfort more desirable than the confidence that you have aimed at doing your Lord's will. Losses borne in the defence of the right and true are gains. Jesus is never nearer His friends than when they bravely bear shame for His sake. IV. THE MOST FRIENDLY ACTION A MAN CAN DO FOR JESUS IS TO OBEY HIM. 1. Rich men have thought to do the most friendly act towards Christ by building a church, or founding almshouses or schools. If they are believers, and have done this thing as an act of obedience to Christ's law of stewardship, they have well done, and the more of such munificence the better, but where splendid benefactions are given out of ostentation, or from the idea that some merit will be gained by the consecration of a large amount of wealth, the whole business is unacceptable. Jesus asks not lavish expenditure, but ourselves. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." 2. Others have imagined that they could show their friendliness to Christ by self-mortification. Jesus Christ has not demanded this as the gauge of friendship. He says, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," but He does not command you to starve, or to wear sackcloth, or to shut yourselves up in a cell: pride invents these things, but grace teaches obedience. 3. Certain persons have thought it would be the noblest form of holy service to enter into brotherhoods and sisterhoods. But assuredly in the New Testament you shall find no foreshadowing of Franciscans and Dominicans. All godly women were sisters of mercy, and all Christlike men were of the society of Jesus, but of monastic and conventual vows we read nothing. 4. Some think it a very friendly act towards Christ to attend many religious services in a consecrated building. They are at matins, and vespers, and feasts and fasts without number. Ye are Christ's friends, if ye do whatsoever He commands ye: that is a better test than early communion or daily mass. 5. It comes to this, that we must steadily, carefully, persistently, cheerfully, do the will of God from the heart in daily life, from the first waking moment till our eyes are closed. Say concerning everything, "What would Jesus have me do about this? What is the teaching of Christ as to this?" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

A Christian—Christ's friend:—If we are friends of Christ—I. WE SHALL BE FREQUENTLY THINKING OF HIM. His image will be often in our minds. Almost all remarkable occurrences, at least, will suggest Him, in one way or another, to our hearts. In common life you could scarcely be regarded as being a warm-hearted friend of that man, of whom there had not been a single thought in your mind during the course of the day. And, yet, are there not a few in our churches who, from one Sabbath to another, have their thoughts wandering in every direction but toward Christ. II. WE SHALL SEEK HIS COMPANY, and embrace opportunities of meeting with Him. When, and where do we find Him? 1. In the reading of the Word. 2. In prayer. 3. At the prayer-meeting. 4. At His own house, amid the ordinances of the Sabbath. 5. In His sacraments. How easy, then, is the application of the test? III. WE SHALL READ WITH INTEREST THE LETTERS HE SENDS US, AND DELIGHT IN CORRESPONDING WITH HIM IN RETURN. On being asked, When you heard from an attached friend? were you to reply, "Some days ago, but I have not yet found leisure to open and read it"—what would be the inference? Well, is not the New Testament literally an epistle which Christ has sent us? And ought not a Sabbath's sermon to be waited on expectantly as containing some message from Him? And is not the return of correspondence on our part exemplified specially by prayer? How, then, do our professions of friendship for Him stand this test? IV. WE SHALL HAVE RECOURSE TO HIM FOR SYMPATHY AND HELP IN SEASONS OF AFFLICTION. Friendship is often manifested and proved better by applying for aid than by bestowing it. If you have two friends of whom you cannot at present tell who is the more endeared to your heart—watch, when some evil may befall you, and see whose image presents itself first to your mind. In

applying these principles for the determination of the question of your friendship for Christ, observe, that there are two classes of evils, for deliverance from which you need friendly help. 1. Your sinfulness, with its twofold evil of guilt and servitude. To whom, then, do you apply for deliverance? Now Jesus is the Friend of Sinners; and that, too, in the sense of His being "the only Mediator between God and man;" and in the sense of His taking the penitent by the hand, and leading him up to the throne of grace. Can that, then, be a friend of Christ, who, as He stands, inviting the guilty to come unto Him, passes Him by. 2. There are your temporal wants, difficulties and distresses. How many, who ween of themselves that they are good friends of Christ, have yet much of the lesson to learn of giving Him the dependence of their hearts, without exception or reserve! V. WE SHALL BE THE FRIENDS OF HIS FRIENDS. 1. We will take a friendly interest in them, for His sake. I should feel there was a want of entireness in the friendship of that man who treated with negligence even the dog in which he saw I delighted. 2. For their own sakes, as bearing a resemblance to Him, and possessed of properties which we admire in Himself. VI. WE WILL BE FRIENDS OF HIS CAUSE—interested in the welfare of His Church: will grieve for its losses; rejoice for its gains; plead for it, spend for it, work for it, and, if need be, suffer for it. VII. WE SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED TO CONFESS HIM (Rom. v. 5). There is nothing by which friendship, in common life, is better manifested, than by avowing yourself a friend of your friend. But—1. Friendship for Christ does not require that we be always obtruding on our company professions of love for Him, and His claims on their embracement of His cause. 2. When challenged and accused for your declared or suspected faith in Christ, by either the magistrate or the mob, though it might imperil your life to confess Him, it would imperil your salvation more to deny Him. 3. There are manners, customs, and fashions of the world which are inimical to Christ's honour and interests, compliance with which His friends will refuse and resist. VIII. WE SHALL BE SCRUPULOUS IN OBEYING HIS COMMANDMENTS. (*W. Anderson, LL.D.*) *The friendship between Christ and the believer*:—I. YOUR FRIENDSHIP IS SOUGHT BY JESUS CHRIST. That He might win it, He declares His own friendship. No matter how meanly you think of yourselves, there is One who seeks your friendship. Think who this One is. In His presence Socrates and Plato pale. The greatness of Alexander, of Hannibal, of Cæsar, of Napoleon, of Washington is feeble indeed in comparison with His. II. THE GROUND UPON WHICH THIS FRIENDSHIP CAN BE BUILT UP. 1. By mutual confidence. This is a law of friendship. To strengthen their confidence He reveals the secrets of His heart to His disciples. He makes confidants of them. 2. By gratitude. Christ says, "All is thine." We answer back, "All that we have is Thine." III. THE FORMS OF THIS FRIENDSHIP. 1. Intercourse. We do not desire to be separated from our friends, but to be near them. 2. Remembrance. The human heart craves to be remembered. Is not this the meaning of tokens, even of the writing on grave-stones? Friendship ministers to this want. It is met in the friendship of Christ. We are told that we are in His thoughts, that our very names are written on His hands. Is there anything more touching than Christ's desire to be remembered by His disciples after He would be gone? At our communion seasons we comply with this desire of Christ. 3. Desire to please. Hence, if our friends are below us we sink to their level. If Christ is our friend, we rise to Him, and become more and more like Him. Hence, not anything tends to such purity of life as love for Christ. 4. Mutual care. Christ cares for us, for our interests, protects us, and we care for His interests. If, as a scientist, I am set for the defence of the law of gravitation, I arrange my arguments and endeavour to convince the understanding. But when our friend is attacked then it is that the lip quivers and the blood boils. When Christianity is assailed it is more to us than the assailing of a system of principles; the interests of our dearest Friend are involved, and we are ready to make any sacrifice, even to the laying down of our lives, in their defence. IV. THE PROOF OF THIS FRIENDSHIP. Friendship does not spring from obedience, but obedience from friendship. What should we think of an admiral who would say, "I will take advantage of the fact that the President of the United States is my friend and will disregard his commands"? That would be unspeakably mean. The Christian does not presume on the friendship of Christ. That friendship holds him but the firmer to what is right. Note some of the characteristics of Christian obedience. It is—1. Active and positive. The best way to meet the importunities to do wrong is to be fully occupied. "I have a great work to do. Why should I come down?" 2. Cheerful. The Christian has the friendship of the most powerful and best

Being in the universe; why should he not be cheerful in his obedience to that One? What parent would wish to see his child surly in his obedience? 3. Without reserve: "whatsoever." I know no earthly friend to whom I would say, I will do whatsoever you command me." (*John Hall, D.D.*) *Believers Christ's friends*:—I. WHAT THIS PRIVILEGE IS IN THE GENERAL. 1. The friends of Christ, whereas naturally they were in a state of enmity with God, are now in a state of peace with Christ, and God through Christ (Eph. ii. 14). 2. Whereas they had divided interests as to heaven, now there is an unity of interests betwixt Christ and them (1 John i. 3). II. HOW THIS FRIENDSHIP IS MADE UP. 1. The first spring and source of it is everlasting free love (Jer. xxxi. 3). 2. The plot for compassing it was laid from eternity between the Father and the Son (Tit. i. 2). 3. The foundation of it was laid in the blood of Christ, in the fulness of time (Gal. iv. 4, 5). 4. It was moved to them in the gospel (2 Cor. v. 20). 5. They are won to it by His own Spirit (Isa. xliv. 3, 5). 6. By faith they go into the friendship with Him (Eph. iii. 17). 7. The friendship is sealed by the sacraments, particularly that of His body and blood. It was an ancient custom to confirm a covenant of friendship with a feast (Gen. xxxi. 54; John xv. 13). III. WHAT A PRIVILEGE THIS IS! Men nor angels cannot fully express the value of it, for it is of infinite value (1 Cor. ii. 9). 1. It is an honourable friendship. Their Friend is the Prince of the kings of the earth; and through Him God is their friend. 2. It is a beneficial friendship. The friendship of many in the world is no more but an empty name. But Christ's friendship, the benefits of it who can tell? 3. It is an intimate friendship. There is no such close and intimate friendship betwixt any relations on earth (1 Cor. vi. 17). 4. It is an universal friendship, of universal influence. There is no friendship in the world but it is limited. But from the greatest to the least of the concerns of His friends, Christ interests Himself. 5. It is a sure and lasting friendship. The friendships in the world are very uncertain (Job. xix. 14; Psa. xxxviii. 11). But Christ's friendship never dies out (John xiii. 1; Isa. xlix. 14–16). IV. IMPROVEMENT. See—1. The wonderful condescension of heaven. We are rebels against God naturally, but may become friends through Christ. 2. They that are Christ's are most happy. 3. Jesus Christ is the best and most generous of masters. He makes all His servants friends. 4. Friendless persons, who have none to regard them, may best bestow themselves and get a friend, that will be better to them than all the world. 5. Let sinners seek this friendship. 6. Ye that profess to be the friends of Christ, walk worthy of your privilege. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Christ's friends, doers of all His commands*:—I. INQUIRE INTO THIS CHARACTER OF THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST. 1. The friends of Christ are doers of His commands. They are all His servants (Luke vi. 46). Christ is their Lord and Lawgiver, and they do His commandments (Rev. xxii. 14). (1) Their lusts are not their domineering lords, to whom they yield themselves to obey (Rom. vi. 13, 14; Gal. v. 24). (2) The course of the world is not their rule (Eph. ii. 2). (3) But as they look for salvation by Him, it is the business of their life, to please, serve, and glorify Him, to walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing (Col. i. 10). There are two works seriously plied by all Christ's friends. (*a*) Salvation-work, that they may be saved from sin and wrath, and set beyond hazard of eternal ruin. This is done by faith. (*b*) Their generation work (Acts xiii. 36; 1 Pet. ii. 9). This is done by obedience. In the former they look for their own safety, and in the latter for the honour of their Saviour. 2. The friends of Christ are doers of His commands, because they are His commands (Col. iii. 17). (1) Out of respect to His authority (Psa. cxix. 4; Heb. xi. 8). (2) Out of love to Him (Heb. vi. 10). (3) As sons redeemed by His blood, not as bondservants working for their own redemption; to please their Benefactor, not to render themselves accepted by their own obedience (Rom. viii. 15; Col. i. 10). (4) With heart and good-will (Eph. vi. 7; Isa. lxiv. 5). 3. The friends of Christ are doers of His commands universally and without exception (Psa. cxix. 6). They are universal—(1) In their desire to do all His commands, saying, as (Psa. cxix. 5). (2) In respect of their endeavour (Phil. 13, 14). (3) In respect of their willingness to know all that Christ commands, that they may do it (Psa. cxxxix. 23). The reasons why Christ's friends are universal in their obedience, are—(*a*) Because the grace of God inclines them to do what Christ commands, because He commands it (Psa. cxix. 4). The law of Christ is a chain of many links, and he that truly draws one to Him, draws all. (*b*) Because the whole law is written on their hearts in regeneration, and not scraps of it here and there (Heb. viii. 10). (*c*) Because Christ hath the chief room in their hearts beyond all

competitors (Luke xiv, 26). (*d*) Because He is jealous, and the least command of His that is slighted is displeasing to Him (Matt. v. 19). (*e*) Because their hearts are reconciled to the whole law, and every part of it (Psa. cxix. 128). II. WHY THIS IS MADE THE TRYING AND DISTINGUISHING CHARACTER OF THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST. 1. Because this hits the point in which the sincere and hypocrites differ. 2. Because the reality of friendship to Christ does without controversy appear here. "Show your faith by your works. Love not in word only but in deed." 3. Because where Christ's friendship to a person takes effect, it certainly has this effect (Eph. v. 25, 26; Tit. ii. 14). 4. Because though the free grace of God tends to holiness (Tit. ii. 11, 12), yet there is a disposition in the children of men to turn it to licentiousness (Jude 4). Therefore the apostle cautions the Galations (Gal. v. 13). III. USES. 1. Of information. This shows us—(1) What the life of a Christian is. It is a life of doing whatsoever Christ commands. And so it is—(*a*) An active not an idle life (Phil. ii. 12; Rev. xiv. 13). (*b*) A well doing life (1 Tim. i. 5). (*c*) A watchful life (1 Cor. xvi. 13). (*d*) A resolute life (Eph. vi. 15). (2) The doctrine of free grace gives no encouragement to looseness of life: for there is no separating of faith and holiness. If ye be Christ's friends by faith, ye will be His faithful and tender servants in obedience. 2. Of exhortation. Show yourselves Christ's friends by doing whatsoever He commands you. And do ye what Christ commands you, if you would show yourselves His friends. (1) In a time of general apostasy and blacksliding from the ways of God (Gen. vi. 9). (2) Even when it must be your temporal loss (Heb. xi. 35). (3) When His hand is lying heavy on you by crosses and afflictions (Job. i. 9, 10). (4) When sin comes with a seen advantage in its hand, as in the case of Moses (Heb. xi. 24–26). (5) When the sin that most easily besets you comes in competition with your obedience to the commands of Christ (Psa. xviii. 23). (6) When there is nothing to keep you back from sin, but pure regard to the command of Christ. IV. MOTIVES. 1. Because all His commands are those of an absolute Lord, to whom we owe obedience in all things (Exod. xx. 2). 2. All His commands are just, righteous, and reasonable (Psa. cxix. 128). 3. We are all of us under covenant-engagements to do whatsoever He commands us. We have all avouched Him for our Lord (Luke vi. 46). 4. Christ has been the best friend ever mankind had (John xv. 13; Rom v. 8) 5. It is necessary to evidence your sincerity (Psa. cxix. 6). 6. The glorious privilege of those who do whatsoever Christ commands them. (*Ibid.*) *Implicit obedience*:—At Federal Hill, Baltimore, Colonel Warren gave orders to his guards that only officers in uniform were to be admitted to camp. One bright morning General Dix, who commanded the troops guarding the city, walked over from Fort McHenry in undress. Attempting to pass the line of sentries in company with an aide, the old general was amused at finding a musket barring his passage, while the aide, with his glittering shoulder straps, was permitted to enter. "Why do you stop me, my man?" inquired the general, quietly. "My orders are to admit only officers in uniform," was the reply. "But don't you see that this is General Dix?" exclaimed the aide, angrily. "Well, between you and me, major," said the sentry, his eyes twinkling with amusement, "I see very well who it is; but if General Dix wants to gets to get into this camp he had better go back and put on his uniform." "You are quite right, sentry," remarked the general. "I'll go back and get my coat." The incident increased his admiration for the entire command. (*H. O. Mackey.*)

Ver. 15. **Henceforth I call you not servants.**—*Slave or friend?*—The word used was the word for slave, though not always used in the most ignominious relation. The word "friends" is *philos*, something more than friendship in the ordinary use of the word "love-friends." These were the disciples that had been ordained to go out and preach. All that time they have been only servants. I. THERE IS, THEN, A DISCIPLESHIP THAT IS SERVITUDE, HAVING IN IT A GOOD MANY EXCELLENT QUALITIES but as soon as possible to be left behind. All over the world, we see in progress this primary state of discipleship—that of servitude and inferiority. 1. The lower province begins, with conscientious morality; that is, so much of rectitude recognized and mildly sought as is embodied in public law and in public sentiment. But the averages of society are always and everywhere very low. 2. Higher than this is a more active recognition of what may technically be called religious life: that is, the recognition of an invisible God, of a moral order, and of a providence which unfolds the thought and the will of God among men. A man has certainly risen very much higher than the ordinary morality which is contained in the Ten Commandments—

he has risen a great deal when he begins to be a worshipper. 3. Then we come, a little more interiorly, to the condition of those who are seeking to conform their lives to canons of morality, to rules of Church life, to religion as a personal experience; and we find that fear is usually the very first incitement, as it is the lowest motive. There is a fear that runs with the highest feelings, that purity itself has lest it should be sullied. There is a fear of love—filial fear. But there is also the fear that if a duty be neglected it will bring chastisement; and this fear takes a very low range. It indicates no great love for moral quality, no worship of good because it is good, no spontaneity, but a dark shadow of dread for neglect or violation. There are thousands whose religion rises in its motives no higher than this: "We must prepare for death; it may come in an untold hour." There are multitudes who are afraid to be wicked. I am glad of that; but it is a very low motive. Multitudes of persons are afraid not to say their prayers. That is a very low motive. Sometimes it is the misery of an heir to know that a decrepit aunt is going to bequeath her property to him, provided his conduct is in all respects suitable to her wishes. So all his life long he is thinking: "What does she want?" And what politeness! what keeping out of her prejudices! And so all his life long he has a certain sort of respectable morality; but the whole way through it is carnal and mean, and it is to get the property, not because he loves politeness, not because he loves her at all—he loves her Will. A service of fear never works the higher moral qualities. If a man's religion is very largely compounded of the element of fear he may save his soul; but is it worth saving?—poor, scrawny, mean! 4. Then comes, next higher in order, the sense of duty—conscience. In combination with higher qualities conscience gives strength and great power. It is an undertone that should run through life. Duty is not less noble because it is inferior to love, but it is inferior to love. The things that every mother does for her child, are they things that are done from a sense of duty? She ought; but she never touches bottom on ought. She does, because spontaneous love urges it upon her. If that were deficient she would fall down upon another, but inferior, faculty of conscience—"It is my duty." A rich man, dying, leaves large properties to be distributed for charitable purposes; and those appointed as trustees and distributors, men of honour and conscientiousness, say: "This is a good cause; we think we will devote a hundred thousand dollars for that." It is the fulfilment of a duty that has been laid upon them. But if a man with a great heart, and blessed with large inheritance, looks out on society, and pities the orphans, and builds a home for them, that springs out of his own heart. It is not his duty; it is his desire and wish. So, then, a man may be doing benevolent work as a duty; but it is a very much higher thing to do benevolent work because you are benevolent, and not because it is your duty. 5. In various grades, all these things are acceptable to God and useful; but as in the pictures of a studio there are various grades of excellence, and yet the least may be a good picture, so in the development of the dispositions of Christians there is very low, and there is a little higher, and there is the higher still, and there is the highest level, which men should seek, and on which they should stand. II. On the eve of His departure, Christ said to men who had been living in this lower relation, doing right things, avoiding evil things—doing this from various motives, more or less in bondage, more or less exhorted by duty: "Henceforth I call you not servants; I CALL YOU FRIENDS. 1. One can see easily how this might take place. In the thrall of poverty and neglect some beneficent heart, meeting with a maiden, sees in her some moral quality that indicates a higher place in life; and it turns out at last that she came of good parents, that they were swept away, that the child went through various hands down to the bottom of society, but that being caught up by this philanthropic missionary, she had responded quickly to moral appeals. Every point in her is susceptible of development; and at every step, coming up, and ministered to little by little, at last there comes a day when the benefactor says: "Hitherto I have called you my ward; I have been your benefactor; now I love you, and I take you for my own." How many have found that higher and nobler development of confidence between their souls and their Saviour? 2. We attain to this state of experience, not as the direct result of effort. It is not by prayer. You never can pray it into yourself, although prayer is an excellent thing. It is not by mortification; it is by the power of love, and soul-ripening that it is attained. That process differs with different people and in different circumstances. In June the orchard blossoms; but nobody wants to eat blossoms. In early July the germs of the apple and the pear have set, and the blossoms are gone. The work has begun. Now, the first rejoicing that the soul has comes when it just begins the

Christian life. Then it has the flush of early love and joy. The growing comes afterward. In early July the apple and the pear have set their germs, they are beginning to grow, and are utterly unfit to eat. In September they have got size that they had not, but are very sour. In October they begin to get colour on their cheeks, but they are hard yet. In November they begin to have sugar in themselves, and they exhale fragrance. Step by step, the fruit from greenness goes on to size, and from size to quality, and from quality to perfect ripeness and harmony. So, largely, is it in Christian life. There is a process constantly going on; and the evidence that there is this tendency toward ripeness is one of the things that should stimulate the hope of our soul. The ripening of men is not a mechanical system, by which we have been awakened, and convicted of sin, and have changed our will and purpose. This ripening does not come because we are joined to God's people, and because we are striving, according to the measure of our knowledge in ordinary things, to live about right and fulfil our duties. We have simply ripened so that we have begun to be susceptible; and Christ says: "Henceforth I call you My love," and we respond, "I am my Lord's; He is mine." (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Servants and friends:—I. SERVANTS AND FRIENDS. All Christ's friends are His servants, but all His servants are not therefore His friends. This was perhaps the distinction between Moses and Aaron (Exod. xxxiii. 11). You see the difference at once between their characters. In Aaron it was attention to the ministry at the altar, in Moses it was jealousy for the Divine law. In Aaron it was a regard for the defences and pictures of purity and truth, in Moses it was regard for truth and purity themselves. 1. Servants may be quite unconscious of their servitude. The elements are the servants of God. Winds, and vapours, and storms fulfilling His word. Time is His servant, and the ambition of princes; but it is all unconscious servitude. How great the difference between the two Shepherds of God, David and Cyrus! (Isa. xliv. 28). Christ made my relationship to Him a consciousness. 2. Servants have but a passing and transient relationship. The connection is slight and fragile, born in interest. Servants have a divided interest from their masters. How suspicious of him and of their fellows! Friendship would make common cause with the master, and identify both interests in one. Christ spoke in the light of the perpetuity of our relationship. 3. Servants are unable to enter into the meaning of the Master's will. "His ways are not their ways, neither are His thoughts their thoughts." The soldier is not one of the council of war; but the mind and heart are revealed to the friend. We know words lovelessly pronounced, how cold! words lovingly pronounced, how dear! The same number of letters, but the accent is all. So God speaks to His people with an accent. "All that My Father hath given Me have I made known to you." In the thought of this deep intercourse, Christ said, "I have called you not servants," &c. 4. Servants may be absolute enemies. How many names are recorded in Scripture of men who were His enemies at last? He used them, while they sought, as Balaam did, to circumvent the Divine purposes. He used them as the builder uses a scaffold or a tool, then to be cast aside as useful no more. In thought of a will made one with His, Christ said, "Henceforth I call you not servants," &c. II. LOOK AT THE DOCTRINE TO WHICH THE TEXT POINTS.- 1. Now it is clear that all along throughout Scripture, its language points to a state of hallowed seclusiveness, in which the soul sees more and feels more, knows more and has more, in highest communion with Christ (1 John i. 3; John xiv. 22, 23; 1 Cor. ii. 16; 1 John v. 10). There is no fact more stupendously beautiful than this—God loves His friends, and they know it. He crowds all imaginable and all imageable mercies upon their souls, to assure them of His love (Isa. lxiii. 9). In the light of God's love to his friends, even nature acquires new majesty. What is more sure and steadfast than the heavens in their daily march, or in their midnight pomp (Jer. xxxiii. 20 21)? Or, think of the seasons in their annual round (Jer. xxxiii. 25, 26). And hence you see the difference between the two methods of our Lord's teaching. He had the parabolical and the real (Luke x. 23; ix. 10; Matt. xiii. 16). For friendship has words which mere acquaintanceship cannot use. And love ever finds new words and new meanings. 2. The doctrine suffers no defect, and does not recoil from the fact of the infinite superiority on one hand, and the infinite inferiority on the other. Such friendships, either in time or eternity, are not impossible. On earth, indeed, real friendship always receives; it is impossible but there must be some benefit on either side. The subject, the friend of the prince, repays the prince in counsel, and in sympathy, more than he receives in honour. And even the heart of the Redeemer owns the Divine light of sympathy with His believing friends. Few joys, to which we can

look forward, can equal the hope we have that one day we shall call our boy our friend. I said to a young mother once, congratulating her on her new-born child. "How proud you will be to take his arm twenty years hence." Although, alas! the young mother, a few days after, was among the angels. Very beautiful is the friendship between a master and a disciple, when the disciple looks reverently up to the teacher for instruction, and the master looks lovingly down and beholds himself growing anew in his young friend. 3. Servants of God, here is a higher ambition for you. Strive for the peerage, for the dignity of friends! This is the relation that completes the Divine life; this is the highest object of ambition of the friends of God. 4. What hallowed rest is here! Friendship rests. They are not troubled as we are who are only servants. Doubts vanish from the full assurance of love. Talk with them, and they will tell you that all things about them Jesus knows. (*Paxton Hood.*) *Christ our friend*:—Seneca once told a courtier who had lost his son, that he had no cause to mourn, either for that or ought else, because Cæsar was his friend. Oh, then, what little cause have the saints to mourn for this or that loss, considering that God is their portion! Would you not laugh to see a man lament bitterly for the loss of his shoe-strings when his purse is safe? or for the burning of a pig-sty when his dwelling-house is safe? and why then should a Christian lament for the loss of this or that, so long as his God is with him? (*Thomas Brooks.*) *The friendship of Jesus*:—When we say of two men that they are friends, we put them down in the same list; but what condescension on the Lord's part to be on terms of friendship with a man! Again I say, no nobility is comparable to this. Parmenio was a great general, but all his fame in that direction is forgotten in the fact that he was known as the friend of Alexander. He had a great love for Alexander as a man, whereas others only cared for him as a conqueror and a monarch; and Alexander, perceiving this, placed great reliance upon Parmenio. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The servant and the friend compared and contrasted*:—The whole human race may be divided into two classes, "Servants" and "Friends." All human beings have to do with Christ, and their service must be either that of slaves or of friends. Our Lord here intimates the superiority of the one relationship to the other, and the superiority will be obvious by comparing the relationships together. I. The one is LEGAL, the other is LOVING. The master treats his slave, and the slave treats him, according to legal contract. The servant works by rule, and the master treats him accordingly; the slave lives and works in the letter of the contract. But the service of the friend is irrespective of all prescriptive rules, of all legal arrangements. He does not feel himself to be under the law at all, and although he does more real hard work in the service of his friend than that of the slave in the employ of his master, love is his inspiration, and love is his law. II. The one is WATCHED, the other is TRUSTED. The master keeps his eye upon the slave; he knows that he is not the character to be trusted, here is a mere eye-servant. If the contracted work is to be done he is to be kept up to it by force. Not so with the friend; he is thrown upon his love, honour, sense of gratitude and justice. Thus Christ treats His disciples; He does not tell them how much to do, or how to do it. He trusts to their love, knowing that if they love Him they will keep His commandments. This is the true way to treat men—trust them. Thus Dr. Arnold treated his boys at Rugby, and thus all whom Providence has put in authority over men should treat their subordinates, in order to get from them the highest service they can render. III. The one is DISTANT, the other is NEAR. The master keeps his servant at a distance, he stands on his authority, gives out his orders, and insists on their discharge. They live not only in different apartments, but in different mental worlds. Not so with the friend—the friend is near to the heart. An old philosopher defined friendship as the existence of two souls in one body. Thus near are Christ's disciples to Him. "The servant," He says, "knoweth not what his Lord doeth . . . but all things that I do I have made known unto you." How close and vital the connection! "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" said God. IV. The one is USED, the other USES. The master uses his slave, uses him as he does a piece of machinery; he has no tender interest in him. All he cares for is what benefits he can extract from his service, the slave is used—used as a beast of burden. But the friend is using. All his services, as a true friend, answer his own purpose, conduce to his own happiness of soul. He acts from love, and love, like the philosopher's stone, turns the commonest things into moral gold, to enrich his own heart. Thus it is with Christ's disciples: all their efforts to serve Him serve themselves. "All things are yours, life, death," &c. Everything turns to the real use of those who are the friends of Christ. V. The one is COERCED, the

other is FREE. The slave is not free in his work; he would not serve his master if he could help it. He is placed under considerations that force him to do his work. But the service of the friend is free, he would not but do what he does, and his desires to render service transcend his abilities. Thus it is with Christ's disciples. "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." The love of Christ constrains them; they welcome the slightest intimation of duty from their Lord. Conclusion: What is our relationship to Christ—that of servitude or friendship? All must serve Him, either against their will or by their will. The former is the condition of devils, the latter that of holy saints and blessed angels. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Friendship with Jesus*:—When a blind man was asked what he thought the sun to be like, he replied, "Like friendship." And truly friendship is a sun, if not the sun, of life. All feel it to be so. Most strange is it that men should wonder that the gospel has not enjoined so good a thing. It needs no injunction. It grows best of itself. It is as unnecessary to command men to cultivate friendship, as to command them to eat and drink. Let us—I. LOOK AT THE EXPRESSIONS EMPLOYED, AND THE GENERAL SENTIMENT WHICH THEY EMBODY. 1. Both slavery and friendship represent our relations to our Lord and Saviour. "For he that is called in the Lord, being a slave, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's slave." Freedom and bondage go together, and we are not free till we are bound. Here servitude is the sign of friendship. As inferiors, as creatures, we can be friends of Jesus only "if we keep His commandments." 2. When Christ says, "All things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you," He can mean only all things intended for them, for in the next chapter He remarks, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now." Their intimacy with Him was progressive. And so now His people pass from one degree of fellowship to another; become less and less slaves, and more and more friends, and the honours and privileges of friendship increase with its spirit. 3. Confidence is the sign of Christ's friendship. There are but two essentially different ways of treating men as friends, or as slaves. We must be ruled either by force or by reason; we must be watched or trusted. Selfishness, ignorance, prejudice, fear, tyranny may say, "Treat him as a slave"; but reason, love, justice, hope, and all in Christ Jesus, say, "Treat Him as a friend." The world is learning this. Severity, though the way to govern men, as Dr. Johnson said, is not the way to mend them, and in the school, the State, the Church, and even the mad-house, they are being treated more as friends, and less as slaves. Who knows not that, even among children, not to believe is to excite to falsehood, to be always watching to be sure to prompt to go astray, and want of trust to beget unworthiness? And if it is so with children, it is still more so with men. II. ILLUSTRATE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SLAVERY AND FRIENDSHIP, AND SHOW THAT CHRIST TREATS US NOT AS SLAVES BUT AS FRIENDS. This is seen—1. In the position which Christ assigns us, and the spirit which He excites within us. Being reconciled, we receive "not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption." Thus the state and the temper of slavery are both abolished. We are "joined unto the Lord" and are "one spirit" with Him. When John, king of France, lost the battle of Poictiers, though he had been beaten by a force one eighth only of his own, though he himself was taken prisioner, he was overpowered by the courtesy and chivalrous kindness of the Black Prince, his foe, "the tears burst from his eyes, and mingled with the marks of blood upon his cheeks." It is thus that God moves the heart. In seeking His high ends, He does not beget a crouching spirit, but treats us generously. And I do not know how the heart of man is to be reached in any other way, how its enmity is to be slain and its love drawn out. 2. In the nature of Christ's communications to us. "The servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth," &c. In like manner God spake of Abraham, His "friend:" "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" (1) It is true of us as of them. Christ has given us information as to what He intends to do, and "the wise shall understand"; He has given us notices of His general purposes respecting the world and the Church: not a minute prophetic history, but a grand idea of the destiny of systems and of men. But we have a more glorious revelation than this. In the text Christ means the whole counsel of God's will. He had opened to them His mind and heart; and, if they saw but little, the fault was in the eye, not the object. He has entered into frank and friendly communication with us, opened His counsels, explained His objects and His methods, told us His desires and designs, and has thus given us an interest not only in what we do, but in what He does. (2) And if this confidence is seen in what He communicates, it is seen also in what He withholds. A friend is

not bound by a clear and particular direction in respect of everything; trust is reposed in him, he has to exercise his own skill and feel his own responsibility. And so, on no subject is the gospel a full rule, except as to principles. If the heart be not right, such a rule would be useless; if it be right, such a rule is unnecessary. When the heart is "ready to every good work," a hint will be enough to set all its powers in active and pleasant motion. "I will guide thee with Mine eye," says God to His people: that look of God will speak volumes to a friendly heart, and supply its own best motive to obedience. 3. In the manner in which Christ employs us. For the gospel idea of saints is that they are not merely to do His commandments, but to engage in His work, and He attaches the greatest importance to their service. He works out His gracious will on earth by the instrumentality of redeemed men; He puts His Spirit into men, and draws out their powers in grateful, cheerful labour. His object is not only to secure the effects of their service; but as a Father, though needing not His children's labour, makes a work to please and honour them. This is seen very striking in the constitution of His Church. Christian Churches are societies of friends. 4. In the extent to which Christ blesses us. No one can look at the gospel and not perceive that it deals with all that believe in the way of the greatest bountifulness. It is not meant to meet a mere necessity, but to gratify our utmost desires and hopes. Are we not treated as friends? III. A FEW OBVIOUS THOUGHTS BY WAY OF APPLICATION. If this is Christ's friendship—1. Let us realize and rejoice in it. He is more deeply interested in us than we are in ourselves: He wishes our welfare as we have never wished it. Why should we not therefore tell Him our perplexities, trials, gladness? Why should we not pass our life in free and familiar intercourse with Him? Friendship cannot live in an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion. "He that hath friends must show himself friendly"; and if Christ confides in us, we must confide in Him. Nothing is more important than our being frank and faithful with Him. As among men, a few honest words may prevent a world of mischief, so with Christ, long seasons of trouble and sin may be prevented by the prompt and ingenious acknowledgment of faults and doubts and difficulties. 2. Let us be worthy of it. There are men not at all remarkable for integrity or gratitude who would feel the force of this claim. The appeal to honour they would respond to, though to all other appeals they would be deaf. Christ makes His appeal to your honour. If He treats you in the way we have indicated, shall it not move you to the utmost zeal to please and glorify Him? Will you abuse His confidence, and answer His grace with gracelessness? Answer His trust with fidelity; His love with obedience. Sin in you is not mere transgression; it is ingratitude, it is sacrilege, it is treachery. 3. Let us imitate Him in our treatment of others. This is the right way, the way most in accordance with human nature. Some, perhaps many, may prove themselves unworthy of it—there was a traitor among Christ's friends—but many also will respond to it; or, if they do not, they will not respond to anything. Let it be your method in your treatment of your friends, in the education of children, in the Church. (*A. J. Morris.*) *Christ's friendship*:—Friendship is the sweetest wild flower that can be found in the desert soil of a fallen world. There can scarcely be conceived a more forlorn description of a man, than that he is friendless. But man often calls another a friend, and it is but a name; he has sinster ends and selfish motives, which he thus disguises; in the hour of need he proves himself false, and when friends ought most to stand forward, he keeps back. But note—I. The REALITY of the friendship of Christ. 1. It is the clearest evidence of friendship, that it will make the greatest sacrifices for a friend. Who can doubt the infinite reality of the friendship of Christ, that traces Him from the throne of heaven to the manger in Bethlehem, from the manger to the cross. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us." 2. But the reality of friendship is also tested by the confidence and the communion which it extends to the friend. Jesus puts His Spirit into us, and He unites us to Himself. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant;" He reveals Himself to them, as He said—"I will come to you, and I will manifest Myself to you." 3. But the reality of friendship is further evidenced by the sympathy that it is manifest, in the hour of trial and affliction. That man is not worthy to be my friend, who can be unaffected in my grief, a friend's heart should throb with every throb of my heart, and thrill at whatever thrills mine. And where is friendship so real as Christ's? "In all the afflictions of His people, He is afflicted;" "He is touched with the feeling of their infirmities;" "Let not your heart be troubled." 4. It is a further proof of friendship, that the faithful friend will rebuke as well as commend.

It is a rare quality, even in Christian friendship; in the friendship of the world, it is hardly known. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." But what friendship gives proof of faithfulness, in comparison with that of Christ? Look at His treatment of Simon Peter. II. ITS EXCELLENCY. 1. What friend can we find so disinterested as Christ? Without disinterestedness, friendship is a mockery. The man who loves me for some selfish end is not my friend—he is his own. A friend is one who loves my soul, loves me for myself, and would love me for ever! He does not love me for what I have, but for what I am. So Jesus loves us. He came to demonstrate His friendship towards us when we were enemies. 2. When shall we find a friend so able as Christ? The love of an earthly friend, however sincere, is often impotent; but there is a Friend sticking closer than a brother," who knows no perplexity of ours which He cannot resolve—no conflict which He cannot comprehend and sustain under—no tempestuous surges to which He cannot speak the word—"Peace be still"—no extremity of poverty, or desolation, or bereavement, to which He cannot say, "Weep not," and the tear shall be staunched. With Christ as my Friend, if I have the universe for my foes, I smile at them all. 3. There is no friend so faithful as Christ. Faithfulness is the crown of friendship. He whom no slight occasion of offence can alienate, whom no infirmities can revolt, whom no outward circumstances can wean, who loves me in poverty as in wealth, in reproach as in renown, in sickness as in health, in death as in life; He is a friend indeed. There are few such, however, to be found. But where Jesus loves, He loves for ever. "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (*Canon Stowell.*)

Christians the friends of Christ:—I. A FEW EXPLANATORY REMARKS CONCERNING THIS FRIENDSHIP. 1. It is really friendship, consisting, not of kindly feelings only, such as we bear towards our ordinary acquaintance, but of a cordial heart-warm love, like that which we have felt towards a few select individals only. 2. It is mutual between our Lord and His people. It is not all on His side, nor all on theirs. To constitute friendship there must be reciprocity. The hearts of Christ and His people are "knit together in love." 3. It is His true disciples only who are admitted to His friendship. He has compassion and kindness for all. But still His kindness, great and tender as it is, is not His friendship. He wept over Jerusalem, the city of His enemies—there was His compassion: He has only His dear, faithful disciples around Him, when He says here, "Ye are My friends." 4. This friendship does not set aside the relation of Master and servant existing between our Lord and His people (ver 14). Spiritual privileges, however high, never alter our obligations. They never put us out of our proper places, nor remove the exalted Jesus from His. 5. This friendship is in truth a friendship between us and God. It begins with Christ; but it does not terminate with Him. All the love of the Father dwells in Him and embraces us as soon as Christ's love embraces us, and soon too we discover this and joyfully embrace the Father in our love. It takes in His Divine nature as well. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father," &c. II. THE GROUNDS OF IT. All these may be comprehended in one word—grace; yet we may trace it still to intermediate things, themselves the fruits of this grace. 1. To mutual knowledge. (1) "I know My sheep, and am known of Mine." Christ knows their persons, peculiarities, all that can be known of them; all they are to be to Him; and thus, knowing them, He fixes His love on them, draws them to Him, makes them His friends. (2) And there is a knowledge too of Him on their side: "Whom having not seen ye love." The Holy Spirit opens the sinner's eyes to behold Christ, discovers to Him the glory of His character and the amiableness of it, and enables him to see and feel how worthy Christ is in Himself of His love. "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee." 2. Congeniality. Men may be perfect opposites; but let there be a real friendship between them, and we know that there is much that is common between them. So wherever there is friendship between the soul and Christ, a conformity to Christ has been wrought in that soul. Without it Christ might love the soul with a love of compassion, but not with a love of complacency. And the soul could have without this a little of what we call gratitude, but gratitude is not friendship. The soul must begin to love what Christ loves, to have the same mind that is in Christ and the same heart—then the soul lays hold with its affections on the Saviour and true friendship between them begins. 3. A mutual power of conferring pleasure. I love the man who in any way contributes personally to my happiness, and I love him the most who contributes most to my happiness. Now the Lord Jesus contributes to the happiness of His people. He is precious to their soul, because He is even now their soul's satisfaction and rest. On the other hand, "the Lord taketh pleasure in His people." His delights are with them." He

rejoices over them, as a father rejoices over a recovered child, or as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride. And this joy, strange as it may seem to us, can be partly explained. What constitutes the Divine happiness? The exercise of the Divine love, and with it the exercise and enjoyment of the other Divine perfections. And where does God so exercise His love, so call into action and display His perfections, as in His people? in their salvation pardon, sanctification, and final blessedness? III. ITS PROOFS. 1. He has made a great sacrifice for His people (ver. 13). 2. He admits His people to His confidence. 3. On our side we should obey His commands (ver. 14). *C. Bradley, M.A.*) *Christ a friend*:—Jonathan Edwards when he came to die, his last words, after bidding his relations good-bye, were—"Now where is Jesus of Nazareth, my true and never failing Friend?" and so saying he fell asleep. *The service of friendship*:—I. CHRIST'S SERVICE IS A SERVICE OF FRIENDSHIP. 1. The relation between the Lord and His people is that of Master and servants; but the perfect bond of that relation is love to His person. (1) These disciples had hitherto been servants, whose awful sense of their Lord's dignity had never yet been quickened into the ardour of personal devotion that He desired. "Henceforth" —after they had received into their inmost souls the self-sacrifice of Christ in laying down His life for them—they added perfect love to perfect homage. Servants they termed themselves to the end; but from that time one spoke for the rest the common sentiment, "We love Him, for He first loved us." (2) In every Christian there is the same "henceforth." Until the hour of the manifestation of the personal Saviour comes, we can neither perfectly love nor serve Him. But when the Son of God is revealed in us, then, "Whether we live we live unto the Lord," &c. The love of God is "then" shed abroad in our hearts. 2. Our interest in the Saviour's work is when made perfect that of friendship. He shares His counsels with us, not as being His servants only, but as being His friends. (1) Before the "henceforth" the disciples' thought of His work was that of servants who know not what their Lord doeth. When He spoke to them of the vast designs He came to accomplish, they were like men that dreamed. When, however, He had died, and the Holy Spirit shed His light upon the Redeemer's passion, their minds entered into the infinite Secret and made it their own. (2) This is, in a sense, the dignity and privilege of all believers. They enter into the fellowship, not only of the Saviour's death and resurrection, but of His government also. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do" expresses the spirit of our Lord's dealings with His friends. His language is not "Go and do this for Me," so much as "Come and let us do it together." 3. The principle that animates true Christian service is that of the truest love. (1) These disciples before that "henceforth" had done their Master's will from a lower impulse: sometimes from fear, ambition, or reward. "What shall we have?" But when they went forth to their duty after the baptism of Pentecost, we trace no other constraint but that of love. (2) And so it is with us if our devotion is made perfect. We are indeed servants still; but the commanding energy of duty is always and only love. II. The counterpart of this truth. Their friendship must not degenerate into licence or presumption: it must be the FRIENDSHIP OF SERVICE. He who knew what was in man knew what would be the danger of His friends; and with exquisite tenderness shows what their peril would be and how they should effectually guard against it. 1. There is an everlasting destinction between the Redeemer and His people in their mutual friendship. (1) This word in the language of men implies, generally speaking, a certain equality, and thus it is in some affecting respects between Christ and His friends. But still the eternal distinction remains. "He chose us." Though in His union with our humanity, He is one with our race. He never ceases to be God. Though He came down from heaven to make us His friends He is still the Son of Man which is in heaven. Hence the profound reverence which is stamped on their every allusion to His person. He called them not servants: they called themselves by no other name. (2) In this they are examples to us. We must enter into their feelings of reverence, while cherishing the warmest personal love towards Him. "He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him." "Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well:" which reminds us that we say well when we keep our language free from endearing epithets. 2. As on the one hand our interest in Christ's work must be that of friends, so on the other we must remember that we are entirely dependent on Him for the best ability in His service. Human friends are mutually serviceable; but in this heavenly relation we have nothing that we did not receive. "Without Me ye can do nothing." "I can do all things through Christ." 3. The Lord guards our sentiments of love and delight in His service by the solemn intimation that His

disciples are under probation for the blessedness of His present and final friendship (ver. 14). Conclusion: The two leading terms of the text point to two prevalent errors in religion. 1. There is a religion which is a service without love, which regards the Lord as only an austere man. 2. There is also a religion which is too full of a baseless confidence in Christ. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*)

Ver. 16. **Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.**—*Christian discipleship:* —I. ITS ORIGIN. 1. Negatively. "Ye have not chosen Me." This is true, both in regard to election unto salvation and election unto office. Christ no more chooses us because we have first chosen Him, than He loves us because we have first loved Him. He makes His universal offer of mercy; we close with it, and are elected. He says, "Whom shall I send?" We have to say, "Here am I; send me." "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve" was addressed to the chosen people. 2. Positively. The Divine choice which originates our discipleship—(1) Is not arbitrary. Those are chosen for salvation who evince the qualifications for receiving salvation. "Chosen . . . through belief of the truth." In regard to office, the apostles were the choice men of their race, as is seen in their after careers. Christ chose for His work Peter and Paul, rather than Caiaphas or Gamaliel, because they were immeasurably better men. Appearances and circumstances go for nothing, as is seen in God's choice of David. So to-day Christ chooses with reference to fitness. There were more brilliant men at Oxford; but when God wanted a man for Africa He went to a factory and chose Livingstone. 2. May be frustrated. Judas was chosen, and the traitor had elements about him which would have made him a prince amongst the apostles. Election is not indelible in regard either to nations or individuals. Israel was chosen because of unique racial qualities, but was rejected because those qualities were abused. England has been chosen; may she be faithful. As for us, however distinguished the office we hold, let us not be high-minded, but fear. "Let him that thinketh he standeth," &c. II. ITS VALIDATION. "Ordained you." 1. Designation for the work. This is a Divine prerogative. Sometimes it is voiced by the appointment of the Church. Sometimes, alas! not. No human authority, however august, can validate an appointment that has not been ratified in heaven. Let all Church officers note this. Often the clearest Divine designation is apparent where there has been no human sanction. 2. Qualification. Whom Christ ordains He qualifies. This may be independent of human qualifications, or it may include them. There are posts for which Christ ordains a man where they would be in the way. There are others where they are imperative. In the latter case He works in us the desire to amass learning, eloquence, &c., and sanctifies these and other gifts to the accomplishment of His purposes. III. ITS WORKS. 1. "That ye should go and bring forth fruit" in two senses. (1) In the graces of personal character; because these are often the means of successful evangelism, and without them a man in the highest office is but a "sounding brass," &c. (2) In conversions to God. This is the grand outcome of all spiritual ministries. 2. "That your fruit should remain." (1) Of what value are the "fruits of the Spirit" unless permanent? Of what value is faith if to-morrow we are unbelieving? Of love if it alternates with hatred? Of joy if it is drowned in despondency? &c. (2) Of what value to a Church are converts unless they "remain"? The curse of modern times is great ingatherings, followed by great fallings away. IV. ITS PRIVILEGE. Prayer—1. Keeps alive our sense of the Divine choice, and maintains our position as chosen ones. 2. Augments our personal and official qualifications. "Without Me ye can do nothing." "I can do all things through Christ," &c. 3. Ensures abiding success in our work. (*J. W. Burn.*) **That ye should go and bring forth fruit.**—*The fruit:*—1. Fruitfulness is the great end of God's ordinances in the vegetable kingdom. It is the focus into which all the various secondary purposes of nature are concentrated. And is it not so in the kingdom of grace? For the fruitfulness of those who love God the whole material system of the earth is upheld; and the whole spiritual world exists and revolves on its axis, that the harvest of spiritual life may be produced in the Church and in the believer. 2. But while fruitfulness is the great end of vegetable life, there are some plants in which this quality is of more importance than in others. It is necessary that every plant should bring forth fruit in order to propagate itself; but, besides this, some plants confer benefits upon the rest of creation by means of their fruit. Like the cow, which produces more milk than its progeny needs; and the bee, which stores a larger quantity of honey than it requires; the vine produces a fruit whose exceptional excess of nourishness is

intended for the use of man. Fruit is not so important to the vine itself as it is to man. We grow some plants in order to produce seed; but we can perpetuate the vine by slips, and, therefore, we grow it solely to supply man's wants. 3. Apart from its fruit, the vine is, indeed, a beautiful plant; but this is subordinate to the one great purpose of producing grapes: and did it cease to produce fruit it would be condemned as a failure. It was for the sake of the fruit of salvation—the redemption of a fallen world—that God cultivated His own Son by the sufferings which He endured. And as with the Vine Himself, so with the branches. The Husbandman of souls grafts these branches in the Vine for the special purpose of producing spiritual fruit; and if this result does not follow, no mere natural beauty or grace will compensate. And so Christ speaks as if in the bringing forth of fruit was summed up all duty and privilege. God's glory is the chief end of man; but "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." God requires of us to believe in Christ; but faith is the root of fruitfulness. Faith and fruit are not distinct; but, on the contrary, the same thing at different periods of existence; just as the fruit of autumn is the seed of spring, and *vice versâ*. God desires our highest happiness; but our highest happiness is indissolubly linked together with our fruitfulness. No man can have a continual feast of gladness who is barren and unfruitful. And here we come to the great outstanding question—I. WHAT IS THE REAL SIGNIFICANCE OF FRUIT? 1. The fruit of a plant is simply an arrested and metamorphosed branch. The bud of a plant which, under the ordinary laws of vegetation, would have elongated into a leafy branch, remains, in a special case, shortened, and develops finally, according to some regular law, blossom and fruit instead. Its further growth is thus stayed; it has attained the end of its existence; its life terminates with the ripe fruit that drops off to the ground. In producing blossom and fruit, therefore, a branch sacrifices itself, yields up its own individual vegetative life for the sake of another life that is to spring from it, and to perpetuate the species. Every annual plant dies when it has produced blossom and fruit; every individual branch in a tree which corresponds with an annual plant also dies when it has blossomed and fruited. Fruit-trees are the most short-lived of all trees; and cultivated fruit-trees are less vigorous in growth, and do not last so long as the wild varieties. Producing larger and more abundant fruit than is natural, they necessarily so much the more exhaust their vital energies. Every blossom is a Passion-flower. The sign of the cross, which superstitious eyes saw in one mystical flower, the enlightened eye sees in every blossom that opens to the summer sun. The great spiritual principle which every blossom shadows forth is—self-sacrifice. And is it not most instructive to notice that it is in this self-sacrifice of the plant that all its beauty comes out and culminates? 2. And is it not so in the kingdom of grace? Christian fruit is an arrestment and transformation of the branch in the True Vine. Instead of growing for its own ends, it produces the blossoms of holiness and the fruits of righteousness for the glory of God and the good of men. The Christian life begins in self-sacrifice. We can bring forth no fruit that is pleasing to God until, besought by His mercies, we yield ourselves a living sacrifice to Him. And in this self-sacrifice all the beauty of the Christian life comes out and culminates. The life that lives for another, in so doing bursts into flower, and shows its brightest hues, and yields its sweetest fragrance. All given to Christ is received back a hundredfold. Have we not seen the glory of self-sacrifice ennobling even the aspect of the countenance, the expression of the eye, the carriage of the form, making the plainest and homliest face beautiful and heroic? II. IT IS FRUIT AND NOT WORKS THAT THE BELIEVER PRODUCES. 1. Work and fruit are contrasted in a very striking manner at the close of Gal. v.;—"the works of the flesh"—"the fruit of the Spirit." This contrast is very instructive. Works bear upon them the curse of Adam. They are wrought in the sweat of the brow and in the sweat of the soul. All that a natural man does comes under the category of works. And even in the case of believers, some things which they do are works, because they are the result of a legal and servile spirit. Such works are only like those of a manufacturer, which display his skill and power, but do not reveal character. You cannot tell what kind of a man he is who makes your furniture from his productions. You may be able to say that he is a clever workman, but not that he is a wise, a good, or an upright man. But fruit, on the other hand, is the spontaneous natural manifestation of the life within. The soul that has the life and the love of Christ in it cannot help producing fruit. Fruit is the free, unrestrained outpouring of a heart at peace with God, filled with the love of Christ, and stimulated by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The curse is removed

from it. It brings back the pure and innocent conditions of Eden. The whole man is displayed in it, as the whole life of the tree is gathered into and manifested in its fruit. By their fruit we know believers as well as trees. 2. It is fruit that Christ wants, not works; because it is the free-will offering of a heart of love, not the constrained service of fear or of law, and because He studies the individual character and regulates His discipline according to individual requirements. If works were what He desired, He could order Christians in the mass to do them, caring nothing for any one of them in particular. But, in order to produce fruit, His sap must flow to, His personal influence must reach, the smallest twig, the humblest individual that yields it. 3. How significant in the light of this idea is the reward promised—"a crown of life." It is not an arbitrary reward from without, but the fruit of their own efforts—a living crown, the crown of their own life. It is with us as it is with some mountains whose deepest or primary formations appear on the summit, which are not mere masses laid in dead weight upon the surface of the earth, but the protrusion of their own energies. So we are crowned with the deepest and most essential part of our own life. Our highest summit is our deepest foundation. Our crown of life is that which we ourselves have formed, and which passes through our own being. Heaven is the fruit of what we have sown, the living crown of the life that we have lived. III. IT IS FRUIT, AND NOT FRUITS, WHICH THE BRANCH IN THE TRUE VINE PRODUCES. The "fruit" of the Spirit is not so many apples growing on separate twigs and having no organic connection except as produced by the same tree. It is a bunch of grapes, all growing from one stalk and united to each other in the closest manner. Each grace is, as it were, a separate berry, connected with the others by organic ties, and forming a complete cluster. It should be the Christian's endeavour, therefore, that the whole cluster should appear—each grape full formed and in due proportion to the rest. IV. IT IS HEAVENLY, AND NOT EARTHLY, FRUIT THAT THE HUSBANDMAN DEMANDS. 1. The fruits of Egypt were melons and cucumbers, grown close to the earth; while its vegetables were leeks, onions, and garlic, which are not fruits at all, but roots. It is such low earth-born fruits that the natural man produces, and for which alone he has a relish. All his tendencies and labours are earthward. The cucumber and the melon are climbing plants by nature; they have tendrils to raise them up among the trees, but they are cultivated on the ground, and therefore their tendrils are useless. So every man has tendrils of hopes and aspirations that were meant to raise him above the world, but he perverts them from their proper purpose, and they run among earthly things utterly wasted. In marked contrast with the earth-borne fruits of Egypt were the fruits of the Holy Land. It is a mountainous country, on which everything is lifted above the world. The people went literally, as well as spiritually, *up* from Egypt to Palestine, *up* to God's house. Its fruits were grown on trees, raised up from the ground and ripening in the pure air and bright sunshine of heaven. Believers are *risen* with Christ. They are not merely elevated a little, but are raised to being fruits in the sky. V. THE FRUIT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS PERMANENT. "That your fruit should remain." 1. In spring, when the blossoms have withered and fallen off, a large proportion of these blossoms leave behind young fruits that have actually set. These fruits grow for a few weeks, acquire shape, become tinted with colour, cheat the eye with the hope of a rich harvest of ripe and full-formed fruit in autumn. But, alas! ere long, they wither and fall. And is it not so with the fruits which unsanctified man produces? They are beautiful in blossom; they minister to his self-glorification and enjoyment; they delude him with fair promises; but they never come to maturity and abide. They are fruits that *set*, but do not ripen. On every brow we see care planting his wrinkles—bare, wintry branches, whose stem is rooted in the heart, from which have fallen, one after another, the fairest fruits of life, and which, through future springs and summers, will bear no more leaves or fruit. 2. But in contrast with all the passing and perishing fruits of earth, we have the abiding fruits of righteousness. It is the glorious distinction of the fruit which Christ enables us to produce that it endures. How literally were these words fulfilled in the case of the disciples themselves! Of all the works of all the men who were living eighteen hundred years ago, what is remaining now? But twelve poor uneducated peasants went forth, and where is the fruit of their labours? Look around! And what is thus true of the glorious fruit of the disciples, is also true of the humblest fruit of the humblest Christian. What has been done for God cannot be lost or forgotten. As the Tree upon which the Christian is grafted as a branch is the Tree of Life, so the fruit that he brings

forth when nourished by its sap is "fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." VI. IN THE GRAPE THERE ARE TWO PARTS, THAT SERVE TWO PURPOSES—there is a fleshy, or succulent part, and there are the seeds embedded in the core, or interior. 1. The fleshy part is for nourishment; the seeds are intended to perpetuate the plant. And so every fruit of the Spirit contains these two parts—holiness and usefulness. Personal holiness is the succulent nourishing portion, delighting God and man; and embedded in it is the seed of usefulness. An earnest desire to extend the blessings of the gospel is an invariable result of their true enjoyment. What the soul has received it would communicate. 2. There are cases in nature in which the fruit swells and becomes, to all appearance, perfect, while no seeds are produced. Seedless oranges and grapes are often met with. And is there not good cause to fear that too much of what is called Christian fruit contains no seed with the embryo spark of life in it, although it may seem fair and perfectly formed? What should go to develop the seed of righteousness for others is diverted to the production of greater self-righteousness and self-indulgence. Many Christians are satisfied with enjoying themselves spiritual blessings which they ought to communicate to others. They are pampered in the selfish use of privileges and means of grace. Moreover, it is necessary that the fruit should have pulp as well as seed; that the perpetuating principle of righteousness should be imbedded in all that is lovely, and amiable, and of good report. The fruits of some Christians are harsh and hard as the wild hips on the hedges—all seed and no luscious pulp. They are zealous in recommending religion to others, while they do not exhibit the amenities of it themselves. (*H. Macmillan, D.D.*) *Fruit bearing*:—The wonder of fruit growing. What nature does, men and women and children are to do. Lives are to be fruitful lives. This what those of the apostles were. Results of their labours. The fruit remains. Different kinds of moral and spiritual fruit. I. THOSE HARMFUL OR USELESS. 1. Crab-apples and sour cherries, emblems of crabbed tempers, sour looks, and general disagreeableness. Cross temper. Sour temper. Sharp temper. Spiteful temper. Surly temper. Fretful temper. 2. Poison berries. Fair seeming, but death within. Selfishness. Hatred. Falsehood. Revenge. Hypocrisy. False friendship. 3. Hips and haws. Disorder. Idleness. Procrastination. II. GOOD FRUITS. Don't grow by accident. Faith the root. Cultivated. 1. Loving obedience and goodness at home. 2. Kindness, brightness, cheerfulness. 3. Prayerfulness. 4. Consecration. 5. Attendance on means of grace. 6. Work for others. Such fruits remain in their effects, influence, and blessedness. Those that he planted in the house of the Lord, &c. (*Preacher's Monthly.*) *Continuance the test of religious profession*:—1. There are few things which, as we grow older, impress us more deeply than the transitoriness of thoughts and feelings. Places and persons that we once thought we never could forget, as years go on are all but quite forgotten; and so with feelings. And there is no respect in which this is more sadly felt than in the case of pious feelings and holy resolutions. We often think sadly of those whose goodness was like the morning cloud and the early dew. We sometimes fear lest we have been deluding ourselves with the belief that we were better and safer than we ever have been, and mourn for the soul-refreshing views, the earnest purpose, the warm affections, of the days when we first believed in Christ. 2. No doubt, by the make of our being, as we grow older, we grow less capable of emotion. Religion in the soul, after all, is a matter of fixed choice and resolution, of principle rather than of feeling. And yet it remains a great and true principle, that in the matter of Christian faith and feelings, that which lasts longest is best. This, indeed, is true of most things. The worth of anything depends much upon its durability. It is not the gaudy annual we value most, but the stedfast forest tree. The slight triumphal-arch, run up in a day, may flout the sober-looking buildings near it; but they remain after it is gone. The fairest profession, the most earnest labours, the most ardent affection for a time, will not suffice. *That* only is the true fruit of the Spirit, which does not wear out with advancing time. The text hints to us that it is even a harder thing to keep up a consistent Christian profession—year after year, through temptations, through troubles—than to make it, however fairly, at the first. I. IT IS ONLY BY OUR FRUIT REMAINING THAT WE ARE WARRANTED IN BELIEVING THAT IT IS THE RIGHT FRUIT. The only satisfactory proof, either to ourselves or to others, that our Christian faith, and hope, and charity, are the true fruits of the Spirit is that they last. In religion, the fruit which "remains" is the only fruit. Anything else is a pretender. Herein is a point of difference between worldly and spiritual things. It would not be just to say that things which wear out have no

value. Who shall say that the flower which blooms in the morning and withers before the sunset is not a fair and kind gift of the Creator? Who shall affirm that the summer sunset is not beautiful, though even while we gaze upon it its hues are fading? Who shall deny that there is something precious in the lightsome glee of childhood, even though in a little while that cheerful face is sure to be shadowed by the cares of manhood? Indeed, the beauty and value of many things in this world are increased by the shortness of the time for which they last. But it is not thus with Christian grace. If it be not a grace which will last for ever, it is no grace at all. A man may show every appearance of being a true disciple; but if his zeal wanes and expires, if the throne of grace is deserted, the Bible neglected, and the little task of Christian philanthropy abandoned, how much reason there is then to fear lest the man was deceiving himself with a name to live while he was dead—that he was mistaking the transient warmth of mere human emotion for the gracious working of the Holy Spirit of God! II. "FRUIT WHICH REMAINS" IS THE ONLY KIND OF CHRISTIAN PROFESSION WHICH WILL RECOMMEND RELIGION TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT CHRISTIANS. Men judge of religion by the conduct and character of its professors. And just as a humble, consistent believer is a letter of recommendation of Christianity to all who know him, just so is the inconsistent believer's life a something to make them doubt whether religion be a real thing, and not a mere matter of profession and pretence. No one but God can tell how much harm is done by the Christian who, in his new-born zeal, disdains the quiet faith of old disciples who have long walked consistently, but whose zeal passes like the morning cloud and the early dew. Oh! far better the modest fruit of the Spirit, which makes little show at first, but which *remains* year after year. Conclusion: The same power which implanted the better life within must keep it alive day by day; the continual working of the Spirit must foster the fruits of the Spirit; and that Spirit is to be had for the asking in fervent, humble prayer. Let us watch against the first symptoms of declension in religion; remember that spiritual decline begins in the closet; guard against that worldly spirit which is always ready to creep over us; seek to walk by faith, and not by sight; be diligent in the use of all the appointed means of grace, and vigilant in guarding against every approach of temptation; and seek to have our loins girt and our lamps burning, as those who do not know how soon or suddenly the Bridegroom may come. (*A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.*) *Religious permanence:*—Think of the Speaker Himself! He is near unto His end. Will He indeed remain? Listen to the angry roar of the multitude, "Away with Him!" If an artist of that age had been asked to put on fresco the permanent, would he have chosen "the Christ"? He might have selected the emperor, or Jerusalem's marble temple; but he would scarcely have selected the Saviour when He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. But our Lord Himself? Did He not know the secret of permanence? Full well we know His thoughts. "I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me." "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." The same spiritual permanence He would see in all His professed disciples. Let them but abide in Him, and then the branch would be as the vine! Fruit is to remain—I. IN PRINCIPLE. Religion is founded on the permanence of the moral nature. It lays hold on the eternally right and true within us. Religion without principle is but a Jonah's gourd. There may be beauty in our life, but there must be strength, or the beauty itself will be but the hectic flush of consumption. Think of a divine teacher who had to suit his thesis of virtue to education or country! No! His virtue was Sinai etherealized and glorified, but it was the same virtue. Christ has made morality living and real. His principles will live on in every age. None can displace them until men have denied the conscience within them. His words still are spirit, still are life. Thus, then, if we are Christians, we shall be firm and strong in moral principle. Ours will be no sentimental life. II. IN INFLUENCE. We are so to live that *others* may gather fruit from our lives when we are gone. We say Milton lives, and Baxter, and Pascal. True. The lustre of noble words and beautiful deeds lingers on, yea, even brightens with time. But the humblest life also lives on in the future years. The permanent influence is not that of the mere orator, thinker, or theologian. Brilliant epochs do not make lives. It is easy to fulfil special tasks, to enter upon some memorable struggle with all eyes fixed upon us. It is difficult in daily life, amid the distraction of little things, to be faithful, patient, earnest unto the end. III. IN FEELING. The emotional nature is not to be crushed, or even relegated to an inferior place. No life is beautiful that is a stranger to tenderness or tears. But unless the heart keeps alive affection, all else will suffer; for we were made to

love, and our influence will cease if that dies out. Why should emotion be a transient thing, to be apologized for or treated with affected criticism as unmanly? Christ was moved with compassion. Feeling should be permanent. Why not? We need not exhaust it by stimulants, nor mortgage the emotion of to-morrow by drawing upon its exchequer to-day. Within us all there ought to be a nature which the Divine memories of the gospel always touch with tenderness. IV. IN ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR. As flowers retire into themselves at eventide, so too often do men and women. There is lassitude or languor *not* born of physical weakness, but of mental ennui, which too often comes in the evening of life. It is a characteristic of a true Christian faith that it vivifies all eras of life. For there can be no preserved sanctities of service where there is no delight in the dear old ways, no true fountains of joy in God. When men lose interest, you cannot quicken their energy. Appeal will not do it, nor arguments, nor firmness of will. A regiment in which there are grey-headed soldiers is likely to have enduring men in it; and a Christian army in which the veterans do not tire is not only a beautiful spectacle, but constitutes a brave contingent for the war. V. IMMORTALITY. (*W. M. Statham.*)

Ver. 17. **These things I command you that ye love one another** (see ver. 12).—*Love in the Christian system:*—The work is all love: love in its hidden source the love of the Father; in its first manifestation, the love of Christ; and lastly, in its full outpouring, the love of believers for each other. Love is its root, its stem, its fruit. It forms the essential characteristic of the new kingdom, whose power and conquests are owing solely to the contagion of love. This is why our Lord left no other law but that of love to those who had by faith become members of His body. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Brotherly love:*—As the spokes of a carriage-wheel approach their centre, they approach each other: so also, when men are brought to Jesus Christ, the centre of life and hope, they are drawn towards each other in brotherly relationship, and stand side by side journeying to their heavenly home. (*J. F. Serjeant.*) *Christian love:*—When a rose-bud is formed, if the soil is soft, and the sky is genial, it is not long before it bursts; for the life within is so abundant, that it can no longer contain it all, but in blossomed brightness and swimming fragrance it must needs let forth its joy, and gladden all the air. And if, when thus ripe, it refused to expand, it would quickly rot at heart, and die. And Christian love is just piety with its petals fully spread, developing itself, and making it a happier world. The religion which fancies that it loves God, when it never evinces love to its brother, is not piety, but a poor mildewed theology, a dogma with a worm in the heart. (*J. Hamilton, D.D.*)

Vers. 18-25. **If the world hate you.**—*Kosmos: unregenerate humanity*—is here presented. I. AS GLOWING WITH HATE. 1. It was a hatred of goodness. To hate the mean, the selfish, the false, the dishonest, and morally dishonourable would be right. But evil was not the object of their hatred. (1) It was good as embodied in the life of Christ. "It hated Me before it hated you." How deep, burning, persistent, and cruelly operative was this enmity from Bethlehem to Calvary. (2) It was good as reflected in His disciples. Just so far as they imbibed and reflected the Spirit of Christ were they hated. "For My name's sake." 2. It was a hatred developed in persecution. It was not a hatred that slumbered in a passion or that went off even in abusive language, it prompted the infliction of the greatest cruelties. The history of true Christians in all ages has been a history of persecution. 3. It was a hatred without a just reason. "Without a cause." Of course they had a "cause." The doctrines of goodness clashed with their deep rooted prejudices, its policy with their daily procedure, its eternal principles flashed on their consciences and exposed their wickedness. But their "cause" was the very reason why they ought to have loved Christ. Christ knew and stated the cause of the hatred (ver. 19). 4. It was a hatred forming a strong reason for brotherly love amongst the disciples. Christ begins His forewarning them of it by urging them to love one another (ver. 17). As your enemies outside of you are strong in their passionate hostility towards you, be you compactly welded together in mutual love. Unity is strength. II. AS LOADED WITH RESPONSIBILITY (ver. 22). These words must, of course, be taken in their comparative sense. Before He came amongst them the guilt of their nation had been augmenting for centuries, and they had been filling up the measure of their iniquities. But great as was their sin before He came it was trifling compared to it now since His advent amongst them. 1. Had He not come they would not have known

the sin of hating Him. Hatred towards the best of beings, the incarnation of goodness, is sin in its most malignant form, it was the culmination of human depravity. But had they not known Him they could not have hated Him, the heart is dead to all objects outside the region of knowledge. 2. Had He not come they would not have rejected Him. "He came to His own and His own received Him not." The rejection of Him involved the most wicked folly, the most heartless ingratitude, the most daring impiety. "If they which despised Moses' law died without mercy under two witnesses," &c. 3. If He had not come they would not have crucified Him. What crime on the long black catalogue of human wickedness is to be compared to this? Conclusion: 1. Good men accept the moral hostility of the unregenerate world. Your great Master taught you to accept it. It is in truth a test of your character and an evidence of your Christliness. 2. Nominal Christians read your doom. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The world*:—The children of this world as distinguished from the children of God. Called the world as indicating number, confederacy, and spirit. Three characteristics. I. GOVERNED BY SENSE. II. LIVING FOR THE PRESENT. III. RULED BY THE OPINIONS AND CUSTOMS OF MEN. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The world*:—The world of John's day we know, as to its actual condition, from other sources. Let any one turn over the pages of Tacitus, Martial, or Persius, and what he learns will put "colour" into John's outlines: nay, one dare not say, "turn over their pages," for some of them can scarcely be read without hurt by the saintliest living. The same "world"—at heart—we still find in the present century, under modern conditions. It has grown in wealth. It has become civilized and refined. Law has become a mightier thing. The glory of science was never half so radiant. But, looking close in, we still find the old facts—a dislike of God and love of sin, pride and self-sufficiency, a godless and selfish use of things, men "hating one another," selfishness fighting selfishness—an infinite mass of misery. Look beyond the borders of comfort and respectability, and think of what exists to-day round about us. Think of the unblest poverty that is growing side by side with enormous wealth and luxury, associated in many cases with vice and crime, crushing the spirit in ways that comfortable people cannot understand, and frequently aggravated by the temper in which it is borne, and by added evils which do not properly belong to it. Think of the ignorance that has grown to such proportions under the very shadow of our schools and churches. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *Sheep among wolves*:—1. These words strike a discord in the midst of sweet music. The keynote of all that has preceded has been love, and just because it binds the disciples to Christ in a sacred community, it separates them from those who do not share in His life, and hence there result two communities—the Church and the World; and the antagonism between these is perpetual. 2. Our Lord is here speaking with special reference to the apostles, who were "sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." If we may trust tradition, every one of that little company died a martyr's death, with the exception of John. But there is no more reason for restricting the force of these words to the hearers, than there is for restricting any of the rest of this discourse. I. WHAT MAKES THIS HOSTILITY INEVITABLE? Our Lord here prepares His hearers for what is coming by putting it in the gentle form of an hypothesis. The frequency with which "if" occurs in this section is very remarkable, but the tense of the original shows us that, whilst the form is hypothetical, the substance of it is prophetic. Jesus points to two things which make this hostility inevitable. 1. If we share Christ's life, we must necessarily, in some measure, share His fate (ver. 18.) He is the typical example of what the world thinks of, and does to, goodness. And all who have the spirit of life which was in Jesus Christ will come under the same influences which carried Him to the cross. In a world like this it is impossible for a man to "love righteousness and hate iniquity," and to order his life accordingly, without treading on somebody's corns. 2. And then (ver. 19), there are two bands, and the fundamental principles that underlie each are in deadly antagonism. We stand in diametrical opposition in thought about God, self, duty, life, death, the future; and that opposition goes right down to the bottom of things, and, however it may be covered over, there is a gulf, as in some of those American cañons: the towering banks may be very near—but a yard or two seems to separate them; but they go down for thousands and thousands of feet, and never get any nearer each other, and between them at the bottom a black, sullen river flows. If the world loves you it is because ye are of it. II. HOW THIS HOSTILITY IS MASKED AND MODIFIED. 1. There are a great many bonds that unite men together besides religion or its absence. There are the domestic ties, the associations of commerce

and neighbourhood, surface identities of opinion. We have all the same affections and needs, do the same sort of things. So there is a film of roofing thrown over the gulf. You can make up a crack in a wall with plaster after a fashion, and it will hide the solution of continuity that lies beneath. But, let bad weather come, and the bricks gape apart as before. And so, as soon as we get down below the surface of things and come to grapple with real, deep-lying, and formative principles of a life, we come to antagonism. 2. Then the world has got a dash of Christianity into it. Thus Christian men and others have, to a large extent, a common code of morality, as long as you keep on the surface; and do a great many things from substantially the same motives. And thus the gulf is partly bridged over; and so the hostility takes another form. We do not wrap Christians up in pitch and stick them up for candles in the emperor's garden nowadays, but the same thing can be done in different ways. Newspaper articles, the light laugh of scorn, the whoop of exultation over the failures or faults of any prominent man that has stood out boldly on Christ's side; all these indicate what lies below the surface, and sometimes not so very far below. Many a young man in a warehouse, trying to live a godly life, many a workman, commercial traveller, student, has to find out that there is a great gulf between him and the man that sits close to him; and that he cannot be faithful to his Lord and at the same time down to the depths of his being a friend of one who has no friendship to his Master. 3. And again the world has a conscience that responds to goodness, though grumblingly. After all, men do know that it is better and wiser to be like Christ, and that cannot but modify to some extent the manifestations of the hostility. But it is there all the same. Let a man for Christ's sake avow unpopular beliefs, let him boldly seek to apply Christian principles to the fashionable and popular sins of his class or of his country, and what a chorus will be yelping at his heels! The law remains still, if any man will be a friend of the world he is at enmity with God. III. How YOU MAY ESCAPE THE HOSTILITY. A half-Christianized world and a more than half-secularised Church get on well together. And it is a miserable thing to reflect that about the average Christianity of this generation there is so very little that does deserve the antagonism of the world. Why should the world care to hate a professing Church, large tracts of which are only a bit of the world under another name? If you want to escape the hostility drop your flag, button your coat over the badge that shows that you belong to Christ, and do the thing that the people round about you do, and you will have a perfectly easy and undisturbed life. Of course, a Christianity that winks at commercial immoralities is very welcome on the exchange, a Christianity that lets beer barrels alone may reckon upon having publicans for its adherents, a Christianity that blesses flags and sings *Te Deums* over victories will get its share of the spoil. If the world can put a hook in the nostrils of leviathan, and make him play with its maidens, it will substitute good nature, half contemptuous, for the hostility which our Master here predicts. Christian men and woman! be you sure that you deserve the hostility which my text predicts. IV. How TO MEET THIS ANTAGONISM. 1. Reckon it as a sign and test of our true union with Jesus Christ. Let us count the reproach of Christ as a treasure to be proud of, and to be guarded. 2. Be sure that it is your goodness, and not your evils or your weakness, that men dislike. The world has a very keen eye, and it is a good thing that it has, for the faults of professing Christians. Many bring down a great deal of deserved hostility upon themselves and of discredit upon Christianity; and then they comfort themselves and say they are bearing the reproach of the Cross. Not a bit of it. Be you careful for this, that it is Christ in you that men turn from, and not you yourself and your weakness and sin. 3. Meet this antagonism by not dropping your standard one inch. If you begin to haul it down where are you going to stop? Nowhere, until you have got it draggling in the mud at your foot. It is no use trying to conciliate by compromise. All that we shall gain by that will be indifference and contempt. 4. Meet hostility with unmoved, patient, Christ-like, and Christ-derived love and sympathy. The patient sunshine pours upon the glaciers and melts the thick-ribbed ice at last into sweet water. The patient sunshine beats upon the mist-clouds and breaks up its edges and scatters it at the last. And our Lord here tells us that our experience, if we are faithful to Him, will be like His experience, in that some will hearken to our word though others will persecute, and to some our testimony will come as a message from God that draws them to the Lord Himself. The only conqueror of the world is the love that was in Christ breathed through us. The only way to overcome the world's hostility is by turning the world into a church. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 19. **If ye were of the world the world, would love his own.**—*The pedigree and position of true men*:—I. THE PEDIGREE OF TRUE MEN. 1. They were once in the world. That world is characterized by—(1) Practical athiesm. They who make it up are without God, if not avowedly, at least in spirit, conduct and aim. (2) Imperial materialism. They have no practical recognition of a spiritual universe, relationship, obligation. They walk after the flesh, and seek their happiness, wealth, dignity in earthly things. (3) Dominant selfishness. Each one is governed by selfish interests. These are the goal towards which their steps are directed; the idol they worship. 2. They have been brought out of the world by Christ. No one but Christ can bring men out of such a state. Philosophy, civilization, natural religion are powerless. Christ penetrates men with the idea of the true God. He draws the curtain of materialism and reveals the spiritual world. He destroys selfishness and constrains men with His own love. This work is represented by an emancipation, regeneration, resurrection, creation—and none of these words are too strong. II. THE POSITION OF TRUE MEN. They are rendered repugnant to the world by Christ. 1. The hatred of the world to true men is of the same kind as that which Christ experienced. The forms of persecution change, but the spirit remains. If it is prevented from mangling the body, it will mangle the reputation. 2. Then hatred is for the same reason. The world hated Christ because—(1) His purity condemned their depravity. (2) His benevolence their selfishness. (3) His humility their pride. (4) His truth their prejudices. (5) His spirituality their carnal pleasures. For these reasons now the world hates true men. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The world we have renounced*:—1. Perhaps there is no word more commonly in our mouth than "the world;" and yet hardly any to which we attach less clear and certain meaning, Indeed, the sense intended by it varies according to the character of the person that uses it. Some people denounce the world as unmixed evil; some say it is for the most part good, or at least innocent: some profess to see its deceitful workings everywhere; some will see them nowhere: some make their religion to consist in a separation from the world; some think the field of their religious duty is in the world: in a word, there is little or no agreement or certainly but in this, that there is such a power and reality as the world, and that it is of great moment to us to know what it is. 2. In its original sense, the world is altogether good. By the work and will of God it is all sinless and pure. It is only in its second intention that the world has an evil sense; but that sense is its prevailing and true one—"the world" is the creation of God as it is possessed by sin and death. So subtle and far-spreading is the original sin of man, that no living soul is without a taint. The original sin was not a measured quantity, so to speak, of evil, which, like a hereditary disease, might exhaust itself in the course of two or three descents. Every several generation renewed it afresh; every several man reproduced it, and sustained the tradition of evil by example, habit, and license; it was perpetuated in races, nations, families; by custom, usage, law. And what is this great tradition of human thought and will, action and imagination, with all its illusions, misjudgments, indulgences, and abuses of God's creatures, but the world? We mean by it something external to our minds, and yet not identical with the creation of God; something which has thrust itself between it and us; something parasitical, which has fastened upon all God's works, and has wound itself into its inmost action, and into its very being. I. It is true to DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD, as between things antagonistic and irreconcilable: for the Son of God, by His incarnation and atonement, and by the calling and mission of His apostles, has founded and built up in the earth a visible kingdom, which has no other Head but Him alone. That visible kingdom is so taken out of the world, that a man must either be in it or out of it; and must, therefore, be either in the Church or in the world. In the visible kingdom of Christ are all the graces and promises of life; in the world are the powers and traditions of death. II. But it is no less true to say, that THE WORLD, WHICH IN THE BEGINNING WAS VISIBLY WITHOUT THE CHURCH, IS NOW INVISIBLY WITHIN IT. So long as the world was heathen, it warred against the Church in bitter and relentless persecutions. The two great traditions—the one of God, the other of the world, the powers of the regeneration and of the fall—kept their own integrity by contradiction and perpetual conflict. The Church stood alone—a kingdom ordained of God, having her own princes and thrones, her own judges and tribunals, her own laws and equity, her own public customs and private economy of life. It was when the conversion of individuals drew after it, at last, the whole civil state; when the secular powers, with all their courts, pomps, institutions, laws, judicatures, and

the entire political order of the world, came into the precincts of the Church; then it was that the great tradition of human thought, passion, belief, prejudice, and custom, mingled itself with the unwritten usages of the Church. In the beginning the Church had a sorer and a more fiery trial: but who can say that the peril of souls is not greater now? In those days it was no hard matter to discern between the world and the Church. But now our very difficulty is, to know what is that world which we have renounced; to detect its snares, and to overcome its allurements. . . . I will say, that the state of public morals, the habits of personal and social life, popular amusements, and the policy of governments, so far as they are not under the direct guidance of religion, are examples of the presence and power of that which is properly and truly called "the world." And nobody need fear to add, that the tone and moral effect of all these, except when they are especially guided by religion to a Christian use and purpose, is almost always, in a greater or less degree, at variance with God. This, then, is the world which in our baptism we renounced. It was no remote or imaginary notion, but a present and active reality: that very same principle of original evil which, in all ages, under all shapes, in all places, has issued in lust, pride, covetousness, vainglory. We are not called to separate ourselves from any outward system, but to be inwardly as estranged from the evil that cleaves to the system around us, as if we were not of it. (*Archdeacon Manning.*) *Christians separated from the world*:—It is a remarkable fact, that while the baser metals are diffused through the body of the rocks, gold and silver usually lie in veins; collected together in distinct metallic masses. They are in the rocks but not of them. . . . And as by some power in nature God has separated them from the base and common earths, even so by the power of His grace will he separate His chosen from a reprobate and rejected world. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The believer not of the world*:—When courtiers come down into the country, the common home-bred people possibly think their habits strange; but they care not for that. "It is the fashion at Court." What need, then, have the godly to be so tender-foreheaded, to be out of countenance because the world looks on holiness as a singularity? It is the only fashion in the highest Court,—yea, of the King of kings Himself." (*H. G. Salter.*) *Christians not to compromise with the world*:—That idea is very popular. "Now then, Moses, do not be too strict. Some people are a deal too particular. Those old-fashioned puritanical people are narrow and strait-laced: be liberal and take broader views. Cannot you make a compromise? Tell Pharaoh's daughter you are an Israelite, but that, in consequence of her great kindness, you will also be an Egyptian. Thus you can become an Egypto-Israelite—what a fine blend! Or say an Israelito-Egyptian—with the better part in the front. You see, it seems a simple way out of a difficulty, to hold with the hare and run with the hounds. It saves you from unpleasant decisions and separations. Besides, Jack-of-both-sides has great praise from both parties for his large-heartedness. My hearers, come out, I pray you, one way or the other. If God be God, serve Him; if Baal be God, serve him. If it is right to be an Israelite, be an Israelite; if it is right to be an Egyptian, be an Egyptian. None of your trimming. It will go hard with trimmers at the last great day. When Christ comes to divide the sheep from the goats, there will be no middle sort, and meanwhile you border people will be driven down to hell. May God grant us grace to be decided! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 21–25. **But all these things will they do unto you.**—*The world's hatred, as Christ saw it*:—I. THE WORLD'S IGNORANCE (ver. 21). "The world," in Christ's language, is the aggregate of Godless men. There is no mincing of the matter in the antithesis which Christ here draws; no hesitation, as if there were a great central mass, too bad for a blessing perhaps, but too good for a curse. No! however it may be with the masses beyond the reach of the truth, the men that come into contact with Him, like a heap of metal filings brought into contact with a magnet mass themselves into two bunches, the one, those that yield to the attraction, and the other those that do not. The one is "My disciples," and the other is "the world." And now, says Jesus Christ, all that mass that stands apart from Him, have, as the underlying motive of their conduct and their feelings, a real ignorance of God. 2. Our Lord assumes that He is so completely the revealer of the Divine nature as that any man that looks upon Him has had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with God, and that any man who turns away from Him has lost that opportunity. Out of Him God is not known, and they that turn away from His beneficent manifestation turn their faces to the black North, from which

no light can shine. 3. But there is a deeper meaning than simply the possession of true thoughts concerning the Divine nature. We know God as we know one another; because God is a Person, as we are persons. And the only way to know persons is through familiar acquaintance and sympathy. And so the world which turns away from Christ has no acquaintance with God. This is the surface fact. Our Lord goes on to show what lies below it. II. THE WORLD'S IGNORANCE IN THE FACE OF CHRIST'S LIGHT IS WORSE THAN IGNORANCE: IT IS SIN. 1. Mark how He speaks (vers. 22, 24). He puts before us two forms of His manifestation of the Divine nature by His words and His works. And of these two He puts His words foremost, as being a deeper and more precious and brilliant revelation. Miracles are subordinate, they come as a second source of illumination. The miracle to the word is but like the picture in the child's book to the text, fit for feeble eyes and infantile judgments, but containing far less of the revelation of God than the sacred words. 2. But notice, too, how decisively, and yet sorrowfully, our Lord here makes a claim which, on the lips of any but Himself, would have been mere madness of presumption. Think of any of us saying that our words made all the difference between innocence, ignorance, and criminality! Think of any of us pointing to our actions and saying, in these God is so manifest that not to see Him augurs wickedness, and is condemnation! And yet Jesus Christ says all this. And what is more wonderful, nobody wonders that He says it, and the world believes that He is saying the truth when He says it. How does that come? There is only one answer. He Himself was Divine. 3. But, notice how our Lord here declares that in comparison with the sin of not listening to His words, and being taught by His manifestation, all other sins dwindle into nothing. "If I had not spoken, they had not had sin." That does not mean, of course, that these men would have been clear of all moral delinquency. There were men committing all the ordinary forms of human transgression amongst them. And yet, says Christ, black as these natures are, they are white in comparison with the blackness of the man that, looking into His face, sees nothing there that he should desire. 4. As light grows responsibility grows. The truth that the measure of light is the measure of guilt turns a face of alleviation to the dark place of the earth; but adds weight to the condemnation of you, who are bathed in the light of Christianity. No shadows are so black as those which the intensest sunshine at the tropics casts. III. THE IGNORANCE WHICH IS SIN IS THE MANIFESTATION OF HATRED. 1. Observe our Lord's indentification of Himself with the Father, so that the feelings with which men regard Him are, *ipso facto*, the feelings with which they regard God. 2. You say, "I do not pretend to be a Christian, but I do not hate God. Take the ordinary run of people round about us in the world; if you say God is not in all their thoughts I agree with you, but if you say that they hate God, I do not believe it." Well, do you think it would be possible for a man that loved God to go on for a twelvemonth and never think of the object that he loved? And inasmuch as, deep down in our moral being, there is no such thing as indifference in reference to God, it is clear, that although the word must not be pressed as if it meant conscious and active antagonism—where there is no love there is hate. If a man does not love God, he does not care to please Him. And if obedience is the very lifebreath of love, disobedience or non-obedience are the manifestation of antagonism, and antagonism is the same thing as hate. There is no neutrality in a man's relation to God. It is one thing or other. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." "The friendship of the world is enmity against God." IV. THIS IGNORANCE, WHICH IS SIN AND HATRED, IS UTTERLY IRRATIONAL. (ver. 25). One hears sighing through these words the Master's meek wonder that His love should be so met. The most mysterious and irrational thing in men's whole history and experience is the way in which they recompense God in Christ for what He has done for them. Think of that Cross! Do we not stand ashamed at the absurdity as well as at the criminality of our requital? Causeless love on the one side, and causeless indifference on the other, are the two powers that meet in this mystery—men's rejection of the infinite love of God. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Persecution for Christ's name's sake:—Among all the malefactors you condemn there is not a Christian to be found chargeable with any crime but His name. So much is the hatred of our name above all the advantages of virtue flowing from it. Setting aside all inquiry into the principle of our religion and its Founder, and all knowledge of them, the mere name is laid hold of; the name is attacked; and a word alone prejudges a sect unknown, and its Author also unknown, because they have a name, not because they are convicted. (*Tertullian.*)

Ver. 22. **If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin.**—*Human responsibility* :—The peculiar sin of the Jews, the sin which aggravated above everything their former iniquities, was their rejection of Christ. He had been very plainly described in the prophets, and they who waited for Him rejoiced to see Him. But because Jesus had not the outward garnishing of a prince, they shut their eyes against Him, and were not content till they had crucified Him. Now, the sin of the Jews is every day repeated by the Gentiles. As often as ye hear the Word preached and reject it, so often do you in effect once more pierce the hand and the side. I. IN THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL, THERE IS TO MAN'S CONSCIENCE THE COMING OF OUR LORD. He that despiseth us despiseth not us, but Him that sent us. As for what I may say, as a man, it is but little that I should say it; but if I speak as the Lord's ambassador, take heed that ye slight not the message. Have we not all of us grossly sinned against God, in the neglect that we have often put upon the means of grace? How often have you stayed away from the house of God, when God Himself was speaking there? And when ye have come up, how often ye have heard as though ye heard not. In all this you have despised God, and woe unto you, except ye repent, for 'tis a fearful thing to have despised the voice of Him that speaketh from heaven. II. THE REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL AGGRAVATES MEN'S SIN. Now, understand, we do not increase our condemnation by going to the house of God; we are far more likely to increase it by stopping away; for in stopping away there is a double rejection of Christ: we reject Him even with the outward mind, as well as with the inward spirit. Your sin is not aggravated merely by the hearing of the gospel, but by the wilful and wicked rejection of it when it is heard. Because the man who does this—1. Gets a new sin. Bring me a wild savage who has never listened to the Word. That man may have every sin in the catalogue of guilt except one; but that one I am sure he has not. He has not the sin of rejecting the gospel when it is preached to him. But you, when you hear the gospel, if you have rejected it, you have added a fresh iniquity to all others. "He that believeth not is condemned already," &c. "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did," &c. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin!" &c. To reject Christ destroys a man hopelessly. The murderer, the thief, the drunkard, may yet enter the kingdom of heaven, if, repenting of his sins, he will lay hold on the cross of Christ; but with these sins, a man is inevitably lost, if he believeth not on Christ. Consider what an awful sin this is. There is murder in this; for if the man on the scaffold rejects a pardon, does he not murder himself? There is pride in this; for you reject Christ, because your proud hearts have turned you aside. There is high treason in this; for you reject a king. 2. He aggravates all the rest. You cannot sin so cheap as other people, you, who have had the gospel. He who sins ignorantly hath some little excuse; but he who sins against light and knowledge sins presumptuously; and under the law there was no atonement for this. III. THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL TAKES AWAY ALL EXCUSE FROM THOSE WHO HEAR IT AND REJECT IT. "Now have they no cloke for their sin." A cloak is a very poor covering for sin, when there is an all-seeing eye to look through it. In the great day of the tempest of God's wrath a cloak will be a very poor shelter; but still man is always fond of a cloak. And so it is with you; you will gather, if you can, an excuse for your sin, and when conscience pricks you, you seek to heal the wound with an excuse. And even in the day of judgment, although a cloak will be a sorry covering, yet it will be better than nothing at all. "But now ye have no cloke for your sin." The traveller is left in the rain without his covering, exposed to the tempest without that garment which once did shelter him. Notice how the preaching of the gospel takes away all cloaks for sin. 1. One man might get up and say, "I did not know I was doing wrong when I committed such and such an iniquity." Now, that you cannot say. God has by His law told you solemnly what is wrong. If the Mahommedan commits lust, I doubt not his conscience doth prick him, but his sacred books give him liberty. But you profess to believe your Bibles, and therefore when you sin, you do wilfully violate a well-known law. 2. Again you might say, "When I sinned, I did not know how great would be the punishment." Of this also, by the gospel, you are left without excuse; for did not Jesus Christ tell you, that those who will not have Him shall be cast into outer darkness? 3. But some of you may say, "Ah, I heard the gospel, and I knew that I was doing wrong, but I did not know what I must do to be saved." Is there one among you who can urge such an excuse as this? "Believe and live" is preached every day in your hearing. 4. I can hear another say, "I heard the gospel preached, but I never had a good example set me." Some of you may say that, and it would be

partially true; but there are others of you, concerning whom this would be a lying excuse. Ah! man; you have been very fond of speaking of the inconsistencies of Christians. But there was one Christian whom you knew, and whose character you were compelled to admire. It was your mother. That has always been the one difficulty with you up to this day. You could have rejected the gospel very easily, but your mother's example stood before you, and you could not overcome that. 5. But others of you can say that you had no such mother; your first school was the street, and the first example you ever had was that of a swearing father. Recollect, there is one perfect example—Christ. 6. One more excuse is this: "I had many advantages, but they were never sent home to my conscience so that I felt them." Now, there are very few of you here who can say that. No, you have not always been unmoved by the gospel; you have grown old now, and it takes a deal to stir you, but it was not always so. IV. I have now as it were to PRONOUNCE THE SENTENCE OF CONDEMNATION. For those who live and die rejecting Christ there is a most fearful doom. They shall perish with an utter destruction. There are degrees of punishment; but the highest degree is given to the man who rejects Christ. The liar and the whoremonger, and drunkards shall have their portion—whom do you suppose with?—with unbelievers; as if hell was made first of all for unbelievers. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Cloaks for sin: or excuses removed:*—No excuse for sin? That is a strange statement. Excuses have been one of the specialties of each sinner's stock-in-trade from Eden. These "cloaks for sin" are "always on hand." And yet Christ declares of those who wickedly and presumptuously reject the offered pardon and guidance, that they have no good excuse, "no cloak for their sin." But you say, I "I have a valid excuse for not being a Christian—THE HYPOCRISIES AND WRONG-DOINGS OF CHURCH MEMBERS." 1. I admit that some rogues are hiding their wolfish hearts under the deceptive wool of churchly professions. As Jacob, by putting hair upon himself and thus professing to be Esau, secured a blessing from blind Isaac, so some bad men have secured credit and confidence by stealing the livery of heaven to serve the devil in. One Sunday morning a dressmaker told her little niece to put on her things and take a bundle of dress goods under her shawl to the house of one of her patrons, remarking, "Nobody will see it." The child replied, "But, Aunty, is it not Sunday under my shawl?" There are some professors to whom church membership is only a shawl to cover up sin. Such an empty profession affords "no cloak for sin." 2. You say then, "I believe in a man living up to what he professes!" I answer, "I believe in a man's daring to profess what he believes." The outward and inward life should fit both ways. Do not think your strange eagerness to point out stains on Christian garments arises from pure love of truth and righteonsness. Look down into your heart and ask, "Why do I so readily hear and so quickly believe and so promptly circulate, without investigation, reports against professing Christians" (Acts viii. 58)? Besides, Christians never profess perfection in conduct, but only in love, with sincere though imperfect efforts toward goodness. II. But another says, "I have a real excuse—A GOOD MORAL LIFE IS A CHRISTIAN LIFE. I gave my old overcoat the other day to a poor man, and I give away to the poor more than anybody knows." Let it be remembered that Dorcas was saved because she was "a disciple." She did not hold up the garments she had made for the poor to cover up the sin of disobeying and rejecting Christ—indeed, she did not exhibit her charity at all; but those to whom she gave them praised her and not her own lips. This effort to cloak our sins is only a repetition of Naaman's effort to hide and heal his leprosy by giving away changes of raiment instead of obeying God in His command. III. Some of you are wrapping yourself in another cloak, which you think is fireproof asbestos—"GOD IS TOO MERCIFUL TO PUNISH ME. I don't believe as you do about future punishment." But the laws of the world assert that there must be punishment or atonement for sin, as well as the Old and New Testaments. But questions about endless punishment cannot fairly be made excuses for any one refusing to accept personal salvation, as the only condition of conversion in the matter of belief is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "I don't believe" is no cloak for sin when God challenges you to test religion. "Come and see." IV. Another WRAP IS, "I AM TRYING TO BE A CHRISTIAN IN A QUIET WAY. I don't believe in talking about it." As well might our soldiers have said in the late war, "We are trying to be loyal, but we don't think that the order to wear blue uniforms and carry the stars and stripes and organize into regiments is essential." V. Another wraps a cloak of mingled humility and pride over his sin as he says, "I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO BE A CHRISTIAN. I'm very conscientious and I couldn't be a Christian without being

a perfect one." Hear that sick man saying, "I'm not well enough yet to send for the Great Physician." VI. Or do you say, "I TRIED THIS THING ONCE AND FAILED?" As well say, "I tried to wear an overcoat but I didn't have it made carefully and it came to pieces in a little while, and so I'll never try to wear another, however cold the winds may blow." Throw away that shivering cloak of past failures as an excuse for sin and have another robe made more thoroughly than your first—the robe of Christ's righteousness. VII. Another cloak is, "I FEAR I SHOULD FAIL AND NOT LIVE UP TO MY PROFESSION. I have very unfavourable surroundings and a peculiar temperament." Exchange that miserable cloak for the sword of Divine help and defence and "the whole armour of God" (Eph. vi. 11.) As to unfavourable surroundings, there were "saints in Cæsar's household," and also in the households of Ahab, Pharaoh, and other famous foes of God. Abraham reared his altar in the very midst of idolaters. VIII. Or do you frankly say, "I COULDN'T BE A CHRISTIAN AND CONTINUE IN MY BUSINESS, and I can't give that up, for a man must live?" Mark you, when every man gives an account of himself to God, church records will never appear in evidence. What is wrong is wrong, whether a man's name is on the church book or not, and it is simply ridiculous to suppose you have a cloak for sin that will wash, because you can say, "My name is not on the church book" (James v. 2). IX. Or do you wave that "cloak for sin" aloft?—"I WANT TO HAVE FUN AND FREEDOM A LITTLE LONGER." "Only use not liberty as a cloak of maliciousness" (1 Pet. ii. 16). Joseph, when tempted by the wife of Potiphar, left the outer robe she had seized upon in her hand and fled, saying, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" X. Or do you offer the excuse, "CAN'T AFFORD TO BE A CHRISTIAN?" The church of Elijah and John the Baptist, with their rough camel's hair coats, and of the widow who gave the two mites, is surely a place for the poorest. Think less of pews and pennies and appearance and more of the penitence and the inward adorning of the hearts. XI. Or do you say by way of excuse, "I'M TOO BUSY TO THINK OF RELIGIOUS MATTERS? The care of the body is about all I can attend to just now." That was Dives' mistake. He was so busy in robing himself and family in purple and fine linen that he left his soul in rags and at last brought himself to hell's robe of fire. XII. OTHER EXCUSES—1. "Too old." "He is able to save unto the uttermost." 2. Too young? As Samuel wore the ephod of a priest at three years of age, so in early life any child may wear the robe of righteousness. 3. Don't feel enough? When you have feeling the tempter will suggest the opposite excuse, "You feel too much excitement." Between these two halves of his shears he is striving to cut in twain your offered robe of righteousness. Conclusion: 1. What comedies are these excuses! To be frank and honest, most are mere quibbling, dilatory motions, talking against time. Such shallow excuses for absence from a business engagement would not be accepted—not even offered, and instead of providing a cloak for our sin, weave another scarlet robe of mockery for the Crucified (Matt. xxvii. 28). When Joseph was called before Pharaoh, he "changed his raiment" (Gen. xli. 14). We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Are you willing to appear there with no change of raiment, wrapped in these ragged excuses? Thank God that a change of raiment, a wedding garment is provided—a real cloak for sin (Isa. lxi. 10). With this robe of Christ's righteousness offered to us a real cloak to cover sin, shall we not, like the returning prodigal, throw away our ragged excuses and accede to that plan of God's infinite love, "bring forth the best robe and put it on him." As Peter threw off his outer robe when he plunged into the sea, that he might the quicker swim to Christ who stood upon the shore; as Lazarus was loosed from the grave-clothes, so let us, lay aside every weight and the cloaks of excuse for sin that keep us back from God and Heaven, and let us first hasten to Christ, and run with patience the race that is set before us. As Lord Raleigh gallantly threw his beautiful robe upon the muddy ground for Queen Elizabeth to walk upon, so let us throw all our excusing cloaks of sin at the feet of Jesus and take instead Christ's cloaks of zeal (Isa. lix. 17). (*W. F. Crafts.*) *The pleas of gospel-impenitents examined and refuted:*—Gospel-impenitents who finally reject Christ have no cloak for their sin—I. FROM ANY PLEAS OR PRETENCES THEY CAN MAKE RELATING TO GOD THEIR MAKER. They cannot plead—1. That they are not invited to believe in Christ for salvation. The gospel-invitation runs in indefinite terms, "Whosoever will, let him come." 2. That they are not elected. It is not the undiscovered decree, but the revealed precept, that is our rule, according to which we are to conduct ourselves, and by which we shall finally be judged (Deut. xxix. 29.) 3. That God uses any compulsion, or exerts any positive influence, to keep them in unbelief and harden them in sin (James i. 13).

4. That there is any deficiency of suitable means on God's part, or that He does not afford them necessary external helps for their believing in Christ (Isaiah v. 4). He has given men the Bible, the Church, pastors and teachers, sabbaths, &c. 5. That there is a want of internal assistances, and a defect of necessary influences from God to make the means effectual. The fact is—(1) Sinners do not realise what God tells them of the necessity of His grace, and of their own impotency, but are apt vainly to magnify their own abilities, and to think every man of himself more highly than he ought to think. (2) Sinners do not pray to God for His Spirit as they ought, although they confess their own impotency. (3) Sinners under the gospel, whether they pray for the Spirit or not, do actually experience those assistances of common grace, which are a full vindication of God, and leave them without all excuse. The Spirit of God is often at work in their consciences. He convinces them of sin, admonishes them of duty, and stirs up their affections, desires, fears, and hopes. But here is the misery and folly of sinners: they do always resist and vex the Holy Ghost. II. FROM ANY PLEAS THEY CAN MAKE REFERRING TO SATAN, AND AN EVIL WORLD, THEIR SPIRITUAL ADVERSARIES. They suffer no violence from external causes, nor will any impediments they met with in the way of duty, afford them a plea sufficient to justify their not repenting and receiving Christ. What or who should compel the sinner to refuse Christ? They may persuade and entice, but they cannot force. They may indeed use a violence upon the body, and hinder that from external duties; but they cannot reach the soul, to hinder repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (James iv. 7). It is the fault and folly of sinners, they do not resist the devil. And then, if Satan has gained a power over any, which seems almost irresistible (2 Tim. ii. 26), they have brought this upon themselves (Psa. lxxxi. 11, 12). III. IT REMAINS, therefore, THAT SINNERS TAKE ALL THE BLAME OF THEIR SIN AND RUIN TO THEMSELVES (James i. 14; John iii. 19). Gospel-impenitents—1. Neglect to use, or trifle in using, those means which are in their own power, and which they might probably hope God would bless, in order to their salvation (John vi. 27; Luke xiii. 24; Phil. ii. 12). 2. Resist the methods of grace, which the blessed God uses with them, and quench the Holy Spirit striving in them (Isa. lxiii. 10; Acts vii. 51). 3. Do actually commit those sins, which, as they have a natural tendency to hinder their conversion, so they provoke God to withhold His special grace from them (Zech. vii. 11, 12; Ezek. xxiv. 13). 4. Do all this in a free and voluntary manner, and upon motives which, at the time, appear to them founded in reason. Conclusion: Have gospel-impenitents no cloak for their sin? 1. Hence we may learn the justice of God in the eternal condemnation of such in a future state. 2. Hence the awfulness of our standing under the gospel, and the miserable delusion of such as trust to mere privileges and externals in religion. 3. Hence the folly of delay in the grand affair of conversion. 4. If gospel-impenitents are inexusable, who perish in their own iniquity; how much more such sinners as are voluntarily instrumental to the sin and ruin of others! 5. What abundant reason have they to admire the grace of God toward them, who after a course of great sin, under gospel light, have been converted! (*T. Foxcroft.*) **They hated Me without a cause.**—*Hatred without cause:*—It is usually understood that the quotation is from Psa. xxxv. 19. No being was ever more lovely than the Saviour; it would seem almost impossible not to have affection for Him. And yet, loveable as He was, from His first moment to the cross, save the temporary lull while He was a child, it seemed as if all men sought to destroy Him. In different ways that hatred displayed itself, in overt deeds, in words of slander, or in looks of contempt. At other times that hatred dwelt in their thoughts, and they thought within themselves, "This man blasphemeth." All grades of men hated Him. Most men have to meet with some opposition; but then it is frequently a class opposition. The demagogue must expect to be despised by the rich, and he who labours for the aristocracy of course meets with the contempt of the many. But here was a man who walked among the people, who loved them, who spoke to the rich and poor as though they were on one level in His blessed sight; and yet all classes conspired to hate Him. I. LET US JUSTIFY WHAT THE SAVIOUR SAID. 1. In Christ's person there was an absence of almost everything which excites hatred between man and man. (1) There was no great rank in Christ to excite envy. Let a man be ever so good, if he be at all lifted above his fellow-creatures the many often speak against him. Now, Christ had none of the outward circumstances of rank. Instead of being lifted above men, He did, in some sense, seem to be below them, for foxes had holes, &c. (2) Many persons envy those who exercise rule or government over

them. If authorities were changed every month, in some countries there would be revolutions as much under one as under another. But this did not operate in Christ's case: He did not assume sway over the multitude. In fact, instead of binding laws upon them which were severe, He loosened the rigidity of their system. (3) Some men make others dislike them because they are proud. Somehow or other the human mind cannot bear pride; we always kick against it. But there was nothing of that in our Saviour. How humble He was! He would wash His disciples' feet. (4) There are others that you cannot help disliking, because they are so snappish, and waspish, and angry. But you cannot find that Christ spake one angry word, save those words of holy wrath against Pharasaic pride. Such a loving, kind, gentle spirit, one would have thought would have gone through the world as easy as possible. (5) Another set you can scarcely help disliking—selfish people. But whatever Christ did, He did for others. "He saved others; Himself He did not save." Self-sacrifice was the life of Christ; but He did it with such an ease that it seemed no sacrifice. (6) Another sort of people there are that I do not like, viz., the hypocritical. But there never was a more unvarnished man than Christ. Among all the slanders men brought against Christ they never disputed His sincerity. 2. Was there anything in Christ's errand which could make people hate Him? He came—(1) To explain mysteries, to tell them what was meant by the sacrificial lamb. Should they have hated one who made dark things light. (2) To reclaim the wanderer; and is there anything in that that should make men hate Christ? (3) To heal the diseases of the body. Shall I hate the physician who goes about gratuitously healing all manner of diseases? Surely, He might well say, "For which of the works do ye stone Me." (4) To die, that sinners might not die? Ought I to hate the substitute who takes my sins and griefs upon Him, and carries my sorrows? 3. Was there anything in Christ's doctrine that that should have made us hate Him? (1) Take His preceptive doctrines. Did He not teach us to do to others as we would they should do to us? (2) Was it the ethical part of His doctrines that men hated? He taught that rich and poor must stand on one level; He taught that His gospel was to be gloriously expansive. This, perhaps, was one principal reason of their hating Him; but surely there was no justifiable cause for their indignation in this. II. MAN'S SIN, THAT HE SHOULD HAVE HATED THE SAVIOUR WITHOUT A CAUSE. 1. I will not tell you of man's adulteries, murders, wars, cruelties, and rebellions; if I want to tell you man's sin, I must tell you that man is a deicide—that he put to death his God, and slew his Saviour; and when I have told you that I have given you the essence of all sin. In every other case, when man has hated goodness, there have always been some extenuating circumstances. We never do see goodness in this world without alloy. But because the Saviour had no inconsistencies or infirmities, men were stripped of all their excuses for hating Him, and it came out that man naturally hates goodness, because he is so evil that he cannot but detest it. 2. And now let me appeal to every sinner, and ask him whether he ever had any cause for hating Christ. But some one says, "I do not hate Him; if He were to come to my house I would love Him very much." But Christ lives next door to you, in the person of poor Betty there. Why don't you like Betty? She is one of Christ's members, and "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ye have done it unto Me." Don't you know a very holy man you cannot bear because he told you of your faults once? Ah! sir, if you loved Christ you would love His members. I must suppose you to be hostile to Christ, unless you love Him; for I know there are only two opinions of Him. You must either hate Him or love Him. Indifference with regard to Christ is a clear impossibility. A man might as well say, "I am indifferent towards honesty." 3. And now, Christian men, I must preach at you. Sure ye have great reason to love Christ now, for ye once hated Him without a cause. Did ye ever treat a friend ill, and did not know it. III. LESSONS: 1. If your Master was hated without a cause, do not you expect to get off very easily in this world. 2. Take care, if the world does hate you, that it hates you without a cause. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 26, 27. **But when the Comforter is come.**—*The Holy Spirit: His work and mission*:—I. THE HOLY SPIRIT. 1. Our text speaks of the Holy Spirit as a Person. "He shall testify;" "and ye also" (see also chap. xvi. 7, 8, 13, 14, 15). In the first of these places He is spoken of as a Person acting with other persons, of whose personality there can be no doubt, viz., the apostles. In the last He is represented as acting intermediately between the Father, an undoubted Person, and the apostles.

We know that the effects of His operation are sometimes personified. But still our Lord and the sacred writers speak of Him in a way which requires us to understand an intelligent agent, *e.g.*, in the form of baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19). If the Spirit is a figure of speech, so are the Father and the Son. 2. He is a Divine Person. Otherwise an idol is set up on the very threshold of the Christian temple; and we are taught by the form of baptism to worship a creature of our own fancy. If the inspired language is perplexing, if He is not a real Person, it is delusive and dangerous if He be not divine (Matt. xii. 28; John xiv. 12; *cf.* Rom. xv. 19). We turn our thoughts to the offer of forgiveness so free and wide (Isa. lv. 7; Mark iii. 28); but amidst all this wealth of mercy we find a solitary exception—blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (Mark iii. 29). Is a figure of speech the object of the one irremissible sin? 3. The Three Divine Persons, though equal in dignity and power, have been pleased to establish a method of procedure which corresponds in a measure to the mode of the Divine existence. The Father is "of none," and is never said to be sent or given. The Son is of the Father, and as the Son of the Father, is sent and given by Him (2 John 3; 1 John iv. 9; John iii. 16), The Holy Spirit is never said to give or send the Son; but to proceed from the Father, to be given, and sent by the Father. In like manner, also, as the Son is called the Son of the Father, the Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of His Son," &c. (Gal. iv. 6; 1 Pet. i. 11), and is said to be sent and given by Christ (chap. xvi. 7; Acts ii. 33). II. HIS WORK. 1. "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." All the preannouncements concerning the coming and work of Christ were but the voice of the Spirit (Matt. i. 22; Acts xxviii. 25). This testimony is so manifold as to anticipate the gospel at every point (Acts xxvi. 22). It was by the agency of the Spirit that this prophecy was turned into history. (1) Our Redeemer must be a man like ourselves, and a body was prepared Him by the agency of the Spirit (Luke i. 35). (2) He must be a holy man, and so that conceived by the Holy Ghost was "that holy thing," and continued so. (3) In His public capacity He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and power. (4) To the same gracious agency we are taught to ascribe the virtues exhibited in His passion. (5) After death Jesus was "quickened by the Spirit." 2. The Holy Spirit's testimony as borne by the apostles. (1) All Christ's oral teachings was recalled to their minds, and the knowledge, courage, &c., needed to discharge their duties. (2) Their testimony was confirmed by the Spirit in a wonderful manner in "wonders and signs," &c. (3) The spoken testimony has perished, but the written testimony remains from generation to generation. (4) In the long succession of faithful men who have been "able to teach others also," from that day to this the Spirit has borne a continuous testimony to Christ. 3. In the Church, as in the ministry, the Holy Spirit bears this testimony, and not only in many persons, but in many ways in the same persons. (1) He testifies to men's need of Christ, by convincing them of sin. (2) He reveals Christ as a Saviour, and enables the penitent to receive and rest on Him for salvation. (3) The spirit of adoption is a testimony of Christ. When we cry, "Abba, Father," it is by the spirit of God's Son. (4) The spirit of adoption is also the spirit of holiness, and growth in holiness is inseparably connected with the knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. iii. 18; Heb. vi. 1). (*G. Osborn, D.D.*) *The Spirit testifying of Christ*:—I. CONSIDER STATEMENTS IN GENERAL TERMS OF THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. 1. "He shall testify"—bear witness. Now, when we have a witness it is most important that we should understand whether or not he is competent to bear witness about the matter in question. This witness is "the Spirit who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." He is a Divine and therefore a competent witness with regard to Christ Jesus. 2. Again, in a court of justice it is important to know whether a witness is reliable. This witness is none other than "the Spirit of Truth" Himself. 3. He is one who puts honour on Christ. In chap. xvi. 14 we read, "He shall glorify Me." As we preach, the Holy Ghost bears witness to Him—carries home the truth in power to the hearts of those to whom it is addressed, and by His sweet constraint leads them to yield to the Saviour and to put their trust in Him. 4. In chap. xvi. 8, &c., we read—(1) "He will convict of sin because they believe not on Me;" of all sins the most heinous is the rejection of Christ Jesus. (2) "Of righteousness," &c., *i.e.*, of righteousness in Christ Jesus. (3) "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." This is of triumph over Satan's power. II. STATEMENTS OF HIS WORK IN PARTICULAR CASES. 1. A striking example of that is afforded in 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. What a catalogue! "Such were some of you," says the apostle, "but ye are washed, ye are sanctified," &c. What a wondrous change! How had the change come

about? By the Spirit of God. He had spoken to them; He had dealt with them; He had drawn them; He had united them to Christ Jesus, so that they were sanctified and justified in Him. A strolling conjuror was one night in a tramps' lodging-house in Sheffield, and different members of the fraternity were sitting over the fire, and they were overhauling the contents of their bags, and he told me that he saw one bring out a New Testament that he had bought for his little girl. The conjuror was greatly struck, and bought it, and that night, before he lay down upon his bed in that tramps' lodging-house, by the dim light of the candle, he opened his new purchase to see what it contained, and his eye fell upon these words, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" He was like a man who had been shot. He tossed backwards and forwards upon his bed that night; there was no rest, no sleep for him. The Holy Ghost had carried the word home to his heart. He gave up his conjuring, and followed some honest trade, and for months he went up and down England with the arrow of conviction sticking fast in his heart; and then, through the kindly counsels of a town missionary, he was brought to put his trust in the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. When last I saw him he was earning an honest living, making and selling braces, and as he offered them for sale he would speak some homely earnest words about the Saviour. 2. If you will turn to the Epistle to Titus iii. 3, you will find another list of sins. Now, when we read the list in the Corinthians, we cannot help thinking what loathsome, horrible people they were. When we read the list in Titus, we cannot help thinking what exceedingly disagreeable people they must have been to live with. But the Apostle says, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour," &c. Those persons had become the heirs of God in the hope of eternal life. And how? By the work of God, because the Holy Spirit had spoken to them and had dealt with them, had wrought in their hearts, had drawn them to the Lord Jesus, and united them in faith to Him. III. THERE ARE SOME NEGATIVE STATEMENTS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE, AS THROWING LIGHT UPON THIS SUBJECT. 1. Turn to Romans viii. 9. "If any man," whosoever he may be, however beautiful may be his character, and however excellent may be his natural disposition, "have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." 2. Another statement occurs in 1 Corinthians xii. 3. These words imply that we not only recognize in Christ a Saviour, but a Lord to whom we yield, and to whose service we consecrate all that we are and all that we have. No man can do that but by the Holy Ghost. 3. Another negative statement is found in Jude 19, where we read, "These be they who separate themselves, sensual—not having the Spirit"—those who are beyond the pale; those who are not to be numbered amongst the children of God. They are in their natural or unrenewed state because they have not the Spirit. IV. ONE OR TWO VERY PERSONAL OR STRIKING WORDS IN SCRIPTURE ON THIS SAME SUBJECT. 1. "My Spirit shall not always strive with men." 2. Turn to Hebrews iii. 15, iv. 7. Why has God seen fit to repeat that sentence three times over? Do you know that when a division on a most important subject is about to take place in the House of Commons the whips on the respective sides of the House send out a letter urging members individually not to fail to be present? And they put what is called "underlining," and when you have a "three-line whip" or a "four-line whip" it means that the matter is most urgent, and that the member must by all means give heed to it. Now, when God caused this word to be written three times over, it is as if He had sent out a three-line whip to the children of men. It is the message of one who loves the souls of men as tenderly as does the Father or as does the Son. (*W. P. Lockhart.*)

The Spirit the witness to truth:—1. Pilate put the question to our Lord, What is truth? The answer was given in a manner more direct and forcible than words can express: in person and in deed. Jesus was Himself the Truth. But Pilate had neither an eye to see the Truth, nor an ear to hear it. 2. Many men, worthy and noble, before and since have put the question, presuming that truth belongs to the region of thought and human speech. But truth does not lie in the sphere of thought and speculation. Reflections and images of the truth are indeed to be found there; but truth is deeper and more original than human intelligence. Our Lord says of Himself, "I am the Truth"—absolute Truth. All other truth is such only relatively to Himself. He is the Truth of all other truths. But to know the truth and to receive its light and power, a man must be in positive sympathy with it. "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." 3. Jesus Christ witnesses of Himself as the Absolute Truth by the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth. Other witnesses, indeed, there are and will always be. But such only are witnesses

who are the organs of the Spirit. Let us consider the Christian doctrine—that the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of Truth, is the all-sufficient witness to Jesus Christ. I. THAT THE SPIRIT IS THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH IS SPECIALLY MANIFESTED BY THE FACT THAT THROUGH HIS AGENCY THE TRUTH OF THE GODHEAD HAS BECOME INCARNATE IN MAN. 1. The Creator and the creature, the Absolute Truth in God and the relative truth in man are constituted one life in the person of Jesus Christ. The Word was made flesh by the Holy Ghost. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, &c. The Divine was made human according to the law of human life; for Jesus was born. And the human was assumed into the Divine after the Divine manner, for Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost. The eternal and absolute Truth was revealed and made manifest in the person and life of a veritable man, who is for us and for all men the living and ultimate Truth, in whom and by whom alone the truth of all truths is accessible to faith, and through faith accessible to intelligence. 2. If we inquire further, How was it that He became the Truth in life and in death? The answer is as by the Spirit Jesus was born the Holy Babe, so by the Spirit did He manifest God by a perfectly holy manhood, and offer a spotless sacrifice for sin upon the cross, and vanquish all the powers of darkness in His resurrection from the dead. II. THIS SPIRIT OF TRUTH, WHEREBY JESUS ACCOMPLISHED THE WORK OF REDEMPTION, IS BY HIM SENT FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH AS HIS REPRESENTATIVE AND WITNESS, THAT HE MAY LIVE IN THOSE WHO RECEIVE HIM, AND GUIDE THEM INTO ALL TRUTH. The Spirit makes those true who are by nature perverse. 1. The truth is heavenly and spiritual, not earthly and material. No earthly thing can witness of the essence of the heavenly. No material thing can exhibit the life of the spirtual. Human genius cannot look into the depths of the Divine and announce its unfathomable fulness. If, as He claims, Jesus be the Truth, and if the Truth be spiritual and heavenly, transcendent and Divine, then in this fallen, dark, wicked world, where the lie is enthroned and men walk in a vain show, there can be no agencies, no resources, whereby the depraved heart and the darkened understanding and the perverted will may come to a knowledge of the Truth. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," &c. The wisdom of this world is utterly inadequate to the task of discovering the truth of God. But God has revealed to us His wisdom by the Spirit. 2. It must needs be, then, that the truth being spiritual and heavenly, the agency, by whom we may know the truth, must likewise be spiritual and heavenly. To this end, the presence and the power of the Spirit is effectual. In those who receive Him, the Spirit dissipates the clouds of natural darkness, removes the aversion of the carnal mind, and sheds the light of heavenly truth into the soul with convincing power. As on the day of Pentecost the Spirit touched the consciences of the multitudes; as the revelation of Christ smote Saul of Tarsus to the ground, as the Spirit opened the heart of Lydia, so has the same Spirit all along the ages been a power working mysteriously in those to whom the Word was preached, convincing them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The Spirit alone can shed the light of truth into the souls of men now. III. THE SPIRIT AWAKENS IN MEN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH BY MAKING THEM POSSESSORS OF THE TRUTH. 1. No right knowledge of Jesus Christ is external or merely intellectual. To appreciate Christ men must be members of Christ. The Spirit, accordingly, is the Divine agency whereby Christ apprehends men and men appropriate Christ. In the Spirit the separation is resolved into unity, the contradiction into the fellowship of faith. The dominion of error and falsehood is broken—broken because He who is the Truth lives in the believer, and the believer thus also becomes true. 2. To this end the power of the Spirit is effectual, independently of time or place, independently of rank or station. 3. For this work of the Spirit there can be no substitute. No discoveries in the natural world, no progress in science, no achievement of human genius can put man in possession of the truth, and thus make man personally true. In spite of all these empty glories he will remain the victim of a lie, and all his proud knowledge will confirm his delusion and deepen his spiritual darkness. IV. MAKING MEN POSSESSORS OF THE TRUTH, THE SPIRIT IS ALSO THE POWER BY WHICH BELIEVERS FULFIL THE TRUTH BY A RIGHTEOUS AND GODLY WALK. 1. When the truth lives in the soul, it becomes the principle of action. The truth fills our ethical nature and gives it freedom. The truth sets the will free from the bondage of self-love and the world-spirit. It becomes active in the truth and for the truth. Thus consciously active our ethical life acquires strength, that strength which is of the truth itself, a strength as mighty as the truth is mighty. 2. No such strength can come from the resoluteness and firmness of the natural will; not from any kind of self-imposed moral discipline.

The self-denial and self-sacrifice of which the natural man is capable is but the renunciation of one falsehood to lay hold of another. The noble heroism and the stern morality of which, without possessing the truth that is in Christ, some men are capable, falls short just as certainly of freedom. 3. Not that the spiritual man is without spot or blemish. Nevertheless the man who by the Spirit possesses the truth and lives by faith under its power, asserts and develops a new morality. Thus in him the Spirit bears witness of Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the believer in turn is a living perpetual witness to the truth of God in Christ. V. RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH, HE BECOMES FOR THE CHURCH AND FOR THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN THE WITNESS TO CHRIST. 1. He is the immediate witness. The Spirit is the living bond by which Jesus Christ and fallen men become one life. Possessing the believer, Christ authenticates Himself to his heart and mind, in his will and consciousness. In that He shows unto us the things of Christ, the Spirit witnesses directly of Christ to us that He (Jesus Christ) is the Truth. Such witness is like the witness of self-consciousness. No truth can be more certainly known than this: that I am, that I think and will. Even so, in the heart and consciousness of a true believer, does the Holy Ghost testify that Jesus is the Truth of all truths. 2. The Spirit is the all-sufficient witness. Whatever question the natural reason may raise, or philosophy suggest; whatever new problem may arise in the history of the world; whatever doubts may be prompted by revolutions in science or convulsions in social life; whatever strength the human intellect may acquire by culture and discipline; however imposing and fearful may be the hostile array of the enemies of the Cross; however proud and triumphant the boasts and predictions of unbelief and naturalism, the status of the Christian Church remains unchanged. The witness is at hand, adequate to every objection that scepticism, materialism, and wickedness may seek to establish; a witness just as satisfying to every man who is not of the lie but of the truth as an axiom of quantitative truth is satisfying to the intellect of a mathematician. Here is the refuge and the strength of the Church and of the ministry and of the people of God in every land and in every age. No other witness is valid, or can satisfy the spiritual demands of the soul. (*E. V. Gerhart, D.D.*) *The great world-restoring Spirit*:—I. HIS ADVENT FORETOLD. "When the Comforter is come." 1. The prediction was given to comfort them in the prospect of the persecution to which Christ had just directed their attention. They are given to understand that however great their approaching trials may be, and though He Himself was about departing from them, One would soon come to them from His Father who would be all sufficient for their help. 2. The prediction was strikingly fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, in connection with the preaching of Peter (Acts ii. 1–3). II. HIS CHARACTER PORTRAYED. "The Spirit of truth." There is a spirit of lying abroad in the world, sowing the seeds of error in human souls, and cultivating them into briars and thorns, into poisonous weeds and upas trees. But here is the Spirit of Truth who is also abroad and at work. 1. He is infallible Truth. Truth without any admixture of error or impunity. His ideas and His affections, so to say, are in perfect accord with eternal fact. 2. He is Redemptive Truth. His truth is to open the eyes of ignorance, to break the chains of bondage, to cleanse the heart from impurities, to deliver the conscience from guilt! In one word, to restore the soul to the knowledge, the image, the friendship, and the enjoyment of the great God. III. HIS WORK INDICATED. 1. His work is that of an advocate. He goes into the court of human conscience and there He pleads for spirituality, benevolence, righteousness, God, against worldliness, selfishness, wrong, the devil. Sometimes He pleads in whispers, sometimes in thunder. Always is He earnest and persevering. He inspires His ministers to say, "We beseech you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled unto God." 2. His work is that of a witness. A witness for Christ, for the perfection of His character, the purity of His doctrines, and the beneficence of His influence. He does this through the teaching, the miraculous works, the moral triumphs, and the noble lives of those whom He inspired as the apostles of Christ. Conclusion: Let the assurance that this restoring Spirit is in the world encourage us in our efforts to spread truth, and in our trials to be magnanimous and patient. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The defence against a hostile world*:—Our Lord has been speaking of a world hostile to His followers and to Him. He proceeds, in the words which follow, to paint that hostility as aggravated even to the pitch of religious murder. But here He lets a beam of light in upon the darkness. He lets them see that they will not be left alone, but have a great champion, who will put into their hands a weapon, with which they may conquer the world, and turn it into a friend, and

with which alone they must meet the world's hate. Consider—I. THE GREAT PROMISE OF AN ALLY AS AGAINST A HOSTILE WORLD. 1. The wonderful designation of this Champion-Friend. (1) The "Comforter" is no mere gentle consoler. The word which means one who is summoned to the side of another, conveys the idea of a helper. The verses before our text suggest what sort of aid and succour the disciples will need. And that Paraclete is a strong Spirit who will be our champion and our ally, whatever antagonism may storm against us, and however strong and well-armed may be the assaulting legions of the world's hate. (2) "The Spirit of Truth," which means not so much His characteristic attribute as rather the weapon which He wields, or the material with which He works. That is to say, the Spirit of God is the Strengthener, the Encourager, the Comforter, the Fighter for us and with us, because He wields that great body of truth, the perfect revelation of God, and man, and duty, and salvation, which is embodied in the Incarnation and work of Jesus Christ our Lord. The truth is His weapon, and it is by that that He makes us strong. 2. The twofold description of the mission of this Divine Champion. (1) "Sent" by Christ. In a previous part of this discourse, our Lord speaks of Him as being sent by the Father in His name and in answer to His prayer. The representation here is by no means antagonistic to this, for "whatsoever the Son seeth the Father do that also the Son doeth likewise." And therefore the Spirit is sent forth by the Father, and also the Son sends the Spirit. (2) But, on the other hand, we are not to regard that Divine Spirit as merely a messenger sent by another. He "proceeds from the Father." That word has been the battlefield of theological controversy, but what is meant is the simple historical coming forth into human life of that Divine Spirit. And, possibly, the word is chosen to give the idea of a voluntary and personal action of the Messenger, who not only is sent by the Father, but of Himself proceeds on the mighty work to which He is destined. Mark that wonderful phrase, twice repeated and emphasized by repetition "from the Father." The word translated "from" designates a position at the side of, and suggests much rather the intimate and ineffable union between, Father, Son, and Spirit than the source from which the Spirit comes. 3. Is not all this enough to make the weakest strong, and to make us "more than conquerors through Him that loved us"? All nations have legends of the gods fighting at the head of their armies, and through the dust of battle the white horses and the shining armour of the celestial champions have been seen. The childish dream is a historical reality. It is not we that fight, it is the Spirit of God that fighteth in us. II. THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT WHICH FORTIFIES AGAINST THE WORLD. "He shall bear witness of Me." That phrase, "unto you," tells us that the witness is something which is done within the circle of the Christian believers, and not in the wide field of the world's history or in nature. Of course it is a great truth that long before Jesus Christ, and to-day far beyond the limits of His name the Spirit of God is working. As of old, He brooded over the chaotic darkness, ever labouring to turn chaos into order, and darkness into light; so to-day, all over the field of humanity, He is operating. But what is spoken of here is something that is done in and on Christian men, and not even through them on the world, but in them for themselves. "He shall testify of Me" to you. 1. The first application of these words is to the little group listening to Him. Never were men more desolate and beaten down than these were, in the prospect of Christ's departure. Never were men more utterly bewildered and dispirited than these were, in the days between His crucifixion and His resurrection. Think of them during His earthly life, their narrow understandings, their manifold faults, moral as well as intellectual. What was it that made these dwarfs into giants in six weeks; that made them start up all at once as heroes and that so swiftly matured them, as the fruits and flowers are ripened under tropical sunshine? The witness of the Spirit of God working within them, working upon what they knew of the historical facts of Christ's life, and interpreting them, was the explanation of their change and growth. And the New Testament is product of that. Christ's life was the truth which the Spirit used, and the product of His teaching was these epistles which we have, and which for us step into the place which the historical facts held for them; and become the instrument with which the Spirit of God will deepen our understanding of Christ and enlarge our knowledge of what He is to us. 2. The promise still applies to each of us in a secondary and modified sense. For there is nothing in these great valedictory words which is not the revelation of a permanent truth in regard to the Christian Church. And, therefore, we have the promise of a universal gift to all Christian men and women, an actual Divine Spirit to dwell with each of us, to

speak in our hearts. And what will He do there? He will teach us a deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ. He will help us to understand better what He is. He will show us more and more of the whole sweep of His work, of the whole infinite truth for morals and religion, for politics and society, for time and for eternity, about men and about God, which is wrapped up in that great saying which we first of all, perhaps under the pressure of our own sense of sin, grasp as our deliverance from sin—"God so loved the world," &c. And as the days roll on, and new problems rise, and new difficulties present themselves, and new circumstances emerge in our personal life, we find the truth that we first of all dimly grasped as life and salvation, opening out into wisdom and depth and meaning that we never dreamed of in the early hours. 3. Then, note that this inward witness of Christ's depth and preciousness is the true weapon and stay against a hostile world. (1) A little candle in a room will make the lightning outside almost invisible; and if I have burning in my heart the inward experience and conviction of what Jesus Christ is, and what He has done and will do for me—oh, then all the storm without may rage and it will not trouble. (2) If you take an empty vessel and bring pressure to bear upon it, in go the sides. Fill it, and they will resist the pressure. So with growing knowledge of Christ and growing personal experience of His sweetness in our souls, we shall be able to throw off, untouched and undinted, the pressure which would otherwise have crushed us. 4. And so here is the true secret of tranquillity, in an age of questioning and doubt. Let me have that Divine voice speaking in my heart, and no matter what questions may be doubtful, this is sure —"We know whom we have believed"; and we can say, "Settle all your controversies any way you like, one thing I know—"the Son of God is come and hath given us understanding that we may know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true." Labour for more of this inward, personal conviction of the preciousness of Jesus Christ to strengthen you against a hostile world. 5. And remember that there are conditions under which this Voice speaks in our souls—(1) One is that we attend to the instrument which the Spirit of God uses, and that is "the truth." If Christians will not read their Bibles, they need not expect to have the words of these Bibles interpreted and made real to them by any inward experience. (2) And there must be moral discipline too. Laziness, worldliness, the absorption of attention with other things, self-conceit, prejudice, and the taking of our religion at second-hand, stand in the way of our hearing the Spirit of God when He speaks. Come away from the babble and go by yourself, and take your Bibles with you and read them and meditate upon them and get near the Master of whom they speak, and the Spirit which uses the truth will use it to fortify you. III. THE CONSEQUENT WITNESS WITH WHICH THE CHRISTIAN MAY WIN THE WORLD. "And ye also shall bear witness of Me," &c. That also has, of course, direct reference to the apostles, and therefore their qualification was simply the companionship with Him which enabled them to say, "We saw what we tell you; we were witnesses from the beginning." But then, again, it belongs to us all, and so here is the task of the Christian Church in all its members. They receive the witness of the Spirit, and they are Christ's witnesses in the world. Note—1. What we have to do—to bear witness: not to argue, to adorn, but simply to attest. 2. What we have to attest —the fact, not of the historical life of Jesus Christ, because we are not in a position to be witnesses of that, but the fact of His preciousness and power, and the fact of our own experience of what He has done for us. 3. That is by far the most powerful agency for winning the world. You can never make men angry by saying to them, "We have found the Messias." You cannot irritate people, or provoke them into a controversial opposition when you say, "Brother! let me tell you my experience. I was dark, sad, sinful, weak, solitary, miserable; and I got light, gladness, pardon, strength, companionship, and a joyful hope." We can all say that. This is the witness that needs no eloquence, no genius, no anything except honesty and experience; and whosoever has tasted and felt and handled of the Word of Life may surely go to a brother and say, "Brother! I have eaten and am satisfied. Will you not help yourself?" We can all do it, and we ought to do it. Conclusion: The Christian privilege of being witnessed to by the Spirit of God in our hearts brings with it the Christian duty of being witnesses in our turn to the world. Oh! listen to the Master, who says, "Him that confesseth Me before men, will I also confess before My Father in heaven." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 27. **And ye also shall bear witness.**—*True Christian testimony* (text in conjunction with chap. xvi. 1–4):—In this we see—I. THE SPIRIT OF GODLY HUMILITY.

It comes only from the Lord, and serves the Lord only (ver. 26). Do not trust your own talents and power, but implore heaven's blessing. Otherwise you will be in the case of Gehazi with the prophet's stick. The witnessing must be concerning Him, not concerning us, our zeal, wisdom, or success. II. SINCERE TRUTH. It comes from the heart and goes to the heart (ver. 27). III. FEARLESS COURAGE (chap. xvi. 2). Stephen and the martyrs of every age had this. If an unfriendly world has persecuted the Master, His followers must not expect to escape, although it may only take the form of a smile or a sneer. IV. HOLY LOVE—a love for men that says, "They do not know the Lord" (ver. 3). He prayed for His enemies because they knew not what they did. It is not all malignity which meets us in the shape of evil at the hands of our fellow-creatures—much of it is folly, blindness, and infirmity. (*C. Gerok, D.D.*) *Witness-bearing for Christ*:—I. ITS NATURE. To witness is to give testimony: and testimony is a statement of facts within the knowledge of the witness. 1. The facts. Christ risen; alive; living in the witness; saving the witness *now*. The facts relate to a present experience, and not to what may have been realized years ago. 2. A knowledge of the facts. No court will admit a desire, hope, belief, as evidence. So the Christian witness must know that Christ is able to save. 3. A statement of the facts known. A holy life is necessary not only to salvation, but to give credibility to testimony; but it cannot of itself bear testimony. We must declare Christ as the source of our excellencies and joys, and confirm our statement by a consistent life. II. ITS OBLIGATIONS. The text is imperative. It is not a matter of option whether we bear witness or not. 1. It is demanded by the constitution of things. Science, art, and enterprize, &c., are largely dependent on testimony for success. And so the gospel is spread by the testimony of those who enjoy it as a living power in the soul. 2. It is one of the ordained weapons for the conquest of the world. Our Lord did not burden His soldiers. One coat, a pair of shoes, and two weapons—the Word and the testimony—made up their outfit. They preached Christ from the prophecies and then charged upon the enemy by their testimony. "They testified and preached." Paul was made "a minister and a witness." The secret of many failures is a want of true and deep experience which enables the preacher to join clear and definite testimony to the Word. 3. Its power to stir and overcome the wicked one. Witness the success of evangelists of very limited ability. (*S. Baker.*) *The witness of the Church to Christ*:—It is in truth one of the most serious things in life to be called upon solemnly to bear witness before our fellow-men and with the invocation of the presence and help of God, even to one's own observation, experience, conviction. To speak out simply and fully, without regard to consequences, the whole truth and nothing but the truth of those matters on which our testimony may be required, involves a simplicity of mind, a straightforwardness, and a courage which are probably less common than we are apt to suppose. How much more awful the duty of bearing witness for God, of representing to the world His thoughts, His words, His life! And yet this is the duty of all who know Him. It was the work to which He called that ancient people whom He separated from the idolatrous nations of the earth, and recorded His incommunicable Name among them. But even He, the Holy Ghost, is not alone in the work of testifying of Jesus; for He adds, "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." The members of His mystical body are to be fellow-workers with God, and organs of the Divine Spirit. And what is the nature of the witness which they were to carry to the world. 1. They were to testify to His Person. "Bear witness—not merely of My doctrine, not merely of My works but—of Me." It is the one most marked peculiarity of our blessed Lord's teaching. Other teachers and leaders had been contented to have followers who would receive and disseminate their doctrines. And the true witness must also direct men to Him, as the God man, the Redeemer, the Prophet, Priest, and King of humanity. 2. They were to testify to His work. They had been with Him from the beginning, and had heard His words and seen His deeds of truth and love and power. The testimony to His work is the completion of the witness to His Person. What He has done for us must explain what He is to us. 3. But they were also to testify to His life. It was in His life that the nature of His person and the character of His work were most fully disclosed. His Divine greatness, His moral sublimity, His redeeming power all shone out in the unequalled, unapproachable grandeur of His life. It declared itself to be unearthly, superhuman, from God. This, then, is the very core of our witness for Christ—not merely a better life than the life of the world: it will of course be in all respects a

better life, but that is not all: it must be another life, drawing its origin from a higher source, animated by a higher principle, directed towards a higher end. It is not difficult to account for the profound impression produced upon men of all ages and lands, and of the most various culture, by the grandeur and sublimity of the character of Jesus Christ. Men could not help being struck with the absolute self-renunciation, the entire spirit of self-sacrifice which pervaded, like an atmosphere, His every thought, and word, and deed. It was a thing, a thought so absolutely new to the world. Obedience more or less ready and willing to the command of a superior they were not unacquainted with. But the complete, voluntary, and a cheerful surrender of a will to God, so complete and entire that there was no hesitancy, no momentary effort at self-assertion, was a phenomenon unexpected and startling, which revealed a kind of spiritual force which they had never seen in operation. Can we wonder that, when men have seen the disciples of Jesus fond of worldly display, greedy of honour, ambitious of place and of power, craving for earthly distinction, they should have found us false witnesses for God, and laughed us to scorn? Can we wonder that some, not caring to mark the startling contrast between the Master and the scholar, should have blasphemed the Holy Name by which we are called? Mark another element in the superhuman life of Christ: His ardent and unquenchable love of souls. They who would be witnesses for our Lord must first be deeply convinced of the unworldliness of the life of Christ, they must have heard and received His testimony to Himself and to them: "Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world." "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." And yet again, we do not learn from the example of our Lord that ours need not be, ought not to be, an unsympathetic unworldliness? The light of Christ was not the clear cold, hard moonlight of a winter's night; but the bright, soft, warm sunshine of a summer's day. The unworldliness of the Son of God was not that of a stern asceticism which refused to own relationship with those who could not rise to its level. It was on the contrary gentle, tolerant, winning. The life of unworldliness of which we have spoken, as the true witness for Christ, is beset with great and peculiar difficulties in our own day. (*W. R. Clark, M.A.*)

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