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 XVI.

Vers. 1-6. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.—*Christ's reasons for present speech and former silence* :—I. Our Lord's loving reason for His speech. 1. The two statements of vers. 1 and 4 are separated by a reiteration of the dark prospect that He has been holding out. The world is the apostate Jewish Church. A formal church is the true world, to-day as then. And such a body will do the cruellest things and believe that it is offering up Christ's witnesses as sacrifices to God. And the bottom of it all is that in the blaze of light, and calling themselves God's, "they do not know" either God or Christ. 2. But that is all parenthetical. Look now at the loving reasons which Christ here suggests for His speech. "That ye should not stumble." There could be nothing more productive of intellectual bewilderment and doubt than to find oneself at odds with the synagogue about the question of the Messiah. A modest man might naturally say, "Perhaps I am wrong and they are right." A coward would be sure to say, "I will sink my convictions and fall in with the majority." And, says Christ, "the only way by which you will ever get over these temptations is to reflect that I told you it would be so, before it came to pass." 3. Of course all that has a special bearing upon the apostles, &c., a secondary bearing upon Christians, who live in a time of persecution. But it also has a bearing upon us. For, if we are trying to live like our Master, we, too, shall often be surrounded by people that take such an entirely opposite view of duty and of truth, as that we shall be only too much disposed to say, "Well, perhaps after all it is better for me to hold my tongue." And then, besides, there are all the cares and griefs which befall each of us. Christ does not try to enlist recruits by highly-coloured pictures. He tells us plainly at the beginning, "If you take My yoke upon you, you will have to carry a heavy burden." The roadway is narrow and rough, and the gateway is very strait, but it all goes steadily up. Will you accept the terms and come in and walk upon it? Jesus Christ will have no service on false pretences. Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom. And the way by which all these troubles and cares can best be overcome is precisely by this thought, "The Master has told us before." (1) Sorrows anticipated are easier met. It is when the ship is caught with all its sails set that it is almost sure to go down. But when the barometer has been watched, and its fall has given warning, and everything has been made fast, and every spare yard has been sent below, and all tightened up and made ship-shape—then she can ride out the storm. Forewarned is fore-armed. (2) Sorrow foretold gives us confidence in our guide. We have the chart, and as we look upon it we see marked "waterless country," "pathless rocks," "desert and sand," "wells and palm trees." Well, when we come to the first of these, and find ourselves as the map says; and when, as we go on mile after mile, we find that it is all down there, we say to ourselves, "The remainder will be accurate too." And if we are in Marah to-day, we shall be at Elim to-morrow. He has told us this; if there had been anything worse than this He would have told us that. (3) Sorrow that comes punctually in accordance with His word plainly comes in obedience to His will. "Their hour"—the time allotted to them by Him. He could tell that they would come, because it was as His instruments that they came. It was only an "hour,"

a definite, appointed, and brief period in accordance with His loving purpose. It takes all sorts of weathers to make a year; and after all the sorts of weathers are run out the year's results are realized and the calm comes. II. OUR LORD'S LOVING REASONS FOR PAST SILENCE. 1. "These things" (ver. 4) include the whole of the previous chapter, in which He sets the sorrow as being the consequence of union with Him. In so systematic and detailed fashion our Lord had not spoken in His earlier ministry. And the reason why He had given but passing hints before was because He was there. What a superb confidence that expresses in His ability to shield His poor followers, "as a hen gathereth her chickens," &c. But He is going away, and so it is time to speak, and to speak more plainly. 2. For us, too, difficulties and sorrows, though foretold in general terms, are largely hidden till they are near. It would have been of little use for Christ to have spoken more plainly before. The disciples managed to misunderstand His plain utterances about His own death and resurrection. There needs to be an adaptation between the hearing ear and the spoken word. And there are great tracts of Scripture dealing with the sorrows of life, which lie dark and dead to us, until experience vitalizes them. The old Greeks used to send messages from one army to another by means of a roll of parchment twisted spirally round a batôn, and then written upon. And it was perfectly unintelligible when it fell into a man's hands that had not a corresponding batôn to twist it upon. Many of Christ's messages to us are like that. You can only understand the utterances when life gives you the frame round which to wrap them, and then they flash up into meaning, and we say at once, "He told us it all before, and I scarcely knew that He had told me until this moment when I need it." (1) It is merciful that there should be a gradual unveiling of what is to come to us, that the road should wind, and that we should see so short a way before us. Did you never say to yourselves, "If I had known all this before, I do not think I could have lived to face it." Thank God for the loving reticence, and for the as loving eloquence of His speech. (2) There ought to be in our lives times of close communion with that Master, when His presence makes all thought of trials in the future needlessly disturbing. If these disciples had drunk in His Spirit when they were with Him, then they would not have been so bewildered when He left them. III. THE IMPERFECT APPREHENSION OF OUR LORD'S WORDS WHICH LEADS TO SORROW INSTEAD OF JOY (vers. 5, 6). The one definite idea that they gathered was that He was going. And they said, "Going? What is to become of us?" If there had been a little less selfishness, and if they had put their question, "Going? What is to become of Him?" then it would not have been sorrow that would have filled their heart, but joy. That gives us a thought that the steadfast contemplation of the ascended Christ is the sovereign antidote against all sense of separation and solitude, the sovereign power by which we may face a hostile world, the sovereign cure for every sorrow. If we could live in the light of that great triumph, then, oh! how small would the babble of a world be. Look up to the Master that has gone, and as the dying martyr outside the city wall "saw the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing"—having sprung to His feet to help His poor servant—"at the right hand of God," so with that vision in our eyes we shall be masters of grief and care, and sin, and feel that the absent is the present Christ, and the present Christ is the conquering power in us. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The Church and the world*:—I. THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO THE WORLD IS THE SAME AS CHRIST'S —one of moral contrast as to character, principle, motive, inward life, whether it be the Jewish world, or the Greek, or the Roman. And it is the same now. Conceive the character of Christ, and place by the side of it that of a thoroughly worldly man, you will have the most striking contrast. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." And marks there are, plain and palpable, between the Church and the world. There are two kinds of changes possible with respect to these. 1. They may be shifted. (1) The Church may push them out so as to take in more and more of the world, bringing in more and more converted spirits. (2) The world may push it in upon the Church, making inroads upon it, persecuting it. Moral ravages, too, may be made, and those who have been in the Church may backslide, and the number of the faithful may be thus diminished. 2. They may be obliterated—(1) By practical compromise. The peculiarities of Christian character are by degrees diminished, and the Church becomes more and more like the world, so that one shades itself off, and gradually fades away into the other. (2) By theoretical dogmas. The puritan doctrine was most unmistakeable. But there is in these days a doctrine which is just the opposite, that instead of dwelling upon the distinction between the Church and the world, dwells upon what belongs

to Christians and men of the world in common. Now, we must protest against this obliteration of landmarks. Christ has drawn them most distinctly, and it is at our peril that we destroy them. We believe as firmly as any in the fatherhood of God over all His creatures; but in the case of worldly men, they have broken the bands of spiritual relationship, and adopted themselves into another family. We believe also in the universality of the atonement; but still there is to be a distinction made between those who accept that gospel and those who reject it. II. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IS THE SAME AS THE MISSION OF CHRIST. "As Thou hast sent Me into the world," &c. "I am the Light of the world," "Ye are the light of the world." Christ is represented—1. In the Church's testimony of truth. The Church is to hold forth the truth, to make a stand for it, to illustrate and enforce it. 2. In the Church's missionary operations. Christ was the great Missionary, and His work is now to be carried on instrumentally by His Church. "Go ye into all the world." There are different kinds of missions. There is the lip mission; the pen mission; the hand mission; the foot mission; but chief of all, there is the life mission, and that must be connected with all the rest. Some men have done great things for the cause of Christ by their intellectual power, by pecuniary power, by business power, but I believe there is still more to be done by moral and social power. That connected with the rest makes the rest most effective. III. THE DESTINY OF CHRIST IN THE WORLD, AND THE DESTINY OF CHRIST'S CHURCH IN THE WORLD IS THE SAME. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own," &c., and so the text. A great change has been wrought in society by the influence of Christianity; so that the world is not what it was when the prediction was first spoken. And persecution does not exist now in the world as it once did. It is one part of the nominal church persecuting another. But the world is still opposed to what is most truly the spirit of Christianity. The world does not like to hear about the mediation of the Lord Jesus or the work of the Holy Spirit. And then, again, the world is not opposed to some aspects of Christian consistency. When a Christian carries out that in the way of generosity the world will praise him, but when he refuses to connive at deceit and falsehood, the spirit of the world will come out and persecute. Nor is the world so much opposed to moral consistency as to spiritual consistency. Those who oppose forms of amusement which are instinct with evil, such men the world hates. The world, too, may admire specimens of Christianity which are remote, but it does not like specimens of Christianity which are near. Bunyan dead is applauded, but Bunyan alive would not be so. Had Havelock come to England and exemplified his principles in connection with some civil callings at home, there are numbers who would have been ready to persecute the very man whom they applauded to the skies when he was far away. In many cases also the world would be found to admire Christians in spite of their Christianity, but not because of their Christianity. They are praised for their kindness, their generosity, their humility; but their fondness for prayer, their religious strictness, and so on, how often all this is regarded as an abatement! (*J. Stoughton, D.D.*) **They shall put you out of the synagogues.**—*The best men liable to the worst treatment from mistaken zealots*:—I. THE BEST OF MEN MAY BE EXCLUDED FROM THE COMMUNION OF THOSE WHO MAY ASSUME TO BE THE TRUE AND ONLY TRUE CHURCH, and that under the notion of very bad and criminal persons. What the Jews did to the apostles hath been too frequently practised since by some of the professors of Christianity towards one another. Witness the case of Athanasius and others, in the reign and prevalency of Arianism, and the ill treatment that whole churches have met with from that haughty and uncharitable church which makes nothing of thundering out excommunication against persons and churches more Christian than herself. But it is our comfort, that the apostles were thus used by a church that made the same pretences that they do, and upon grounds every whit as plausible. II. THEY WHO ARE THUS EXCOMMUNICATED MAY NEVERTHELESS BE TRUE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. Men may be put out of the synagogue, and yet received into heaven; for the judgment of God is not according to the uncharitable censures of men, but according to truth and right. III. FROM UNCHARITABLE CENSURES MEN NATURALLY PROCEED TO CRUEL ACTIONS. This has been the source of the most barbarous cruelties; witness the severity of the heathen persecution, which justified itself by the uncharitable opinion that the Christians were despisers of the gods, and consequently atheists; but they were pertinacious and obstinate in their opinions; *i.e.*, in the modern style, heretics. And the like uncharitable conceit has been thought a sufficient ground (even in the judgment of the infallible chair) for the justification

of several bloody massacres; for after men are once sentenced to eternal damnation, it seems a small thing to torment their bodies. IV. MEN MAY DO THE VILEST AND MOST WICKED THINGS OUT OF A REAL PERSUASION THAT THEY DO RELIGIOUSLY. The great duties and virtues of religion are easy to be understood; and so are the contrary sins and vices: but then they are only plain to a teachable and honest mind; to those who receive the Word with meekness and love. But if men will give up themselves to be governed by any corrupt interest, to be blinded by prejudice, intoxicated by pride, and transported by passion, no wonder if they mistake the nature, and confound the differences of things, in the plainest and most palpable cases; no wonder if God give up persons of such corrupt minds to strong delusions to believe lies. In these cases men may take the wrong way, and yet believe themselves to be in the right and be verily persuaded that they are serving God, and sacrificing to Him. Of this we have a plain and full instance in the Scribes and Pharisees, and in St. Paul. And if God had not checked him in his course, he would have spent his whole life in persecution, and would (with Pope Paul IV. upon his death-bed) have recommended the Inquisition to the chief priests and rulers of the Jewish Church. V. SUCH ACTIONS ARE NEVERTHELESS HORRIBLY WICKED. To make an action good and acceptable to God, we must do it with a good mind, and to a good end, and it must be good and lawful in itself. VI. THE CORRUPTION OF THE BEST THINGS IS THE WORST. Religion is certainly the highest perfection of human nature; and zeal for God highly acceptable: and yet nothing is more barbarous, and spurs men on to more horrid impieties, than a blind zeal for God, and false and mistaken principles in the matter of religion (Acts xxvi. 9–11). (*Abp. Tillotson.*) **Whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.**—The word "doeth" is the technical word for offering sacrifice (*cf.* Matt. v. 23; viii. 4). The word "service" means the service of worship (Rom. ix. 4; xii. 1; Heb. ix. 1–6). A rabbinic comment on Numb. xxv. 13 is, "Whosoever sheddeth the blood of the wicked is as he who offereth sacrifice." The martyrdom of St. Stephen, or St. Paul's account of himself as a persecutor (Acts xxvi. 9; Gal. i. 13, 14), shows how these words were fulfilled in the first years of the Church's history, and such accounts are not absent from that history's latest page. (*Archdeacon Watkins.*) *Abuse of conscience*:—What a rattle and noise hath this word conscience made! How many battles has it fought? how many churches has it robbed, ruined, and reformed to ashes? how many laws has it trampled upon, dispensed with, and addressed against? and in a word, how many governments has it overturned? Such is the mischievous force of a plausible word applied to a detestable thing (Acts xxvi. 9). (*R. South, D.D.*) **Put you out of the synagogue.**—*Excommunication* was much more than simply to exclude from the place of public worship. It cut a man off from the privileges of his people, from the society of his former associates. It was a sort of moral outlawry, and the physical disabilities followed the sufferer even after death. To be under this ban was almost more than flesh and blood could bear. All men shunned him on whom such a mark was set. He was literally an outcast; in lasting disgrace and perpetual danger. Those familiar with the history of the dark ages, or who are acquainted with the effects of losing caste among the Hindoos, will be able to realize the terrors of such a system. Sometimes this punishment and degradation was a prelude even to death. At all events, the Jews, who since their subjugation by the Romans had lost the legal prerogative of life and death, yet thought it meritorious even by irregular and clandestine measures to compass the destruction of those who were obnoxious. And the men who, in however underhand a manner, carried out the secret sentence of their displeasure were regarded by the rulers with approbation. So that there grew up a desperate and fanatical sect among them, which went by a name which in our adopted term of "zealot" has a very mitigated meaning. (*G. J. Brown, M.A.*) *Excommunication among the Jews*:—The three degrees of excommunication among the Jews were—1. *Niddui*, putting out of the synagogue (Luke vi. 22). And the effect of this excommunication was to exclude men from the communion of the Church and people of God and from His service, which was a great disgrace, because after this sentence none of the Jews were to converse with them, but to look upon them as heathens and publicans. 2. *Cherem*, which extended farther, to the confiscation of goods into the sacred treasury, and devoting them to God, after which there was no redemption of them (Ezra x. 7–9). 3. *Shammatha*, when the rebellious and contumacious person was anathematized and devoted, and, as some conceive, according to the law (Levit. xxvii. 29), was to be put to death; though other very knowing men in the Jewish learning think it amounted to no more than a final sentence,

whereby they were left to the judgment of God, by some remarkable judgment of His to be cut off from the congregation of Israel. Of the first and last of these degrees of excommunication our Saviour seems here to speak. (*Archbishop Tillotson.*) *Gratitude for massacre:*—One of the most horrid circumstances attending the dreadful massacre of the Protestants under Charles IX. of France was that, when the news of this event reached Rome, Pope Gregory XIII. instituted the most solemn rejoicing, giving thanks to Almighty God for this glorious victory over the heretics!! *Religious fanaticism:*—In the Huguenot persecution in Belgium and France in 1562, the inhabitants of the town of Orange fell into the hands of the Catholics. They were hacked to pieces, burnt at slow fires, or left, infamously mutilated, to bleed to death. Noble ladies, first sacrificed to the lust of the soldiers, were exposed in the streets to die—either naked, or pasted over in devilish mockery with the torn leaves of their Geneva Bibles. Old men and children, women and sick, all perished under cruelties unexampled even in the infernal annals of religious fanaticism. (*J. A. Froude.*) *Religious intolerance dishonouring to God:*—In one of the Jews' books it is stated that when Abraham sat at his tent door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travel, coming towards him, who was a hundred years of age. He received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, and caused him to sit down. But observing that the old man eat and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing on his meat, he asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven. The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other God. At which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry, that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called to Abraham and asked him where the stranger was. He replied, "I thrust him away because he did not worship Thee." God answered him, "I have suffered him these hundred years, although he dishonoured Me; and couldest thou not endure him one night, when he gave thee no trouble?" Upon this, saith the story, Abraham fetched him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment and wise instruction. "Go thou, and do likewise," and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham. (*Jeremy Taylor.*) *The fate of the first disciples:*—Matthew suffered martyrdom by the sword in Ethiopia. Mark died at Alexandria, after being dragged through the city. Luke was hanged on an olive tree in Greece. Peter was crucified at Rome with his head downward. James was beheaded at Jerusalem. James the less was thrown from a pinacle of the Temple and beaten to death below. Philip was hanged against a pillar in Phrygia. Bartholemew was flayed alive. Andrew was bound to a cross, whence he preached to his persecutors till he died. Thomas was run through the body at Cormandel, in India. Jude was shot to death with arrows. Matthias was first stoned, and then beheaded. Barnabas was stoned to death by Jews at Salonica. Paul, "in deaths oft," was beheaded at Rome by Nero. (*J. Angus, D.D.*) **Because they have not known the Father, nor Me.**—*The tribulation explained:*—I. TRACED TO ITS CAUSE—ignorance. It is strange how differently Christ and man may view the same action. The Jews imagined they above all men were acquainted with the Father, and knew better than all the world beside what kind of service to present upon His altar. This was not the judgment of Christ. II. CONDEMNED IN ITS CHARACTER. Though Christ ascribed their behaviour to ignorance, He does not say that for this they were not responsible. If they did not know the Father or Him they might have known (chap. xv. 22). III. COMMISERATED IN ITS ACTORS. One cannot help thinking Christ designed His words to awaken pity in the breasts of His persecuted followers, like that afterwards found in His own, when, hanging on the cross, He prayed for His murderers (Luke xxiii. 34). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **But now I go My way to Him that sent Me.**—*Going to God:*—He says, not that He is going the way of all the earth, because He was not going as all flesh must go, from the necessity of man's nature, but of His own will. All things which He suffered on earth were a going to His Father, a fulfilment of His mission, and the way by which He was to return to Him that sent Him. By His cross and passion, by His sufferings and death, was His kingdom to be set up and His throne established. And by reminding His disciples of this truth He seeks to assuage their grief, and to prevent their being offended in Him, since, however greatly He should be humiliated, and however many His sufferings might be, they were all but a going to His Father, all but the means by which His glory was to be made known unto men. This thought was the consolation of the Man Christ Jesus, and

with the same thought He consoles us. The oil from the head of our Great High Priest flowed down to all His members, even the oil of gladness to comfort them in all their troubles. The whole of this present life of man is one continual going either to God or from Him. All thoughts and deeds of our daily life are either separating us from our heavenly Father or drawing us towards Him in whose presence we are at all times. It is our vocation to pass through life into the glory of our Father; and our duty to remember that whilst all is shifting around us, the Christian's career is in itself a going the way to Him that sent him. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) **None of you asked Me, Whither goest Thou?**—*Misdirected and sanctified curiosity*:—Curiosity is often reprehensible. It is the fault of many to wish to pry into matters which they had much better never know. But there is one direction in which inquiry is never out of place. We can never be too anxious to know about Christ, the reasons of His movements, and the explanations of His doings (1 Pet. i. 10–12). Here anxious interest and casting about for light are not only legitimate, but necessary to our proper instruction, comfort, and salvation (James i. 5). But just here it is that the human heart is most sluggish. People spend their lives searching into questions of political and domestic economy, finance, commerce, agriculture, education. They toil and experiment touching the character, relations, and classifications of rocks, metals, soils, plants, insects, reptiles, animals, birds, and flowers. They explore and labour, at every expense and inconvenience, to make and test theories about the world. They rummage the darkest histories of the past, and exhaust their powers speculating upon the phenomena of human life, and perplex themselves about a thousand things in reference to which the best wisdom is as useless as it is scanty. But when it comes to the great and mighty movements of the Lord of all, the incarnation of Jehovah for the redemption of a world labouring under the curse of sin, and those moral and spiritual administrations, without which all the universe must be as nothing to us, they have no inquiries of living interest to propound. And to many an energetic sage and earnest searcher in departments not a thousandth part the account of this, the wronged and burdened Saviour is compelled to say, "I go My way to Him that sent Me; and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?" And especially in times of affliction, when the good Lord seems to withdraw Himself, and leave us to ourselves and our weaknesses, does the Saviour find occasion to complain of the deadness of men, paralyzed with their griefs, when they ought to be inquiring of Him about the reasons and objects of them. He has His explanations for all our days of darkness, and an antidote for every pain or privation we suffer, if only we had the faith and interest to ask after it. But the human heart is such an inveterate doubter, and so ready to give way before what is afflictive and dark, that we often miss the very consolations which are at hand, just because we are too dull and despondent to make the requisite inquiry. (*J. A. Seiss, M.A.*)

Ver. 7. **It is expedient for you that I go away.**—*The absenteeism of Christ*:—1. The words must have been very startling to the apostles. They had doubtless come to consider the personal presence of Christ indispensable. He was the principle of cohesion among them, and His departure would be the signal for the dissolution of the brotherhood. He, moreover, gave them what influence they possessed in the nation; for without Him they were but a band of ignorant fishermen. 2. Now if these words were true in the case of the apostles, they are true for all time. The absenteeism of Christ is a help rather than a hindrance to the religious life. I. It is, of course, true that THE DEATH OF ANY GOOD MAN IS SO FAR A LOSS TO THE WORLD. It is the withdrawal of a beneficent influence. How grand, then, it would have been, to have had Him, the world's greatest blessing, making one everlasting pilgrimage round the globe. But—1. Such perpetual residence here would have limited His moral influence. No man is understood till he is dead. Absence is the condition of correct insight. Presence either blinds us to greatness, or produces flattery, or that familiarity which begets indifference. It is to be feared that, had Christ remained for ever on the earth, the blindness of the Jews who saw no beauty in Him to make Him desired, would have been repeated by each succeeding generation. We labour under an incapacity for seeing a hero in the man whose hand we can shake. The fault, no doubt, lies in us who live so much in our senses, and look only on the surface of the life. That the valet cannot see a hero in his master is more likely to be due to the valet's blindness than to the master's defects. We might have gained in physical happiness from Christ's perpetual presence, but that would have been but a poor compensation for the loss of reverence, and the

inspiring lift our whole nature has received from the ascended and invisible Christ. Why, the physical boon itself would have been but parochial and temporary. And thereon would have arisen dissatisfactions and jealousies. 2. Christ's perpetual residence here would have been against the growth of the religious life. Instead of living for Christ and God in our hearts, we should have lived for them only in our senses. We should never have hungered for the hour of religious meditation, but rather have complained that He had long delayed to appear in our streets. Newspapers would have been searched to learn His whereabouts; shiploads of the stricken would have travelled the deep, and longed impatiently for the port of their destination; and the rest would have lived on in the restless hope that He would pass their way before they died. Who would have thought of submitting with obedient heart to the afflictions of Providence, of seeking out their Divine purpose when one word from Christ would remove them all at once? Would men ever think of spiritual fellowship with Christ when physical fellowship might be had? Is it not far better that, instead of being the monopoly of a favoured few, He should be ever near to all who call upon Him; that, instead of gazing on Him as a man without, we should feel Him in the background of our hearts? 3. Had Christ dwelt for ever on the earth the good and the bad would have had equal experience and perception of Him. His absence from the earth was indispensable to His manifesting Himself to His people in another way than He could unto the world. 4. Christ's perpetual residence here would have made impossible the expected distribution of His spirit in the hearts and lives of men, and through all the political, moral, and social organizations of the globe. II. You will see the expediency of Christ's departure from the earth, if you consider that HIS CONTINUED RESIDENCE HERE WOULD HAVE SECURED US NO ADDITIONAL BLESSING, except, indeed, relief from physical ills; and, if you admit that these are productive of moral good, and work in us a recompensing glory, it is questionable if their arbitrary removal would have been an unmixed blessing. All the good Christ could do for the world might be summed up under these points:—1. In His sacrificing Himself for sin. And here it will be obvious that the satisfactoriness of His death could in but a small measure depend upon any condition of time. As soon as the hour had struck when He would be accepted as our Substitute, it would have availed nothing to have deferred the hour of His triumphal return to God. 2. In impressing on the world's imagination an ideal of saintliness and nobleness of character that would make for righteousness and protest against evil through all generations. Into the doing of this the condition of time, in a greater measure, did enter; but when He had reached the age at which He spoke of the expediency of His departure, this end had been attained. He has left no more precious legacy behind Him than the memory of what He was. (*J. Forfar.*) *The departure of Christ:*—This departure—I. HAS SECURED TO THE CHURCH HIS CONSTANT PRESENCE. While dwelling here as our Saviour He was not ubiquitous. This was sometimes an apparent loss. "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." How this wail would have extended itself had He remained. Europe would have cried for Him when He was teaching the millions of Asia, &c. No Church now mourns an absent Lord. When faith looks for Him it sees Him. When love yearns for Him it feels Him near. Only when these are feeble do we seem to be forsaken and alone. We have then one friend to whose memory no tablet will ever be erected, and no tear shed; for the strong arm will never cease to hold us securely, and the loving heart will not fail to keep alive our affection with the fire of its abiding love. II. PREVENTED, TO A GREAT EXTENT, THE GROWTH OF A SPURIOUS AFFECTION FOR HIM. "We have known Christ after the flesh." Many have an affection for His person without regard to His character and work. It is one thing to weep over Christ's sufferings, and quite another thing to weep over our sins. Blessed are they who can say, "Whom having not seen we love." Their affection is not less strong, while probably it is more spiritual than it would have been had He remained on earth. III. ENABLES US TO UNDERSTAND HIM BETTER THAN WE COULD HAVE DONE HAD HE REMAINED. Why are we more ready to garnish the graves of dead saints than to praise the virtues of living ones? Not always because we are envious. Mainly, perhaps, because just as we may get too near a magnificent pile of architecture, and thus lose sight of the exquisite harmony of the whole. No man was more unknown than Christ. Even His attached friends misunderstood His plainest teachings. It was well that He went away. Things dimly seen before, shone with unclouded radiance after His departure. IV. SECURED THE OUT-POURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. It is very probable that this was the chief cause of His departure. Their views of the Holy Spirit

were very indistinct. Nevertheless, the language of Christ concerning Him had kindled a strong desire for His presence. Now they learn the price which must be paid for His advent. "If I go not away," &c. How essential the Spirit was to them, and to the interests of the kingdom, all their subsequent history shows. And there never has been an age in which the Church could afford to dispense with His presence. If this were the only reason for the departure of Christ, we could not murmur. We have not lost our Lord. "He takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us." He strengthens our faith in Him, deepens our love to Him, enlarges our desires after Him, sanctifies our communion with Him. (*H. B. Robinson.*) *Christ's departure and Paul's abiding* (text, and Phil. i. 24):—Jesus thought that His disciples would gain by losing Him, and Paul thought that his friends could not do without him. A singular contrast—reverses what might have been expected. How strange it must have seemed to them that they, poor sheep in the midst of wolves, would be better without the Shepherd! And the strangeness is brought more home to us by that word of Paul's in which we recognize the familiar tone of love that cannot face the thought of leaving a life's work half done and dear ones unbelped. The contrast rests on the absolute difference between the work of Christ and that of all other teachers, friends, and guides, and so may help us to grasp the unique relation which He and it sustain to the world. It was expedient that Christ should go away, for—I. CHRIST'S DEATH IS HIS WORK. It was needful that Paul should abide, for Paul's death was the end of his. Paul's words show us how those speak who know that their departure will do nothing to advance the purposes to which they have given themselves. Christ's are intelligible only in the light of the great truth that He came to give His life a ransom for the many, and that His death has a substantive value all its own. II. HIS WORK GOES ON AFTER HIS DEATH, WHILE THAT OF OTHERS CEASES. When Paul dies he can no more help his brethren. True, he may leave a holy memory. The great personalities of the world may, in a certain figurative sense, be said to "rule the nations from their urns." But that reverberation from the past prolonged into the present is but a poor shadowy thing. Christ's work to-day is no mere influence flowing from activities long since terminated. It is real and continuous—a present putting forth of present power. III. CHRIST'S PERSONAL RELATION TO US IS WHOLLY INDEPENDENT OF HIS BODILY PRESENCE. His departure aided in the apprehension of His true character and nature. Like some star, that, as long as it is low on the horizon and shrouded by mist, may be mistaken for some earthborn light, but is known for what it is as it climbs the sky, He was discerned when unseen far better than when here. When He ascended to the Father, that withdrawal from the touch of sense gave Him to the touch of faith, and these desolate disciples were nearer Him when the cloud received Him out of their sight. The true personal bond that knits men to Christ is actually helped by His absence. "Jesus Christ, whom having not seen ye love," is held in the inmost hearts of millions. That is a phenomenon in the history of human affections altogether unique, and standing in the strongest contrast to the feelings with which the most enthusiastic admirers regard the mightiest among the dead. For love, there must be, or must have been, personal intercourse. With earthly teachers and guides that is only possible whilst they live; so their abiding in the flesh is needful for us. With Jesus Christ, who died—yea, rather, who is risen again—it is possible now for us all; therefore it was our gain that He went away, "departing for a season, that we might receive Him for ever." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christ going away*:—Our Lord here represents the complex whole of His death and ascension as being His own voluntary act. He goes. He is neither taken away by death nor rapt up to heaven in a whirlwind, but He goes into the region of the grave and thence to the throne. Contrast His ascension with that of Elijah. One needed the chariot of fire and the horses of fire to bear him up into the sphere, all foreign to his mortal and earthly manhood; the other needed no outward power to lift Him, nor any vehicle to carry Him, but slowly, serenely, upborne by His own indwelling energy, and rising as to His native home, He ascended up on high, and went where the very manner of His going proclaimed that He had been before. (*Ibid.*) *We need not lament Christ's departure into heaven*:—Men long for Christ on earth. Christ in heaven is not only faint and dim, but they think a heavenly Being cannot have earthly love. There may be more purity, they think, in heavenly love than in earthly, but less heartiness, and heartiness is what they long for. Now, Christ returned to heaven that He might love more, not less. This was a part of the glory which He had laid aside and was to take again. On earth His soul stood but in the bud. He went to a fairer clime that He might blossom, and now the heavens and

the earth are full of the fragrance of His love. Incarnation was limitation. Ascension was expansion. There was not room enough for such a heart while in the body. It came as a seed, and grew, but we saw only the sprouting and the leaves. Death ripened it back again to the golden fulness of a heavenly state. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The departed Christ*:—The Saviour declared to His disciples that He must leave them. On Him their whole souls had rested. He epitomized to them everything that was sacred; they had forsaken occupation, and had suffered contumely for following this man; and now He was about to be taken from them; and everything in their knowledge, affection, understanding, rebelled against it. They could not comprehend it either in its relations to Him or to themselves. And yet He said, "It is for your own interest that I *go* away." That, I think, touches the universal feeling of wonder in men. I. Is there one of you who has not pondered the question, "WHY DID CHRIST LEAVE THE WORLD? Having once come into it, and brought life and immortality to light, why did He not abide here?" 1. There are multitudes who think that if they could but once have seen Jesus, or laid their hand on His, or heard from Him the history of His life and His instructions, that it would have begotten in them a certainty, an enthusiasm, and a power which would have carried them through a thousand sloughs that otherwise must have engulphed them. 2. Then, again, men think that if once they could pour out their soul's allegiance to Christ, in His very presence, they could go on all their lives long worshipping and rejoicing in Him. They think it would lay the foundations of piety so strong, that all doubts would flee from them for evermore. 3. Then there is a large number who feel that if Christ were enthroned in Jerusalem, around that sacred Centre would be formed the Church circle in an unbroken unity, and that all the shattered particles of shining truth would be gathered together. 4. Then, again, there is the feeling of certainty which men seek for. This leads men to feel that if they could have a determiner of controversies, it would be a great and desirable thing. They say, "True, we have the Bible; but how can the Bible be a determiner of controversies, when there are a dozen different and warring sects that draw their proofs from it?" There is the vicegerent in Rome; and men say, oftentimes: "We do not believe in a great many things that are claimed in regard to the papacy; but, after all, it is a good thing to have somewhere a centre of faith —one that can determine and put an end to controversies." I cannot deny that, at the first blush, there is some justification for these fancies; but they will not bear examination. God's way is always the best. II. SUPPOSE OUR MASTER HAD REMAINED UPON EARTH, ABIDING IN JERUSALEM—1. How many of the race could have seen Him? The ocean may know ways of circulating its waters; the atmosphere may change and go from place to place without vehicle or expense; but there is no grand current by which the human race may be thus carried hither and thither. So the tribes of the earth would find it difficult to go to a certain place and see the Saviour if He were on earth. Moreover, the mere social and physical disturbances would be enormous. It would break up the household, destroy social intercourse, and subject men to untold perils, and toils, and wastes, and expenses, to say nothing of the destruction of vast multitudes of the human race—witness those fearful pilgrimages in the East, and their fatal results, in famines, slaughters, and the dreaded Asiatic cholera. 2. But let us rise above these considerations of man's physical circumstances, and go higher. Do you suppose that you would feel any better satisfied if you had seen Christ? When the disciples were with Christ were they more strong and more powerful than afterwards? You know they were not. The inspiration that lifted them above common humanity came by faith, and not by sight. There are realms of knowledge which cannot be reached by vision, and which must be reached by the Spirit. Therefore the Saviour says, "It is expedient," &c. 3. But, again, would there be any more certainty of unity if Christ could yet be referred to? There are men who say: "If we only had some one in Jerusalem who should be supreme over the Church throughout the world, saying: 'This is the exact way—walk ye in it,' how much better it would be!" Would it be any better? Why, we do not want mere likeness, sameness, absence of conflict. We have that—in the graveyard; and the race would be but little better than dead men if such unity were to exist, and men did not need to think, to exert themselves, or to make mistakes, which are always incident to investigation and endeavour. Some people are all the time trying to set aside the Divine providence by doing for a man what it was designed that he should do for himself. A Church formed on such principles would be like Babbage's calculating machine. All that would be necessary would be to turn a crank, the wheels being of just such

a diameter, and with just such cogs, but having no volition, no life, individuality, Divinity! I cannot conceive how anybody who has an idea of how the providence of God is unfolding, and has unfolded the world, should stumble on that as the way in which he ought to unfold it. But it is thought that, at any rate, it would determine controversies to have one who could speak authoritatively. Did the disciples believe just what Christ told them? Did the most learned and educated men in the time of the Saviour believe what He taught them? Did not the mind act the same then as it does now? and was it not necessary for men to get at the truth by unfolding themselves, and by educating their inward nature to the thing taught them? And if Christ had lived two thousand years, He would down to this day have taught only those who were competent to understand, by reason of their growth. The earth would have always followed the same law that He pointed out to them then, and we should have had to learn by stages, and rise accordingly. But we should not even then have come to unity. Even in the consideration of physical truths there is but very little absolute unity. And when you take social and moral truths, still more when you take spiritual truths, they are of such a nature that they report themselves to each individual according to his conformation. III. CHRIST SAID that it was expedient that He should go away, and THAT IF HE DID NOT GO THE COMFORTER WOULD NOT COME. Blessed word! because if there is anything that we need in this world, it is comforting. There are gods of love, of wine, of war, of government and law, but the world needs a God to comfort it. The Holy Spirit; the One who stands over against those subtle elemeuts in the human soul —which we call the spiritual instinct or sentiment—comes to take the place of Christ, and open the doors of the understanding through the highest intuitions, and give light and direction to our interior nature, and enable us to triumph over death, and crown us sons in the kingdom of God. And this is infinitely better than that Christ should have continued on the earth in His physical form. Now, how blessed it is to feel that the heaven is filled by one who is interpreted to our spirit by historical sympathies as he never could have been interpreted to us in Jerusalem, where He would have had to walk the streets, to eat and drink and sleep as men do. In the spiritland there is not a long day's journey between us and Him. The distance is not even so great as that which must be gone over to send a letter from the post-office in New York to the post-office in Brooklyn. No thought emerges from your soul that does not go instantly to Him. There are no distances in spirituality. (*Ibid.*) *Jesus invisible*:—I. LET US SUPPOSE THAT THE SON OF MAN HAD CONSENTED TO REMAIN UPON THE EARTH. He could not thus remain except to die daily, or to be for ever triumphant. On which of these two alternatives must we fix? You know too well. 1. Jesus Christ always equally entitled to be loved, will always be equally hated; so that were Jesus Christ to appear successively in different countries, each of them would in its turn be moistened with His blood. If it accords with piety to believe that the Son of God died once, the just for the unjust, it is impious to believe that the blessed seed of the woman was more than once to allow His heel to be bruised by the angel of darkness. 2. Let us hasten then to reject this alternative, and conceive that He has to enjoy an everlasting triumph. He has conquered; He has put infidelity completely to flight. Jesus reigns King of all the earth. He has no more enemies or rivals. Still this kingdom, glorious as it appears, is but a place of exile. The subjects of this King have an advantage over Him. The servant is more than his Master. For Jesus Christ having suffered once, what can those around Him have to suffer? A single look from Him crowns them with glory. There is no longer either difficulty to be surmounted or struggle to be maintained. It is no longer by fire that men are saved, nor by much tribulation that they enter into glory. Religion is no longer a sacrifice; the blessing of the narrow way, and the kingdom of heaven taken by violence, are henceforth only empty sounds. It only remains to ask why earth is not already transformed into heaven? II. LET US NOW LISTEN TO JESUS CHRIST. Let us see in what this expediency consists. 1. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come," &c. Remain with us, Lord, and we will be comforted. Such would perhaps have been our answer. Who can console better than Jesus? Jesus absent is only one misery more. Jesus might have answered, Are you consoled? does My presence suffice you? No; and yet I am in the midst of you. Thus it appears you still require the Comforter. Two consolations compose the whole new man. (1) Faith. To believe is to repose entirely on the infallibility and faithfulness of God. It is, consequently, to go forward with unflinching eye, and meet coming events as we would meet God Himself; to live in the Spirit; to renounce the domination of the senses; to prefer the invisible, which is eternal.

In regard to what specially concerns Jesus Christ, it is to bless God that the Word was made flesh, but not to regard Jesus Christ, although perfect man, as an ordinary individual, whose presence is indissolubly attached to the body. Now, such was the disposition of the disciples, and such is human nature, that had Jesus Christ remained upon the earth, faith would have remained for ever in an infant state. Its case would have been that of a young bird whose parent will not permit it to try its wings. Men would have reposed on the corporeal presence of Christ; not upon His spiritual, which is His real presence. The magnificent developments of the Christian Church would thus be strangled in the birth; or, to speak more properly, there would be no Christian Church; if by the Church we mean the assembly of those who walk by faith, and live in the Spirit. (2) Love in the Spirit. To love spiritually is to love as God loves and wishes to be loved. All in love that is only nature, instinct, taste, self-complacency, disappears or is subordinate. Love, purified and made Divine, rises and attaches itself to what is invisible and immortal. Now almost all the world loves Jesus. How is it possible not to love Him! But no man of the world could have more love for Him than the son of Jonas; and do we not know that Jesus deserved to be loved otherwise? The affection of Peter was not spiritual; that of the world for Jesus is, if possible, still less so. It is a human attachment which Jesus does not count sufficient. But this attachment remained human so long as Jesus Himself remained in a human condition. The visible, corporeal, limited person, behoved to disappear, in order to make room for the idea which it represented, and at the same time concealed. 2. If faith and spiritual affection are the life of the Church, it was for the advantage of the Church that Jesus should go away. This has been well proved by fact. Where was the Church before the departure of Jesus? Nowhere; not even in the bosom of that college of apostles who we have reason to believe knew Jesus far less, and loved Him less completely than a poor Christian peasant now knows and loves Him. Why had His lessons less affect on the apostles than those of the apostles themselves afterwards had on others? The facts cannot be disputed. Before the departure of Jesus there was no Church, but there is one immediately after. 3. Could we venture to maintain that it was good for the disciples that Christ should go away, and yet bad for us? The situation, and wants, are still the same, and we cannot dispense with the painful privation. No Christian, however, consents to it willingly. The resolution to do so depends on the measure of his spirituality. But nothing is more universal or more natural than regret for not having seen Jesus Christ. Many imagine that they could do all with Jesus Christ were He to become visible, that there would then be neither doubt nor fear, that they would thenceforth be all ardour for the service of their great Master. But after reflection how can they continue to use this language? (1) What is the human body? A living statue. An image of the presence of a moral being, to which through the body are addressed all the feelings which this being can inspire. This organization, however, does not constitute the man. This we all admit when we refuse to estimate a man's worth by his body, and make it wholly depend on his intellect and will. Moreover, in our attachments we rise superior to the impressions which body can produce upon body. An affection on which neither the external decay of the object loved, nor its absence, nor death, would have any power, would justly be entitled to the highest honour. If any being should be loved purely, it is undoubtedly the Son of God. If the Son of God appeared in the flesh, it was not to make us adore His corporeal presence, but to be man like us, and submit to death. He has given this as a support to our love; but our love should attach itself to that in Him which thinks, invites, and loves. (2) But let us reply to those who exclaim, "Oh how strong we would be if we could only see Jesus Christ!" Alas! how many saw Him at full leisure, and remained weak! So would it be with you were Jesus Christ to communicate the Holy Spirit, which was given to the first disciples only under the condition of His own absence. The mere aspect of a great personage, the mere report of his presence, has sometimes, on grave emergencies, exercised a decisive influence. But however great the results might be, they were human. But spiritual effects demand a spiritual cause, and the fact of Christ's corporeal presence, considered in itself, is not so. There is nothing spiritual in it. This absence of a visible Christ is regarded as a privation, a loss. But it is the flesh itself, it is the charm of the present life that makes us deem it so. Jesus Christ, though absent, is not absent. In giving us His Spirit He gives Himself. 4. "Enough of this," you say, "None of us have the idea of making Christ dwell a second time in the sad darkness of this life." But if you presume not to claim the visibility of Jesus Christ's personal

presence, you wish visible signs of His invisible presence. If the signs for which you call are only those fruits of the Spirit, which constitute and manifest Christianity, assuredly you are right; and it is these signs of the presence of Jesus Christ you ought in the first instance to ask from yourselves. But there is another desire less pure, "Make us gods to walk before us." Anything which will give a tangible shape to the spiritual kingdom which Jesus Christ came to establish on the earth. (1) In the first rank are the institutions and customs which time has consecrated in the bosom of the Christian Church. These circumstances, which are wholly external and are not the Church itself, we so overvalue that we mistake them for the Church; if certain barriers, words, sounds, happen to fail, we think it is the Church herself that fails, and our heart melts within us, and we can scarcely help exclaiming, "They have taken away my Lord," &c. (2) Sometimes we consider Jesus Christ to be represented by men who are devoted to His service. Every Christian, in a certain sense, represents Jesus Christ. The error lies in making a mere man the object of feelings which are due only to our Lord, and in regarding any instrument of whatever nature as necessary. And when the righteous hand of God throws down this idol and breaks it to pieces, when this man, supposed necessary, has disappeared, all has disappeared with him. (3) The successes of Christianity are also a kind of visible Christ to us. We are willing not to believe Him absent so long as we see His religion honoured and multitudes thronging His churches. Our faith takes courage at the sight; but how readily it is shaken, when, in consequence of any great change in the condition of society, enmity grows bold. It seems as if this host of enemies had carried Jesus Christ away. 5. But Jesus Christ, who cannot permit us either to serve Him as an idol, or to put idols in His place, or to seek indubitable evidence of His presence anywhere but in ourselves, as of old, "withdraws to a mountain." By this new retreat He extinguishes the bright light which He had kindled; He obliges us to seek Him on the mountain, in other words, in our faith, and constrains us to look at Him with other eyes than those of flesh. Let us with all the strength which God has given resist the dangerous temptations of that "lust of the eye," which, from our carnal nature, we carry even into the purest of religions. (*A. Vinet, D.D.*) *Christ's going away our gain*:—I. By His DEPARTURE His LOCAL PRESENCE WAS CHANGED INTO AN UNIVERSAL PRESENCE. As God, He dwells with us through the Holy Ghost, by His essence, presence, and power. As Man He is always with us in all the truth of His Incarnation. His character—His pity, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, love, tenderness, compassion—is shed abroad throughout all His Church. The kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of the Man Christ Jesus; and the reign of His will, human as well as Divine, is His kingdom. And there are even deeper things than these. The mystery of the Incarnation is not a mere isolated fact, terminating in the personality of the Word made flesh, but the beginning and productive cause of a new creation of mankind. By the same omnipotence which wrought the union of the Godhead and the manhood in the womb of the blessed Virgin, the humanity of the Second Adam is the immediate and substantial instrument of our regeneration and renewal. The Church is Christ mystical—the presence of Christ, by the creative power of His Incarnation, produced and prolonged on earth. II. His DEPARTURE CHANGED THEIR IMPERFECT KNOWLEDGE INTO THE FULL ILLUMINATION OF FAITH. While He was with them, and taught them by word of mouth, their hearts were slow of understanding. Their minds were earthly, and interpreted all things by the rules of earth and sense. But when the Comforter came all things were brought back to their remembrance. Old truths and perplexing memories received their true solution. Words they had mused upon in doubt were interpreted; sayings they had thought already clear were seen to have profounder meanings; a fountain of light sprung up within them, an illumination cast from an unseen teacher unfolded to their consciousness the deep things of God and of His Christ. Their very faculties were enlarged; they were no longer pent up by narrow senses and by the succession of time, but were lifted into a light where all things are boundless and eternal. A new power of insight was implanted in their spiritual being, and a new world rose up before it; for the Spirit of truth dwelt in them, and the world unseen was revealed. III. His DEPARTURE CHANGED THE PARTIAL DISPENSATIONS OF GRACE INTO THE FULNESS OF THE REGENERATION. Our nature, which He had made sinless, deathless, and divine, from the time of His ascension into heaven was glorified. The Second Adam began to give of His own spiritual nature, to multiply the lineage of His elect, and to gather His mystical family into one universal body. The agent in this Divine work is the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. The Incarnation raised man

to a higher life, and laid a higher law upon us: the coming of the Holy Ghost endowed man with power to walk in that higher and more perfect path. (*Archdeacon Manning.*) *Christ's ascension the Church's gain:*—I. THERE IS A NATURAL SENSE IN WHICH LOSSES OFTEN PROVE TO BE GAIN IN THE END. We gain wisdom and knowledge and experience by losses; and we unquestionably gain a very much clearer mental and spiritual vision. And so, perhaps, in this natural and human sense it would be in one way expedient for the disciples to lose their Lord—inasmuch as the loss of Him would tend to open their eyes to a juster and truer estimate of His Person and character. On this very night Philip gave sad evidence of how little he and the others even yet understood of Him. "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" was the Saviour's reply to Philip's request that He would show to them the Father. To the very end of His life it was still true of the disciples that "they understood not what things they were that He spake unto them," and what He did they knew not either as yet—but should only know hereafter. Was this, then, what our Saviour meant in the text when He said "It is expedient for you that I go away:"—"You will be able, after I am gone, to balance and weigh the things that I have said and done better than you can at present, and so, by the exercise of your calmer judgment, arrive at a juster estimate of Me?" This would certainly be a consequence of His departure—but it was not this He meant by the words He used. II. IF FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY ARE THE THREE GRACES WHICH MAKE UP THE SUM OF A CHRISTIAN CHARACTER, HOW VERY MUCH THAT CHARACTER MUST BE STRENGTHENED BY THE GREATER EXERCISE OF THESE SEVERAL GRACES. When the Lord they loved was taken away from them, then their faith would be called into action as it had never been before, for faith begins where sight ends; when they ceased to see the Lord with the natural eye then the spiritual vision—which is only another name for faith—would have to be entirely depended upon. And so, too, with their hope. No longer would they be looking for a temporal and earthly fulfilment of God's promises. The hope they had been hitherto entertaining of earthly honour for their Lord, and the restoration of an earthly kingdom to His chosen people, would henceforth give place to a wider and better and further-reaching hope. Their treasure henceforth would be in heaven, and they would surely experience in their own case the truth that they had long since heard and learnt by rote—that where a man's treasure is there will his heart be also. III. IF I GO NOT AWAY THE COMFORTER WILL NOT COME UNTO YOU—but if I depart I will send Him unto you. Do we understand this? Is it that the Holy Spirit is kinder, more loving, more powerful than He who sends Him? Ah no, we know that the Three Persons are at the same time One God—One in power, and in holiness, and in love. The meaning has already been partly stated. It is better for the Church—it is better for each one of us its members—to walk by faith than to walk by sight. It is better, and it is the work of God the Holy Ghost to lead us on to this higher life. So long as Jesus was present upon earth there could not fail to be something earthly and carnal in the attachment of His disciples to Him; but when He was departed the Holy Ghost would teach men a more spiritual attachment. (*John Crofts.*) *Expediency:*—I. THINGS ARE NOT OF NECESSITY AS THEY APPEAR AT FIRST SIGHT. We are very short-sighted, and we judge just by what is within range of our vision. How should human sight perceive that it ever could be expedient for the well-loved Jesus to depart? Surely nothing could compensate for that; and yet He says it is for their advantage. Let this be a lesson to us, not to be too hasty in taking things at first sight. Let us not say, when, perhaps, we are on the very road to blessing, "all these things are against me." It is necessary that we keep our minds in a state of readiness to admit possibilities. II. THE VALUE OF UNDERLYING AND DEFERRED BLESSINGS IS OFTEN FAR GREATER THAN THAT, OF WHAT WE HAVE LOST, OR ARE ABOUT TO LOSE. The full ear of corn is of much more value than the single grain from which it sprang, from whose death it took its life; but who would have believed as a theory, that it was only under this condition it could come. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." God is continually sowing for us seed which we would never sow for ourselves, because we could not bear to see it die. III. THINK OF GOD'S ACTION ON THE WHOLE MATTER. We can never deal with the whole of a matter. All human affairs are like spheres, they can be illumined only on one portion of their surface at a time. Some of them revolve so slowly, that it requires more than a lifetime for a man to see their whole surface. Events are happening to us now, which are the legitimate consequences of certain actions of our youth; or even of our parents; or of their parents; and God is engaged in the whole matter. Is it not an immense relief that

we can leave God to deal with things as a whole—that we need not strain ourselves, in endeavouring to compass things beyond our grasp. IV. CONNECT GOD DIRECTLY WITH EXPEDIENCY. Expediency implies suitability of action to circumstances, of means to accomplish an end—that end being what "seemed meet unto Him." Man recognizes the meaning of the word, and thinks he acts upon it; but being evil, he often forgets moral principles; moreover, he is so ignorant, he often chooses wrong means; he thinks it is not expedient to do such and such a thing, whereas it is the very thing he should have done; and he does the very thing, which, as it turns out, he should not have done. But with God there are no mistakes; and so, there is no miscarrying: there is absolute righteousness in Him; and so, in His dealings towards us, and others, there can be no wrong. He does the right thing, with the right motive, in the right way, at the right time. There are two considerations, which will help us very much to fall in with God's arrangements with faith and comfort. 1. The persuasion, that when He deems such and such a mode of action expedient, He sees the end from the beginning. We do not know in what a beginning will end, He does. 2. The belief that He sees the real suitability of operative causes—how certain things are calculated to bring about certain ends. We often think we see this. But all life is full of the history of sad mistakes in this respect. Unforeseen and disturbing influences have come in. The means we put in motion did not go far enough, or they went too far, or, perhaps, were beside the mark altogether. But when God is in action, all this is put far away; and if the causes which He sets in motion are in any way trying to us, we may be certain that they will produce the end He desires. And so, though we cannot see it at the time, our heaviest trials are for the best. They are only means to an end. They are expedient. (*P. B. Power, M.A.*) *Christ more useful within the veil:*—The high priest was more useful to them within the veil than outside of it; He was doing for them out of sight what He could not accomplish in their view. I delight to think that my Lord is with the Father. Sometimes I cannot get to God, my access seems blocked by my infirmity; but He is always with God to plead for me. Let us joy and rejoice that our covenant Head is now in the bosom of the Father, at the fountain-head of love and grace, and that He is there on our behalf. *Expedient absence:*—It is better for us that Christ should be in heaven than with us upon earth. A woman had rather have her husband live with her than go to the Indies; but she yieldeth to his absence when she considereth the profit of his traffic. (*T. Manton.*) *The expediency of Christ's absence:*—All departures are painful and trying, *e.g.*, the boy to business; the girl to marriage; the friend to sea; the relation over the river of death. Glad that this is true of Christ; that He felt the going away, and needed comforting. But, in His case, that was true which is so often true still—the one who went was the Comforter. His was no ordinary going. He was more to the disciples than they realised. I. IT WOULD PROVE TO BE A PRESENT SPIRITUAL POWER. Our Lord comforted by giving a two-fold assurance: 1. He would really be always with them. 2. He would give His Spirit to be always with them. But this is confusing, until our hearts learn to hold both these forms of truth in harmony. Our Lord, while here, was always trying to glorify His spiritual relations; and so preparing for the time when His relations should be all spiritual. Is it not infinitely comforting to be assured that temporal relations shall, by and by, give place to those which are spiritual? The comparative value of the temporal and the spiritual we learn in the progress of life. The child-Christian wants a Christ of the flesh. The matured Christian wants a Christ of the spirit. And just that Christ "gone away" has become. He was outside us; He is in us now. We hear of the scene on Olivet, and we say, "He is gone." We hear of the scene at Pentecost, and we say, "He has come again to abide with us for ever." II. IT LOCALISES OUR CONCEPTION OF HEAVEN. The human Christ went to a place, and prepares a place. "This is enough, Jesus is there; and Jesus knows." III. IT GIVES US GROUND FOR CHERISHING A HIGH HOPE. Resting upon the promise He has left. Our sorrow is the seeming separation; our everlasting joy shall yet be conscious union, under conditions that involve no separation. One day we "shall be ever with the Lord." We may reverently fit the influence of Christ's departed saints into Christ's own words (as in text). Few of us but have dear friends, "not lost, but gone before." And they seem to whisper in our souls, and say, "It is expedient for you that I go away." We cannot see it. We are like the women at the sepulchre. And yet those who are "gone away"—1. Do become a present spiritual power to us. By "going" their characters get glorified, so as to be to us—(1) Holy example; (2) call; and (3) impulse. They live ever in our souls. Among the very highest of the

spiritual forces moving us in the godly life, we put the influence of the white-robed host, the sainted dead. 2. They localize heaven for us. 3. They keep alive in our souls a great hope. "I shall go to Him, but He shall not return to me." The hope of reunion, where they "go no more out for ever." (*Weekly Pulpit.*)

Expediency of the Ascension:—The Ascension was expedient because—I. IT SECURED AN ADEQUATE SENSE OF THE TRUE PLACE AND DIGNITY OF MAN AMONG THE CREATURES OF GOD. There are great studies, which, as they are sometimes handled, tend to create a degraded idea of man. 1. Look, says the astronomer, at the North Star, the light which falls on your eye left that star some thirty years or more ago; and yet this light travels at a rate of 200,000 miles a second. Or, look at the Milky Way, a collection of worlds more numerous than the sands on the sea-shore, separated often from each other by distances which our figures cannot express, and among these are stars whose light must have taken even thousands of centuries in order to reach us on this earth. Or, look at that Dog Star, Sirius. When it was first known that our own sun was moving round some other centre, just as our earth moves round him, it was a shock to the thought; but this giant sun, Sirius, compared with which our own sun is but a pigmy, is himself in motion around some other central orb, the size and place and distance of which exhaust the capacities of imagination. And then our friend turns our thoughts upon this little home of ours. Astronomy has told man many things, and among others, his insignificance. 2. Comparative physiology takes us into its museums, and we see ranged before us the skeletons of apes. Look at the lower types (so it is said) of the human family; at the Aztecs and the Papuans; and then say how you can trace a sharp line of demarcation between this animal and that animal. 3. Or again, we picture to ourselves a scene which takes place inevitably after a great battle; and as our thought lingers over the ghastly ruin, chemistry passes by, and it suggests that after all all is well, and that these buried and disfigured forms will presently be resolved into their constituent elements; and that the value of man may be appreciated when we have discovered what remains after a human body has been submitted to the verdict of a chemical student. Certainly most of us do not readily acquiesce in these theories of human life. Our reason tells the astronomer that there is a moral as well as a material world, and that bulk and distance are not the main tests of greatness; and it tells the comparative anatomist that no similarity of his skeletons can possibly obliterate the vast interval which parts a being with self-reflecting consciousness, and free will from a being which is governed only by instinct; and as for the chemist, whether he is in the cemetery or in the laboratory, reason protests to him that his analysis begs the tremendous question, whether the most important and vital part of man has ever been before him to be analysed at all. But the Christian falls back upon a distinct fact, which enables him to listen with interest and with sympathy to all that the astronomer, &c., may have to tell him, and withal to preserve the robust faith in the dignity of man. He believes in the ascension of our Lord into heaven. Somewhere in space he knows there is at this moment, associated with the glories of the self-existing Diety, a human body and a human soul. Ay, it is on the throne of the universe. No other creature of God shares that incomparable dignity. II. IT MAKES ROOM FOR FAITH IN CHRIST. It is, of course, conceivable that our Lord might have willed to prolong His life upon the earth through the centuries of Christian history. Had He done so, there would have been no questions as to the seal and centre of authority in the Christian Church, or as to the true area and contents of the Christian creed; there would have been ever before the eyes of men a living example of what the Christian character was meant to be; and perhaps the conversion of the world would have been completed long ere this. But one thing is certain, that if Christ had continued to be visibly present, there would have been no room for true faith in Him. Trust in Christ there might have been; we trust our friends, our elders; but faith "is the evidence of things not seen." Think what this would have meant for Christendom. Why is it that so great a place is assigned to faith in the New Testament? Because faith is the apprehension of an object with ever-increasing clearness on the part of the whole soul, of its thought, of its heart, of its determination. And such an apprehension of a perfect object means vast moral leverage. We become, more or less, like that on which we continually fix our attention. If we look persistently downwards then we become earthly; if we look upwards then the light of heaven is reflected in our souls. For this there would have been no room if our Lord had not ascended; the world would only have "known Christ after the flesh," would have concerned itself with His outward and human form,

rather than with His true and essential divinity, and it therefore was expedient that He should go away, as promoting the moral effect and power of faith. III. IN THE INTERESTS OF WORSHIP. What is the idea of God which we gain from nature? Courage, energy, and intelligence—nature certainly suggests these; but benevolence is in the back-ground of its suggestion respecting its author and its master. It is cold, thin, superficial; like the clear sunlight on a frosty day in January, there is no warmth, no colour, no character about it; it may provoke intellectual interest, admiration, wonder, but not passion of any kind, not devotion, not worship. But we Christians approach God not only through external, non-human nature, but through man. Man, unlike nature, has moral character. When the Old Testament would teach us the awful attributes of the self-existent, it draws upon the ordinary language of human passion and human experience, it describes a being with human feelings of anger, of pity, of jealousy, of love. The revelation through man is a higher revelation; it is one of moral character. "The Lord is long-suffering," &c. But here, of course, human nature, as we know it, if taken on the average as a guide to the true character of God, may easily mislead us. It is expedient that perfect humanity should thus be associated on the throne of heaven with the infinite and the eternal. And thus, in the worship of the Church, inspired on the one hand, by an awful sense of the inaccessible majesty of God, and, on the other, by a trustful, tender passion, which has its roots in the consciousness of a human fellowship, with its awful object, we find that which we find nowhere else on earth, and we understand the words, "It is expedient for you that I go away." And a last reason for the expediency—IV. IN CONNECTION WITH HIS WORK OF INTERCESSION. A question which Christians ought to ask themselves more often than they do is this—"What is our Lord doing now?" At His ascension "He sat down at the right hand of God." It is the posture not merely of the enthroned Monarch of Heaven; it is the posture of the omnipotent Priest. He does not stand to plead; still less does He prostrate Himself, side by side with those highest beings who are ranged around the throne. He sits in His wounded but glorified humanity as the one permanent sacrifice which will for ever avail before the eyes of the All Holy. "Therefore, if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father," &c. This uninterrupted action of our glorified Redeemer should surely be more in our minds. What was He doing when we were born? Interceding. What will He be doing at the moment when we shall be leaving it? Interceding. How was He engaged during the long hours of last night, or when we arose from sleep this morning? What will He be doing when we again lie down to rest? What is He doing now, while I am speaking for Him, and while you are listening? The answer is ever the same. Now, this intercession is the very strength of our Christian life. We claim its power in every prayer when we say, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord." We associate our poor feeble prayers with His majestic pleading. It is the knowledge that this great work proceeds uninterruptedly, that makes hope and perseverance possible when hearts are failing, when temptation is strong, when the sky is dark and lurid. Surely it is expedient for you and me that He should go away. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Our Lord's ascension the Church's gain:*—1. Selfishness is never less attractive than when it would leave its imprint on theology. Yet we are not unfrequently confronted by systems in which the satisfaction of the believer is made the centre of a theological panorama, while the revealed nature or economies of God are banished to its circumference. In this way the self-sustaining, infinite, Supreme Being comes to be regarded as chiefly interesting on account of the satisfaction which He yields to the subjective yearnings of a finite and created soul. But the manifested glory, the vindicated honour of Jesus Christ must take rank before all other considerations in regard to the Ascension: at length that life of humiliation is over, and the Bridegroom of the Church "girds His sword upon His thigh, as becomes the Most Mighty, and according to His worship and renown." 2. This, then, is our first tribute of love and duty to the mystery of to-day, and we may now turn to that other and very different point of view which is sanctioned by our Lord in the text. No words that ever fell from the lips of Christ can have at first seemed to those faithful souls who heard them to verge more closely than these on the confines of paradox. Could it be expedient for men who are still pilgrims upon earth that their Guide should be taken from them? For pupils who are still ignorant that their great Teacher should desert them? For spiritual children, still so deficient in the Christian character, that they should be deprived of Him who taught by example even more persuasively than He taught by precept? He might have said "expedient" for the spirits of the just made perfect, to whom,

after overcoming the sharpness of death, He was about to open the kingdom of heaven; for the angels who had for thirty-three years been "ascending and descending upon the Son of Man," and who had now higher ministries in store for them: for Myself, who, after finishing the work that was given Me to do, am to be glorified by the Father with that glory which I had with Him before the world was. But He does say, "for you." My broken-hearted, despairing disciples, it is "expedient for you," that I, your Teacher, Friend, Guide, Strength, should leave you. Wherein then, it may be asked, did this expediency lie? I. THERE WAS A KIND OF NATURAL EXPEDIENCY IN THE ASCENSION, grounded on that law of the human mind which makes the appreciation of present blessings so very difficult. Most men look back with affection on the years of their childhood; and nations have always surrounded their early annals with an atmosphere of poetry. So limited are our powers, that generally speaking, observation must have ceased before reflection can begin to do its work. Had Christ continued to live visibly upon earth, the spiritual force of the Church might have been expended in an indefinitely prolonged observation. The strength even of saintly souls might have been fatally overtaxed. If Jesus is to be seen by His creatures in His relative and awful greatness, He must be withdrawn. Even on the night before the Passion, St. Philip asks a question, which proves that he does not yet know who Jesus really is. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," was an announcement of the self-same principle. He was to be comprehended when He was gone. The life of Christ on earth had first to be brought to a close, ere it could be dropped as a seed that would spring up and bear fruit into the heart of redeemed humanity. And each teacher that has unfolded and enforced the meaning of that life, has, in adding to the illuminated thought of Christendom, attested the truth of our Master's words—"It is expedient," &c. II. THE LIFE OF THE SOULS OF THE APOSTLES MUST HAVE BEEN QUICKENED BY THE DEPARTURE OF THEIR LORD. Faith, hope, and charity are the threefold cord that links the living spirit with its God. These graces were dwarfed in the apostles. Their belief did not materially differ from the creed of the devout Jew. Their hopes were centred on an earthly throne. Their charity was discoloured by the presence of a subtle element of sense, which dimmed its spiritual lustre. Christ left them, and behold, they find springing up within themselves a new and vigorous life. By leaving them our Lord has made room for the full play and power of faith. (1 Pet. i. 8). Hope, too, rivals in its growth the growth of faith. It reaches forth into an eternal future. And when Christ was seated at the right hand of God, love, as a matter of course, would seek simply and constantly those things that are above, and not the things upon the earth. III. But if the apostles had been altogether left to their own resources, could they have formed so true an estimate of His life, as by their writings to rule the thought and kindle the enthusiasm of all ages? Were faith, hope, love, thrown out, as plants of native growth, from the rich soil of their natural hearts? Are the Epistles of St. Paul, or is the character of St. John to be explained by their natural gifts, educational antecedents, contact with the Redeemer, the circumstances and directions of their lives? Surely not. Even though the Pentecostal miracle had not been recorded, some supernatural interference must have been assumed, in order to account for the apostolic character, and the apostolic writings. Of itself the departure of our risen Lord would neither have permanently illuminated the reflections of the Church, nor yet have quickened the graces of its separate members. WE MUST WAIT UNTIL PENTECOST IF WE WOULD ENTER INTO THE FULL EXPEDIENCY OF THE ASCENSION. Pass the eye over that last great discourse, and mark how it bears with repeated effort and significance upon the statement of the text (chap. xiv. 3, 12, 16, 26; xv. 26, 27; xvi. 7, 10, 13). While Christ tarried here, His apostles who saw and conversed with Him were further, immeasurably further, from Him than we may be, if we will. To them He was still an external example—voice, force. Christ in us is the hope of glory. Our ascended Lord has sent down upon us that promised and gracious Friend, whose office it is to unite us to Himself. Therefore, united to Christ, man is no longer an isolated unit; he is a member of that spiritual organization which is Christ's Body. If we feel the expediency of the Ascension, we are men of prayer. "In heart and mind" we "ascend thither" where prayer is not an effort but an atmosphere. It is the instinctive breathing of an informing spirit, the voice of children, who, without doubt or questioning, throw themselves into their Father's arms. Can we realize, each one for himself, what is involved in this expediency of our Lord's ascension? Not if we forget the sharp distinction which exists, and which will exist for ever, between the very highest, noblest, purest, truest efforts of nature, and the heavenly action of the Spirit of grace. We shall

never understand the expediency of the Ascension, if we forget that we are the subjects of a spiritual dispensation, in which forces more extraordinary are at work, and results more wonderful are produced than any which fall under the cognizance of sense (1 Cor. ii. 7-9). The Ascension reminds us of a life which is higher than this world. So much higher, so much more blessed and glorious is the life of grace, that One who loved us men with the truest and purest affection, yet withdrew Himself, as on this day, from our sight in order to enable us, if we will, to live it. (*Ibid.*) *Gain in the Saviour's loss* :—1. The parting of friends is always a sad thing; for many things may come to prevent a meeting again. But partings sometimes are among the very saddest things: parting of those who are very dear: of the playmates of childhood: of those who hitherto have kept close together in the race and the warfare of life, but who are now to be severed by long years. And why is it then, that emigrants, *e.g.*, are yet content to part? Because they feel it is better so; that they are leaving a country which will not yield bread, for another where there is work and bread for all. And the friends who remained behind knew all that too. 2. The thing to which people most naturally have recourse to blunt the pang of parting is some such thought as is suggested in the text. The dying wife tries to persuade the husband that it is far better as it is. The reckless and graceless young man, reclaimed by a kindness and a wisdom that were half angelic, as he feels life ebbing away, says: "Perhaps it is as well I should go home pretty soon." And just with that simple and natural thought did the blessed Redeemer seek to console His disciples. 3. Now we often say and hear such words as these, when they express rather what is wished than what is felt and believed; when we could give no sufficient reason, save that one sheet-anchor of the weary and disappointed heart, the wise and kind decree of God. But it is not merely in this general view, and merely by way of saying a kind word that might cheer up somewhat in a trying hour, that Jesus said this. His departure was the condition of another's coming, who would more than make up for His loss. Precious indeed, then, must that other be! 4. Now we must all feel that although it is our privilege to love each of the three Persons in the Trinity; still the Saviour we cannot choose but single out for special love. And we should hardly be able to persuade ourselves that even the coming of the Comforter could make up for His absence. But all that He declared was, that for believers so situated as the disciples He was addressing, it was advantageous that the Comforter should be present with them, even at the price of His own departure. 5. But the thought naturally suggests itself, Why might the Church not have had both? Now, we must just take Christ's word for it, that this cannot be. For some good reason we cannot have both together. Note two or three considerations—I. THE CHOICE LAY BETWEEN CHRIST AS HE THEN WAS, A PERSON DWELLING IN A HUMAN BODY, AND A DIVINE SPIRIT CAPABLE OF BEING UNIVERSALLY PRESENT AT THE SAME TIME. Christ, dwelling in flesh, could be only in one place at a time; while the Comforter, unbound by fleshly trammels, could be in a thousand places, working on a million hearts all at once. And for the grand end of carrying on the government of a Church that is to overspread the world, it was better to have one Divine Being, equally present, working with equal energy everywhere, than even to have Christ Himself dwelling in visible form in some favoured spot, and by the very fact of His being visible there, making those disciples in distant countries who saw Him not, feel as though they were so far overlooked. It is the fancy of Popery, but it is not the purpose of the Redeemer, to have one fixed, localized, visible centre of the Christian Church. If sacred places can even yet warm the Christian's heart, it is not that Christ is nearer us there than here. And when we call it to mind, how the cares and duties of life tie most of us to one little spot of this world; when we think how vainly most of us might wish to make a pilgrimage of thousands of miles, even though that pilgrimage should bring us into the visible presence of our God, shall we not be thankful for the presence here of a Sanctifier and Comforter, who can make our very soul His home. II. Each Person in the Trinity has His own share in the great task of preparing man for heaven; and A CERTAIN WORK HAS BEEN APPOINTED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. Now, when we think of the things which it is the Spirit's occupation to do, we see that this world is the place where they must be done. The Spirit's work lies mainly with a suffering, struggling, sinful, tempted, imperfect Church. Placed and tried as we are, it is just the Holy Spirit we need; and so it is just the Holy Spirit that we get. We shall need Him less, with reverence be it said, when we shall have entered upon the immediate presence of our God. It is by the working of the Blessed Spirit that we are born again, sanctified, comforted, taught to pray. There is not a point in the soul's

better life, there is not an emergency in the Christian's earthly pilgrimage, at which the Blessed Spirit does not come in, the very thing we need. (*A. K. H. Boyd. D.D.*) *Christ in heaven better than Christ on earth*:—Christ in heaven instead of on earth means—I. CHRIST'S PERSON NEARER. II. CHRIST'S CHARACTER CLEARER. One is apt to think the men of Christ's day were much more advantageously situated for judging of Christ's Divinity than we are. Yet what were the facts of the case? Now if Christ had never gone away—1. We should want the highest proof, which we now have, of His divinity: viz., His resurrection and ascension. 2. We should feel, and that too increasingly, the difficulty of the Jews. They were acquainted with His parentage, with His upbringing, and with His daily life. Would *we* have found it easy to believe? The abundance of Christ's miracles would make them cease to be miracles; the gracious words becoming so common would lose their power; the very character of Jesus would come to be regarded as a product of the earth. What were helps to the men of Christ's day would become no inconsiderable hindrances to us. 3. Having Christ in our midst, we should have the difficulty, which is felt by every age, of judging of its great men's characters while they are yet alive. Great men are better appreciated by after generations than by their contemporaries. Sometimes, too, those who die beneath a cloud of shame have their names vindicated by posterity. Many examples might be given, but none more illustrious than that of Christ, who eighteen centuries ago was executed as a malefactor, but now is worshipped throughout the world as God. III. CHRIST'S WORK SURER. Of course Christ came to reveal the Father; to fulfil the law; to destroy the works of the devil; to bring life and immortality to light; to open heaven for believers. But while these are essential parts of the work of Christ, Scripture invariably assigns the central position to the Cross. All the others are rightly seen only when beheld as radiating from it; as thus—Christ's sacrificial death upon the cross was the highest revelation of the Father (John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8; 1 John iii. 16); the perfect pattern of duty (1 John iii. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 21); the absolute destruction of death (Heb. ii. 14, 15); the certain opening of heaven to believers (Heb. ix. 12). And all these because it was all expiation of the guilt of men (Eph. v. 2, &c.). Yet, of this work the surest evidence would have been wanting had Christ continued on the earth. Had He postponed His dying we should certainly have had the promise of the Father as our guarantee that the work would be accomplished: had He died and risen, but remained on earth, we should have had the double witness of His own word and of the testimony of those who had seen Him. But that evidence would have gradually become obscure by the passing years. His visible presence would always be felt to be a difficulty in assenting to the truth of His decease. But now, Christ having gone away to His Father's throne, we have, so to speak, been supplied with a sublime public certificate that His great redeeming work has been accomplished. IV. CHRIST'S CHURCH RICHER; that is, by the presence of the Holy Spirit. In Christ's view the dispensation of the Spirit was a higher gift than the mission of the Son; higher relatively, as being an onward step in the development of redemption and the enjoyment of salvation. What the materials of a building are to the building and the architect; what the light is to the vision which we have by means of the light; what the wisdom in a book is to the same wisdom when apprehended by the mind; what the external revelation of nature is to the intelligent appreciation of it; what the Mosaic economy, with its code of precepts and system of sacrifice, was to the spiritual interpretations and applications thereof, which were given by the prophets; that was the work of Christ to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes of the things that are Christ's and shows them to the soul. Christ revealed the Father *to* men; the Spirit reveals the Father *in* men. Christ gave to men a pattern of life; the Holy Ghost enables men to imitate as well as understand. Christ gave Himself to be a sacrifice for human sin; the Spirit helps men to believe in, and rest upon, that sacrifice. See also ver. 8. V. CHRIST'S HEAVEN DEARER. To bring to light the reality of a future life was one of the specific objects of Christ's mission. He came to speak of it in His teachings; to purchase it by His sufferings; to reveal it by His resurrection; to open it and take possession of it for His people by His triumphant ascension. Obviously, then, Christ's departure into heaven has given the world the surest proof that a heaven exists, and invested it with the strongest and sweetest charm for His people. Christ would not be long absent from the sorrowing disciples before they would come to feel in this respect the benefit of His departure. It would humanize heaven for them. It would no longer seem to them a strange place. Those who have Christian friends there know how that blessed

home is all the dearer on that account. How much, then, should heaven be enhanced by the presence of Christ. Conclusion: What should be the soul's attitude towards this absent Saviour? "Whom having not seen we love," &c. Faith. Love. Joy. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The greatest trials leading to the greatest blessings*:—I. THE GREATEST TRIAL MAY PROVE THE GREATEST BLESSING. 1. The departure of Christ was felt to be a most grievous trial. "Sorrow hath filled your heart." The Sun of their souls was sinking beneath the horizon and their world left in darkness and desolation. 2. The advent of His Spirit would be the greatest blessing. He was the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, &c. He would enter the inner temple of their nature, reproduce all the impressions that Christ had made, and abide with them for ever. Thus it is and ever will be with the good. "Our light affliction," &c. II. THE GREATEST TRIAL MAY BE NECESSARY TO THE GREATEST BLESSING. It seemed expedient in order—1. To give a more real meaning to the life of Christ. Never does the life of a loved friend come with such meaning and might as when death has removed him. He then assumes lovelier forms, and wields a more potent influence. So with Christ. When He ceased to be seen without, He became formed within them the "Hope of Glory." 2. To dissipate all their material and local perceptions of Him. His departure tended at once to spiritualize and universalize their conceptions of Him. 3. To stimulate them to study the eternal principles of duty. So long as our teacher is with us we are contented to have our duty pointed out to us. Like children, we shall be controlled by verbal rulers and voices from without. But when he is gone there is a sphere and stimulus for the use of our faculties. How inferior is the mind moving by prescriptive rules to one ruled by universal principles. 4. To throw the soul upon the help of its own faculties. Man only grows as he works his own faculties and becomes self-reliant. Up to a certain point parental watchfulness is indispensable; beyond that it becomes an evil. It is a kind law, though painful, which requires the child to withdraw from the parental roof, and rely upon himself. So with the disciples. What a marked change occurred in them after the Ascension. The principle before us admits of a wide application. It may be necessary for a man to lose friends, property, health, liberty to prepare him for eternal life. III. THE GREATEST TRIALS AND THE GREATEST BLESSINGS ARE ALIKE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF CHRIST. 1. The greatest trial. "I go away." No compulsion; Christ was free. "I have power to lay down My life." 2. The greatest blessing. "I will send," &c. "Him," not "It"—a Person, not an influence. Our destiny is in the hands of Christ. Let us trust in Him. The whole of our life is made up of loss and gain; but if we are His, He takes away a good thing to give a better. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The work of the Holy Spirit*:—I. THE EXPEDIENCY OF CHRIST'S DEPARTURE. How could they, poor sheep, be better off in the midst of wolves without a shepherd? A few things remembered may make it a little clearer. 1. The Master has a work to do for us in heaven. His work was not all done on Calvary. His intercession is the sequel and continuation of redemption. 2. His departure prepared the way for the coming of the Holy Spirit. 3. He could not be with them in the fullest sense unless He left them. 4. His departure raised and spiritualized their conceptions. 5. His departure made them better men. Even after three years with Jesus they were but children in understanding and power. We have their portraits before and after His departure, and so changed are they that one could hardly believe them the same men. II. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. This is twofold. 1. Upon the world (vers. 8–11). The Master mentions three distinct points as to which the Spirit will reprove or convict the world: "sin," "righteousness," "judgment." Then, resuming each point separately, He shows more particularly what the Spirit will do. The first work of the Holy Spirit is to convince of sin—of all sins, but chiefly of the sin of rejecting Christ. All sin has its root in unbelief, and the most aggravating form of unbelief is the rejection of Jesus Christ. This is the one great, comprehensive, all-inclusive sin of ungodly men. He next convinces the world of the righteousness of God's whole dispensation, but especially of Christ's personal righteousness. The world accounted Jesus guilty. It would also be the special function of the Spirit to keep alive the idea of judgment. He teaches the world moral and spiritual discernment, and vivifies their views of the final judgment. 2. The mission of the Holy Spirit among believers. As He turns to His disciples Jesus says: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." But they are told of a Guide who shall lead them into all truth. (*G. W. Brown.*) *Death the interpreter*:—The advantage to a great cause in the death of its great leader. This is a paradox, but there are many paradoxes

that are true. 1. In the first place we never come to know any man while he is with us. The world's best judgments of men are formed after their death. Christ Himself was not known while He lived. His twelve disciples, while they were in fellowship and companionship with Him and walking by His side, resting even on His bosom, never realized that He was the Son of God. You know that the mother always loves best the child that is dead. It is not because the child that is dead was better than all the children that are living, but because death brings the loved ones nearer to us than life ever brings them. You will never know your wife till she has gone from you. We never realize the meaning of Good-morning until we have said Good-bye. 2. The great truths are never apprehended while the great teachers of those truths are living to expound them. The death of a great teacher deepens and disseminates the knowledge of the truth. It was so with the death of Christ. It has been so with the death of every great teacher since Christ died. And the death of a great leader not only deepens the knowledge of the truth, it disseminates that knowledge. The Reformation is a great deal broader than Luther; and Calvinism is a great deal larger than John Calvin; Methodism is immeasurably more than Wesley; and, in a true sense, Christianity is more than Jesus of Nazareth—not more than Christ, but more than Jesus of Nazareth. There are some persons who look forward with hope to a second coming, in fleshly and visible presence, of Christ. They want to see Jesus of Nazareth descend again to earth, enthroned and crowned, sitting at Jerusalem. This would limit Christianity instead of broadening it, weaken instead of strengthening it, decrease instead of adding to its power. No great truth can be fully made manifest in a single narrow life; and every individual life is narrow. So long as the great leader lives the truth is caged; when the cage is destroyed has the bird liberty to fly out to carry its song everywhither? 3. But, yet more than that, as truth is greater than the teacher, so life and spirit is greater than any manifestation of that life and spirit. Life is more than truth. It is truth vitalized. The life of piety is more than any man's piety. The life of love is more than any one love. Mother-love? It is infinitely more than the love of any one mother. Patriotism? It is immeasurably broader than the service of any one patriot. The history of the Christian Church is the history of the unfoldings of successive developments of Christian truth, Christian experience, in and through Christian lives. (*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*) *The gift of Pentecost*:—I. THE GREAT DOCTRINE WE COMMEMORATE. The disciples, as yet, knew only the foundation truth of the unity of the Godhead. Doubtless the All-wise, who has evermore proportioned His revelations to the needs and capacity of His creatures, knew that this great truth was all that they as yet were fitted profitably to receive. For this master-truth, when man's corruptions had multiplied false gods, the Jewish Church was to enshrine and to transmit; and it may be that the full knowledge of the Trinity might have weakened their special witness for the indivisible Unity of God. Now to men trained up to view this as the key-stone of their whole religious system, the trial of faith required to receive the doctrine of the Trinity must have been so great, that nothing but the direct illumination of the Holy One could make them able to receive it. They had indeed been accustomed to hear of the Spirit of God (Gen. i. 2; Exod. xxxi. 3; Numb. xxiv. 2; I Sam. x. 10; xix. 20; 2 Chron. xv. 1). And yet they were amongst those who "did not so much as know whether there were any Holy Ghost." They doubtless thought of God's Spirit as of His inward being, or as the breath of His mouth; it was with them but another name for His essence, power, or influence. But the truth, as it was revealed by the Spirit, was—1. That in the Unity of the indivisible Godhead there were not only the Persons of the Father and the Son, but also that of the Holy Ghost. 2. That though the Holy Ghost is One God with the Father and the Son, yet is He not either the Father or the Son. 3. That this was no mere revelation to man of the one Godhead under a threefold aspect, but that it was an eternal and necessary condition of the Godhead itself. 4. That whilst as touching time there was neither before nor after in relation to the three blessed Persons, there was between themselves a priority of order; in that the everlasting Father was the fountain of being; for that the Son was from the Father, whilst the Father was not from the Son; and that the Holy Ghost was from the Father and the Son. 5. His special office in the work of man's salvation. They now learned—(1) That whilst every Person in the Godhead contributed to that salvation, yet that the Father is the Creator; the Son the Redeemer, the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the Advocate, the Comforter, is the Sanctifier of all the elect. (2) That although the work of the Redeemer, so far as it depended upon His personal

presence upon earth, was perfectly accomplished, yet that still He had much to do for those whom He had died to save. For He had to ascend into the highest heaven, that there He might plead the sacrifice He had once for all offered, and administer from the Father's right hand the rule of the mediatorial kingdom. (8) That as the first-fruits of that rule, there was poured out upon the Church on earth the gift of the Holy Ghost. II. THIS GREAT DOCTRINE IS FULL OF PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES. 1. It is this which makes the Church of Christ to be what it is. All the attributes, powers, and blessings of the Church are the consequence of this presence of the Holy Ghost. It is through this that Christ the Lord is ever with it; that it has gifts of light, and understanding, and power, and holiness; that its members are a true living unity; that its prayers mount up acceptably to God; that the Sacraments and means of grace are made real. It is of the utmost moment that again and again we remind ourselves of these great truths, for everything around us tends to rob us of their reality. (1) The world, though it bears the Christian name, has no real belief in any special presence of the Holy Ghost; and we cannot mix with it without being tempted to take up even unawares its tone of unbelieving thought. (2) Even within the Church itself this temptation re-appears in the most subtle forms. Formality creeps over us even as we worship, and then we rest in the outward and visible as if it had some virtue of its own. Nor is the reaction from this less common or less dangerous. We meet daily with those who seek to get rid of formalism by decrying the forms through which God the Holy Ghost acts. Hence it happens that even whilst seeking for spirituality, men come to deny the reality of that spiritual Presence which alone can make them spiritual. 2. Its light colours the whole of those lives which each one of us is leading in the Church of the redeemed. It is in this presence and under these influences that our lives are being spent. And see how it must affect them. (1) What a character does it give to our sins! How deadly is the defilement which keeps men unclean though surrounded by such a cleansing power! Think what your life has been, and remember that in all its innumerable incidents you have been acting under the very pressure of the hand of the Holy Ghost. Through all those hours of youth and tenderness, by all the hallowing agencies of Christian homes, the Sanctifier has co-operated for your salvation. By all the secret avenues of your soul have His blessed influences acted on you. By hopes and fears, by aspirations and depressions, in sorrow and in joy, in the hour of pain and in the bounding glow of health, He who for Christ's sake is in Christ's Church present with us, has been dealing with your inmost spirit. What are you, and what ought you to be? All has been done for you which could be done without destroying that mysterious power of will with which the Almighty has endowed you. What must allowed impurity, malignity, envy, harshness, evil imaginings, evil speakings, be in us with whom the Paraclete is present! Yea, and what must mere earthliness, coldness in devotion, the unbelieving eye, the careless touch of heavenly mysteries, the absence of contrition, the lack of faith, dulness of soul beneath the Saviour's Cross, dulness of heart and affection in the sight of Bethlehem, Gethsemane, and Calvary,—what must these things be in those who even here are in God's very temple, and under the hand of the Eternal Spirit. (2) But further, whilst Whitsuntide is so eminently a humbling time, yet what season is fuller of thoughts of hope and comfort. For though here, if anywhere, we see the true evil of an earthly life, yet we see also how we may escape from it. Only let us strive to realize His special presence who is the Lord and Giver of life; only, using humbly, faithfully, and simply the instruments of His presence. (*Bp. S. Wilberforce.*) *The Paraclete:*—Just as we have sometimes seen the setting sun, surrounded by dark and gloomy clouds, and about to plunge into still darker and gloomier, break out for a moment and pour a final flood of light over mountain and sea, so this Sun of the World, about to set amid sombre clouds, sheds upon His Church a glorious beam of light to enlighten and comfort for ever. Notice—I. THE DESCRIPTION HERE GIVEN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. "Comforter" is a word peculiar to St. John (chaps. xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7; 1 John ii. 1), and means one called to be beside another. In Greek and Roman courts of law it was the custom for an accused person to be accompanied by influential friends. These were not advocates in our sense of the term, paid professionals, but men who out of friendship came to stand by their friend in his time of need, to help him by encouragements and suggestions, and if necessary to take his place. Jesus had hitherto been all this. Now He was going away in order that another Paraclete might take His place, and—1. As the paraclete stood by his friend in the hour of trial, so does the Spirit by us. We are not left alone to face our difficulties and

afflictions. "I will not leave your orphans." The Church is not left alone to face her trials and dangers. The Lord "will help her, and that right early." 2. As the paraclete suggested to his friend what was best for his defence, so does the Holy Spirit to us. "Take no thought what ye shall speak," &c. So these fishermen went everywhere, standing before kings, meeting the defenders of deeply-rooted religions and overthrowing them. So also with ourselves. We are not left to go a warfare at our own charges. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One." 3. As the paraclete pleaded for his friend, so does the Holy Spirit for us. Christ pleads for us in heaven; the Spirit pleads in our hearts (Rom. viii.). II. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE DEPARTURE OF JESUS AND THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. It is the atonement of Christ that gives His Church a right to the Spirit's presence and the Spirit's grace. The atonement was not completed till Christ had gone away. In accordance with this we read (chap. vii. 39) that the Spirit was not given because Jesus was not glorified. Not, however, that the Spirit was entirely absent from the Old Testament Church. He strove before the flood, inspired the prophets, &c.; but in His plenitude and power, He did not come till Jesus had gone. Conclusion: Let us—1. Be encouraged by this word of the Master. 2. Realize the blessedness here conveyed. (*T. Hamilton, D.D.*) *The ministry of the Comforter*:—1. The teaching of Christ respecting the ministry of the Holy Ghost is so peculiar as to raise the inquiry, Where was the Holy Ghost during the earthly ministry of the Son of Man? Throughout the Old Testament there are the clearest testimonies as to His personal service, and yet Christ speaks of the descent of the Spirit as a new and special gift. Was His ministry suspended? It may be suggested that the fulness of the Spirit had not been realized in the ancient church, which is undoubtedly true; yet it is sufficient to account for the treatment of His descent as a new visitation. The answer would seem rather to be, that the Holy Ghost was in Jesus Christ himself, and could not be given to the Church as a distinctively Christian gift until the first period of the Incarnation had been consummated in the Ascension—"if I depart I will send Him unto you." 2. Christ gives a specific definition of the work of the Holy Ghost. That His work admitted of definition is itself significant; and that the Son of Mary should have presumed to define it is a marvellous instance of His spiritual dominion, if it be not a covert yet daring blasphemy. Let us now see with what simplicity and decisiveness Christ defines and limits the functions of the Holy Ghost. I. "HE SHALL NOT SPEAK OF HIMSELF." Why not? Because He would be speaking an unknown tongue. We cannot understand the purely spiritual. Whatever we know of it must come through mediums which lie nearer our own nature. The whole ministry of God is an accommodation to human weakness. When He would teach truth He must needs set it in the form of fact: when He would show Himself, it must be through the tabernacle of our own flesh; when He would reveal heaven, He must illustrate His meaning by the fragments of light and beauty which are scattered on the higher side of our own inferior world. The Holy Ghost does not speak of Himself, because there must be a common ground upon which He can invite the attention of mankind. II. "HE SHALL GLORIFY ME." The common ground is the work of the Man Christ Jesus. 1. What is meant by glorifying Christ? We know what is meant by the sun glorifying the earth. The sun does not create the landscape. Yet how wonderful is its work! Everything was there before, yet how transfigured by the ministry of light! In this respect, what light is to the earth, the Holy Ghost is to Christ. The work of the Spirit is revelation, not creation. He does not make Christ, He explains Him. The sun in doing all his wonderful work does not speak of himself; he will not, indeed, allow us to look at him. The Holy Ghost, in like manner, does not speak of himself. He will not answer all our inquiries respecting His personality. We cannot venture with impunity beyond a well-defined line. Yet whilst He Himself is the eternal secret, His work is open and glorious. His text is Christ. From that He never strays. The Christian student sees a Christ which he did not see twenty years ago. This increasing revelation is the work of the Holy Ghost, and is the fulfilment of Jesus Christ's own promise. This is an incidental contribution towards the completeness and harmony of the mystery that is embodied in Christ Jesus. The beginning and the end are the same—equal in mystery, in condescension, in solemn grandeur. Thus: "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost"—this is the beginning; "He shall not speak of Himself, He shall glorify Me;"—this is the end. The incarnation of the Son of God was the work of the Holy Ghost: how natural that the explanation of the Son of God should be the work of the same minister! As He was before the visible Christ, so He was to be after

Him, and thus the whole mystery never passed from His own control. 2. The life of the Son of Man, as written in the Gospels, needs to be glorified! He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: He made Himself of no reputation: upon all this chasm we need a light above the brightness of the sun. When that light comes, the root out of a dry ground will be as the flower of Jesse and the plant of renown, and the face marred more than any man's will be the fairest among ten thousand and altogether lovely. Such is the wizardry of light! 3. This claim to be glorified by the Holy Ghost is without precedent in human history. That is a fact which ought to have some value attached to it. It is the kind of claim which an imposter would have avoided. Besides, for such a man, or for any man indeed, to have had such an idea is most marvellous. Had He merely committed His case to the care of time and the judgment of posterity, He would have taken the course of ordinary sagacity; but instead of that He expressly stated that the Holy Ghost would glorify His person, and complete His meditation on the earth. The work of the Holy Ghost was to be infinitely more than a work of mere explanation: it was to move forward to the very point of glory, even the glory which the Son of Man had with His Father before the world began. Having spoken of the ministry of the Holy Ghost in relation to Himself, our Lord proceeds to speak of it in relation to His disciples. III. "HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH." 1. Not "He will add to the number of miracles which you have seen at My hands," but "I am the Truth; He will glorify Me, He will show you all My riches." Our Lord Himself did not guide His disciples into all truth, nor have men even yet been so far guided. Truth is an infinite quantity. At first it may seem to be compassable, but it recedes as it is approached; yet it throws the warm rays of promise upon every honest and loving pilgrim to its shrine. Our Lord's expression is comprehensive, —not only into truth that is distinctively theological, but into all truth,—scientific, political, social, religious. Is truth not larger than the formal church? Our Lord does not open one department of truth and refuse the key of others. It is not to be supposed that any one man is to be guided into all truth. Some possessions are put into the custody of the whole race. No single star holds all the light. No single flower is endowed with all the beauty. What man is there who knows all things? Every honest student has some portion of truth that is in a sense his own, and every eye sees at least a tint which no other vision has seen so clearly as itself. Men make up man, churches make up the Church, truths makes up Truth, and it is only by a complete combination of the parts that the majesty and lustre of the whole can be secured. 2. "The Spirit of Truth" as such is to "guide into all truth." The quantity is unlimited; the method assumes consent and co-operation on the part of man. A reference to Old Testament history will show how grave is the error which limits it to thinking and service which are supposed to be purely theological. It may indeed show that "theology" is the all-inclusive term, holding within its meaning all the highest aspects and suggestions both of speculative and practical science. Can anything be farther from theology, as popularly understood, than stone-cutting or wood-carving? Can any two spheres be much more widely sundered than those of the preacher of the gospel and the artificer in iron and brass? Apparently not. But the biblical testimony sets the inquiry at rest (Exod. xxxi. 2-5). Bezaleel was an inspired theologian. More than this, and apparently still farther away from the theological line: "I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire," &c. Then, intermediately at least, may stand the agriculturalist, of whose treatment of the earth is said: "This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." The rulers and soldiers of Israel were qualified for their work by the Spirit of the Lord. The ministration of the Spirit is various: by it Moses was made wise, Bezaleel was made skilful, and Samson was made strong (1 Cor. xii. 11). 3. Upon the Church itself this promise of guidance into all truth should exert a healthful influence, especially in the direction of enlarging and refining its charity. The danger is that the Church should be content with a limited range of dogma and purpose when it is invited to the mastery and enjoyment of a kingdom that cannot be measured. Men of the most inquisitive mind should be encouraged by the Church to lead the van of inquiry, and subject every doctrine and every spirit to a cross-examination which to minds of an opposite type may become wearisome and even vexatious. The Church should extend to its adventurous sons who go out to shores far away and to lands unmapped and unclaimed, the most ardent and loving recognition. Even when they return with hopes unfulfilled and with banners torn by angry winds, proving the abortiveness of their chivalry, or the mistake of their method, they should

be hailed with a still tenderer love. To such men the promise of being guided into all truth becomes a personal torture. They yearn for its fulfilment: they are straitened until it be accomplished. IV. "HE WILL SHOW YOU THINGS TO COME." Such a promise would seem to imply that secret communications about the future will be made to the Church; yet this construction must be admitted with extreme caution, for men would in some cases mistake prejudices and frenzies for inspiration, and in others they would inflict needless trouble upon themselves and upon society at large. Limited to the immediate hearers of our Lord, of course the promise is exhausted and the results are to some extent recorded in apostolic history; but it cannot be so limited. Merely to "show things to come" in the sense of prevision is a blessing greater in appearance than in reality; but to prepare the mind for things to come—to show the mind how to deal with new and perplexing circumstances—is an advantage which cannot be expressed in human terms. Whatever the promised "announcement" may include, it must involve this supernatural preparedness of mind and heart, or it will merely excite and bewilder the Church. Whatever may come, and with what violence soever its coming may be attended, the Church will be prepared to withstand every shock and surmount every difficulty. Out of this assurance comes rest; the future is no longer a trouble; the clouds that lie upon the remote horizon will be scattered by the brightness of the image of God. V. "HE SHALL BRING ALL THINGS TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE, WHATSOEVER I HAVE SAID UNTO YOU." There is an inspiration of memory. Readers of the Gospels must have been surprised by the minuteness of recollection which is shown in their pages. Conversations are reported; little turns of dialogue, which seem to be merely artistic, are not omitted; records of occasions on which the disciples were actually not present, and of which they could only have heard from the lips of the Lord Himself, are presented with much particularity and vividness: how, then, was this done, and especially done by men who certainly were not conspicuous for the kind of learning which is needful for the making of literary statements? The explanation of this artless art, and this tenacious memory, is in this promise. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Of the sending of the Holy Ghost*:—1. He did go, and He did send, and on this day, so between the text and our feast there is the reciprocation that is between "the promise of the sending" and the "sending of the promise." 2. There seems to be a question here, whether best the Comforter come or not come? This question grew out of whether Christ best go or not. But Christ resolves this: if they were against the Ascension they were also against a feast which they might not miss out of their calendar, and persuades them to accept the Ascension in hope of Whitsuntide: one to make amends for the other. This is usual. After Christmas, the poor estate of Christ's birth, there comes Epiphany with a star and great men's oblations as by way of compensation; after Good Friday Easter, &c. 3. But Ascension Day, though to Christ a day of glory, could not but be a day of sorrow for the disciples. For—(1) To part with any friend is a grief—even though he be a Demas. (2) And if any friend, how much more such a one as Christ! (3) And if such a friend at any time, much more now (ver. 2)! 4. Men often grieve, however, at what is for their good. Therefore Christ says, "I tell you the truth." Your hearts are full of sorrow because your heads are full of error. Your loss will be your gain. I. THE INCONVENIENCE OF THE SPIRIT NOT COMING. 1. The absolute necessity for His advent. In both the main works of the Deity all three Persons co-operate. As in creation not only the Word of God was required, but the motion of the Spirit to give life; and as in the genesis so in the palingenesis. It was necessary not only that the Word should take flesh, but flesh also receive the Spirit to give the life of grace to the new creature. So we baptize into all Three. 2. Most expedient is it that the work of our salvation should be brought to full perfection. If the Holy Ghost came not, Christ's coming can do us no good. Christ said "It is finished," but only in respect of the work itself. In regard of us and making it ours it is not finished if the Spirit come not too. For—(1) A word is of no force, though written, (*i.e.*, a deed) till the seal be added: that makes it authentic. Christ is the Word, the Spirit, the Seal. (2) The will of the testator even when sealed is still in suspense till administration be granted. Christ is the Testator of the New Testament; "the administration is the Spirit." (3) The purchase is made, the price paid, yet is not the state perfect unless there be investiture. Christ has purchased, but the investiture is by the Spirit. 3. As nothing is done for us, so nothing is done by us if He come not. The means avail nothing. (1) Not baptism; no "laver of regeneration," without "renewing of the Holy Ghost." (2) No preaching neither; for that is but a letter that killeth, "except the Spirit come and quicken it." (3)

No Lord's Supper; for "the flesh profiteth nothing," if the Lord and Giver of Life be away. (4) No prayer; for unless the Spirit helps our infirmity and make intercession within us, we neither know how nor what to pray. II. THE NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S GOING. But why not Christ stay and the Holy Spirit come? Or if He go, come again with Him. Surely He and Christ are not incompatible. Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost. At His baptism the Spirit rested upon Him. We shall enjoy both together by and by: Why not now? It was necessary that Christ should go. 1. On the Holy Ghost's part. Otherwise He could not come as He should. The stay of Christ would have been a hindrance of the manifestation of His Godhead. His signs and wonders would not well have been distinguished from Christ's, and would probably have been ascribed to Christ. 2. On Christ's part. Otherwise it had been an impeachment to Christ's equality with the Father. For He not going to send Him, but staying here, the sending of the Spirit would have been ascribed to the Father alone. 3. On the apostles' part. (1) For His bodily presence. It is often good for some that their meat be taken, and yet meat is the stay of their life; or for their blood to be taken, yet blood is nature's treasure and holds us in life; or for light to be taken, in some disease of the eyes, yet light is the comfort of life. The loving mother withdraws herself from her child when the child grows foolishly fond of her. For the same reason Christ withdrew. So strangely fond the disciples grew of Him that nothing but His carnal presence would quiet them (chap. xi. 21). And "a tabernacle" they must needs build Him to keep Him on earth still; and ever and anon they dreamed of a temporal kingdom and chief seats there. These feelings were by no means to be cherished. They were not to continue children but to grow to man's estate, and so they had to be weaned from the presence of Christ's flesh, and to say, "If we have known Christ after the flesh," &c. (2 Cor. v. 16). (2) For His spiritual presence. This is expedient — (*a*) When men grow faint in seeking, and careless in keeping Him (Cant. iii. 1). It was meet that Christ should go to teach them to rise and seek, to watch and keep Him better. (*b*) When men grow conceited and overweening of themselves and their own strength, and say with David, "I shall never be moved," as if they had Christ pinned to them; and with Peter (Matt. xxvi. 33). Christ goes to teach them to see and know themselves better, that we may be humble, and being humble receive the Holy Ghost who comes to give grace to none but the humble (*Bp. Andrewes.*) *The superlative excellence of the Holy Spirit*:—I. THE BODILY PRESENCE OF CHRIST MUST HAVE BEEN EXCEEDINGLY PRECIOUS. How precious those alone can tell who love Christ much. Love always desires to be in the company of the thing beloved, and absence causes grief. Have we not some of us been looking for years for the personal advent of Christ. Think of the advantage it would be in the instruction of His people. No mystery need puzzle us if we could refer all to Him. There would be no discouragement to the Church henceforth in her work of faith and labour of love. Christ would take the personal supervision of His universal Church. He would create unity. Schism would cease to be, and heresy would be rooted out. But I question whether the pleasure of this thought may not have had a leaven of carnality in it, and whether the Church is yet prepared to enjoy the corporeal presence of her Saviour, without falling into the error of knowing Him after the flesh. It may be it shall need centuries of education before the Church is fit to see Him. II. THE PRESENCE OF THE COMFORTER IS VERY MUCH BETTER THAN THE BODILY PRESENCE OF CHRIST. 1. The bodily presence of Christ would involve many inconveniences which are avoided by His presence through the Holy Spirit. (1) Christ, being most truly man, must inhabit a certain place; but the Holy Spirit is everywhere, and through that Holy Spirit Christ keeps His promise, "Where two or three are met together in My name," &c. (2) Access to Christ, if He were here in His corporeal personality, would not be very easy to all believers. Even at the present moment there are some millions of true saints upon earth—what could one man do, even though that one man were incarnate Deity, in our day for the comfort of all of these? Why, we could scarcely expect to have our turn once in the year. But we can now see Jesus every hour and every moment of every hour. (3) Christ's presence in the flesh would involve another difficulty. Busy scribes would be always taking down Christ's words; and, if in the short course of three years our Saviour managed to do and to say so much that if all had been written the world itself could not have contained the books which would have been written, I ask you to imagine what a mass of literature the Christian Church would have acquired if she had preserved the words of Christ throughout these 1800 years. But now we have a book which is finished within a narrow com-

pass, and the poorest man in England believing in Christ, who is present through His Spirit may, in a short time, understand with all saints what are the heights and depths, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. 2. If Christ were still present in the flesh, the life of faith would not have such room for its display as it now has. The least faith the most show. The Romish Church, which has little enough of true faith, provides everything to work upon the senses. The presence of Christ Jesus here would be the bringing back of the saints to a life of sight, and in a measure spoil the simplicity of naked trust. Happy day will it be for us when faith enjoys the full fruition of her hopes in the triumphant advent of her Lord; but His absence alone can train and educate her to the needed point of spiritual refinement. 3. The presence of Christ would materially affect the character of God's great battle against error and sin. Suppose that all men who would oppose Christ were suddenly devoured, why then it would be rather a battle between physical greatness and moral evil, than a warfare in which only spiritual force is employed on the side of right. But now that Christ has gone the fight is all between spirit and spirit; between the Holy Spirit and Satan; between truth and error; between the earnestness of believing men and the infatuation of unbelieving men. Now the fight is fair. Physical force is left to our enemies, we ask it not. Why? Because by the Divine working we can vanquish error without it. 4. Christ must be here in one of two ways—suffering, or not suffering. If He be a suffering Christ, then we should suspect that He had not finished His work; and, if He be an unsuffering Christ, then it would look as if He were not a faithful High Priest made like unto His bretbren. III. THE PRESENCE OF THE COMFORTER IS SUPERLATIVELY VALUABLE. 1. We may gather this first from the effects which were seen upon the day of Pentecost. Here was an omen of what the Spirit of God is to be to the Church. (1) When He comes like the wind, it is to purge the moral atmosphere, and to quicken the pulse of all who spiritually breathe. (2) Then the Spirit came as fire. The Church wants fire to quicken her ministers, to give zeal and energy to all her members. Having this fire she burns her way to success. (3) Then there came from the fire-shower a descent of tongues. Though we can no longer speak with every man in his own tongue, yet we have the keys of the whole world swinging at our girdle if we have the Spirit of God with us. There is no reason in the nature of the gospel, or the power of the Spirit, why a whole congregation should not be converted under one sermon. There is no reason in God's nature why a nation should not be born in a day. The great prophetic event occurred on the day of Pentecost. The success given was only the first fruits—Pentecost is not the harvest. You must expect and pray for greater things. 2. Without the Holy Spirit no good thing ever did or ever can come into any of your hearts—no sigh of penitence—no cry of faith—no glance of love—no tear of hallowed sorrow. 3. No good thing can come out of you apart from the Spirit. Do you desire to preach?—how can you unless the Holy Ghost teaches your tongue? Do you desire to pray? Alas! what dull work it is unless the Spirit maketh intercession for you! Do you desire to subdue sin? Would you be holy?—you cannot without the Spirit! Conclusion: If these things be so—1. Let us, who are believers in Christ, so reverence the Spirit as not to grieve Him or provoke Him. You who are unconverted—never despise Him. Remember, there is a special honour put upon Him in Scripture—"All manner of sin and of blasphemy," &c. 2. Let us, viewing the might of the Spirit, take courage to-day. Our fathers bore their testimony in the stocks and in the prison, but they feared not for the good old cause, because they knew that the Spirit of God is mighty and will prevail. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The preference due to the Holy Spirit*:—I. THE RELATION BETWEEN CHRIST'S BODILY PRESENCE AND THE SPIRIT'S INFLUENCE WITH THE CHURCH. 1. Before Christ came the Spirit was little known. In all ages it is true that while Christ is the only foundation, the Spirit is the only architect of religion. But if before the Incarnation Christ was dimly seen, can we wonder that the Spirit was not clearly known? Yet as many received salvation by a Messiah whom they scarcely descried in the distance, they received Him by the grace of that Spirit whose operations they felt rather than understood. 2. While Christ was on the earth the Spirit was better known, but known as resting on the Head rather than descending on the body of the Church. Nothing, in all the preceding ages, could be compared with this for clearness. How natural, after the manifestation of the Spirit at Christ's baptism, was it for Christ to begin His ministry by selecting this text—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," &c. The very name, Messiah—Christ—is derived from the sacred unction

which Christ here claims to Himself. What a display of the Spirit's influence was given in the person and ministry of Christ! Still, this was in the Head rather than in the body of the Church, "for the Spirit was not yet received, because Jesus was not yet glorified." For what do we see of the work of the Spirit on man in general during the ministry of Christ on earth? It is true that we read of above five hundred brethren. But what are a few hundreds, or even thousands, as the fruit of such a ministry as that of Jesus Christ? But, alas! we read of no grand effusions of the Spirit accompanying the preaching of our Saviour. Though Christ spake as never man spake, His audience never cried—"What shall we do to be saved?" And when the unbelieving multitude vociferated, "Away with Him, crucify Him!" there was no counter-cry from an opposing mass who had received life at His lips. No; it was necessary first to show what the Spirit does in the Person of Him from whom the grace descends to us; that the anointing should flow from the Head to the members. 3. But when Christ departed to heaven, then the Spirit descended on the whole Church. For there were sufficient reasons why the Spirit of grace should not descend before. (1) It was not fit that the choicest blessing which heaven can shed on men should be granted while the guilt of their sins remained unatoned for. But now "He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, . . . that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (2) It was fit that Christ should go away to heaven, and from thence should bestow this best of blessings. As our kings date their highest royal acts, and issue their proclamations of grace, from "our royal palace at St. James's," it behoved the King of grace to "ascend up on high," in order to give from His heavenly throne "gifts to the rebellious." (3) While Christ was as our king, it should be remembered that He was to be a "priest on His throne," and from His throne Christ, our priest and king, has shed forth that influence which has shown the fulfilment of this promise. II. THE PREFERENCE DUE TO THE SPIRIT'S INFLUENCE. 1. The value of Christ's bodily presence is implied when it is said to be expedient for us that He should go away. While He was on earth He was its treasure and its joy. Christ Himself said, "Blessed are your eyes that they see," &c. The hope of seeing Christ after death makes even that bitter thing sweet. Can we wonder, then, that the disciples who saw Him on earth were reluctant to part with this grateful sight? Nor do we wonder that the hope of His speedy re-appearance should prove a fascinating lure to many who are as much mistaken as the disciples were. 2. The superior value of the Spirit's presence. (1) The bodily presence of Christ was confined to one spot—the presence of the Spirit is universal. (2) The bodily presence of Christ belongs to the order of means that strike the senses, but the presence of the Spirit is that of an agent who affects the heart and attains the end. If Christ were to appear on earth, He must either come in His glory or lay it aside. Were He to come in His glory could we endure it? Paul "could not see for the glory of that Light," and John fell at His feet as dead. Must He, then, lay aside His glory and become again of no reputation? What! has He not had enough of this? But on any supposition Christ's bodily presence might act on our bodies, whereas His Spirit operates upon our spirits. Many, therefore, saw Christ while on earth, only to their more aggravated condemnation. Even those who repented because they saw Christ were told not to glory but to blush. Had Christ continued on earth our imperfect religion would regard Him with a mixture of debasing carnal emotions from which we are, by His absence, kept free, saying, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh," &c. Now we are no longer in danger of intruding upon Him with unseemly familiarity, nor are we exposed to the repulse, "Touch me not;" but by the Spirit's pure and heavenly influences we are elevated towards the Saviour's throne by a flight altogether spiritual and Divine. (3) It is more honourable, both to Christ and to His Spirit, that the Son should depart and send His Spirit down. If this can be shown, it will follow that it is expedient for us. (*a*) The Head cannot be glorified without shedding lustre on the members; nor can the members see the Head exalted, without feeling a sense of exaltation and delight. While Christ dwelt here He was the Father's servant. So much humiliation and infirmity entered into His sojourn here, that He might well chide His friends for wishing to detain Him in it, saying, "If ye loved Me ye would rejoice," &c. But now He has prayed, and has been heard, "Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self," &c. When He quitted earth for heaven, He exchanged the condition of a servant for that of a king. From the seat of glory He sent down His Spirit as His advocate, as well to glorify Christ as to call and sanctify us. The "Paraclete" should be regarded as conveying the idea of a patron and counsellor, to vindicate Christ's rights, and display His glory, and animate the

spirits of men to rise to lofty and delightful ideas of the Saviour. (*b*) This is more honourable to the Spirit too. Would not the splendour of the glorified Redeemer take off men's attention from the operations of the Spirit of grace? But should the Spirit be robbed of his honours? Is it not, then, fit that He should work by means less splendid and fascinating—by the ordinary preaching of the Word—by those who have the treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be seen to be of God, and not of man? III. THE NECESSITY OF ENFORCING THE PREFERENCE DUE TO THE DIVINE SPIRIT. 1. We are exceedingly prone to dote on that which strikes the senses in preference to that which affects the heart. Has not the fatal apostasy of Rome originated in this infirmity of our nature? Perhaps there is scarcely one unconverted person here that does not fancy he would believe if he saw Christ in the flesh. Even the infidel says, "If I saw Jesus Christ as you represent Him, I would hail Him as my Saviour." But did that sight convert the Jews? 2. We as much undervalue the Spirit's influence. You have something better than that which you so fondly fancy would vanquish all your love of sin, and triumph over your unbelief. There are more mighty resources provided for us than if the Son of God were to come down. For the Holy Ghost is now sent to be an advocate to plead His cause with the world, and convince it of Christ's righteousness, and grace, and dominion, and saving power. Conclusion: 1. Beware, lest having lost Christ's presence, you live without the Spirit's influence. 2. Aspire to join the spirits of just men made perfect, who, enjoying both these blessings, are at the summit of bliss. (*J. Bennett, D.D.*)

Vers. 8–11. **And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.**—*The mission of the Comforter:*—This is the only passage in which the Saviour has expressed the process of the Spirit's action in regenerating the world. It forms Christ's own history of the silent progress of the spiritual life. The first step in the Divine life is the sense of sin. That sense is excited by the conviction of the heart's unbelief in the Christ who died. Then the sense of sin must pass into the belief in righteousness. The Spirit reveals righteousness in the Christ who rose. And from this twofold revelation must spring the belief that evil is conquered and that sin shall finally pass away; for the Spirit reveals its overthrow in the Christ who lives and reigns. Mark the mission of the Comforter in—I. AWAKENING THE SENSE OF SIN. 1. The ground on which the charge of sin is founded—"because they believe not on Me." This may seem strange at first sight. But on examination we shall see that no charge but this can awaken a real deep sense of sin. Take the other grounds on which men have attempted to bring home the conviction. (1) The innate depravity of man. Of its awful truth, indeed, there can be no question. But in what does the enforcing of this issue? Do not the questions rise—Who made me thus? Why was I born in sin? Am I responsible? (2) The evil of a man's actions may be felt by him, and yet he may say, "It is not I that do those things. There are two powers in me, 'For that which I do I allow not,'" &c. (3) Or you may awaken simply a confession of self-reproach: "I have erred, and played the fool exceedingly," but you have not made the man feel that he—the personal self—has deliberately endorsed the action as his own. (4) Still further, you may preach the doctrine of everlasting condemnation, and you produce either a cowardly confusion of suffering with sin, defiant unbelief, or abject despair. 2. Take now unbelief in Christ, and see what the rejection of Him implies. Whatever excuses a man may make for committing sin, he knows that it creates an alienation from God, that its effects on the soul are devastating. Now the Cross stands as the sign of reconciliation with God, and therefore of healing and blessedness. But by unbelief, refusing Christ's deliverance, I affirm my antagonism to the Divine. There is the revelation of sin. Man defying the supremest love. II. THE CONVICTION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE ASCENDED SAVIOUR. The first deep glance into life's evil overcomes a man with hopeless sorrow. It is vain to tell him "to let the dead past bury its dead." Forgetfulness would not destroy, but only cover with a thin veil the evil He has found—a veil that death would rend in twain. It is useless to say, "Obey conscience, and become righteous." Conscience has no power to raise; it can only point out the right and condemn the wrong. It is a flaming terror until a man finds Christ. Thus awakened, the great cry of the heart is this, Can I ever be cleansed? Can those memories be banished into eternal forgetfulness by the forgiveness of God? Unless these cries are answered, it were a cruel punishment to convince man of his evil. But the Comforter does answer them. "There is righteousness because

Christ is gone to the Father, and ye see Him no more." It is not, therefore, Christ crucified only, but Christ risen and ascended, who reveals a righteousness for man. Why is this so? and how does the Comforter inspire this conviction? There are three requisites which must be fulfilled before man, as a sinner, can feel the possibility of His righteousness. And these are all met by the truth that Christ has gone to the Father. 1. The assurance of forgiveness for the past. Explain it how we may, there is no conviction more profound and universal than that sin is death, and that its pardon necessitates the death of a pure and unstained life. The world's altars, laden often with human victims, bear witness to this. There is in conscience an inner witness to the rectitude of the law that condemns, and it gives man no peace till he feels that a Holy Being, who was yet one with Him, has "become obedient unto death," and thus manifested the sanctity of the commandment. But suppose Christ had vanished in death, who would have known that He had finished the work He had undertaken? But He rises and ascends to "His Father and our Father," and becomes the eternal Priest, dispensing forgiveness to the world. This is the truth revealed by the Comforter. Touched by the Spirit's power, we accept Christ's sacrifice as our sacrifice, and find pardon. 2. The removal of the terrors of the future. It is the double curse of sin that, while it narrows our range of vision, it clothes immortality with terror. We feel sin is barring our entrance into those bright abodes. We need a Deliverer who shall open for us those barred and everlasting doors. Christ ascended to heaven to be our Brother and Intercessor there. The grand assertion, "In My Father's house are many mansions," &c., falls like music from the sky that received Him. This, then, is the truth revealed by the Comforter, which, by removing the terrors of the future, deepens the conviction of righteousness. 3. The creation of a new manhood in the present. When the past is forgiven and the future brightened, we want to become righteous men. And here we approach the doctrine of imputed righteousness—a righteousness not our's, but Christ's. But the idea of a transference of spiritual states is only a figurative expression of a great truth. We become righteous only when we feel that we are nothing, have nothing, can do nothing, and trusting solely on Christ, yield ourselves to Him. Then the old forces of sin die. The love of Christ possessing us recreates us, and God, seeing in that life of faith the first beginnings of a purity which shall become perfect and everlasting, regards us as righteous in Christ Jesus. III. The belief which completes and renders perfect the new nature—THE BELIEF IN JUDGMENT THROUGH THE CONQUEST OF THE "PRINCE OF THIS WORLD." This passage is frequently interpreted as though it referred to the final judgment. But this destroys the connection between the three convictions, and the words have a present meaning—"is judged." The judgment, therefore (see chap. xii. 31), is that conquest which Christ should gain on His cross. Taking it in that sense, we perceive at once why the belief in judgment must follow the belief in righteousness. For when we have been freed from sin, and made righteous in Christ, we find that we have entered on a life-long struggle with evil; and as the one thing to keep us true, we need the assurance of final victory. These words present two thoughts: 1. Christ's conquest over the kingdom of evil. (1) The kingdom of evil as opposed to the Saviour. The "prince of this world" suggests the majesty of the power that He overcame for man. "This world" expresses the collective forces that are opposed to God; "Prince" manifestly implies that evil forces are not separated, but combined, and form a great living power, a kingdom of wrong. But the phrase points to a personal evil spirit as lord of that evil kingdom. This was the kingdom that opposed itself to the Son of man. Evil spirits confronted Him constantly. It seemed as if the dark spiritual world were stirred through all its depths by the appearance of the Perfect Man. The whole world was groaning in the throes of spiritual death. The light of Divine revelation was dying out. All the evil influences that touch the human soul gathered themselves against the Perfect Soul to turn Him aside and tear Him from His self-chosen path of dedication for the world. (2) The Saviour's conquest. For this two things were requisite—(*a*) Christ must overcome the essence of evil by a means common to humanity. Now, the essence of evil is self-will. Its first expression was the "I will" of man opposing itself to the "Thou shalt not" of God. Christ must conquer sin through the might of a Divine obedience, and yet occupy a battle-ground common to humanity. And where was this so perfectly accomplished as in His life and death? (*b*) Christ must show by His conquest that the facts which seem to prove the perpetuity of evil are really signs of its overthrow. The darkest lie of the evil one is this—that evil is an eternal power. Before the advent

of the gospel, the world was beginning to believe in the omnipotence of wrong, and men were losing faith in anything which could conquer evil. Just note the two great facts which, as the results of sin, lay at the root of this state. First, Suffering. It seemed to belie the goodness of God and prove sin to be irresistible. Now suffering, in all its deepest dreadfulness, Christ endured. "He was perfected through sufferings," and thus revealed it to man as the education of a Father. Secondly, Death—the sign-manual of sin's dominion. Christ became subject to its power. It seemed to conquer Him. But, rising from the grave, He ascended to the heavens, thus consecrating death for all men as a pathway to the Father's home. Such was Christ's conquest. It was the crisis of earth's history—the judgment and overthrow of the "prince of this world." 2. Christ's conquest as a pledge of victory for man. There are three ways in which this is revealed by the Comforter. (1) The fact itself is a power. We are strengthened by the belief that some one has known our difficulties and subdued them. On this deep principle of human nature Christ's conquest lays hold. Like us He fought. By a strength which we may share He conquered. Look at the early Church, when the meaning of this fact was revealed by the descending Comforter. Men awoke with new power. The old tyranny of evil was broken; and hoary apostolic men, kindling with the energies of youth, went forth to do battle with it in the world which had so long groaned under its sway. (2) Christ is God's promise. Through His life God's voice speaks to us now. If we conflict like Him, like Him we shall conquer. We must copy His instant resistance to temptation, and His prayerful submission in suffering, if we would share the glory of His victory. (3) Christ a present friend. We do not always realize His presence, but sometimes amid the pauses of the battle, we feel Him near in that "peace which passeth understanding," and hear Him saying, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life." (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *The object of the mission of the Comforter*:—"To reprove the word of sin" is one thing; but (as the original expression implies) "to convince" is quite another. The reproof of sin has been the practice of philosophers, the object of poets, the office of moralists, the aim of satirists, in every age. Parents reprove their children; silent virtue reproves obtrusive vice. But sin may be reproved, and yet not be eradicated; be silenced by exposure, and yet not subdued. Hence the reproofs of the world have fallen upon the sins of the world too often, as the winds fall upon the bleak hill, or the waves of the sea beat upon the solid rock—leaving no impression behind. Now to "convince," or to "convict" means to bring home sin to one's judgment, and to render all denial impossible; to one's conscience, and to render all evasion impracticable; to unveil sin in its own hiding-place; to detect it when it lurks in the core of the most exquisite bud, or when it nestles in the bosom of the most fragrant and beautiful flower; to fix upon it the sinner's eye so intently, that he shall see it lying where he never suspected it to be before, nestling amidst the affections he thought holy, clinging to the habits he thought beautiful, and staining all his nature so entirely by its venom, that he shall feel that none but the Omnipotent Spirit of God can enable him to get rid of it. It is easy to convince a man of outward offences, none but the Eternal Spirit can convince the honourable, the great, the moral, that all their excellencies are like flowers and leaves torn from the root, and doomed soon to fade, and that the only excellencies that will survive the storm, and bid defiance to the grave, are those which spring from the living principle imparted by the Holy Spirit of God. Many have tried to "convince of sin," besides the Holy Spirit. 1. Conscience. But it fails to do so with any sensible results. No man sins without hearing the remonstrances of that solemn monitor; but you have defied it, mastered it, bribed it, and now it has become more or less stupefied. Or if not it has recourse to the only other expedient to those atoning efficacies said to be in all the relics and prescriptions of an absurd superstition. 2. Public opinion. But while this reproves some sins, it connives at others. 3. The law of Sinai. This commands, in the accents of thunder, the duties which it reveals by the lightning's flash; but that law only speaks of outward acts; it lops off branches, it cuts off a main stem—but as soon as it has done so, a thousand shoots start from the root. The only being, then, that can convince of sin savingly, really, deeply, is the Holy Spirit. He shall convince the world—I. OF SIN: of one special sin; not intemperance, avarice, or selfishness. These are of flagrant enormity, but there is one which outweighs them all in its guilt—a sin that lies too at every man's door—at the door of philanthropist and of the felon, a sin that ties to us all sins, and prevents their forgiveness; unbelief in Christ. This is just the sin of which we have no conception, except by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Conscience does

not accuse you of it; society will not denounce you for it. 1. How this can be so heinous a sin? Because it is rejecting the great remedy for all sin; it is suspecting the love, doubting the mercy, disputing the sufficiency of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a sin merely against God as a judge, but against God as a Saviour. And those persons approach more or less to the guilt of this sin, who have doubts whether Christ will have mercy on them that appeal to Him; lest His blood be not adequate to cleanse them; that He would thrust them away if they were to make the experiment. If there be a single obstruction between the greatest sinner and the bosom of God, it is not in God—it is in your hearts alone. 2. "What is it to believe in Christ?" It is to feel that if God were to sink you to the very depths of hopeless ruin, He would not inflict a punishment greater than your sins have deserved; but, on the other hand, it is to feel that if, in the name and through the righteousness of Christ, He were to raise you to a glory too brilliant for mortal eye to look on, God would not bestow upon you a greater boon than Christ's merits entitle you to. II. OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. He opens our ears, that we may hear the curse, but He opens our ears, that we may hear the music of the blessing also. "Sin shall not have dominion over you:" "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." "And when the Spirit convinces of righteousness, it is not that Christ is simply a righteous man"; that would be no comfort to me, but He was righteous for us. Hence our justifying righteousness is not a faint imitation of what Christ is, but an acceptance of what Christ has bequeathed. Imitate what Christ is, and there is your model; but to be justified you must believe on and embrace by faith what Christ has done, and that alone, as your title and your righteousness in the sight of God. Just as Christ was condemned for my sin, so I am justified because of Christ's righteousness. III. OF JUDGMENT. The first promise was, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head"; the Spirit of God convinces His people that this process of bruising goes on—that the earth now, while under grace, is also partly under judgment, and that those things which the world cannot explain by what is called the law of nature, are the judgments of God. For instance, disease, decay, and death, the world calls the laws of nature: the Christian calls them the judgments of God. Death does not belong to nature; it is a disruption of nature. It is sin that is the cause of all the head-aches and the heart-aches which our mortality is heir to. And therefore the Spirit of God and He only will convince that they are the judgments and decrees of God. Wherever you see a Christian happy amid oppression, there you have an evidence that "the prince of this world is judged." And is it not still becoming more and more true that humility is dignity, and that holiness is strength? And the time is coming more and more, I trust, when "the prince of this world," being "judged," shall be cast forth from the cabinets of queens and from the councils of statesmen, from the press and from the pulpit, from all men's hearts and from all men's homes—and the joy and holiness and happiness of God shall overflow the world, like a mighty and deepening river. Oh! that the Spirit of God may then convince us of this! (*J. Cumming, D.D.*)

The hardened sinner:—Angelo Mario, a Jesuit librarian at the Vatican, made the discovery, many years ago, that some of the ancient MSS. had more than one layer of writing upon them. By certain chemical experiments, he succeeded in making legible the ancient writing. Archbishop Whately has suggested the theory, now generally admitted, that this was done on account of the expensiveness or scarcity of parchment in the middle ages. De Quincy, in his "Confessions," has given us a chapter on the subject, applying it to signify different layers of thought and emotion that have at different times passed upon the heart, and become apparently covered over completely with some other. So it is with the hardened sinner. How many a layer of conviction after conviction and partial reformations has he known, yet still how thick a case covers his hardened heart! *The spirit of fire*:—Suppose a blacksmith were sent for to mend a number of old broken iron vessels, and told that he must do it without fire, what would he say to the proposal? Yet sinners' hearts are as hard and cold! and just as foolish are they who think that all that is needed is to begin and go on hammering at them, and that will convert them. No! heat the iron, and it may be mended and remoulded. Melt the soul with the Spirit of burning, or we are without hope of seeing any saving change. *The awful evil of sin*:—Oh sirs, if I had a dear brother who had been murdered, what would you think of me if I valued the knife which had been crimsoned with his blood?—if I made a friend of the murderer, and daily consorted with the assassin, who drove the dagger into my brother's heart? Surely I, too, must be an accomplice in the crime! Sin murdered Christ; will you be a friend to it? Sin pierced the heart of

the Incarnate God; can you love it? Oh, that there was an abyss as deep as Christ's misery, that I might at once hurl this dagger of sin into its depths, whence it might never be brought to light again! Begone, O sin! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The three-fold conviction:*—I. OF SIN—"in that they believe not on Me." 1. The world's conduct towards Christ is the decisive proof of its sinfulness. His Cross manifests, as nothing else, what "the bad element in human nature" is capable of. So it must needs be. When the Holy One comes into a world of sinners they must either renounce their sins or contradict Him. And if He endures their contradiction they must hate Him; and if He still braves their hatred it is but another step to slay Him. "If I had not come they had not had sin," &c. In conflict with the light darkness is known for darkness indeed. 2. Therefore, the gist of the Spirit's charge lies simply in this: that the world does not believe in Christ. All the rest, the insolence and outrage, &c., was nothing more than the logical outcome of unbelief. Here is the root of the matter. For the rest Christ could say, "Father, forgive them," &c. 3. On this point the Paraclete has to convince *the world*. The rejection of Jesus was virtually the act of the race. Herod &c., were not fiends but men. We can understand them because we are so much like them. All the vices that culminated in the Crucifixion are those of every generation, nay, of ourselves. 4. The present world thinks that it would have acted differently. Let it not be too sure: "Your fathers killed the prophets," &c., and so the ungodly world may be garnishing the sepulchre of Him whom it treats as a dead Christ, in so far as it does not believe in Him. 5. Just as all good works are at the bottom acts of faith, so every kind of evil doing runs up into unbelief. The first sin began here, "Hath God said?" And so the ripened form of human sin reproduces naturally the seed from which it sprang. And this is the condemnation of the whole world: "They have not believed Me." 6. One day this conviction of sin will have penetrated to the world's very heart. It will "look on Him whom it has pierced and mourn," as it confesses that it has not yet believed on Him. II. OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. In the thought of sin, man is the central subject, as himself sinful; in the thought of righteousness, Christ as alone righteous. 1. The personal righteousness of Christ was at stake in the controversy between Himself and the world, and everything depended on clearing that first of all. Only as it appreciated that could the world understand righteousness. Of this the world is now convinced. But Christ could not have waited for this vindication, which without other proof would never have been brought about. And besides, the Father was concerned to vindicate Himself and the Son of His good pleasure by some immediate and unanswerable demonstration. This was seen in His going to the Father. So He says, "If ye loved Me ye would rejoice," &c. —because He would be glorified and the world put to shame, convinced of His righteousness, convicted of its sin. 2. By the death of Christ the case as between Him and the world was transferred to the final court of appeal, "After death, judgment." His accusers had said, "This Man is a sinner," and by crucifying Him they invited the Divine judgment. And thither with His dying breath He made His own appeal, "Into Thy hands I commit My spirit." Those appeals were answered, and in three days Jesus lived again, and in due time went where He was before; and all the angels worshipped Him, and the Father set Him at His own right hand where every word He said is justified, every claim He made established, and where heaven and earth combine to adore Him as "Jesus Christ the Righteous." 3. And if righteous, then Divine. It is no discrepancy that the Evangelist should report the officer as saying, "This Man was righteous," and "He was Son of God." Every one knew that this was the capital charge against Him; and, indeed, if He was a righteous man He was Son of God; if He was not Son of God, He was not even a righteous Man. Therefore He was "declared Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead," and His righteousness is not simply that of the righteous man, but a manifestation of that of the "righteous Father" whom the world had not known, but of which it had to be convinced. 4. And if He is righteous, then the great ideal has been realized, the hunger after righteousness may be assuaged; for righteousness has appeared in concrete human form. There is hope of righteousness for the sinful world. "He died the just for the unjust," &c. "He goes to the Father, and so we have an Advocate with the Father," &c. Well may we then, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. III. OF JUDGMENT. "Because the prince," &c. The death of Christ caused a judgment to be passed on Satan, which he and his kingdom felt to be a virtual overthrow. Christ saw again and again behind all human forces another antagonist guiltier and mightier. He who knew what was in man recognized lurking behind

Judas, Peter, the Pharisees, &c., him whom He thrice called the prince of this world. It was his "works" that He came to destroy, and His "death-fearing" subjects He meant to deliver. And the "strong man armed" knows who it is that has entered his domain. Calvary is to be the decisive battle-field. He was allowed to reach the height of his apostasy in his lying temptation, and failing that, in his murder of the Incarnate Son, and from this height he fell instantly, utterly, as lightning from heaven. He is judged, has failed, is doomed. Henceforth he waits with fearful expectation till the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God, &c. Slowly, yet surely, this sentence is taking effect. After dispossession comes punishment. What else meant the terror of demons at the voice of Christ, and the dreadful words (Matt. xxv. 41) re-echoed in the Apocalypse (chap. xx. 10)? He is judged already, but the day shall declare that judgment. But, alas! he is not the only subject. The judgment that fell upon him cannot but strike those who choose "their part" with him (Rev. xxi. 8). (*Geo. G. Findlay, B.A.*) *The Holy Spirit's threefold conviction of men*:—Observe what the Holy Spirit did as an Advocate. The passage cannot be fully understood except we give it three renderings. A promise is here made to the servants of Christ, that when they go forth to preach the gospel the Holy Ghost will be with them—I. To REPROVE MEN. By this is meant, not so much to save them as to silence them. Another advocate appears in court, whose pleadings would make it hard for men to resist the truth. Observe how this reproof was given with regard to—1. Sin. On the day of Pentecost when Peter stood up to preach to the assembled multitude, the signs and wonders wrought by the Spirit in the name of Jesus were a witness which they could not refute. The evidence was brought home to them that they had with wicked hands crucified the Lord of glory: and so they stood reproved. All the subsequent miracles went to prove the same thing. 2. Righteousness. Jesus was gone, and His Divine example no longer reproved their darkness, but the Holy Spirit attested that righteousness, and compelled them to feel it. A fresh standard of morals was set up, and it has never been taken down; it stands in its place to rebuke, if not to improve. 3. Judgment. (1) They were made to feel that somehow the life and the death of Jesus of Nazareth had made a crisis in the world's history, and condemned the way and manner of the ungodly. All historians must confess that the turning-point of the race is the cross of Christ. It would be impossible to fix any other hinge of history. From that moment the power of evil received its mortal wound. It dies hard, but from that hour it was doomed. Systems of false worship, so firmly rooted in prejudice and custom, that it seemed impossible that they should ever be overthrown, were torn up by their roots by the breath of the Lord. (2) Moreover, the thought flashed upon humanity more clearly than ever it had done before—that there would be a day of judgment. The dim forms of Rhadamanthus on a cloudy judgment seat, and of the assembly before his throne, and of the crowds divided according to their lives, now began to assume another and far more definite shape. The Holy Spirit attested the teaching of the apostles. Henceforth man is accused and rebuked by the great Advocate. He who rejects human testimony when it is true is foolish; but he who despises the witness of the Holy Ghost is profane. Let him beware lest he so sin against the Holy Ghost as to never have forgiveness. II. To CONVINCE MEN—1. Of sin. (1) He comes on purpose to convince men that they are so guilty that they are lost and ruined; to remind them of their enmity to the God of love. He does not come to make sinners comfortable in their sins, but to cause them to grieve over them. He comes to wound so that no human balm can heal; to kill so that no earthly power can make us live. (2) This work is most necessary, because without it there is no leading men to receive the gospel. We cannot make headway with certain people who profess faith very readily, but are convinced of nothing. But get near a real sinner, the man who mourns in his inmost soul that he is so, and you find one who will welcome the Saviour. To him the news of pardon will be as cold water to a thirsty soul. (3) The Spirit comes to convince men of sin, because they never will be convinced of sin apart from His Divine advocacy. A natural conscience may show a man his faults, make him uneasy, and may bring about reformation; but it is only the Spirit of God that to the full extent convinces a man of sin so as to bring forth repentance, self-despair, and faith in Jesus. (4) The Holy Spirit dwells upon one point in particular, "They believe not on Me." None see the sin of unbelief except by His light. For a man thinks, "Well, if I have not believed in Christ, that is a pity, perhaps; but still, I was never a thief, or a liar, &c. Unbelief is a matter of little consequence; I can set that square at any time." But the Holy Spirit makes a man see that not to be-

lieve in Christ is a crowning sin, since it makes God a liar. He who believes not on Christ has rejected God's mercy, and has done despite to the grandest display of God's love. In this he has dishonoured God on a very tender point: His only begotten Son. 2. Of righteousness—that is to show them that they have no righteousness of their own, and no means of working it, and are condemned. Thus He leads them to value the righteousness of God which is upon all them that believe. (1) Among men, if a person is convicted of wrong-doing, the next step is judgment. A young man has embezzled money: he is convicted by process of law, and found guilty. Then judgment is pronounced, and he must suffer. But observe how God interpolates another process. Truly, His ways are not our ways! "He shall convince of sin——" The next step would be judgment; but no, the Lord inserts a hitherto unknown middle term, and convinces "of righteousness." Be amazed at this. The Lord takes a man, even when he is conscious of sin, and makes him righteous on the spot, by putting away his sin and justifying him by a righteousness which comes to him by the worthiness of another. This seems to be a thing so impossible that it needs the Spirit of God to convince men of it. (2) Note well the great point of the Spirit's argument, "Because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more." Our Lord was sent into the world to work out a righteousness, but He would not go till He had fulfilled His covenant engagements. Behold, then, Christ has finished a righteousness which is freely given to all them that believe, and all those who trust in Christ are for His sake regarded as righteous before God, and are in fact righteous, so that, "Who is He that condemneth?" It is Christ that died, &c. 3. Of judgment. "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The true penitent feels that the great enemy of his soul must be dethroned, or else forgiveness itself will afford him no rest. He must be rescued from the power as well as from the guilt of sin, or else he abides in bondage. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil; and on the cross our Redeemer judged Satan, and cast him down. He is now a condemned criminal, a vanquished rebel. His reigning power over all believers is broken. Though it will cost you many a conflict, the Lord shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly, for He has already bruised him under His own feet on your behalf. III. To CONVICT MAN. 1. The world stands a prisoner at the bar, and the charge is that it is and has been full of sin. In courts of law you are often surprised with what comes out. The prisoner seems to be a respectable person, and you say, "I should not think he is guilty." But, as the evidence proceeds, you say to yourself, "That is a villain." Now hear the Spirit of God. The Spirit came into the world to make all men know that Jesus is the Christ, and He attested that fact by miracles, and by the conversion of myriads. But this wicked world nailed Christ to a cross. By this the world is convicted, its guilt is proven beyond question. The wrath of God abideth on it. 2. What follows? The trial is viewed from another point. The world has declared that the gospel is not righteous, that the system which our Lord has come to establish is not true. But, by sanctifying men through the gospel so that they lead gracious lives, the Holy Spirit proves that the gospel is righteous. This process grows more and more complete as time rolls on. Were not the world unrighteous it would long ago have yielded to the holy message and its holy Messenger. But it will be forced to own the truth one day. 3. When the world shall see Jesus enthroned at last on the clouds of heaven, what conviction will seize on every mind! Not a sceptic will be found in that day! Christ seen at the Father's right hand will end all unbelief. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

The Spirit's threefold conviction:—I. THE SPIRIT'S CONVICTION OF SIN. And first, the Spirit's conviction of sin—"Of sin, because they believe not on Me." 1. This is not society's definition of sin: according to society, sin means crime, vice, immorality. Neither is it the philosopher's definition of sin: according to the philosopher, sin means misdirection, abuse, disease. Neither is it the theologian's definition of sin: according to the theologian, sin means transgression of God's law, coming short of God's glory, hereditary guilt. But it is Christ's definition of sin: according to Christ, sin means unbelief on Himself, unbelief in Jesus as the Christ and Son and Image and Revealer of the Father. To disbelieve on Jesus, then, is to disbelieve on Deity Himself. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father (1 John ii. 23). Christlessness in a Christian land is atheism. Sin, therefore, became a new thing when Jesus came into the world (chap. xv. 22). 2. Observe now that of this sin of sins the Spirit is the sole convicter. When He is come, He will convict the world in respect of sin, because they believe not on Jesus. And no other power can. The preacher cannot do it; conscience cannot

do it; even holy scripture cannot do it. Remember the difference between sins and sin. A jury may convict me of crimes: conscience may convict me of sins. But no power less than the Holy Spirit can convict me of sin. No barb but His can pierce to the root of my nature; no flash but His can show me to myself as a ruined sinner. And the argument he wields in convicting me of sin is this very fact that I do not believe on Jesus. Calvary, not Sinai, is the Spirit's mightiest artillery. But what avails it to be convicted of sin, unless at the same time we are also convicted that there is somewhere righteousness, and that this righteousness can be made available to ourselves? II. THE SPIRIT'S CONVICTION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. "Of righteousness." What is this righteousness of which our Lord here speaks? Whose righteousness is it? (1) Certainly not the world's. For the world is quite swift enough to detect its own merits. No Holy Spirit does it need to convince it of its own virtues. A very Narcissus it is, seeing everywhere the reflection of its own beauties and worshipping itself. But let us look at this matter a little more deeply, noting what the world's conception of righteousness really is. True, we admire and value righteousness. But why do we admire it? Because it is righteousness? Or because, in a civilized, well-ordered community, righteousness is one of the conditions of success? Do we not, practically speaking, secretly feel that Thomas Carlyle has hit the truth when, in his "Heroes and Hero-worship," he virtually tells us, Success is virtue; might makes right? Let righteousness but stand in the way of success, and let the choice lie between the two; and then see which the world will choose. Yes, the world crucified, and, were He to return, would virtually crucify again, the only absolutely righteous One the world has ever seen. (2) Whose then is the righteousness the conviction of which the Spirit is to bring to the world? Evidently Christ's righteousness. But what part or element of Christ's righteousness is the righteousness of which He here speaks? Evidently, righteousness in the general, complete sense of the word; the sum total of all that God requires; the righteousness of a perfect character. In other words, the righteousness of which the Lord here speaks is the righteousness which was incarnated in His own blessed person and career and character and work. And of this righteousness Christ's departure and present invisibility are both the illustration and the proof: "Of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold Me no more." 2. "Because I go to the Father." This going to the Father involves several profound things. First, it involves Christ's own death. And why did Jesus Christ die, and so go home? Just because He was righteous, and lived in a world which did not believe on Him. His very righteousness crucified Him. Again: This going to the Father involves Christ's resurrection. And why was Jesus Christ raised from the dead? Just because He was righteous: He was declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead (Rom. i. 4). Once more: This going to the Father involves Christ's ascension and heavenly enthronement. And why was Jesus Christ exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high? Just because He was righteous; His exaltation being the reward of His incarnate obedience. His going to the father was both a revelation and a demonstration of Christ's righteousness. 3. "And ye no longer behold Me." Why did not the risen Lord remain on earth? Why is He not here now, to be a terror to His foes, a comfort to His friends? We behold Him no more in order that we may the better understand what righteousness truly is. For righteousness is not a bulk—so many inches cubic; not a weight—so many pounds avoirdupois. Righteousness is a quality, a character. 4. And of this righteousness the Holy Spirit is the sole convictor: "When He is come, He will convict the world in respect of righteousness." It may also be admitted that the world does in a certain sense admire Christ's character. Few eulogies are more eloquent, so far as language goes, than the eulogies which eminent unbelievers have pronounced on the Nazarene. But admiration is one thing: loyalty is another thing. There is a tremendous difference between æsthetic admiration and practical devotion; between assent to Christ's teaching and consent with Christ's character. And what the world needs is to have such a profound conviction of Christ's personal, conspicuous, distinctive righteousness as to yearn for it, crying, O Jehovah, be Thou my righteousness (Jer. xxii. 6). And this conviction no power but the Paraclete can effect. III. THE SPIRIT'S CONVICTION OF JUDGMENT. But what avails it to be convicted of righteousness, unless at the same time we are convicted that righteousness will be victorious? 1. "The prince of this world." If you ask me why Satan was allowed to enter this world and usurp its throne, my only answer is this: I do not know. Here is one of those secret things which belong to Jehovah our God (Deut. xxix. 29). Of

one thing, however, I am only too sure. Satan is the prince of this world. A usurped principality though it is, the principality is nevertheless his. See how he lords it over man's moral nature, as disclosed in the various religions of the world. Look, for example, at the world's idolatries: at its Apis, its Baal, its Dagon, its Mithras, its Siva. Look at the Greek and Roman mythologies. Or, to keep within our own land, look at the idolatry of second causes, the worship of antecedent and consequent, the adoration of the powers of nature. What is materialism but a sort of sublimated fetichism? Again: See how Satan lords it over man's psychical nature—over the capacities and affections and desires of men, instigating to all passions of pride and selfishness and ambition and hate and lust. Once more: See how Satan lords it over man's bodily nature, driving his thorns in the flesh to buffet us; bringing disease and pain and death and grave. In fine, look at this world as it actually is; its crimes, frauds, robberies, hates, falsehoods, perfidies, oppressions, cruelties, sensualities, blasphemies; its griefs and woes and deaths: look at all these and similar instigations and works of the devil, and tell me, Is not Satan the prince of this world? 2. But is this to be so always? God be praised, no! for the prince of this world hath been judged. To us indeed Christ's judgment of Satan seems to be a process still going on. But this is only because we are finite: for this idea of process, or succession in time, is one of the tokens of human weakness. But to the eye of the Son of God the overthrow of Satan was a single act, and an act already accomplished (Luke x. 17). But how was this judgment on Satan effected? (1) To answer, first, in a general way: it was effected by the Incarnation. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil (1 John iii. 8). The Incarnation itself was a judgment (2) But to give a more particular answer: Satan was judged by Christ's own death. Accordingly, a few days before, Jesus exclaimed: "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified. . . . Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out: and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself. This He said, signifying by what manner of death He should die" (chap. xii. 28–33). 3. And this judgment on Satan is a judgment of which the world needs to be convicted: and this, not merely in way of intellectual apprehension, but, especially and emphatically, in way of moral conviction. (1) Thus each Christian needs this conviction for himself. For he is exposed to a thousand discouragements: for example, the sense of infirmity, the enigma of delays and disappointments and adversities, the prevalence of iniquity, the enmity of Satan himself. Verily he does not yet see all things subjected to Jesus Christ (Heb. ii. 8). Hence he needs the saving power of hope (Rom. viii. 24). He needs the conviction that Christ's grace within him is omnipotent; that the life in Jesus will not be a failure; that the Christian's victory, if he holds steadfast, is a matter of certainty. What he needs is to be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of His glory (Eph. i. 14). (2) And as each Christian needs this conviction for himself in order to his own salvation and victory, so does the Church of the Lamb need it in order to her own going forth and battling under inspiration of assured triumph. What she needs is the certain conviction that the Church's triumph is a foregone conclusion in the Divine mind; that in virtue of her joint-heirship with Jesus Christ (Rom. viii. 17), the appointed heir of all things (Heb. i. 3), she will share His sovereignty, even already owning this world by a sort of reversionary right. 4. But how shall this conviction be wrought? By no power less than the Holy Spirit. When He is come, He will convict the world concerning judgment, because the prince of this world has been judged. Conscience cannot work this conviction: all that conscience can do is to make us aware that we are under Satan's power. Neither can philosophy work this conviction: all that philosophy does is to try to make us believe that there is not, and never has been, any Satan at all; that hell is only the obverse side of heaven, or "heaven seen in a side-light." The philosopher does, indeed, talk of a golden age. But what kind of a golden age is it? An age when all that is now anomalous and discordant and monstrous shall give way to universal law and order and beauty; in brief, when the world shall develop into a godless paradise, from which Satan and Jesus shall be alike aliens. (*G. D. Boardman, D.D.*) *Conviction*:—The idea is complex. It involves the conceptions of authoritative examination, of unquestionable proof, of decisive judgment, of punitive power. Whatever the final issue may be, he who "convicts" another places the truth of the case in dispute in a close light before him, so that it must be seen and ac-

knowledged as truth. He who then rejects the conclusion which this exposition involves, rejects it with his eyes open and at his peril. Truth seen as truth carries with it condemnation to all who refuse to welcome it. The different aspects of this "conviction" are brought out in the usage of the word in the New Testament. 1. There is the thorough testing of the real nature of the facts (chap. iii. 20; Eph. v. 13). 2. The application of the truth thus ascertained to the particular person affected (James ii. 9; Jude xv. 22; 1 Cor. xiv. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 2; *cf.* Matt. xviii. 15; John viii. 9). 3. And that in chastisement (1 Tim. v. 20; Tit. i. 9, ii. 15; *cf.* Eph. v. 11); or with a distinct view to the restoration of him who is in the wrong (Rev. iii. 19; Heb. xii. 5; Tit. i. 13). The Gospel of St. John itself is a monument of the Spirit's conviction of the world concerning—I. SIN (chap. iii. 19–21; v. 28, &c.; 38–47; viii. 21, &c.; 34–47; ix. 41; xiv. 27; xv. 18–24). II. RIGHTEOUSNESS (chap. v. 30; vii. 18, 24; viii. 28, 46, 50, 54; xii. 32; xiv. 31; xviii. 37). III. JUDGMENT (chap. xii. 31; xiv. 30; xviii. 15). (*Bp. Westcott.*) *The facts which convince the world*:—Our Lord has just been telling His disciples how He will equip them, as His champions, for their conflict with the world. He now advances to tell them that the three-fold conviction which they, as counsel for the prosecution, will establish as against the world at the bar, will be based upon three facts: a truth of experience, of history, of revelation, all three facts having reference to Christ and His relation to men. Now these three facts are—the world's unbelief; Christ's ascension and session at the right hand of God; and "the judgment of the prince of this world." These three facts are the staple and the strength of the Christian ministry. These are misapprehended, and have failed unless they have driven home to our consciences and understandings the triple conviction of my text. I. THE REJECTION OF CHRIST AS THE CLIMAX OF THE WORLD'S SIN. 1. This is the most striking instance of the gigantic self-assertion of our Lord's. The world is full of all manner of evils, but Christ passes them all by and points to a mere negative thing, and says, "There is the worst of all sins." 2. And some of us do not think it is sin at all; that man is no more responsible for his belief than he is for the colour of his hair. Well, what is it that a man turns away from when he turns away from Christ? And what does such an attitude indicate as to the rejecter? He stands in the presence of the loveliest revelation of the Divine nature, and he sees no light in it. Why but because he is incapable of seeing God manifest in the flesh he loves the darkness rather than the light. He turns away from the revelation of the most self-sacrificing love. Why but because he bears a heart cased with selfishness? He turns away from the offered hands heaped with the blessing that he needs. Why but because he does not care for the gifts that are offered? Forgiveness, cleansing, purity, a heaven which consists in the perfecting of all these has no attractions for him. The man who is blind to the first, who has no stirrings of responsive gratitude for the second and who does not care for the third, in turning away, manifests and commits a true sin. 3. Then our Lord here presents this fact of man's unbelief as a "typical sin." In all other acts of sin you get the poison manipulated into various forms, associated with other elements, disguised more or less. However unlike they may be to one another—the lust of the sensualist, the craft of the cheat, &c.—all of them have this one common root: a diseased and bloated regard to self. The definition of sin is, living to myself and making myself my own centre. The definition of faith is, making Christ my centre and living for Him. And so, if you want to know what is the sinfulness of sin, there it is; it is all packed away in its purest form in the act of rejecting Christ. When you have summoned up the ugliest forms of man's sins, this one overtops them all, because it presents in the simplest form the mother-tincture of all sin, which, variously coloured and perfumed and combined, makes the poison of them all. A heap of rotting, poisonous matter is offensive to many senses, but the colourless, scentless, tasteless drop has the poison in its most virulent form, and is not a bit less virulent though it has been learnedly distilled and christened with a scientific name, and put into a dainty jewelled flask. II. THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST AS THE PLEDGE AND THE CHANNEL OF THE WORLD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. Christ speaks as if the process of departure were already commenced. It had three stages—death, resurrection, ascension; but these three are all parts of the one departure. 1. The fact of an ascended Christ is the guarantee of His own complete fulfilment of the ideal of a righteous man. Suppose Jesus Christ never rose from the grave, would it be possible to believe that, however beautiful these records of His life, and however lovely the character they reveal, there was really in Him no sin at all? A dead Christ means a Christ who, like the rest of us, had His limitations and His faults. But if it be true that He sprang from the grave because "it was not possible

that He should be holden of it," and because in His nature there was no proclivity to death, since there had been no indulgence in sin; and if it be true that He ascended up on high because that was His native sphere, as naturally as the water in the valley will rise to the height of the hill from which it has descended, then we can see that God has set His seal upon that life by that resurrection and ascension. 2. And further, with this supernatural fact, stands or falls the possibility of His communicating any of His righteousness to sinful men. If there be no such possibility, what does Jesus Christ's beauty of character matter to me? I shall have to stumble on as best I can, sometimes ashamed and rebuked, sometimes stimulated and sometimes reduced to despair, by looking at the record of His life. But there can come nothing other in kind, though, perhaps a little more in degree than comes from any other beautiful soul that has lived. But if He hath ascended up on high, then His righteousness is not a solitary, uncommunicative perfectness for Himself, but like a sun in the heavens, which streams out vivifying and enlightening rays to all that seek His face. If Christ be risen, His righteousness may be the world's; if Christ be not risen, His righteousness is useless to any but to Himself. III. THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD'S PRINCE AS THE PROPHECY OF THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD. 1. The world has a prince. That chaotic agglomeration of diverse forms of evil has yet a kind of anarchic order in it, and, like the fabled serpent's locks on the Gorgon head, they intertwine and sting one another, and yet they are a unity. We hear very little about the prince of the world in Scripture. Mercifully the existence of such a being is not plainly revealed until the fact of Christ's victory over him is revealed. 2. That prince is judged. The Cross did that, as Jesus Christ over and over again indicates. Since that Cross, the power of evil in the world has been broken in its centre; God has been disclosed, and new forces have been lodged in the heart of humanity, which only need to be developed in order to overcome the evil. Since that auspicious day when "He spoiled the principalities and powers," &c., the history of the world has been the judgment of the world. Hoary iniquities have toppled into the ceaseless washing sea of Divine love which has struck against their bases. Ancient evils have vanished, and more are on the point of vanishing. A loftier morality, a deeper conception of sin, new hopes for the world and for men, have all dawned upon mankind; and the prince of the world is led bound, as it were, at the victorious chariot wheels. The central fortress has been captured and the rest is an affair of outposts. 3. A final judgment is coming and that it is, is manifested by the fact that Christ, when He came in the form of a servant and died upon the Cross, judged the prince. When He comes in the form of a King on the great white throne He will judge the world which He has delivered from the prince. (1) That thought ought to be a hope to us all. Are you glad when you realize the fact that the righteousness which is in the heavens is going to conquer and coerce and clap under the hatches the sin that is riding rampant through the world? Men who did not know half as much of the Divine love and righteousness as we do, called upon the rocks and the hills, &c., to rejoice before the Lord, "for He cometh to judge the world." (2) It ought to be a hope; it is a fear. And there are some of us that do not like to have the conviction driven home to us. (3) But hope or fear, it is a fact, as certain in the future as the Cross is sure in the past, or the Throne in the present. Have you learned your sin; have you opened your heart to Christ's righteousness? Then, if you have, when men's hearts are failing them for fear, and they call on the rocks and the hills to cover them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, we shall lift up our heads, for our redemption draweth nigh. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness before Him in the day of judgment." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The fixing of impressions:*—When Daguerre was working at his sun-pictures his great difficulty was to fix them. The light came and imprinted the image; but when the tablet was drawn from the camera the image had vanished. Our lamentations is like his—our want the same; a fixing solution that shall arrest and detain the fugitive impressions. He discovered the chemical power which turned the evanescent into the durable. There is a Divine agency at hand that can fix the truth upon the heart of man—God's Holy Spirit. (*J. Stoughton, D.D.*)

Ver. 9. **Of sin, because they believe not on Me.**—*Ineffectual reproof and effectual conviction of sin:*—We did not need that the Holy Spirit should come down from heaven to reprove the world of sin. The words and thoughts of men would have been sufficient to do this. Every preacher of righteousness from the days of Noah has gone about reproving the world of sin. Everybody who in any age has led a

just and holy life has reproved the world of sin, even though he may not have lifted up his voice against it. Nay, the unholy may do so, and the greatest sinners may be the loudest in reproof. Poetry had reproved the world of sin; indeed this is the special business of two of its branches—comedy and satire. Philosophy had reproved the world of sin; and at the time when the Spirit of God had begun His great work, the reproofs of philosophy had become severer and more clamorous than ever. But what is the world the better for all this laborious reproving? How much does the world heed it, or care for it? No more than the crater of Etna cares for the roaring and lashing of the waves at its feet. The smoke of sin will rise up and stain the face of heaven, the flames will still burst forth and spread desolation far and wide, although the waves of reproof should roll around it unceasingly century after century. In fact, the whole history of man has shown that reproof, when there is no gentler and more penetrative power working along with it, instead of producing conviction, rather provokes the heart to resist it. The office of the Spirit, then, was not to reprove but to convince, to teach mankind what sin is, to lay it bare under all its masks, to trace it through all the mazes of its web, and to light on it sitting in the midst thereof, to show it to man, not merely as it flashes forth in the overt actions of his neighbours, but as it lies smouldering inextinguishably within his own bosom, to give him a torch whereby he may explore the dark chambers of his own heart, to lead him into them, and to open his eyes so that he shall behold some of sin's countless brood crouching or gambolling in every corner. And to convince a man of sin in this way, by proving to him that it lies at the bottom of all his feelings, and blends with all his thoughts, that the bright coloured stones with which he is so fond of decking himself out, and which he takes such delight in gazing at, are only so many bits of brittle, worthless glass, and that what he deems to be stars are earthborn meteors, which merely glimmer for the moment they are falling; to convince the world of sin, by showing it how sin has tainted its heart, and flows through its veins, and is mixed up with its life-blood—this is a work which no earthly power can accomplish, and therefore was our Saviour mercifully pleased to send the Comforter to produce this conviction in mankind. (*Archdeacon Hare.*) *Sin and its reproof*:—I. THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN PRODUCING CONVICTION OF SIN IN THE CONSCIENCE. 1. Sin is wholly a matter of motives. It is true that sin is the transgression of the law, and we might suppose it to be a matter of action; but we mistake the law. The law of God is to love God supremely and our neighbour equally. Sin is transgression of this law. 2. Now, whatever form of action may tend to good and to blessedness is right. God has a right to good and blessedness; and if we minister to His good and blessedness we respect His right. Man, too, has a right to good and blessedness, and when we confer upon him good and increase his blessedness, we give him that which is his due. 3. But since we do not understand in what way our life may be related to the good and blessedness of God, we must receive instructions from Him as to the manner of expressing our love to Him. And this He has done in His Word, progressively, most fully by His Son, in whom we have not only an instructor, but also a pattern; and it is ours to receive the instruction and apply it. And when we have received it and applied it, we shall furnish ourselves with rules of conduct. Conformity to these is righteousness; non-conformity to these is unrighteousness. 4. That, then, for which the Spirit is come into the world is chiefly to convince the intelligence and convict the moral judgment of a want of perfect love to God and man. You will easily see that it does not need the Spirit to teach a man concerning immorality, or even unrighteousness. For there is in man a natural conscience, and it teaches him that selfishness is wrong, and that generosity, at least, if not love, is right. And at the time the Saviour spoke there had been a revelation. The law of love had been expressed in the life of Jesus, and it had been wrought out into many precepts which He had uttered during His ministry, and which would be repeated by His disciples. But it is in the power of the mind to turn itself away from the inspection of motives, and to set itself so outwardly from itself, as that it will merely try its conduct by the external rule, without searching its recesses and referring its activities to their real sources in the affections. And so men need not only help in order to sound judgment, but a disposition in order to faithfulness with themselves. And if any help shall be given, it must be of a personal sort. It must come from one who can look into the heart, discern the thoughts and feelings, discover the motives, test them, and perfectly judge them. No mere influence proceeding from God could do anything with man in the court of conscience when he is determined to stop inquiry and prevent judgment. II. IN WHAT DOES THE SIN OF

THE WORLD CONSIST? Who is this young peasant who gathers about Him a few disciples, and, when He is about to be sacrificed for His enthusiasm, talks about His importance to this degree that the Spirit of the living God is to come into the world to convince all men of their sin—consisting in failure to trust Him? I should not want any other hinge than that upon which to swing the whole doctrine of the divinity of Christ; for here is either infinite assumption, or a consciousness of infiniteness—one or the other. The ages have decided it. I do not think two million two hundred and fifty thousand copies of the history of His life would have been seized by the English-speaking people in forty-eight hours if such talk as this were regarded in the judgment of the nineteenth century as infinite assumption. Now note that, we cannot love a being unless, when we know him, we know him to be such that we can trust him; and we cannot trust a being without loving him. 1. Where, then, is God revealed that we may know Him? Partly in nature, partly in our own constitution, but chiefly in the person of Jesus Christ. God sent Him into the world—Immanuel, "God with us"; God sent Him to manifest His moral excellence in His character and by His life. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." If we shall know God, it will be by knowing Christ. He said, "I am the Truth." 2. We could not otherwise come into relationship with God except as He is known, and as He has manifested Himself, in Jesus Christ. Therefore, we love God as we love Him in the Son, and not otherwise; for we can only love where and as we know and trust. 3. Out of this grows the filial spirit, and we at length are able to reach the Father, to come into perfect relations to Him, and by the Spirit of adoption to say, "Abba, Father." And then, of course, when we are so related to God as that we love Him, and our life is in Him, it is our very nature to love His children. 4. We can now see in what respect it is the work of the Spirit to convince us of sin, namely: that in our hearts we do not purely and perfectly love God and God's children; and we fail here because we do not know Him and trust Him; and we do not know Him and trust Him because we do not see and approach Him in Jesus Christ. Therefore, as the Lord said, "He will convince the world of sin, because they believe not on Me." III. INFERENCES. 1. That is the most miserable and powerless religion that has emptied Christ of His divinity. It is of no service to man, and history is proving it, as experience is. 2. That it is not left to a man's option whether he shall trust Jesus Christ or not. No man with a natural conscience but knows that if He lives, moves, and has his being, and depends for his destiny upon, and must have his good and joy from, the loving and continual agency of God, he ought to render to God what is His due; and if He is the highest object of knowledge, He ought to be known; if He is worthy of perfect trust, He ought to be trusted; and if He is infinitely lovely and loving, He ought to be loved; and our natural conscience would teach us that we ought to know and love and trust God. Very well; there is no other way to do it, except to take God as God comes to us, and He never comes to any man except in the Son, and He never will. (*J. T. Duryea, D.D.*) *The Holy Spirit convincing of sin*:—I. WHAT IS CONVICTION OF SIN? It is opposed to the insensibility of the thoughtless; to the vain self-flatteries of those who delude themselves with the hope that it will be well with them, though they are strangers to regenerating grace and unwashed in the blood of atonement; and to the perilous delays of those who defer the concerns of their souls to an uncertain future. Unlike all these, he who is under conviction of sin has awaked to an awful sense of the importance of eternity, of the danger of his state, and of the necessity of instant attention to his dearest, his everlasting interests. His carnal security is terminated. Seeing himself pursued by the curses of the law, and exposed to everlasting agonies, the world diminishes in his esteem; much change is made in his affections, and much reformation in his outward conduct. Such is conviction of sin; that conviction that was felt by Peter's hearers on the day of Pentecost; by Saul of Tarsus when, "trembling and astonished, he cried, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" by the Philippian jailer. II. WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THIS CONVICTION OF SIN? To Him we are indebted not only for grace, but also for all that is preparatory to the infusion of it in the soul: of this the slightest observation must convince us. Let me add, that the great end and design of the gospel rendered it requisite that conviction should be wrought by the Holy Spirit. The gospel is intended to display the riches of Divine grace, and to remove all cause of glorying in ourselves: and if we could convince ourselves, make ourselves sensible of sin, the glory of the commencement and preparation of the work would belong to ourselves. III. DO ALL CONVICTIONS TERMINATE IN TRUE CONVERSION? To this question the declarations of the Scripture, as well as our own observation, answer "No."

We are taught that we can "grieve," can "resist," can "quench the Spirit" of God. And suppose not that it is improper to attribute these fading convictions to the Spirit of God. "Wherever they fail," I here use the words of the excellent Dr. Owen, "wherever they fail, and come short of that real conversion to which they have a tendency, it is not from any weakness and imperfection in themselves, but from the sins of those in whom they are wrought. Common illumination and conviction of sin have a tendency unto sincere conversion. They have so, in the same kind as the law hath to bring us to Christ. Where this end is not attained, it is always from the interposition of an act of stubbornness and wilfulness in those enlightened and convicted. By a free act of their own will they refuse the grace which is further tendered to them in the gospel." IV. WHAT ARE THE CHIEF POINTS OF DISTINCTION BETWEEN THOSE LEGAL CONVICTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED BY MANY WHO ARE LOST, AND THOSE EVANGELICAL CONVICTIONS THAT ARE PECULIAR TO THE CHILDREN OF GOD? A legal conviction arises from a sense of God's justice, and power, and omniscience. All this is felt by him who is under evangelical conviction; but his chief sorrow arises from the consideration of other attributes of God: the Divine goodness, holiness, and disaffection to sin. He exclaims, "I have abused the tenderness of a Father, and outraged infinite goodness; I have offended purity, which would have sanctified me." The one traces the malignity of sin principally by its tendency to produce the death of the soul, and in the agonies of the lost; the other chiefly studies it in the sufferings and death of the Son of God. The one is burdened with the fear of punishment, the other with the sense of his desert of it. 1. This subject teaches us the deep guilt of those who strive to stifle those convictions of sin that are produced in the hearts of their acquaintance and friends. Such persons "do despite to the Spirit of grace," and unite with the prince of darkness in opposition to God and the souls of men. 2. This subject tenderly and solemnly admonishes those who have stifled the convictions which they once felt. Unhappy men! you once appeared "not far from the kingdom of heaven." 3. This subject consoles and admonishes those who are under convictions of sin. Fear not the pangs of godly sorrow; it is the Spirit of grace who convinces you, that He may be your Comforter. Though you are pained, it is by Him who is love and tenderness. (*H. Kollock, D.D.*) *Conviction of sin*:—I. WHAT IS SIN? Any want of conformity to or transgression of the law of God. This law is the eternal rule of rectitude. It is not merely a revelation of what is right and reasonable, but what we are bound to be conformed to. Of course our views of sin will be determined by our views of the law. If the law is only the law of reason, sin is simply unreasonable. If the law is limited so is sin. If the law is perfect, then all want of perfection is sin. II. CONVICTION OF SIN IS THEREFORE A CONVICTION OF WANT OF CONFORMITY TO THE LAW. This includes —1. Want of conformity—(1) Of the heart. (2) Of conscious states of the mind. (3) Of particular acts. Under the gospel it is specially of unbelief, as a sin against Christ. 2. The consciousness of this as guilt, *i.e.*, as justly exposing us to the condemnation of the law. 3. The sense of inability to make atonement. 4. The sense of defilement: that which renders us objects of abhorrence. This stands opposed to self-complacency and self-approbation. III. THE NECESSITY OF THIS CONVICTION ARISES OUT OF THE FACT THAT THE GOSPEL IS A PLAN FOR THE SALVATION OF SINNERS. It is designed for sinners. If we are not sinners, we do not need the gospel; and if we do not as sinners feel our need of the gospel we shall not embrace it. If we do not feel ourselves guilty and polluted we shall not look to Christ for pardon and cleansing. IV. WHAT KIND OR DEGREE OF CONVICTION IS NECESSARY? What are the evidences of genuine conviction? 1. Every man is convinced of sin in a certain sense and measure. But only in such a measure as is consistent with indifference or carelessness. 2. Others are so convinced as to create great anxiety and to lead to long and painful efforts to save themselves. 3. Others are so convinced as to be thoroughly persuaded that they can neither atone for their guilt, nor deliver themselves from defilement, or make themselves holy. This is the result to be desired. V. THIS CONVICTION CAN ONLY BE PRODUCED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Conviction of sin*:—As John Wesley on a summer evening in 1742 was preaching on his father's tombstone, he observed a gentleman in his audience, who, he knew, made no profession of religion. "I was informed," said Mr. Wesley, "that he had not been at public worship of any kind for upwards of thirty years. Seeing him stand as motionless as a statue, I asked him abruptly 'Sir, are you a sinner?' He replied with a deep and broken voice, 'Sinner enough,' and continued looking upward till his wife and a servant or two, who were all in

tears, put him into his chaise and carried him home. (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *The convictive work of the Holy Ghost*:—I. TO CONVINCE THE WORLD OF SIN IS MUCH MORE THAN TO CONVINCE THE WORLD OF CRIME. There may be sin where there is no crime, but wherever there is crime there is sin to account for it. Society is organized to defend itself against crime, yet every member of it is guilty of sin. Thus—1. Society condemns murder; so in His reasoning with us the Holy Ghost begins with this admission, and proceeds to say—You condemn murder, but this is merely a gross and vulgar morality, little better, indeed, than selfishness stimulated by fear; you must find out how murder begins—it begins in unholy anger; that anger may never have spoken one word or shown one sign, yet by so much as you have given way to it in the secrecy of your inmost heart you are guilty of murder in the sight of God! It required a Ghost to teach us that. We could only get so far as to make some difference between murder and manslaughter, or between murder with extenuating circumstances and murder without them. There society paused, being unable to go further; and precisely there the Spirit began His work. 2. Society has made murder penal, but it has not been able to set falsehood amongst punishable crimes, although it is treated more spiritually than murder. We own, for example, that a man may act a lie as well as tell one: that he may use words with two meanings: that he may guard himself and mislead others by mental reservations. What more can the Holy Ghost Himself do? The Holy Ghost says that a form of words may be true, and yet it may express a lie! A conversation may be reported *verbatim*, yet, by a mere change of tone, by the omission of a facial expression, by a skilful variation of pause or emphasis, the report may be a falsehood from beginning to end. Farther and deeper still, a man may be false to himself. He may actually have treated himself so dishonestly as to have suspended or destroyed the very power by which he knows right from wrong. His conscience is "seared as with a hot iron," and he "given over to believe a lie." Under such circumstances the man is something more than a liar, he himself is actually a lie! Who then but the Spirit of God can convince of sin here? 3. But the process becomes still more spiritual. Murder and falsehood are at all events nominally condemned; but what of virtues which are praised as the very security and crown of human society? Take an act of almsgiving, and let it be outwardly the choicest specimen of its class: the gift is large, timely, cordial, and deservedly bestowed. Beyond this point society does not carry its judgment. But where man ends, the all-searching Spirit begins: He holds the candle of the Lord over the secret places of the heart: He tries the motives by the fires of the supreme judgment; and having done so, He says in effect to the applauded man—"Your love went not with your gift; it was an oblation to your own vanity; it was a bribe by which you bought reputation; it was not given to the poor, it was given to yourself." This conviction may be made so clear to a man, as to cause him pain amidst the general applause. 4. We are now upon the line every point of which adds to our knowledge of spiritual realities as distinguished from formal facts. May our religion be the chief of our immoralities? You prayed in the house of your friend, and made your prayer the medium of personal compliment to his supposed excellencies and deserts; not daring to hint at his sins; would you have so prayed for him if he had not been listening to you? Would you have prayed at all if you could decorously have escaped the duty? Not only does the Holy Ghost ask these questions, He compels you to answer them to your shame. 5. More: even if we are unassailable at any of the great points now indicated, yet there is another kingdom. Every man has two lives—the life of motive, and the life of behaviour, into the first of which none can enter but the Spirit of spirits. "He knoweth our thought afar off;" before it is a complete thought. Through your heart there shot a desire which scorched you, though no human eye will ever see the blister which it left, and the very memory of that desire will make you dumb whilst others sing. Into your mind there came what was only the hint of a thought, yet it struck you like a thunderbolt, so evil did it seem to be even in its incompleteness! These are the visitations which show a man that there is something worse than crime, and make him impatient with the deceitful comforters who would "heal his hurt slightly." II. "The Spirit of truth will convince the world of sin, BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE NOT ON ME." The Holy Ghost will so vividly and thoroughly show the nature of sin, that those who thought themselves the best examples of human society will be afflicted with the keenest compunction because of what they know themselves to be in the presence of God. It will no longer be a question of comparison as between one class of man and another; the judgment will lie wholly between man and God. This personal

consciousness is to be so vivid and intense as to become painful; a man will see himself as he never saw himself before, and feel the burden of life with a new and intolerable oppression. Can he in that moment of despair turn to others for help? No; because they are in the agonies of the same experience. What then? When the conviction is so keen and relentless, the heart will begin to know that in turning away from Christ, it turned from the Son of God, the only mediator of the covenant of peace. This is the conviction of sin which the Spirit of God is to work in hearts which have not believed in the Saviour of the world. Christ cannot be understood until sin is understood. So long as sin is regarded from a merely social point of view, the Cross of Christ must appear to be an exaggeration. Why do with blood a work which could be done as well with water? Why sacrifice a man when the blood of a beast would answer every purpose? But the moment that sin is seen under the illumination of infinite holiness, the Cross of Christ alone is equal to the tragic awe and appalling horror of the situation. The first clear view which any man gets of the sinfulness of sin marks the crisis of his life. From that time he elects his destiny. III. In the light of this exposition we may see the way clear to some PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS. 1. All attempts to establish a satisfactory life on the basis of what is commonly known as morality, must be given up. Morality has become one of the fine arts. It is a fine balancing of calculations, a tacit understanding with evil powers, at best but an armed neutrality. But what if morality be only an art—the most cunning and profitable of tricks? What if the partitions which we call our "rights" be saved from destruction merely because it pays better to repress the fire of passion than to give it free course? The Holy Ghost teaches us that we cannot be right with one another until we are right with God. He says: "You must be born again—you must die unto yourself, that you may live unto God." This is clearly a magnificent basis of life, supplying as it does eternal guarantees of purity and nobleness. 2. All hopes founded upon what are thought to be different degrees of sin must be abandoned. There are, of course, different degrees of crime, but the question does not turn upon crime at all. For all the purposes of criminal law it may be sufficient to classify men according to the mere accidents of their mischievous behaviour, so that punishment may be assigned with some degree of proportion to the shock which public feeling has sustained; but another standard must be set up when the offence is between man and God. "Would you send a murderer and a speculative sceptic to the same hell?" it may be asked. But stop! The question is one of the heart, not of the hand. According to the teaching of the Holy Ghost it may be that the heart through which has passed an unholy desire may be in a worse condition than the heart whose momentary passion has vented itself in murderous vengeance. The thing to be understood is that sin is spiritual, and that it is to be judged spiritually, without reference to the vulgarity or noise which may make it socially noticeable. 3. Under such realization of sin the work of Christ is seen in its true light. Here it is emphatically true that "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." But let the boastful man awake to the fact that in his own body there is a slowly developing disease, painless in its early stages, but surely advancing upon his very life; let him come to the conviction that at any moment his pulse may cease, and instantly his attitude towards the medical profession may be totally changed. A new conviction has given him a new feeling and compelled him towards a new policy. Jesus Christ makes use of this very experience to throw light upon His own ministry: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Everything, therefore, is made to depend upon conviction. Where there is no conviction there will be no pressure of necessity. Where there is no thirst, who cares for the fountain? but in the desert, under an intolerable sun, who can calculate the value of a cup of cold water? Christ awaits the demands of spiritual necessity. He knows that the Holy Ghost will so torment the heart with a sense of sin as to compel the sufferer to pray for mercy, and at that point of anguish he will show himself to the Saviour of the world. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

The work of the Holy Spirit in the conviction of sin:—1. WHAT IS CONVICTION OF SIN? The word means—1. To reprove, censure, or upbraid. 2. To convict, prove to be guilty. 3. To render manifest. Here it is used in the last two senses. (1) The people of the world are to be convicted at the bar of their own conscience of being sinners. This act is to be manifest to their own consciousness; and as sin includes two elements—guilt and pollution—the one expressing the relation of sin to justice, and the other its relation to holiness, conviction of sin includes—(*a*) The conviction of just exposure to the wrath of God on account of our own character and conduct.

And this includes the conviction that we deserve punishment and that we certainly shall be punished unless in some way our guilt is removed. (*b*) The conviction of moral defilement, *i.e.*, that we are in fact and in our own eyes offensive, degraded, and the proper objects of loathing. (2) The effects of conviction flow from these two sources, and are—(*a*) Dread of the wrath of God. (*b*) Self-condemnation. (*c*) Remorse, including the sense of ill-desert, sorrow for the offence, and craving after satisfaction. It is stilled by punishment or adequate atonement. II. THE SIN OF WHICH MEN ARE TO BE THUS CONVINCED IS THAT OF NOT BELIEVING ON CHRIST. 1. What is it to believe on Christ? This includes—(1) The belief that He is what He claimed to be—the Son of God, or God manifest in the flesh; the Messiah; the Prophet, Priest and King, and therefore the Redeemer of men. This involves the recognition of the truth of all His doctrines. This faith to be genuine must not rest merely on external evidence, but on the revelation of the Holy Spirit. (2) Reliance on Christ, on His propitiation, His saving, sanctifying and protecting power. (3) Adoring love for His person, zeal for His glory, devotion to His service, submission to His will. It includes this not exactly in its nature as faith, but as its necessary effects: just as we cannot separate apprehension of beauty from delight in it. 2. The worst of all sins is unbelief. And men are convinced of sin when convinced that want of faith in Christ deserves God's wrath and degrades and pollutes the soul. III. WHY IS THIS UNBELIEF SO GREAT A SIN? That it is the greatest of sins is directly asserted in John iii. 18. It is so because—1. It is the manifestation of the greatest depravity. The disbelief of speculative truth is not sinful, except where some moral obligation is violated in rejecting the evidence by which it is supported. But the rejection of moral truth is in its nature sinful, because it implies moral blindness and perversion of moral feeling. This latter unbelief differs in the degree of its sinfulness according to the importance of the truth and the kind of evidence with which it is attended. That the heathen are sinful and without excuse because they do not believe God, as revealed in nature, is asserted by St. Paul. But this sin is slight compared with those who rejected God as revealed in the Old Testament, and their guilt is small compared to that of those who reject Christ. He is God in the clearest and most attractive revelation ever made of the Divine Being. The rejection of Him implies the greatest blindness and depravity. 2. It involves the greatest conceivable ingratitude. It is not only the rejection of God, but the rejection of God humbling Himself to the death of the Cross out of love for us and for our salvation. 3. It involves a preference and deliberate choice of evil instead of good, and the kingdom of darkness instead of the kingdom of God. "He who does not bow to Christ has bowed to Me." 4. It is the rejection of eternal life for ourselves, and doing what we can to render certain the perdition of others. IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT ALONE CAN CONVINCE MEN OF THIS SIN. 1. It is certain that human reason or our own nature will not do it. 2. That flesh and blood cannot do it. 3. The Holy Spirit alone can do it, because He alone can open our eyes to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 4. It is His office to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us. V. INFERENCES. 1. It is our first and greatest duty to repent of sin and to believe on Christ. 2. Our next great duty is to labour to convince the world of this sin, and to lead them to faith in Christ. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The work of the Spirit in the conviction of sin*:—I. THE SPIRIT'S DEFINITION OF SIN. Notice that unbelief in Christ is—1. The radical and essential sin. Christ did not begin to be when He became man, nor did His relation with men begin with the Incarnation. He was in the beginning with God, and was God, and was the light that enlightened every man that came into the world. And so now, every good tendency comes from God through Him. Whoever therefore opposes such tendency resists the influence of Christ, and sin is the result of that resistance. 2. The ultimate form of sin. We need go no further than this to convict a man of being a sinner. Why is it that men are saved or lost? Not by keeping the law of Moses, for "by the deeds of the law shall no man be justified," &c.; "we are not under law, but grace." The terms of salvation or damnation are now belief or unbelief. As there is now no other saving righteousness but that of faith in Christ, so there is no other fatal sin but that of unbelief. "This is the condemnation," &c. 3. The all-inclusive sin. It may be said truly that there are other sins—theft, murder, &c. But note that the law is summed up in two precepts—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." &c. Now when that love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost we love God and our brother also, and so keep the commandments. When we have not that love we break the whole law; but it cannot come save by faith in Him who is the

revelation of Divine love. II. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE CONVICTION OF THIS SIN IS WROUGHT BY THE HOLY GHOST. 1. It is one thing to convince of a sin and to convince of sin. A man may acknowledge the existence of and remove a fruit or a branch while ignorant of the root. 2. The conviction too in the two cases is distinct. In the one case the impression may be very superficial; in the other it is a deep and awful sense of wretchedness and want. 3. This form of conviction is not easily effected. It comes not from the words or wisdom of men. Though the speaking of the truth by a human messenger may be the occasion, yet the Holy Ghost must be the agent. 4. In this conviction the Spirit—(1) Gives evidence of sin to the conscience—tells man of his fault. (2) Remonstrates and rebukes; and the effect of this is to convince of error, and to convict of criminality in following that error. 5. It is as the Comforter that the Spirit convinces. He is at once the comforting Convincer and the convincing Comforter. What true comfort can there be for a man, who knows he is a sinner, till the whole matter of his sin has been probed; and what greater comfort is there in any hour of weakness and infirmity than that of knowing that the whole matter has been sifted to the bottom? And then the operation of the Spirit mingles a revelation of the remedy with the revelation of the sin. The Spirit convinces us of the righteousness of that Christ in whom we should believe. (*W. Roberts.*) *The necessity of the Spirit's conviction because of the incompetency of the law*:—The law could not convince the world of sin as sin, a thing to be abhorred on account of its own hatefulness, but merely as a thing to be dreaded on account of the punishments attached to it. So that there was need of another witness who should search the heart and turn it inside out, and bring forward all the abominations contained in it; a witness, too, who should appeal not to its selfish fears, but to every germ of good left in it, to its love, its gratitude, its pity, its hope, its more generous desires and aspirations—a Witness that should pick up every little fragment of God's image still remaining in it, and should piece them all together, and make a new whole of them. Such was the Witness that God in His mercy sent to convince the world of sin. (*Archdeacon Hare.*) *The necessity of the Spirit's conviction because of the incompetency of conscience*:—We have the voice of conscience sighing through every fresh crack that we make in God's image in our hearts, and conspiring, with reason and imagination and every other faculty, to admonish us that we are betraying our duty, outraging our better feelings, marring our true, aboriginal nature, polluting our souls, and withering and rotting our hearts. But is this enough to convince a man of sin? Alas! conscience is so wasted by year-long neglect, and crushed by reiterated violation, that it scarcely ever utters its warnings and reproofs, except against overt acts of sin. It seldom takes notice of our habitual sins: still less does it rouse us to contend against that sinfulness which is inwrought in the natural heart. No! when conscience is uttering her most righteous words, she often is only casting pearls before swine. The passions of the carnal mind are fretted and irritated by the sight of what is so unlike themselves, and trample them impatiently in the mire. (*Ibid.*) *Unbelief, the greatest sin*:—1. The Spirit convinceth of all sins, but chiefly of a state of sin—of unbelief; (1) As the fountain of all sin. It was the first sin of Adam. It was the cause also of all the sin that grew up to such maturity in the old world. The faith of Abel is applauded (Heb. xi. 4); consequently the unbelief of Cain is marked. If Abel's sacrifice was more excellent in regard of his faith, Cain's was more vile in regard of his unbelief. (2) As the ligament and band of all sin (chap. viii. 24). 2. Unbelief is the greatest sin, because—(1) God employs the highest means to bring men to a sense of it. The odiousness of sin to God appears by His sending Christ to expiate it; the odiousness of unbelief by His sending the Spirit to reprove it. (2) It is a sin against the gospel, which is so holy a declaration of God's will that there cannot be an holier; so good in itself, that nothing can be better; the sin therefore against it is so bad, that nothing can be worse. (3) It is a sin against the highest testimony (chap. viii. 17, 18). (4) As faith is the choicest grace, so that which is opposite to it must be the greatest sin. Note—I. WHAT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY UNBELIEF. 1. Negatively. (1) Not a want of assurance. Drooping spirits may be believers. There is a manifest distinction made between faith in Christ and the comfort of that faith; between believing to eternal life, and knowing we have eternal life (1 John v. 13; Isa. l. 10). (2) Not every interruption of the act of faith. Faith may lie asleep in the habit, when it doth not walk about in the act. Fogs and mists darken the sun, but put not out that eye of the world. (3) Not doubts. Such there are in the beginnings of faith, when the state of the soul is like that of the twilight, a mixture of light

and darkness (Psa. cxxvi. 6, 7). This is rather infirmity than unbelief (Psa. lxxvii. 10; Matt. xiv. 31; Psa. lvi. 3). (4) Not temptations to unbelief and unbelieving thoughts injected. If these be not entertained, formally they are not acts of our unbelief (Matt. iv. 8; Psa. lxxiii. 21). (5) Not unbelief of some truths through ignorance, provided they be not fundamental (Mark xvi. 11-14). Errors in the head do no more destroy the truth of faith than miscarriages in the life through infirmity nullify the being of grace, or every spot upon the face impair the beauty and features of it. (6) Not a negative unbelief which is in the heathens, who never had the means of faith. 2. Positively it is—(1) A denial of the truth of the gospel; when men assent not to the doctrine of the gospel by an act of the understanding. (2) A doubting of the truth of the doctrine of the gospel as many do who will not openly deny it. Since all men are in the rank of believers or unbelievers, a suspension of our belief of the doctrine of the gospel cannot be ranked under the banner of faith; it is at best, for the present, a more modest refusal, rather than a downright rejection. (3) Refusal to accept heartily of Christ upon the terms of the gospel, which is opposite to justifying faith, when there is not a fiducial motion to Christ as the centre. II. WHEREIN THE SINFULNESS OF UNBELIEF DOTH CONSIST. 1. It is against God. (1) It is the greatest reproach and undervaluing of God (Isa. vii. 11-13). As faith "gives glory to God" (Rom. iv. 20), so unbelief casts reproach and scorn upon Him. (2) It robs God of the honour of all His attributes. (*a*) It blemishes the truth and veracity of God. He that believes "sets to his seal that God is true" (chap. iii. 33). It makes God guilty of perjury (Heb. vi. 17, 18; Ezek. xxxiii. 11). (*b*) It casts a black aspersion upon the wisdom of God. Unbelief charges God with folly in regard of the unnecessariness of it. If men think they have ability to save themselves, what a needless work was this in God, to make His Son a sacrifice for man's salvation! Or, if men do account the coming of Christ necessary, and so free God from the charge of folly, they at least charge His wisdom with a mistake in the means of salvation, as if it were undertaken without precedent consideration. And further, by this sin the unbeliever doth, as much as in him lies, frustrate the design of God's glorious wisdom, in not consenting to that which the wisdom of God hath contrived. (*c*) It slights the goodness of God. No greater act of love could spring from boundless eternity, than the parting with His only delight in heaven out of His bosom for the redemption of man (Isa. v. 4). (*d*) It disparages the power and sufficiency of God. First, In not coming to Him. Secondly, In trusting to something else. What then we trust unto, besides God and above God, we render in our thoughts more powerful than God. (*e*) It strikes at the sovereignty and authority of God. It is a debt we owe, as subjects, to God as our sovereign, to give credit to what He doth reveal, and to obey what He doth command (1 John iii. 23). It is a contradiction to the resolute and fixed will of God. All unbelief is a dislike of God's terms (Rom. x. 3). And it renders God, as much as in it lies, unworthy of any sovereignty. (*f*) It affronts the holiness and righteousness of God. If the setting forth Christ to be a propitiation for sin was to declare His righteousness (Rom. iii. 25), what doth unbelief signify but that this act was unrighteous in God? (*g*) It is a stripping God, as much as lies in man, of all His delight. The service Christ did, which was delightful to God, is contemptible to an unbeliever. First, It is a refusal of Christ, the "man that is God's fellow," His "daily delight." Secondly, It is a privation of faith, a grace so pleasing to God (Heb. x. 38). Thirdly, It is a refusal of His mercy in Christ (Micah vii. 18). 2. It is a sin peculiarly against Christ. It is a piercing Him again (Zech. xii. 10). (1) It is a nullifying the work of His meditation and death. (*a*) It renders the design of His coming a vanity, when it receives not the fruits of it (2 Cor. vi. 1). (*b*) It is a vilifying the price of redemption (Heb. ix. 28). (2) It is a denying of the love of Christ. (3) It denies the wisdom of Christ. It chargeth Him with folly and inconsiderateness, in undertaking a task that was not worth His pains. (4) It wrongs the authority of Christ. It receives an aggravation from the greatness of the person that published the doctrine of faith (chap. v. 43). (5) It denies the excellency of Christ (Philip. iii. 8). (6) It denies the sufficiency of Christ: the greatness of His priesthood, the fulness of His satisfaction, His prevailing intercession. Where no trust is reposed in Him, it implies that no benefit can be expected from Him. (7) It denies Christ His right and reward (Isa. liii. 11). (8) It puts Christ to the greatest grief. His soul was never more deeply impressed with grief before the hour of His passion than when He saw men would not come to Him that they might have life. 3. It is also a wrong to the Spirit of God (Acts. iii. 51; Heb. iii. 10, 17). (*S. Charnock*,

B.D.) *The sin of unbelief*:—There are three general forms of unbelief. I. SCEPTICISM. 1. This consists in either doubting or rejecting the truths of religion and morals in general, or the Divine origin and authority of the Bible in particular. 2. This arises from—(1) Pride of intellect; assuming to know what is beyond our reach and refusing to believe what we cannot understand; setting ourselves up as capable of discerning and proving all truth. (2) The neglect of our moral nature, and giving ourselves up to the guidance of the speculative reason. (3) The enmity of the heart to the things of God; or opposition in our tastes, feelings, desires and purposes, to the truths and requirements of religion. (4) Frivolous vanity, or the desire to be thought independent or upon a par with the infinite. 3. The sinfulness of this form of unbelief is manifest—(1) As pride. Self-exaltation is sinful and offensive in such a feeble, insignificant creature as man. (2) As the habitude of the moral nature which makes it possible to believe a lie is the evidence of moral degradation. (3) As opposition to the truth is opposition to the God of truth. It is alienation from Him, in which all sin consists. Hence unbelief is the generic form of sin. It is the general expression of alienation, the opposition of our nature to His. It is, therefore, the source of all other sins. II. UNBELIEF, or want of confidence in the doctrines, promises, and providence of God. This may exist even in the hearts of believers. It is a matter of degree. 1. It arises either from—(1) The entire absence, or low state, of the religious life. (2) Or the habit of looking at ourselves and on difficulties about us rather than at God. (3) Or refusing to believe what we do not see. If God does not manifest His care and fulfil His promise, then our faith fails. 2. The sinfulness of this state is apparent, because—(1) It is the evidence and effect of spiritual weakness and disease. (2) It dishonours God, refusing to Him the confidence due to an earthly friend and parent; which is a very heinous offence, considering His greatness and goodness, and the evidences He has given of His fidelity and trustworthiness. (3) It is the manifestation of the same Spirit which dominates in the open infidel. III. UNBELIEF IN REFERENCE TO CHRIST. 1. This is a refusing to recognize and receive Him as being what He professes to be. (1) God manifest in the flesh. (2) The Teacher sent from God. (3) Our atoning Sacrifice and Priest. (4) As having rightfully absolute proprietorship in us and authority over us. 2. This is the greatest of sins. It is the condemning sin. Its heinousness consists—(1) In its opposition to the clearest light. He who cannot see the sun must be stone blind. He who cannot see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ must be blinded by Satan. This blindness is moral, religious, and spiritual deadness. (2) It is the rejection of the clearest external evidence, which evinces opposition of the heart. (3) It is the rejection of infinite love, and the disregard of the greatest obligation. (4) It is the deliberate preference of the kingdom of Satan before that of Christ, of Belial to Christ. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The Convincer of sin*:—I. CONSIDER THE MEANING OF THE WORDS OF THE TEXT. "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin." What does this mean? 1. The word reprove is the first that requires explanation. The word so translated has various shades of meaning. It is clear, from the context, that it does not mean merely to accuse or convict, although it has this signification. It must also mean here to teach and demonstrate the matter of the accusation, or the subject under deliberation. We say this is clear from the context, because, although we may speak of convicting a person of sin, we could hardly speak of convicting him of righteousness. Hence we may say, with reference to the part of His work now before us, the Holy Ghost has come to convince of sin, or to convict of sin, according to the result produced in the mind of him to whom the demonstration is afforded. 2. Then, who or what is it, that is to be convinced of sin? It is the world, that is to say, the great power which ever has been and ever is arrayed against Christ and His Church. You will see the comfort which the assurance of our text must have conveyed to the disciples of Christ at the time it was first spoken. They had been prepared for the antagonism of the world, and they might fear for their own weakness in the struggle with the great adversary. One who is all-powerful is on their side. 3. He is to convince the world of sin. This is the first part of His work, for it is a part which is clearly fundamental in a world like ours and among men like ourselves. Other convictions, indeed, must go side by side with this, in order that it may be complete; but this must come first. Sin existed, and yet its existence was denied. Sin was carrying men away like a flood, and it could not be stemmed until its reality and its nature were clearly perceived. II. THE NECESSITY FOR THE CONVICTION OF SIN BY THE HOLY GHOST. We have seen that this conviction must

come first; but what need was there for the Holy Ghost to produce it? 1. Conscience could not do it. We all know by experience as well as observation that the truthfulness of the voice of conscience is affected by the life which we live. Conscience needs education before it can be a guide to us. Even after it has been instructed, it may be darkened and silenced. 2. The law of God will not do it. The law has an important part in the work of conviction; but is not sufficient to effect it by itself. The law, in accordance with its essential character, forbade only the act, and not the thought and the motive. 3. Even the teaching of Christ Himself was insufficient to produce this conviction. It was a mighty advance on anything that had preceded it. Let me not be mistaken. I do not mean that any new Teacher could be sent from God who would undo all that had gone before Him. The light which came from heaven was a true light, even if it was not wholly adequate to man's requirements. And when Jesus Christ promised to send His Church another Comforter, an inward Teacher, it was not one who should be independent of the instruction which God had given to men before He came. On the contrary, He was to use all that had been revealed in the law and the prophets, all that had been taught by Jesus Himself. III. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE CONVICTION OF SIN IS PRODUCED BY THE HOLY GHOST. "He shall reprove the world of sin—because they believe not on Me." This was going to the very root of the matter. and striking at the principle from which all sin proceeded. The Holy Spirit had not so much for His work to produce conviction with respect to any special sinful act. That is undoubtedly a part of His work, and a very important part, inasmuch as there can be no reality in a conviction of sin in general which does not include the sense of special and particular sins. That, however, was not the work which He was peculiarly appointed to accomplish. It is clear that a conviction of this kind could be produced only by One who could go deeper into man's nature than any previous agent had been able to penetrate. When we examine the testimony of conscience and of the law of God, we shall see how inadequate they were to this task. Conscience, apart from Divine revelation, says nothing at all about faith. The same must be said of the law. We do not forget that it was to the law that St. Paul attributed his own knowledge of sin; and it cannot be too often repeated that the natural conscience or even the influence of the Holy Spirit of God could have affected but little in the moral education of mankind, without that rule of duty which was revealed by Almighty God to the Jewish Lawgiver. Yet St. Paul himself, who so powerfully sets forth the virtue of the law as a revealer of sin, in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, acknowledges in the Epistle to the Galatians that "the law is not of faith; but, the man that doeth them shall live in them" (Gal. iii. 12). Yet, although neither the natural conscience of mankind nor the revealed law of God set forth the principle of faith as the very element of all virtue and goodness, it will be clear to any one who places the history of the human family in the light of that revelation which we now possess, that unbelief has been the root and fountain of man's sin from the very beginning. The law to which Adam was subject in Paradise was in reality a demand which was made upon his faith. Certain privileges were granted to him: one thing only was denied to him. He was required in that one case to exercise his faith in the goodness and wisdom of his Maker. It was through unbelief that he fell. Unbelief was the radical sin of mankind at all times. Every page of the history of the Jews tells us that this was the origin of all their apostacies and idolatries. Either they doubted the promises of the most High, or they "limited the Holy One of Israel." But this sin of unbelief, which was everywhere and always the root of evil in man, found its climax in the rejection of Jesus Christ. It is indeed clear that the enormity of sin must always be judged by the opportunities possessed of becoming acquainted with our duty. Hence it is, that every fresh disclosure of truth to men has been a disclosure of sin in man. The Jews of the time of our Lord were guilty of many sins, as He Himself plainly showed them; but compared with the sin of rejecting Him, their other sins were but slight. In the rejection of Jesus all the enmity against God which their hearts had harboured was concentrated in a single act. It was a sin against the clearest moral and spiritual light, which had ever shone upon human darkness. "God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ," said the Apostle. It was unbelief that crucified the Lord of Glory. Jesus put forth claims which if they were not true were blasphemous. To reject His claims was to pronounce Him worthy of death. But we must not forget that the conviction of sin is produced in the very same manner among ourselves now. Unbelief is the principle of sin, and we are never thoroughly convinced of sin until we

have been made to know the guilt of our want of faith in Jesus Christ. Throughout the whole life of those who are now unfaithful and unworthy members of the Christian Church, their defects are traceable to this radical one. The growth of unbelief is the growth of sin; and the climax of evil in the heart and life of man or woman is the deliberate rejection of Jesus Christ as the Son of God crucified for the sins of the world. "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son" (1 John v. 10); and the beginning of a new life of holiness must be laid in the conviction of the guilt of such unbelief. And this conviction, the same substantially in us which was wrought in the hearers of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost, is produced by the same great Agent. IV. There is a question still remaining to be answered, which is suggested by the words of our text: IN WHAT SENSE CAN IT BE SAID THAT THE HOLY GHOST CONVINCES THE WORLD? It is true the Holy Ghost is said to convince the world of sin, and not only those who are saved. And this will actually take place. Sooner or later, all men will be convinced or convicted; will be convinced of sin, that they may flee from it and be delivered from it; or convicted of sin, that they may be punished for it. The object of the work of the Holy Spirit is the deliverance of man from sin and destruction, by showing him the evil of sin, and thus compelling him to flee from the wrath to come, a work worthy of One who is called the Comforter. But if that aim is disappointed, He will at least produce conviction; and the great result of His work, whether in saving or condemning, will be moral decision. (*W. R. Clark, M.A.*) *Faith in Christ*:—I believe on a physician when I put my case into that physician's hands, and trust him to cure me. I believe on a lawyer when I leave my case in his hands, and trust him to plead for me. I believe on a banker when I put money into his hand, and allow him to keep it on my behalf. I believe on my Saviour when I take Him to be my Saviour, when I put my helpless case into His hands, and trust Him to do what I cannot do for myself—save me from my sin. Have you done so? You believe there is such a Person as Jesus, and that He is the sinner's Saviour. You do well; but that is only a partial and incomplete faith. To believe that a certain doctor exists and has a large practice is not personally to believe in that doctor. True faith contains a moral as well as an intellectual element, and when the former is wanting the latter can avail but little. Do you repose your moral confidence in Him, as being to you the Saviour that you need, as one whose character and office are congruous to the wants of your nature? You are a sinner, He represents Himself as Saviour. You are a lost one, He has died to find you? You are dead, He presents Himself as the Resurrection and the Life. The point is, Do you take Him by faith to be what He reveals Himself to be? That is believing on Him. If you can say in your heart, "Yes, I believe in Him," then the Holy Spirit of God can no longer convict you of sin. All your sins were laid on the Lamb of God, who bore the sin of the world. There is no longer a case against you; the summons is dismissed. There is no condemnation; you are pronounced acquitted, and accepted in the Beloved. (*W. H. H. Aitken, M.A.*)

Ver. 10. **Of righteousness, because I go to My Father.**—*The world's false theories of righteousness*:—The world is examined, convicted, convinced, as to its false theories of righteousness. In Christ was the one absolute type of righteousness; from Him a sinful man must obtain righteousness. Just as sin is revealed by the Spirit to be something far different from the breaking of certain specific injunctions, so righteousness is revealed to be something far different from the outward fulfilment of ceremonial or moral observances (*cf.* Matt. v. 20; vii. 33; Rom. iii. 21, &c.; x. 3). (*Bp. Westcott.*) *The conviction of righteousness*:—It is a fit time for the Holy Ghost to convince God's people of righteousness when they are convinced of sin before. Then they can relish Christ. I. THE HOLY GHOST CONVINCES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THIS ORDER. 1. There must be a righteousness; for we have to deal with a God who is righteousness itself; and no unclean thing shall come into heaven (Rev. xxi. 7). 2. There is no such righteousness in any creature. Perhaps we may have a righteousness to satisfy the world, because we live civilly. But that will not satisfy conscience. And then there must be a satisfaction to the law, which condemns our thoughts, desires; but God is the most perfect of all. 3. This righteousness is to be had in Christ. The righteousness of Christ is that righteousness that is founded upon His obedience: active, fulfilling the law; and passive, discharging all our debts, satisfying God's justice. The meritoriousness of both of them is founded upon

the personal union of God and man; in reference to which union we may without blasphemy aver that God performed the law, God died for us. 4. This righteousness is our righteousness. The Spirit convinces that this belongs to all believers, and it is better than Adam had. His righteousness was the righteousness of a man, this righteousness is the righteousness of a mediator; and it is such a righteousness, that when we are clothed with it, we may go to the justice of God. II. HOW DOTH THE HOLY GHOST "CONVINCE" THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST? He presents to the soul the knowledge of this excellent righteousness, and then creates a hand of faith to embrace it. The Spirit doth not tell in general only that Christ is an excellent Saviour, but relates to a Christian soul, God gave Christ for thee. This sways the heart to rest upon Christ. And then as it is in marriage, the persons, by virtue of that relation, have interest in each other's substance and estate; so when this mystical marriage is made up between Christ and us, we have a right unto Christ by all rights, by titles of purchase and redemption. All that Christ hath is ours; our sins His, and His righteousness ours. III. WHY IS THE SENDING OF THE SPIRIT NECESSARY FOR THIS? Because—1. It is above the conception of man that there should be such a righteousness of God-man. A devil incarnate may know all things, and yet want to see. Only the Holy Ghost gives inward sight, and works faith to see Christ as mine. 2. He alone must make the conscience quiet, who is greater than the conscience. Conscience will clamour, "Thou art a sinner;" the Holy Ghost convinces, "In Christ thou art righteous." 3. Flesh and blood are full of pride, and would fain have some righteousness of their own. The Jews were of this temper; and it hath been the greatest question from the beginning of the world till this day, what is that righteousness whereby we must stand before God? IV. HOW SHALL WE KNOW WHETHER WE BE CONVINCED OF THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS OR NO? 1. By the method Christ uses in convincing. First, He convinces of sin, and then of righteousness. For a man to catch at righteousness before he be convinced of sin is but an usurpation. 2. By our hatred of sin, and the alteration of our bent, and by so making Christ sweet to us. 3. By the witness of the Spirit. The work of the Spirit hath a light of its own; as I know I believe, when I believe. Upon this apprehension that Chist is mine, the soul is constrained to love; whereupon ensues an enlargement of heart, and a prevalency of comfort above all discomfort, for love casteth out fear. 4. By inward peace and great joy suitable to the righteousness. As the righteousness is an excellent righteousness of God-man, so, that peace and joy that comes from it is unspeakable peace and joy (Rom. v. 1-3). 5. It answers all objections. The doubting heart will object this and that, but the Spirit of God shows an all-sufficiency in Christ's obedience; and that sets the soul down quietly in all crosses, and calms it in all storms in some degree (Rom. viii. 33). V. THE REASON WHY THE COMFORTER CONVINCES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. "Because I go to the Father." Wherefore did He go to the Father? 1. To make application of what He had wrought. If Christ should not have gone to the Father, He could not have sent the Holy Ghost to us. 2. To clothe us with a sweet relation, to make the Father our Father (chap. xx. 17). (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *The Convincer of righteousness:*—It has been made a question by men, whether the words "right" and "wrong" have any real meaning. Is there such a thing as right? If there is no right, there is no wrong; the one implies the other. Are they both delusions? Two opposite answers are given to these questions, the answer of the world and that of God. The world knows of expediency and inexpediency, of advantage and disadvantage, as connected with certain actions and courses of conduct; but of nothing beyond, of nothing deeper and more binding than the rules of expediency. God, on the contrary, tells us of good and evil, of right and wrong, apart from the dictates of prudence and expediency. One great object of all God's dealings with men has been to convince them of the difference between right and wrong. The first part of the work of the Holy Ghost described in these verses is, as we have seen, the conviction of sin. But how can such a conviction be brought about? It is impossible, unless the conviction of righteousness is also produced. Sin is a negation; it is a departure from truth and righteousness; and therefore there can be no real conviction of sin, unless there is a conviction of that which sin denies and contradicts. I. OF WHAT THE HOLY GHOST IS HERE SAID TO CONVINCE THE WORLD. "Of righteousness." The expression is obviously incomplete. What must be supplied, in order to complete it? Shall we say, "of my righteousness," or "of their righteousness"? Of both? 1. Of the personal righteousness of Christ. This must clearly be the first conviction produced by the operation of the Holy Spirit; because it lies at the foundation of the whole work of

redemption. No more awful proof could be given of the blindness and depravity of mankind than the possibility of the righteousness of Christ being doubted. The teaching of our blessed Lord was opposed to the conventional morality of the times in which He lived. The popular notions of superior sanctity identified self-righteousness with righteousness, and reckoned a man good according to the outward display which he made. It was needful therefore to convince men of the righteousness of Jesus; needful, because they could bring themselves to doubt it; needful for man's own sake, because unless there is a righteousness to be discovered in the life of Christ, it is nowhere to be found. The righteousness of Christ is the proof that righteousness is not impossible to man. But it is also the foundation of the Christian religion. How shall He be the Lamb without spot, unless He is personally "holy, harmless, undefiled?" The conviction of righteousness includes next—2. The justifying righteousness of Christ. We come now, from the righteousness which is the personal character of the God-Man, to that righteousness of His which in a sense belongs to the world. And this is clearly implied in the text. The conviction of sin is wrought in the conscience of men, not that they may be driven to despair, but in order that they may be led to amendment; and it is then only that justifying righteousness will be appreciated, when the conviction of sin is produced. We have no righteousness of our own. Such is the testimony of conscience as well as of revelation. In vain it is that men go about seeking to establish their own righteousness. But that which man cannot procure for himself, God has provided for him. The Holy Ghost convinces men of sin, that He may show them how helpless and lost they are, and He convinces them of righteousness, that they may appropriate to themselves, by faith in Christ and by the grace of the Holy Ghost, the righteousness provided for them in the Redeemer. The Holy Ghost convinces men not only of the personal righteousness of Christ and of His justifying righteousness, but also of—3. The righteousness to be wrought in believers. The process of human salvation would be incomplete, unless this formed a part of it. The Holy Spirit convinces men that there is a righteousness from which they have departed, and thus He convinces them of sin; He tells them of a justifying righteousness in which they are accepted, to which they may flee and obtain the ful pardon of all their sins; and He further convinces them of the need of righteousness in themselves, and of the provision which God has made for bestowing it. We are next to consider—II. BY WHAT MEANS THE CONVICTION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS PRODUCED. "Because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more." The work of the Comforter still points to the person and work of Christ. 1. Let us remark at the outset that the descent of the Holy Ghost, in itself, was a proof that Jesus had gone to the Father. The promised Gift was bestowed, the promised Spirit was given; and now they had not only their own testimony but His to the resurrection and ascension of their Lord. "We," they could henceforth say, "are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts v. 32). 2. But what our text reminds us of is not so much, that the Holy Ghost, by His descent, proves the ascension of our Lord to heaven, but that His return to the Father is a vindication of His righteousness, both as a personal attribute, and as the justification and sanctification of His people. (1) The Holy Spirit makes use of the ascension of Christ to prove His personal righteousness. Unless the apostles believed, unless they could in some manner demonstrate the righteousness of Him whom they preached, their whole mission must prove ineffectual. And how could they do it? They might remind their hearers of the words of truth, and beauty, and power, which He had spoken. But, alas, multitudes had listened to His words, and had failed to receive conviction from them, and how much less must be the effect of those words when repeated by others! They might ask whether the mighty works which He had wrought could have been accomplished by any but a perfectly righteous man; but they could not forget that in the performance of one of the chief of them He had been called a sinner. There was one other fact to be brought forward, to be testified to by the Third Person in the Holy Trinity Himself, the fact that He had gone to the Father, and while hidden from the world was placed at the right hand of the most High. At His transfiguration the same testimony had been borne. Then His righteousness was declared by a Voice; now it is proclaimed by a stupendous act. Then it was spoken in words which died away upon the ear; now it is uttered by the voice of His glory—a glory which is abiding and eternal at the right hand of His Father. (2) But, further, the resurrection and ascension of our blessed Lord were not merely a proof of His personal righteousness, nor a mere evidence of the truth of His

mission and the Divine origin of the gospel; they were the witnesses of His justifying righteousness. Jesus Christ was not a mere Teacher, nor a mere Worker, nor a mere Sufferer; nor all of these combined. He was the Second Adam, who represented the whole fallen family of the first Adam before God; and every act of His was not the act of a mere Individual, it was the act of a Substitute, a Representative, a Saviour. We do not forget the atonement which our Lord made by His death, when we say that His resurrection, or that whole process of exaltation which comprehended His resurrection and ascension, His rising from the grave into the presence of the Father, was the justification of mankind. It was His death that paid the penalty due for man's transgression; but it was His resurrection that declared the penalty to be paid. He "was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." It was the evidence that His atoning work was complete; for death could no longer hold Him. It is the abiding proof that His offering on our behalf was accepted by God. (3) But, once more, it is by this means that the Holy Ghost convinces us of the righteousness that is to be wrought in believers. From His throne in heaven our risen and glorified Redeemer dispenses the blessings of His kingdom, the pardon of sin, acceptance with God, and access into the holiest of all; and that which is the seal of all present blessings, the earnest and pledge of those which are to come, the Holy Ghost Himself, who applies all the blessings which God bestows. Let us ask, in conclusion, what practical bearing these truths have upon ourselves. And first let us ask—1. Has the Holy Ghost convinced us of sin by showing us the righteousness of Christ? We are sinners. That is not only undeniable: as a general rule, it is not denied. But is it admitted in its full meaning? The patriarch Job felt that there was a moment in his experience in which he came to know God as he had never known Him before. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job. xlii. 5, 6). So it is with us. 2. But this is not all. Supposing that such a conviction of sin has been produced, let us ask again, has the Convincer of sin driven us to lay hold of the justifying righteousness of Christ? It is not enough to have a guilty conscience, and to know the deep and dark enormity of our past and our present. Judas was, in some sense, convinced of sin, but he went and hanged himself. 3. Instead of answering that question, let us for a moment consider another, which implies the answer to the former. Are we through Christ new creatures in heart and life? This is the grand proof of our being in a state of grace, of our having the good hope of being saved. (*W. R. Clark, M.A.*)

Ver. 11. **Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.**—*The prince of this world judged*:—Through His whole life did Christ judge the prince of this world. When He, who was born King of the Jews, was born in the stable of Bethlehem, and when the shepherds were called to be the first witnesses of His birth, then was the prince of this world judged; and this judgment was made manifest in that he who sat on the throne of Judæa was so troubled with the tidings, and tried to frustrate the purpose of God by the massacre of the children. Hereby the prince of this world laid bare the hell that boiled in his breast; and though he sent forth the fiercest of his servants he was foiled. When He who came to fulfil all righteousness submitted to be baptized by John, the greater by the less, the sinless by the sinful, God by man, then was the prince of this world judged. Then was man taught not to seek his own glory and righteousness, but the glory and righteousness of God—not to seek to be first, but to be last; and therefore were the heavens opened and the voice from heaven heard, "This is My beloved Son," &c. Again in the whole course of our Lord's temptation was the prince of this world judged; he was judged in that all his most powerful lures were scattered at once by being brought to the light of God's Word. Throughout the whole Sermon on the Mount the prince of this world is judged. His most vaunted blessings are declared to be woes, and his woes declared to be blessed. Every time that Christ forgave sins the prince of this world was judged. It was proclaimed in the sight of heaven, God Himself bearing witness that a Man was walking on the earth mightier than the prince of this world, and who could arrest his captives even out of his nethermost prison; and men were taught how they might obtain this deliverance—by faith. By every miracle that Christ wrought, the prince of this world was judged. In that He cast out devils by the Spirit of God it was proved that the kingdom of God had come on mankind, and that among the sons of men there was One who had bound the strong

man, and was spoiling his goods; and when the devils took refuge in the herd of swine, and ran down the precipice into the lake, then was it shown what is sin's only congenial abode, its only rightful doom. Moreover, by every grace in our Lord's character the prince of this world was judged—by His meekness, His patience, His forbearance, His infinite lovingkindness, His perseverance in well-doing, His spotless purity, His zeal. The judgment of the prince of this world was consummated on the cross, and then when he had thus been finally overthrown, death, the last enemy, was also subdued. In all these manifold ways do they who are convinced of judgment by the Comforter perceive that the prince of this world has been judged. And what ensues? Will they follow him into his judgment, share his condemnation, be confounded with him in his confusion? Surely this cannot be. They who have been truly convinced of judgment will no longer cleave to that which they know their Saviour has condemned. Feelings of justice, honour, compassion, may sometimes urge a man to uphold the cause of the vanquished. But here all honour and right and mercy are on the side of the victor, and the victory consists in this, that the shame of sin has been unveiled, that its hatefulness has been disclosed, and men's eyes have been opened to discern its malice and its cruelty, its falsehood and its woe. Those whose eyes have been thus opened must needs loathe and turn away from sin. As Christ condemned sin so will all His faithful servants condemn it. They will condemn it in the world, but still more in their own hearts, for until they have condemned it in themselves, in vain will they try to condemn it in the world. (*Archdeacon Hare.*) *The Convincer of judgment*:—The judgment of the world is the natural sequel to its being convinced of sin; and the statement in the text assures us that one day a distinction will be made between the good and the evil, the servants of God and the servants of the devil, and that the result of that distinction and separation will be the condemnation and destruction of the wicked. I. THE NECESSITY OF THE CONVICTION OF JUDGMENT. If men are to be so convinced of sin as to feel that the service of sin is a hopeless one, they must also be convinced of judgment. It is not enough to set forth the beauty of righteousness, and the deformity of sin. All law, whether human or divine, whether it points out a duty, or forbids a transgression, must have its sanctions. It must have something connected with it, in the shape of rewards, or of punishments, which shall make it to be respected. So it is with regard to righteousness and sin in general. Men must be convinced of more than the mere abstract wrongness of sin, of more than the mere deformity of vice, of more than the rightness, and beauty, of virtue and holiness. It is true that the beauty of holiness was illustrated in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that sin was rebuked by the purity and glory of His character; by means of the righteousness of Christ the conviction of righteousness is worked in the hearts of men. Yet in vain would the Holy Ghost set before many men at least that glorious ideal, or show that sin was a departure from it; unless He could also show that righteousness must triumph, and that sin must be put down and overthrown. II. THIS NECESSITY GOD HAS BEEN MEETING IN THE PAST HISTORY OF THE WORLD. 1. The first chapters of the sacred history contain this lesson in the probation, fall, and expulsion from paradise of our first parents. Here righteousness and sin confronted each other in their simplest forms of obedience and disobedience. Adam and Eve were put upon trial to see whether they would obey or disobey the Divine command. There was discrimination, an examination of the moral character of their conduct; there was condemnation, and there was rejection, and consequently punishment. All this is involved in the idea of judgment. It was the first lesson given by God to man, the first of a long series by which He has sought to convince His creatures of judgment. 2. We find the same repeated in the Deluge. The sins of mankind waxed grosser and more heinous, and the long-suffering of God waited and warned His rebellious creatures, until, it may be, men ceased to believe in judgment, and thought that to-morrow should be as to-day, and the wicked even as the righteous. But their dream was broken in upon and their delusion dispelled. The Flood came and took them all away. 3. We might point next to the history of Sodom and Gomorrah, but we pass on to the illustration of the subject in the history of God's dealings with the Israelites. In that remarkable history we have not only law, we have not only guidance and direction, we have judgment also. If God revealed Himself to the Israelites as their Teacher and Ruler, He also manifested Himself as the Judge of them and of the whole earth. The Judge of all the earth does right, even when the evil has been committed and the penalty merited by the seed of Abraham. It would not be judgment, it would not be a help

towards convincing men of judgment, unless it were the result of discrimination and the just consequence of the act which had been performed. The whole history of the Israelites illustrates these remarks. It abounds in what we should call especial Divine interpositions; and those interpositions are frequently acts of retribution consequent upon the disobedience of the Divine commands, or a refusal to comply with His requirements. When Israel came out of Egypt, the exodus was accomplished by means of a Divine judgment. 4. We dwell upon these illustrations of God's dealings with mankind, because we possess His own interpretation of them, and are not liable to the charge of presumption which is sometimes brought against us when we seek to trace the hand of God in secular history. But we must not therefore suppose that the same lesson is not taught, and clearly too, in the whole history of nations. The conviction of judgment, in a measure at least, is impressed upon the religious belief of the whole human race, and is reflected in all their mythologies. Its very distortion is often no mean proof of its reality. The footprints of the Avenger are never far separated from those of the evil doer. III. How THEN IS THE CONVICTION OF JUDGMENT WROUGHT BY THE COMFORTER? Let us endeavour to understand what our Lord means when He tells us that the Comforter shall convince the world of judgment, "because the prince of this world is judged." The two principles of good and evil have been contending from the beginning of the world; but since the Incarnation it may be said that the great leaders and representatives of these opposing powers have encountered each other face to face. "The Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John iii. 8). And His whole history tells us, that whenever they met in spiritual warfare, the prince of this world was judged. 1. It was so in the temptation of our Lord in the wilderness. The prince of this world was judged. In that contest from which he departed beaten, he had a pledge of the power and authority of Him who was to be his Conqueror. 2. The prince of this world was also judged in our blessed Lord's works of Divine power, and especially in His casting out devils. When the disciples of Christ returned with joy to their Master, saying: "Even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name," His answer was, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke x. 17, 18). His empire was overthrown: the prince of this world was judged. 3. The same victory was won, the same act of judgment was performed upon the cross. It is clear that our blessed Lord looked forward to the death of the cross as the consummation of His victory. "Now," He said in prospect of that hour (chap. xii. 27-31), "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 the cause He mentions distinctly directly afterwards, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of the world be cast out." Blot out the propitiation from the work of Christ, and the judgment of the god of this world is incomplete. That was the great means whereby Satan was cast down; for when the blood of atonement was sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, he had no more claims upon sinful man, and no more hold upon the conscience. 4. And the victory was completed by our Lord's resurrection and ascension. If the Cross was the victory, this was the triumph. If Satan was defeated by the Conqueror on the cross, the resurrection declared His defeat. Nay more, it declared by the entrance of the Redeemer into the holy of holies that the curse was done away, that man could now enter into the presence of the Most High. This is what is meant by the accuser of the brethren being cast down, when the Man-child was caught up into heaven (Rev. xii. 5, 9, 10). Satan falls as lightning from heaven. The prince of this world is judged. We have seen what is meant by the fact of which the Holy Ghost makes use in working the conviction of judgment, we have seen in what sense the prince of this world was judged: let us now ask what use the Comforter makes of this act in producing the conviction of judgment. Evidently the very descent of the Holy Ghost is a witness of the triumph of our Lord. He is the promise of the Father, the gift of the Son. But this not all. He produces this conviction by carrying on the work, by giving effect to the triumph of Christ. In the progress of the Church of Christ, a progress which has been the work of the Holy Ghost, in the triumph of the individual, or of the body over sin and over the opposition of the world, we have seen the conviction of judgment. But the judgment of the prince of this world, which is now being manifested in the overthrow of evil, is the pledge of a future and final judgment. I need not say that the pledge is adequate. The fact of the descent of the Holy Ghost, the mighty works which accompanied, and which since then have followed His descent, the power which He has put forth in human society, all these things are our pledge for the future. And the pledge will be redeemed. We know

not when or how; but the time will come when there will be a separation of good and evil, of light and darkness. (*W. R. Clark, M.A.*)

Vers. 12–15. **I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.**—The original implies that such teaching as that of the Cross would have been a crushing burden (*cf.* chap. xix. 17; Luke xi. 46; xiv. 27; Gal. vi. 2, 5; Acts xv. 10). The Resurrection brought the strength which enabled believers to support it. (*Bp. Westcott.*) *The wisdom of delayed revelation*:—"I remember," says Dr. Pierre, "on my return to France, after a long voyage to India, as soon as the sailors had discerned the shores of their native country, they became in a great measure incapable of attending to the duties of the ship; some looked at it wistfully, others dressed themselves in their best clothes; some talked, others wept. As we approached their joy became greater; and still more intense was it when we came into port, and saw on the quay their parents and children; so that we had to get, according to the custom of the port, another set of sailors to bring us into the harbour. Thus would it be with God's children if they saw the full and unclouded glory of eternity before they reach the eternal heaven. 'I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now'" (chap. xvi. 12). *The Guide into all truth*:—This is our Lord's last expansion of the great promise of the Comforter. First, He was spoken of simply as dwelling in Christ's servants. Then, His aid was promised, to remind the apostles of the facts of Christ's life, especially of His words; and so the inspiration and authority of the four Gospels were certified for us. Then He was further promised as the witness in the disciples to Jesus Christ. In the preceding context we have His office of convicting the world. And now we come to that gracious work which He is to do for all those who trust themselves to His guidance. We have here—I. THE AVOWED INCOMPLETENESS OF CHRIST'S OWN TEACHING (ver. 12). 1. Earlier we have our Lord asserting that all things whatsoever He had heard of the Father He had made known unto His servants. Is it possible to make these two representations agree? Yes! There is a difference between the germ and the flower; between principles and complete development. All Euclid is in the axioms and definitions, yet when you have learned them there are many things yet to be said, of which you have not grown to the apprehension. And so our Lord, as far as confidence and fundamental and seminal principles were concerned, had declared all that He had heard. But yet, in so far as the unfolding of these was concerned, the tracing of their consequences, the exhibition of their harmonies, the weaving of them into an ordered whole in which a man's understanding could lodge, there were many things which they were not able to bear. And so our Lord declares that His spoken words on earth are not the completed revelation. 2. We cannot but contrast the desultory, brief, obscure references which came from the Master's lips with the more systematized and full teaching which came from the servants, especially in reference to the atoning character of His sufferings. 3. What then? My text gives us the reason. "You cannot bear them now," not in the sense of endure, tolerate, or suffer, but in the sense of carry. And the metaphor is that of some weight—it may be gold, but still it is a weight—laid upon a man whose muscles are not strong enough to sustain it. It crushes rather than gladdens. So our Lord was lovingly reticent. There is a great principle involved here. A wise physician does not flood that diseased eye with full sunshine, but puts on bandages, and closes the shutters, and lets a stray beam, ever growing as the cure is perfected, fall upon it. (1) So from the beginning until the end of the process of revelation there was a correspondence between man's capacity to receive the light, and the light that was granted; and the faithful use of the less made them capable of receiving the greater. "To him that hath shall be given." (2) Now that same principle is true about us. How many things there are which we sometimes feel we should like to know, but compassed with these veils of flesh and weakness we have not yet eyes able to behold the ineffable glory. Let us wait with patience until we are ready for the illumination. 4. People tell us, "Your modern theology is not in the Gospels. We stick by Jesus, not Paul." What then? Why this, it is exactly what we were to expect; and people who reject the apostolic form of Christian teaching because it is not found in the Gospels are going clean contrary to Christ's own words. II. THE COMPLETENESS OF THE TRUTH INTO WHICH THE SPIRIT GUIDES (ver. 13). 1. Note the personality, designation, and office of this new Teacher. "He," not *it*, He, *is* the Spirit of Truth. "He will guide you"—suggesting a loving hand put out to lead—"into all truth." That is no promise of omniscience, but the assurance of gradual

and growing acquaintance with the truth which is revealed, such as may be fitly paralleled by men passing into some broad land of which there is much still to be possessed and explored. "He shall not speak of Himself," &c. Mark the parallel between the relation of the Spirit-teacher to Jesus and the relation of Jesus to the Father. "All things whatsoever I have heard of the Father I have declared unto you." The mark of Satan is "He speaketh of his own;" the mark of the Divine Teacher is, "He speaketh not of Himself, but whatsoever things," in all their variety, in their continuity, in their completeness, He shall hear. Where? Yonder in the depths of the Godhead—whatsoever things He shall hear—"there, He shall show to you." And especially, "He will show you the things that are to come." Step by step there would be spread out before them the vision of the future and all the wonder that should be, the world that was to come, the new constitution which Christ was to establish. 2. Now, if that be the interpretation, then—(1) This promise of a complete guidance into truth applies in a peculiar and unique fashion to the original hearers of it. One of the other promises of the Spirit was the certificate to us of the inspiration and reliableness of these four Gospels. In these words there lie involved the inspiration and authority of the apostles as teachers of religious truth. And so for us the task is to receive the truth into which they were guided. The Acts of the Apostles is the best commentary on these words. There you see how these men rose at once into a new region; how the things about their Master which had been bewildering puzzles to them flashed into light. In the book of the Apocalypse we have part of the fulfilment of "He will show you things to come;" when the seer was "in the Spirit" on the Lord's day, and so the heavens were opened, and the history of the Church was spread before him as a scroll. (2) This great principle has an application to us. That Divine Spirit is given to each of us if we will use it. Only we do not stand on the same level as these men. They, taught by that Divine Guide and by experience, were led into the deeper apprehension of the words and the deeds of Jesus. We, taught by that same Spirit, are led into a deeper apprehension of the words which they spake. And so we come sharp up to this. "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual," &c. That is how an apostle put his relation to the other possessors of the Divine Spirit. And you and I have to take this as the criterion of all true possession of the Spirit of God that it bows in humble submission to the authoritative teaching of this book. III. THE UNITY OF THESE TWO. 1. "He shall glorify Me." Think of a man saying that! So fair is He, so good, so radiant, that to make Him known is to glorify Him. The glorifying of Christ is the ultimate and adequate purpose of everything that God the Father, Son, and Spirit has done, because the glorifying of Christ is the glorifying of God, and the blessing of the eyes that behold His glory. 2. "For He shall take of Mine, and show it unto you." All that that Divine Spirit brings is Christ's. So, then, there is no new revelation, only the interpretation of the revelation. Christ said, "I am the Truth." Therefore, when He promises, "He shall guide you into all the truth," we may fairly conclude that the "truth" into which the Spirit guides is the personal Christ. We are like the first settlers upon some great island-continent. There is a little fringe of population round the coast, but away in the interior are leagues of virgin forests and fertile plains stretching to the horizon, and snow-capped summits piercing the clouds, on which no foot has ever trod. 3. "All things that the Father hath are Mine, therefore said I," &c. (ver. 15). What awful words! Is that what you think about Jesus Christ? He puts out here an unpresumptuous hand, and grasps all the constellated glories of the Divine nature, and says, "They are Mine;" and the Father looks down from heaven and says, "Son, Thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is Thine." Do you answer, "Amen! I believe it?" Conclusion: 1. Believe a great deal more definitely in, and seek a great deal more earnestly, and use a great deal more diligently that Divine Spirit that is given to us all. I fear that over very large tracts of professing Christendom men only stand up with very faltering lips and confess, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." Hence comes much of the weakness of our modern Christianity, the worldliness of professing Christians. 2. Use the book that He uses—else you will not grow, and He will have no means of contact with you. 3. Try the spirits. If anything calling itself Christian teaching comes to you and does not glorify Christ, it is self-condemned. And if the great teaching Spirit is to come who is to "guide us into all truth," and therein is to glorify Christ, and to show us the things that are His, then it is also true, "hereby know we the Spirit of God," &c. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

"*Yet many things to say*":—There is always a pathos in last words. Those of

great men become the inspiration of future generations; those of the humblest become sacred as gospels to those who loved them. Of dying teachers we expect last views of truth; of dying captains last advices for the campaign; of dying leaders some inspiring programme. But it can scarcely be said that Christ's programme is an inspiring one. He prophesies tribulation, and dies with the fulness of His teaching unexplained. Note—I. CHRIST FORESEEING THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS OWN TEACHINGS. It must be remembered that the ministry of Christ was not a harvesting. He had only time to cast in the good seed of the kingdom. But then there is a sense in which the man who looks upon the seed virtually is looking on the harvest too. So Christ saw in His teachings the prophecy of their fulfilment. He said that His words were Spirit and life. There are many issues, many harvests of the word of Christ, which He dare not even intimate to us yet. Yet the time will come, for this Galilean peasant dares to stand forth in the light of all the ages, and to say, "Heaven and earth shall pass away; My teachings shall never pass away." Note, for instance—1. What Christ has to say about war. There is one of the sorest problems of the world, and Christ lived under the domination of the greatest military empire which the world has ever seen. In one sense He says nothing about it, except to prophecy of it when He is gone. What, then, was Christ's attitude towards it? "Love thy neighbour as thyself." That is the seed. Ages have trampled with heavy feet above it; and tens of thousands of men, women, and children have been crushed beneath this frightful Juggernaut. But the seed is not dead: now, after eighteen centuries, a tiny spear of green life begins to pierce through the red soil of the battle-field. Men gather round, and, behold, it is the plant of peace at last. Whatever be the wickedness of rulers, or the folly of statesmen, the entire sentiment of Europe towards war has changed; and governments talk of arbitration, and war is dreaded, shunned, hated by every civilized power. 2. What Christ has to say on slavery. Christ was familiar with it, and knew what it meant and would mean. What, then, did Christ say? Well, He did not go up and down Palestine preaching the abolition of slavery or the rights of man. Yet Jesus Christ overturned slavery, and that by recognizing the divinity of human nature—that the lost are worth saving; that the harlot and the publican were created in the image of God; and Christ said: "If any man will be great among you, let him be servant of all." That is to say, He recognized the dignity and grandeur of service. That was the seed. Ages pass, till at last Macaulay, Wilberforce, &c., are praying, and the heavens seem to open and the authentic voice of Christ reaches them, and in the strength of that vision they begin their great crusade, till, at last, exactly eighteen hundred years after Christ bowed His head on Calvary, England pays down her twenty millions to free her last slave. And thirty years later, at the price of one of the greatest wars in history, America knocks the last shackle off her last slave. 3. He has many things to say to us on such questions as communism, socialism, liberty, sacrifice; for His life was the seed. He was the Divine Socialist, who, being rich, for our sakes became poor. He was the Heavenly Communist, who shared His heart's blood with us. He was the Great Liberator who made us free with a glorious liberty. He was the Sacrifice who gave Himself "the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God." Very dimly and feebly have the wisest apprehended the truths that lie in those words. But the time will come when God will send His new teacher; and then that Christianity which began in a commune will end with a brotherhood, which says not, "thine is mine," but, "mine is thine." 4. Christ has much to say, too, of the duties that the Church owes to the world; and if we would know how long it takes for men to learn the issues of the words of Christ, just think how long it took England to learn what Christ meant by "Go and preach the gospel unto every creature." Eleven centuries of Christianity pass in this land, during which the people perish in their darkness; until at last a clergyman against whom the Church doors are closed goes out into the highways and hedges to find his congregation, and says, with magnificent prevision, "The world is my parish." II. THIS PRINCIPLE OF GRADUAL ADVANCEMENT IS CHRIST'S PRINCIPLE IN ALL THINGS. 1. For illustration you need go no farther than this very supper chamber. How fast Simon's heart is beating! He has just said, "I will go with Thee to prison and to judgment." Hush! Thy Master is about to speak. Where shall He begin? He sees the vision of thee, old and grey, girded by those whom thou knowest not, &c. He knows all the paths of pain thy martyr feet will tread. Shall He tell thee all that? No. It would not make a Judas of thee, but it might make a Demas, who would love the wicked world more than Christ. It would break thy heart. Wait thou. Thou must stand in the

blackness and hear that last cry that thrills from that cross of shame, and then, when thou hast wept thine heart out in an agony of penitence, at last the morning will break beside the grey sea when Christ will meet thee, and then He will tell thee everything; but thou couldst not bear it now. 2. There are successive revelations for every age and for every man. They never come too soon; they never come too late. The Church is like a man who sits in a darkened room. He has been blind; he begins to see. Day by day a little more light is let into the chamber. At last the hour will come when the blinds will be rolled right up, and the windows flung wide open. We shall look out. There will be "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Music has much to say to the little child. He begins snatches of his mother's lullaby, cradle songs, nursery rhymes. Then, as the years pass by, higher strains engross him. The deep chords of wailing and distress wake the poet in his brain. He bathes himself in the angel joy of Handel. He himself, perhaps, becomes a young Mozart or a Haydn. Music had much to say, but it waited till the heart was deep enough and the brain strong enough to receive the message. So the Church learnt her cradle song at Bethlehem, her hymn of pain on Calvary, her victorious marching music at Pentecost. In the dungeon and the fire her voice has been trained to its noblest use, until at last, without a single jarring discord, she shall sing in that new song which is never old—the praise and glory of the Lamb. 3. Some one says, "I thought that all Christ's words were in the Gospels. I know all that Christ has said, for I have read them." I congratulate you, for I do not. I find that Christ's words are like the sea, which deepens evermore as we go farther into it. I find that Christ has always something new to say. Oh, think of it! For all these centuries men have been preaching out of these fragmentary sketches of biography—these broken words of Christ, and yet they are newer and deeper and Diviner to-day than ever they were before. Therefore, if Christ says nothing to me, I know that it is not because Christ is not speaking, but it is because I am deaf and am not listening. He tells me His truth as I am able to bear it. 4. Or, perhaps, some one says again, "Oh, if Christ had this great foresight, that He would tell me something about my own future." Let me paint you a little picture. See, out of church there come those two who have plighted their troth each to each until death them shall part; and with what happy pride they step forth into the unknown years. Now, suppose I know their future, and I tell that fair young bride how she will know poverty and trial, and watch by sick children, and weep over little graves; and how he will grow old and grey before his time, vexed with many cares and hurt with many sorrows. Yes, and one of those two must close the other's eyes in the coffin! Ah! which? Shall I tell them which? Would there be any more joy in marriage mornings, any more music in wedding bells? I will not tell them. And neither will Christ tell me. He has many things to say, but He wants the quietness of the house of sickness to say some, and the more solemn silence of the house of death to say others. "Ye could not bear them now." Conclusion: So I learn that for much of Christ's speech you and I must wait for another world. There are so many things that you and I would like to ask Christ about. Why did that great ambition cheat me so? Why did that bright joy crumble into ashes? Why did that fair angel child flit so early into heaven? I cannot tell; but I shall see Christ some day, and He will tell me everything. (*W. J. Dawson.*) *The reserve of Christ*:—I. THE SAYINGS OF JESUS. 1. They are the expression of the deepest and purest earnestness. There is no aim at any outward demonstration; yet in reading and reflecting upon them, they sink into your deeper life, they gain upon your reason, sentiment, and conscience, until at last they leaven you with their spiritual life, and you become His disciples through their life-power. This earnestness made Him despise all artifice and cunning concealment, and led Him to present His thoughts and sentiments natural and openly, without varnish and pomp. 2. They are the expression of the highest wisdom. Solomon uttered many wise proverbs; but Christ's sayings contain the wisdom of life, of salvation, which Solomon and other wise men never pretended. He is the wisdom of God. 3. They are of perpetual and universal power and authority. The sayings of wise men like coins lose their weight and value in their use, because they are not essential for life and happiness, for all times and places; but the sayings of Jesus remain in their weight and authority, because we ever need them to guide and comfort us. Before anything which belongs to men can be of perpetual authority and fitness, it must—(1) Be comprehensive of all nature, and have provision to meet it in all its phases and relations, which is one reason why the sayings of Jesus remain the same. (2) Harmonize with all essential

laws outside itself, which is another reason why the sayings of Jesus perpetuate their power and authority. Essential laws change not. In vain all artificial powers try to prop a thing contrary to the laws of the universe and the constitution of our mind. The unnatural will perish by the hand of nature. (3) Be capable of new development and application, which is another element constituting the permanent authority of Christ's sayings. They are ever deeper than our plummet, and loftier than our highest reach. Like rich grapes, the more they are squeezed the richer and sweeter is their sap. The sayings of Jesus are like seed buried for a while, but which, by suitable agencies, will be restored to new life and fresh application. 4. They are expressions of His love. Love may be shown by tears, by gifts, and by sacrifices, as Jesus showed His; but the most common expressions of rational minds are words; these remain when tears are dried, and gifts and sacrifices are forgotten. Christ spoke as never man spoke, for He spoke from a true heart to the heart of humanity, according to the law of truth and love, which will abide for ever, and so He still speaks. II. THE RESERVE OF JESUS. It was a reserve—1. In the surplus which was beyond and above the immediate need of His disciples. They had every way more than actually they needed to meet their present necessity. He had already told them more than they understood; He had given them work more than as yet they performed; He had declared already of privileges and blessings greater than they enjoyed; and their difficulties and persecutions were as numerous and heavy as they could well bear without speaking of more. It does not appear requisite on any ground to tell them more at present. They must master their present lessons before they are fit for more. 2. Was dictated by wisdom, to educate their Christian graces and character. He was a wise Master; He did not cram all into one lesson. There may be things which belong to this hour only that demand to be told as complete as they are, and that because we are fit to comprehend and use them now, and shall be unfit at any other time. But a system of spiritual education demands to be revealed little by little. If all the evil of the future were told us, it would discourage and distract all our life; or if all the good, it would partly destroy its enjoyment. The reticence of Christ was intended to keep alive their expectation for future blessings, and thus preserve them from flagging and weariness in their toil and trial, and to preserve their freshness of faith and experience. 3. Was inevitable because of the inexhaustibleness of His resources. Every true teacher has always something more to say. He never says all in any lesson or sermon. How could such riches of knowledge and love be bestowed all at one time, and that to feeble minds and contracted sympathies? The light was greater than their eyes, the cloud was larger than the field, the shower richer than the blades, and the ocean immeasurably greater than their cups. 4. Was a reticence of anticipation. What was unsaid should be declared another day with a comment. III. THE PRESENT UNFITNESS OF THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD TO BEAR THE SAYINGS OF JESUS. It is the general misfortune of every great teacher to be misunderstood. The unfitness of the present age consists in—1. A want of greater sympathy with His teaching, and more insight into its meaning. As it is in any branch of knowledge, so is it with truth and character; without some sympathy to begin with in the object of our search, or faith, we shall not acquire an insight into it. Sympathy with the things of the Saviour is quite a different thing from certain attachments to certain appellations and certain acquired opinions. What we need is that deep attachment of our spirits with something that is common to all, and unchangeable in all times, in the person, life, and sayings of JESUS. 2. Overweening and preconceived attachment to other and contrary things to His sayings. This may be opinion, pleasure, worldly aggrandisement, self-indulgence, or any other wrong and sinful way. Or it may be some contracted habits, which have sunk into the very root of our nature, so that we have lost the power to renounce them. It may be associates who are loved more than Him; or it may be careless and blind indifference of all truth and goodness. Even what is right, if used in the wrong way, and the truth if misapplied or not used rightly, may unfit for His teaching and truth. Whatever absorbs the attention of the soul, so that it cannot listen fully and impartially to Him, unfits to bear His truth and spirit. 3. The many discordant voices that are heard. There is such a contradictory crying, "Here is Christ, and there is Christ." Not that these voices are altogether false, for there is some Christ doubtless in all. But their great wrong is in the pretension that He is all with them, and none with others. These things perplex many, and keep them away from listening to the sayings of the Saviour; and until men will love Christianity more than sects, and the spirit of the Saviour more than habits

and opinion, they will continue. 4. The materialistic spirit of the age. This world is the kingdom of most; they neither have taste nor time to think and trouble themselves about any other; and the love of the world is enmity against God. 5. An unwillingness to see our own wrong, and be corrected and directed rightly. The teaching of the Saviour is too spiritual, high, and searching, to suit our sensuous desire and self-indulgent view and feeling. This is the condemnation, &c. 6. The breadth and catholicity of His teaching. He is a teacher of truth, and not of party; He claims mankind as His suitable audience, and not a small portion of it. Such teaching is too lofty for men of narrow conceptions and small hearts. 7. The weakness of our powers and the imperfect character of the present state. "For now we see through a glass darkly," &c. (*T. Hughes.*) *Christ's reticence in teaching truth*:—I. SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS FEATURE OF CHRIST'S TEACHING. 1. Take some of the truths to which we may suppose our Lord made immediate reference. (1) The long separation which was about to take place between Him and His disciples. This would have been a terrible prospect, to them, with the sense they then had of entire dependence on His outward presence. There was but one thing that could enable them to bear this prospect—the descent of the Comforter. Till then it is not made clear to them. (2) The fall of the Mosaic dispensation, accompanied with the destruction of the Jewish State, and the scattering of the nation. The whole foundation of their faith would have been convulsed by the thought of this. It was only the unfolding of Christianity in its spiritual power, and the transference of their affections to a higher fatherland, that could enable them to bear it. (3) The admission of men of all nations upon equal terms to the privileges of the children of God. It was only the perception of Christ's relationship to man as man that could lead them to cast wide the gospel-door to every sinner. (4) The gradual way in which He made the true view of His own person dawn on them. Had they known, as they came afterwards to know, the full truth of His Divinity, they could not have borne it. It needed that they should have the tenderness and condescension of His character, as well as its purity and grandeur, brought out by the Spirit, before they could realize that God incarnate had entered our world. 2. Consider the manner of His revelation of truth to the world in general. (1) The parable was Christ's favourite method in speech, and the miracle in action. In both of these a man sees little or much, according to the spirit he brings, and what he sees is always growing into something deeper and higher, as he ponders it. It is this manner of Christ's teaching which makes it suited to all the years of human life, as it is suited to every age of the world. The youngest child can understand something of it, and the most mature Christian feels that he has not reached the end of it. (2) The Old Testament teaching was conducted in the same way. The symbols and the sacrifices were Divine parables, where the learners were made their own instructors. There is nothing more beautiful than to trace how their views of guilt, pardon, and holiness kept equal pace, growing in clearness till Christ came and satisfied all their longings when they were prepared for Him. (3) When we come down to the ages that have followed His appearance upon earth, there is the same gradual unfolding of the principles of His kingdom. The great Reformers of the Christian Church were led on to their final views by slow degrees. If Luther had seen the whole course that lay before him when he opened the epistle to the Romans, he might have shrunk back in fear. But darkness was made light before him as he advanced, till a new dawn rose upon the Christian world. When churches and nations are brought out of Egypt, they do not see the long wanderings that are before them. Marah and Meribah would terrify them; and yet these have all their lessons of faith and fortitude, which qualify God's people for conquering the land of their birthright. 3. In the individual life. (1) Take, *e.g.*, the way in which the view of human life alters as men advance in years. Were the young to discover how unsatisfactory the present world is at the core, they could not bear it. The young need the bright view of the world to develop their energies—to nurse their affections and imagination—that when the veterans droop they may come in, like a fresh reinforcement, into the failing battle of life. (2) There is a similar experience in the Christian life. Those who enter on it have the confident feeling which would gain triumphs without thinking of trials. They have the "love of their youth, the zeal of their espousals," and they cannot conceive that it should ever be otherwise. But then comes "the check and change," chillness of feeling, temptation, the bitter cross, and long prospects of march and battle before the close. Ere this, however, they have learned to add to their faith virtue and temperance and patience—to put on the whole armour of God, and

having done all to stand. (3) The afflictive events of God's providence are measured in the same way. The days of darkness come, and they are many, but our eye takes in only the first. One wave hides another, and the effort to encounter the foremost withdraws our thought from evils which are pressing on. (4) The great doctrines of the gospel are presented to the mind in a like manner. There are many who cannot bear at first the full view of the sovereignty of God. But grace and unconditioned freeness go forward, and with joined hands embrace at last the lofty doctrine of God's sovereignty, while they say, "Not unto us," &c. II. SOME OF THE CONCLUSIONS TAUGHT US REGARDING CHRIST AND HUMAN NATURE. 1. In regard to Christ, we have reason to admire—(1) His control alike over Himself and His message. He is so absorbed by it that He can say, "The zeal of Thine house hath devoured me," and yet He is not possessed by it like a frenzied instrument. There is calmness with all His depth—because of His depth. A little knowledge makes men eager to tell all they have. We read of God that it is "His glory to conceal a thing." And Christ has this same token of Divinity. He is neither the slave nor organ, but the Owner and Lord of truth. It was the saying of a philosopher, "If I had all the truth in my hand, I would let forth only a ray at a time, lest I should blind the world." (2) His tenderness. The rays of the Sun of Righteousness do not injure the most delicate tissue of the eye on which they fall. It needs the most loving heart to have such pity on ignorance as to feel that premature knowledge may hurt it, and to refrain from acting the tyrant in the possession of superior intellect—"to have a giant's strength, but not to use it like a giant." (3) His wisdom. Wisdom is displayed not so much in doing the right thing, as in doing it at the right time. No crisis has ever yet appeared when Christ's word was not ready to take the van of human movement. The truths in their particular application may have lain unmarked—or revealed themselves only to a few sentinels watching for the dawn—till some great turn in the life of humanity comes, and then the principles of freedom and right and universal charity shine out so clear and undoubted, that men wonder at their past blindness. When so it is, we need not fear any want of harmony between the Word of Christ and the progress of science. It was never Christ's intention to reveal scientific truth in His Word; but the indentations of the two revolving wheels will be found to fit, whenever they really come into contact; and the only thing broken will be the premature human harmonizings which are thrust in between them. (4) His patience. He is not in restless commotion to have His work done on the instant; nor does He abandon it in discontent when men prove inapt and slow. He has often to say in sorrow, more than in anger, "How is it that ye do not understand?" but He patiently begins His labour again, and is long-suffering to our ignorance, as to our sins. Short-lived men must speak out all their mind before they die, but the centuries belong to Christ, and He can calmly wait. 2. Concerning our common human nature. (1) We should take large and tolerant views of it. When we see how slowly the best of men have apprehended the clearest of all truths, we must not be provoked at what we call the stupidity and prejudice of our contemporaries. If the great Teacher had to wait, we may be content to do so. There are errors which give way only when God takes them into His own hand by the events of His Providence. It is marvellous how a turn in the road opens whole landscapes of truth to men, and lets them see what no logic could convince them of. (2) We may cherish very hopeful views of it. There must be noble things in store for that race with which the Son of God is contented to have such patience. If the great Husbandman waits so long for the feeble, springing blade, how precious must the full harvest be! There are ages for the world to learn in, and an eternity for the individual; and when the soul is able to bear full light, how many things will the great Teacher have to disclose! It is a token of the immortality of the soul, that God has implanted in man a boundless desire of knowledge, and given him so limited a time to satisfy it—and it is ground for expecting all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge from Jesus Christ, that He came into this world, possessed of them, and yet kept silence on so much we long to know. Conclusion: 1. In regard to things which Christ does not tell us, let us be thankful to Him for His silence. The cloud that veils full knowledge "is a cloud of love." 2. Let us be chiefly concerned about knowing the one great thing which Christ has to say to us. There is a message which stands out in His Word distinct from the beginning to the close —"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." There are times in the future for learning other truths, but for this our time is always ready. (*J. Ker, D.D.*)

Divine teaching gradual:—I. OUR LORD'S OWN ORAL TEACHING DID NOT EMBRACE ALL NECESSARY CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. 1. This is a point of great importance. It is not unusual to hear people say: "I accept only the very words of Christ. St. Paul taught some doctrines which Christ Himself did not teach: I do not wish to be bound by these. The Church has in her creeds and elsewhere used language which I do not find in the words of Christ: I may reject that language. The Sermon on the Mount and Christ's other discourses are enough for me. The rest is superfluous." This language recommends itself because it sounds at first so loyal to our Lord, just as politeness towards a single individual is more remarkable when the person who shows it is habitually uncivil to the rest of the world. By a confession of faith such as this, men flatter themselves that they can cut down the Christian creed to very narrow dimensions, and at the same time be all the better Christians. And yet here we find Christ saying that He did not undertake to teach in Person all that it was necessary for Christians to know. What the apostles taught would be still His teaching, even although it should go beyond the measure of truth which He had taught Himself (Luke x. 16; Matt. x. 40). 2. Chap. xv. 15 would seem at first sight to be at variance with the text. But there is no contradiction. So far as confidence went our Lord trusted His disciples unreservedly. But there was a want of spiritual comprehension on their side. Many a man has a wife or a sister with whom he has literally no secrets whatever, although she is not on that account able to share all his intellectual interests; he does not trust the less because he does not communicate unintelligible secrets; the time will come, perhaps, when whatever is now unintelligible will be understood. 3. Our Lord's teaching, then, was completed by that of the Holy Spirit. To see how this was done we need not go beyond the limits of the New Testament. (1) Our Lord had spoken, for instance, of the necessity that the Messiah should die; of His blood as the blood of the New Testament which was shed for His disciples. In the apostolic writings this is expanded into the doctrine of the Atonement. (2) Our Lord had hinted at a new ground of acceptance with God in His parable of the labourers in the vineyard, in His eulogy upon the publican, and in His precept (Luke xvii. 10). But in St. Paul's writings we find a fully elaborated doctrine of salvation through the grace of Christ as contrasted with that of obedience to the Jewish law. In the visit of the Eastern sages to the manger of Bethlehem, in the acceptance of the Syro-Phœnician woman, in the interview with the Greeks at the passover, in the statement that the Good Shepherd had other sheep who were not of the fold of Israel, we have hints that the Pagan nations were in some way to have their part in the Divine Saviour. In St. Paul we find the express assertion that a special revelation had been made to him to the effect (Eph. iii. 6). 4. Our Lord spoke about Himself, His sinlessness, His claims upon human thought and human affection, His power of enlightening and saving human beings, His future coming to judge all human beings, in a way which we should now-a-days think very extraordinary in any good man, and indeed fatal to his claim to goodness because inconsistent with sober fact. The Holy Spirit took of the words of Christ and showed the truth unto the apostles that the Speaker was Divine (1 Cor. xii. 3). The disciples could not have borne the full splendour of these truths before (chap. xii. 16). II. WHY WAS OUR LORD'S OWN TEACHING THUS INCOMPLETE? 1. The answer is, that the same motive which led Him to teach men at all led Him to impose these limits. He taught men in their ignorance because He loved men too well to leave them in darkness. He taught men gradually, and as they were able to bear the strong light of His doctrine, because He loved men too well to shock or blind them by a sudden blaze of truth, for which they were as yet unprepared. He knew what was in man. He knew what the prejudices of education, the power of mental habits, the associations of youth, the traditions of a great history, could do to destroy the receptive powers, the moral flexibility of the soul. He was too wise and considerate to expect too much. The full understanding of who He was, and what He came to do, was preceded by a twilight; itself His own work, which brightened more and more towards the day. 2. In this He was true to God's providential action in human history. All along God has taught men gradually. The heathen nations have been taught what little truth, amid their errors, they know by a succession of minds. The old Jewish Scriptures are a long series of revelations: the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, the prophetical. Each is an advance upon its predecessors, and all lead up to the final and complete revelation of God in Christ. III. TWO PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. The true principle of—(1) A religious education. To be solid it should be gradual;

it should be given only as the learner's mind becomes acclimatized to the atmosphere of religious truth. We find in the Epistles the distinction between "babes in Christ" and "strong" men or adults. To the first was given that elementary instruction which, from its easiness of reception, the apostle terms "milk." To the second a much more comprehensive instruction in the mysteries of the Christian creed and in the range of Christian duty was imparted, and this the Apostle terms "strong meat." This double order of teaching passed into the primitive Church. The catechumens, who were in the earlier stage of instruction, were treated quite differently from the faithful. (2) The principle holds good of secular education, and is too much lost sight of in some modern methods. The old and deeper idea of education as a means of training the faculties of the mind to deal with any subject has been abandoned only too largely for the idea of an education which overloads the mind with huge packages of unmastered and unmanageable knowledge, and not seldom leads to frightful cases of intellectual indigestion. Boys are expected to know something about everything; they too often know nothing about anything thoroughly. The consequence is, that while they can talk with striking but unnatural facility on a great many more subjects than boys did forty or fifty years ago, their mental faculties are really less braced and sharpened, and their actual capacity for meeting the requirements of life is less considerable than that of their predecessors. (3) And in teaching religious truth parents are sometimes apt to fall into the same mistake. They want to teach everything at once, and they end by really teaching nothing. They forget that most necessary duty of every teacher of placing himself, by an effort of sympathy and imagination, as nearly as possible in the mental position of his pupil or child. They think chiefly or only of what interests themselves in religion; not of what might be interesting or intelligible to minds just opening upon life, and catching with difficulty the horizons of truth and duty which meet the gaze. What is the consequence? Either the children are alienated from all religion in later life, or they learn that most fatal of all lessons in religion, to talk about it easily without thinking of what they say. 2. Remember that until our last day God is teaching us, through the action of other minds, through the events of life. Each stage of life up to the very last leaves some truth untaught. We are daily adding to our experience. We never complete it. What can the soul do but breathe the prayer—"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, lead Thou me on," &c.? (*Canon Liddon.*) *Christ's gradual teaching in the Church*:—This does not mean that during all the coming centuries He would go on adding from time to time new truths to the Christian creed by a process of continuous revelation. The faith was, St. Jude says, once for all delivered to the saints. Later ages might explain what the apostles had taught. This, for instance, is what was done by the great council which authoratively adopted the Nicene Creed in order to defend the truth of our Lord's Divinity. But when in that creed we confess that Jesus Christ our Lord is of one substance with the Father, we do not say more than St. John says in the introduction to his Gospel, or St. Paul in the Colossians (i. 16, 17). In the same way the word "Trinity" is not itself found in Scripture. But the baptismal formula, and many passages in the apostolic writings, especially in the Epistle to the Ephesians, obviously imply it. If therefore doctrines, having no ground in the teaching of the apostles, have been added to the faith, in whatever quarter of Christendom, these do not rest on the same basis as explanations or restatements of truths which the apostles had already taught. They are newly imported and foreign matter, and as such would have been rejected by the early Christian Church. We cannot, therefore, include additional doctrines proposed after the apostolic age under the head of the "many things" which our Lord had to say to His Church. It is not likely, to say the least, that the holiest and wisest of later divines should know more of His will than did St. John or St. Paul. (*Ibid.*) *Christ's gradual teaching by His providence*:—Consider the history of our own country. What lessons has God been teaching it during its fifteen centuries! Lessons of order to the England of the Heptarchy; lessons of patience and hope to the England of the Norman kings; lessons of the value of freedom to the England of the Tudors and the Stuarts; lessons of the need of seriousness in life and conviction to the England of the Georges. And surely in our time He is saying many things, stern and tender, to those who have ears to hear, in the events amidst which day by day we are living now. He is teaching us that morality should never be divorced from politics; that the duties of property rank higher than its undoubted rights; that races which

trifle with the laws of purity are on the road to ruin; that "righteousness exalteth a nation" much more truly than any financial, or diplomatic, or military success. And much that God teaches us of to-day would have been unintelligible to our ancestors. As we look out on the surface of our national life, on its hopes and fears, on its unsolved, to us apparently insoluble, problems, on its incessant movement, whether of unrest or aspiration, we hear from behind the clouds the more or less distinct announcement of a future which will be at any rate as unlike our present as our past. "I have many things to say unto thee, but thou canst not bear them now." (*Ibid.*) *Teaching should be adapted to the condition of the mind*:—A careful mother or teacher will treat a child's mind with great tenderness and reverence; she will be careful to excite interest before gratifying it, to gratify it in such degree as its capacity will admit. She will not think of the mind of her child as of a large bag into which all the odds and ends of knowledge that are swept up from the table of common life can be thrown at random; she will think of it as a delicate and beautiful mechanism to be handled with tenderness and respect and one mistake in dealing with which may well be fatal. How well a lady writer has told us how she was taught by her mother. "I asked mother one day who God was, and I was told to come again the next day and at the same hour, and I came and repeated the question, and she told me to wait another day and then I should be answered, and then, when my curiosity was raised to the highest pitch and when my sense of the importance of the subject was immensely enhanced by its repeated postponement of an answer, I came once more and my mother explained in words which I shall never forget how great and awful and beautiful a Being God is and what He has told us. And all this she did in simple words and as a child's mind could bear it." Such a lesson as that she was not likely to forget, and it was never forgotten. (*Ibid.*) *Human capacity the measure of Divine communication*:—I. To CHRIST'S MIND NO INFORMATION CAN BE IMPARTED. When He says "ask," He accommodates Himself to human phraseology. Christ's is the infinite mind—to its perceptions there is no end! This is—1. Consolatory to the good: they can never pass the region of Christ's knowledge, whether in fiery furnace or lions' den. 2. Terrifying to the ungodly: they cannot commit sin except under the eye of the Being to whom it is infinitely hateful: there is no secret spot on which they can outrage the laws of purity. Not a leaf stirs, not a pulse beats, without attracting the notice of the Divine eye. II. CHRIST'S MIND IS THE HIGHEST SOURCE OF MENTAL ILLUMINATION. 1. "Many things" are in Christ's possession. The phrase is simple, but who can measure its comprehensiveness? What imagination can conceive the number of the "many things"? All that we know of truth, holiness, destiny, we know directly or indirectly from Christ. 2. It follows, therefore, that companionship with Christ must ensure the highest mental attainment. "Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life;" walking with Him we must reach the highest altitudes of knowledge. 3. The mission of the Spirit is to take of the things of Christ and show them to the Church (ver. 13). III. CHRIST'S MIND REVEALS ITSELF ACCORDING TO OUR MENTAL CAPACITY. Mark here the true majesty of Christ. "*Ye* cannot bear them," *I* can; *your* intellect is not strong enough—Mine is. For a time these many things must dwell in My own mind. As ye grow in capacity ye shall grow in knowledge. God does not pour His glory on the world in one dazzling blaze, He precedes the splendour of noontide by the ray of dawn. The passage has a bearing—1. On our individual experience. There are many things in the future which we could not bear in our present state. Suppose that God should certify every man of the exact time and precise circumstance of his death, society would be paralyzed. Be thankful for Christ's forbearance. 2. On the inscrutable mysteries of faith. God has not taken man into His secret counsels. 3. On the perplexities of moral government. I cannot explain why Dives should be in the mansion and Lazarus at the gate. "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." By and by we shall know enough. Let us calmly wait until it shall please Him to explain. We shall then say, "It is well." (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The new theology*:—Many persons are alarmed at the idea of a "new theology." Because God is eternally the same, the science which treats of His Person and of His dealings with men is regarded as stationary. Theology, however, represents man's thoughts about God, and these may change as knowledge grows from more to more and as the power to understand spiritual things is increased. The elementary substances of nature are the same to-day as when the earth was a mass of fiery vapour; but to-day there is a "new chemistry," which professors who died a

score of years ago would find it difficult to read. So there is a "new astronomy" and a "new geology," though worlds and the crust of our earth are the same. I. CHRIST'S WORDS DISTINCTLY FORESHADOWED A PROGRESSIVE APPREHENSION OF HIMSELF AND HIS TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD. Just as men lived for ages on this earth without a suspicion of its being globular, and walked in the light of the sun and yet had no notion that the solid earth was rolling round it in space; as they tilled their fields, without dreaming that the soil was composed of decayed animal and vegetable life; so the disciples were warmed by the love of Christ and guided by His wisdom without understanding the mystery of His Person or the wealth of His wisdom? What, then, does He promise? He does not say the Spirit shall give you a new revelation, but He shall lead you into new views of Me and My words. The theology of the apostles, therefore, was to be progressive; it was to be a journey into truth as a boundless realm whose borders they had crossed, but which still stretched away far out of sight beyond the utmost horizon of their thoughts. II. HISTORY READ IN THE LIGHT OF THIS INTIMATION STRIKINGLY VERIFIES ITS TRUTH by showing that there have been successive stages of advance in human knowledge and opinion, while the substance of the Christian revelation has remained unchanged. 1. Two disciples set out one evening to walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus. That walk gave them most emphatically a new theology. It revolutionized their whole conception of the Divine character and ways with men. 2. Long after the day of Pentecost the apostles thought that faith in Christ must be combined with obedience to the ritual law of their fathers. But when Peter had seen his vision on the housetop, his eyes were opened to see Christ in a totally unexpected light. From that hour the Church began to form a new theology. God was the same; Christ was the same; the discourse by the well at Sychar was the same; the gospel was the same; but the Church was led into previously untraversed regions of truth. 3. Time would fail to mention the various theologies which have had their day since the apostles. There was a Greek theology which prevailed up to the time of Augustine. Then came a Latin theology fathered by him. Later on there arose several scholastic theologies. Then, again, at the Reformation there arose the Lutheran, Calvinistic, and Zwinglian theologies, all revolting against Rome and yet all of them framed by men influenced by Latin divinity. The confessions of faith drawn up at Wurtemberg, Geneva, Zurich, and Westminster were all new theologies, and all sought to arrange and systematize the doctrines of the Scriptures as observers deal with the facts of nature in the construction of a new science. What, then, shall we conclude? Shall we say that they attained to a final knowledge of the truth and of Christ? It is at least permissible to suppose that the researches, experience, and Divine illumination of later students may have prevailed to eliminate some of their errors, to supply some of their defects, to combine some of their divided excellencies, and so to make some further progress towards that richer knowledge and clearer understanding of the mystery of God in Christ, which, when attained, will bring us all into the unity of the faith. III. THE GROUND ON WHICH REAL ADVANCES HAVE BEEN MADE. As it was in the days of the apostles and reformers, so it has been since; new visions of truth have come in connection with new outbursts of spiritual life and new acceptances of service. In the latter part of the last century there was a strange movement of compassion for the souls of men. Looking out on heathendom abroad, and spiritual desolation at home, men said: "We must cease our controversial strife, and give these peoples the good news of a Father's love and a Saviour's readiness to save. Stirred by these voices, the Church shook herself from sleep, and rose up to do her neglected duty with a vigour unexampled since the days of the apostles. In the course of these ministries she has formed a new feeling of human brotherhood, and this has opened her eyes to see more clearly the Divine Fatherhood. In the service of man, for Christ's sake, she has learned to read anew Paul's grand unfolding of the meaning of Christ's life and death as a ministry of Divine sacrifice. In her own prayers and yearnings over down fallen men she has entered into unison with the pity of the Lord, and the travail of Christ's soul, to seek and save the lost. This sympathy has touched her thoughts and modified her creed. She can no longer hold with Calvin that babes are deserving of eternal damnation because guilty before God of Adam's sin. The displacement of that one terrible idea has taken a big stone—a veritable key-stone, out of the arch of Calvinistic theology. IV. OUR DUTIES AND DANGERS IN THIS AGE OF THEOLOGICAL TRANSITION. 1. To keep our spirits right. Whether we view the movements of our time with fear or hope, let

us be patient with all men, charitable, tolerant. 2. To see to it that we neither part with nor refuse any true thing because it happens to be mixed up with something manifestly false. In all times of controversy some men fling away gold because embedded in dross, and other men grasp a needless quantity of dross because they see glittering grains of gold. 3. Beware of allowing religious earnestness to be evaporated by a too exclusive attention to the intellectual elements of religion. The life is more than creed, and the spirit than dogma. I meet men who reiterate the stale maxims about conduct being three-fourths of life, and the unimportance of dogma, yet are doing nothing for the good of their fellows but protest in this lordly fashion against the bigotry of men who, however mistaken in their creed, are assuredly spending time, and strength, and means in the practical imitation of Christ. It is possible to be a creed-bound creature, though your only creed be that all creeds are vain. (*T. V. Tymms.*)

Ver. 13. **When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come.**—*The Spirit of Truth*:—What is meant by "all truth?" It is better to take for granted that the Bible always means what it says—all the truth of nature as well as of the gospel, of science as well as of religion. Aholiab was, doubtless, a skilled mechanic before the effusion of the Spirit; but after he became the best carpenter of the nation. So with Bezaleel. I am glad to acknowledge that the great thinkers of the world have not been wholly unguided by the Holy Ghost. Great discoverers are almost invariably devout: Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato—Kepler, Newton, and Faraday. Even nature confides her secrets to none except to men of deep piety. Tyndall and Huxley are very brilliant; but they have not yet established their right to be classed with the great. The truth which makes for our salvation is here mainly intended. Note, the Spirit guides into all truth—I. IN RESPECT OF REVELATION. This means that the Spirit will—1. Speak nothing but the truth, "for He shall not speak from Himself," &c. This is the Saviour's infallible proof of the trustworthiness of His own teaching, and urges the same in support of the infallibility of the Spirit's illumination. If you hear any one speaking from himself, boasting much in his originality, you may rest assured that his discovery will turn out to be shallow and worthless. For truth is not a thing that comes from, but to, man. He never strikes it—it always strikes him. Accordingly, great discoverers never claim much credit. "I am but a child," said Newton, "gathering pebbles on the shore of the great sea of truth." He felt that all the credit due to him was that of seeing the pebbles—the credit of making them belonged to another. You cannot originate truth—only discover it; you cannot make it—only see it. If you make it, it is no longer truth, but a lie. Wherefore it is averred of the evil spirit that he "speaketh of his own," and therefore of necessity "speaketh a lie." But "whatsoever the Spirit heareth" in the exalted fellowship of the Trinity in Unity, "that speaketh He." 2. Inspire the truth already extant in the world, and only waiting the breath of inspiration to quicken it. True "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," but "every Scripture is God-inspired." Not only the writers, but their writings, are all alive with the breath of God. "God breathed into it the breath of life, and the Bible became a living book." The inspired men are dead, but the inspired truths are living. They are warm now with the breath of the Eternal. One of the rare excellencies of the Bible is its warmth. Its temperature is many degrees higher than that of any other book. Whereas the same truths in other religions and philosophies sink down to freezing-point, in Christianity they invariably rise to blood-heat. Here are two bars of steel. They are precisely of the same make, shape, weight, size. But put them on the ground near a heap of rubbish, and the difference will be manifest. Whilst one lies inert, the other exerts a potent influence on the whole mass, disturbing the needles and nails and iron filings. What is the matter? One has been magnetized. And here are two truths, one in heathen philosophy, the other in the gospel. They are as similar as two truths can be. But the truth as contained in Greek or Chinese philosophy lies barren and inoperative; but the same truth as uttered by Jesus Christ enters as a living quickening force into human life. In Christianity it has been magnetized, inspired. 3. Revealed new truths. "Eye hath not seen," &c. The truths of nature are only His surface thoughts, and therefore within the range of created intellects. But the truths of the gospel are His "deep things," too deep for human reason ever to fathom, but which, nevertheless, "God has shown to us by His Spirit." In the context the "things of God" are called the things of Jesus Christ. As Columbus took possession of the continent of America in the

name of Christ, so Christ took possession of the continent of truth in His own name—He has stamped on every truth His own private mark. This is the final test whether any doctrine be of the inspiration of the Spirit. Does it glorify Christ? Many teachers went out in the apostolic age claiming to be Divinely commissioned; but this was the test whereby the spirits were tried. Many novel doctrines are promulgated to-day, labelled with the names of able and scholarly men. "Do they glorify Christ?" If not, beware of them. "What do you think of 'Ecce Homo?'" asked a lady once of Professor Duncan. "What does 'Ecce Homo' think of Christ?" asked the old Rabbi back. "I cannot tell; that it is which puzzles me," answered the lady. "Well," deliberately answered the sick professor, "if any book, after a careful perusal of it, leaves you in doubt what it thinks and what you ought to think about Christ, there is something radically wrong in it. Every sound book, doctrine, sermon, glorifies Christ." II. IN RESPECT OF EXPOSITION. 1. The nature of the Spirit's influence. (1) "Guide"; not only to show the road, but travel along it. To direct strangers in a strange country is much; to accompany them till they reach their destination is more. Thus the Holy Spirit takes us by the hand, as it were, and leads us to a reasonable apprehension of the great doctrines of salvation. This partly indicates the difference between the influence of the Spirit under the Old Testament and under the New. Then He "moved." The prophets were borne along before the breath of the Spirit, like ships before the wind, a force outside them and behind them driving them irresistibly along. The Spirit sometimes fell suddenly upon them, and sometimes left them quite as suddenly; but in either case they were thrown half dead on the ground. But "guide" denotes steady, constant, uniform influence. (2) And He will guide you, not to, but into. You cannot properly judge truth except from within. Go and examine a coloured window. From without it looks a mixed, unmeaning, vulgar blotch of paint. But enter the cathedral, look upon it between you and the light, and it is gloriously transfigured. Similarly the fundamental truths of the gospel, such as the atonement and justification, are "unto the Jews a stumbling-block," &c. But study them from within, look at them between you and the light of God and the eternal judgment, and they become "the power of God and the wisdom of God." 2. The subjects of His guidance. "You," not the apostles only. The Spirit influences the mental movements of the weakest saint. The Spirit mysteriously invigorates the mind. The "unction from the Holy One" oils the wheels marvellously. Look at Saul, the son of Kish, and Peter. This, however, does not mean the total extinction of all differences between believers in their scholastic attainments; but it does mean the abolition of all difference in their spiritual apprehension of the saving truths of the gospel. Long sight has no advantage over short sight in examining the heavens. Both can see the sun, neither can see behind and beyond. The dullest, obtusest believer sees as far as the Sun of Righteousness, and your most learned occupants of professorial chairs cannot see an inch behind and beyond. 3. The scope of the Spirit's influence. "All," not into some, but into all. Not at once, for guidance is a gradual process. (1) The history of doctrine is none other than the history of the Divine guidance of the Church into the truth. He guided the Church fathers into the truth concerning the Person of Christ; the Reformers into the truth of justification; the Puritans and Methodists into the doctrine of regeneration. Well, has the Bible been exhausted? Oh no; other truths remain to reward the patient and prayerful study of generations to come. The Spirit guides as fast as the body of the Church can follow, and will not desist till every chapter of the Bible has been emptied of its contents. "God has much light to break out of the Bible yet." There are more acorns in Bashan than oaks, and there are more seeds of truth in the words of Christ than have yet developed into doctrines. If that be the case, you ask, What shall we do with the creeds, the confessions, and standards of faith? We shall respect the old, and, if need arise, make new ones. Creeds are not intended to shut out new truths, but to shut in old. Creeds do not set limits to faith, only to unbelief. Creeds are not hindrances to progress, but to retrogression, and so lose the ground it has gained through much agony of thought and prayer. They do not tie down the mind and impede its flight upwards; they tie up the mind and stop its flight downward. What minds have soared higher than those who think it no degradation and no bondage to subscribe to the hoary creeds of Christendom? Creeds are the garners where the Church lays by its ripe truths for the support and comfort of its children in years to come. But because we store the ripe fruit, does that make us negligent of the orchard? Let the history of the Church answer.

(2) You are welcome to go out on voyages of discovery to find out new islands or continents of truth. Only remember the condition—under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation"; and a good reason why, "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man." The Spirit, who inspired the Bible, He only can adequately interpret it. But what about the right of private judgment? I have profound respect for that when it is a holy judgment, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. But I have not confidence in it when it is a depraved judgment, under the dominion of the evil spirit. The other evening I visited the Houses of Parliament, and observed that a soft, pure light was shed down on the floor from above the ceiling. I could see the light, but not the flame. Methought the Scriptures were illuminated in the same manner, from above the ceiling; the source of the light is in God, not in man. Let us, then, seek that illumination. We study human commentaries, but let us not forget the commentary of the Holy Ghost. When the Council of Trent sat, when an embarrassing question arose, the ecclesiastics submitted the points in dispute to the final arbitrament of the pope and cardinals. In due time the answer returned, prefaced with "It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to us." This happened so frequently that it passed into a proverb that the Holy Ghost was being sent in the pope's portmanteau. But we need not send to Rome to learn the mind of the Spirit, "for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (3) This is the Protestant counterpart to the Romish doctrine of the infallibility of the pope. He will guide you infallibly; but it is another question if you will follow infallibly. But wait awhile. The Bible is an infallible book; the Spirit is an infallible interpreter; and between them both men will grow infallible by and by. III. IN RESPECT OF APPLICATION. This suggests that the Spirit—1. Whets the truth, puts edge on the ministry of the Word. "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words," &c. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts," &c. Not tickled, amused, entertained, but pierced through. The sermons men like are refined, polished, full of flowers. But read Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost; it bristles like a hawthorn bush. The great need of the modern pulpit is sermons with fewer flowers and sharper pricks. 2. Imparts warmth to the ministry. "He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Warmth is an essential element in the Scriptures; it is an essential element in the ministry. The chief difference between genius and talent seems to me to consist, not in the amount of light, but in the amount of heat; not in the knowledge, but in the fire. The erudition of Ben Jonson was profounder than that of Shakespeare; the knowledge of Whewell was more extensive than that of Carlyle; the information of many a Scott was more capacious than that of Robert Burns. Where, then, was the genius? Not in the knowledge, but in the fire. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *The Spirit of Truth*:—The Holy Spirit, who was given for the reproof and conviction of the world, was given also for the enlightenment and edification of the Church. I. THE DESIGNATION OF THE HOLY GHOST. The Father is the absolute Truth, the one eternal source of all truth. The Divine Son reveals, embodies, and bears witness to the truth. But the Spirit, coming into contact with souls, brings the truth home to them with power. II. HIS COMING. Whilst believing in the eternal existence and activity of the Third Person in the Trinity, Christians apprehend what has been called "the temporal mission of the Comforter." As there was a time for the advent of the Son, so was there a time for the full gift of the Spirit, viz., when the full truth had been revealed in Christ. The Spirit "came" conspicuously on the Day of Pentecost to remain for ever. III. HIS OFFICE. 1. Generally—to lead Christians, not into every kind of truth, but the truth as in Jesus. As a master leads a pupil through a picture gallery, as a tutor leads a scholar through a science or a language, so does the Spirit lead us through the realm of spiritual truth. 2. Specially—to reveal what is Christ's to His people: "He shall take of Mine." Not only did He inspire apostles to record the facts of Christ's ministry, and to expound the doctrines growing out of those facts, but He enables every Christian to realize and appropriate the blessings Christ brings to man. 3. Prophetically—to unfold things to come. Thus to Peter was unfolded the mystery of the inclusion of the Gentiles in the fold; to Paul the doctrine of the resurrection; to John the glories of the eternal future. IV. HIS END AND AIM. The glory of Christ, as secured by the achievement of the purposes of our Saviour's ministry, and as manifested by the praise and fame accruing to Him both on earth and in heaven. (*Family Churchman.*) *Divine guidance*:—I. OUR CIRCUMSTANCES AS NEEDING A GUIDE. 1. Our entire ignorance of our journey. There is not a man

in the world that knows anything of the way to happiness or heaven without this Spirit. 2. Our frowardness. We are rash and heady and obstinate. We rush on heedless of consequences. We hit on some one path or other, and it is sure to be a wrong one; but onward we go. Many tell us that it leads to death, and many times we are told so, but on we go. We therefore need a guide. 3. Our pride. We are by nature full of self-consequence. We think we know the way. If any tell us of it, we soon reply, "We know these things as well as you. We have not lived so long in the world for nothing. We do not want your teaching," &c. Such never ask for wisdom, lest they should by that request confess their ignorance. We therefore need a guide. II. THE EXCELLENCIES OF THE GUIDE HERE PROMISED US. 1. He has perfect knowledge of the way. A blind guide will be no guide. We should discard such, should they offer to conduct. This Guide knows the way, every step of the way; knows all truth, and where truth leads. 2. He is faithful. This is essential in a guide. If we trust to a guide we give up ourselves to his care. 3. He is condescending and familiar. This in a guide will make him a pleasant companion. A guide that will describe the surrounding scenery, and lead us into a knowledge of objects as we pass, will endear him and make our journeying easy. This Spirit is a Guide that stoops to converse with us by the way. Sometimes He tells us some sweet truths, as the Father's everlasting love, the Saviour's finished work. Sometimes He shows some instructive objects. "Look yonder, do you see that pillar? That is Lot's wife: she left Sodom, and left all her furniture behind, and, against the command of God, she turned her head to look as if she hankered after that she left behind, and the Lord turned her into a pillar of salt. Look, there is Demas, who, having loved this present evil world, has left Paul and the gospel that he might embrace it. See, yonder is the place of skulls; that is Golgotha, where Christ fought with principalities and powers, and overcame, having destroyed Death." III. THE EXECUTION OF HIS WORK. "He shall guide you into all truth"; wherein we have three particulars to open. 1. The way in which the Spirit leads. That way is the way of truth. Respecting this way of truth there are these particulars which commend it. Gospel truth is a pleasant way to walk in (Prov. iii. 17). There is nothing in this way to grieve or distress: its prospects are all good; it holds up to view a God reconciled in Christ. There is no pleasure equal to that which is found in walking in this way. True it is that Christians are not always happy, but that is not from any gloominess in the path of gospel grace. They step aside or walk carelessly, and so lose their comfort. Gospel truth is also a peaceful way to walk in; "her paths are peace." Gospel truth, again, is a straight and even way to walk in. Gospel truth is a free way to walk in. Whosoever will may walk there. Gospel truth, in which the Spirit leads, is also a near way to walk in. We often choose the nearest way. It is but a step from misery to mercy, from nature to grace, from a fallen, ruined condition to a state of acceptance with God. Gospel truth, in fine, is a permanent way to walk in. There will never be another. 2. But where does the way of truth lead? We often ask where this or that pathway leads; in what direction or to what place. This leads to three places. To the Christ of God, "the truth as it is in Jesus"; truth centres in Him. This way leads to His person, fulness, work, love, and salvation. To the throne of grace. Truth tends that way. He that follows the word will call upon God. To the heavenly glory. Truth reveals heaven with all its glory, and shows itself the way. 3. How this Spirit, as a guide, leads in the way of truth. By putting us into the way. By nature we are all out of the way. By keeping us in the way when in. We are prone to wander. Did this Guide leave us we should soon leave the way. By upholding in the way. We are in danger of falling. By bringing us to our journey's end. "He shall abide with you for ever." And for what but for this very purpose, "to perfect that which concerneth us?" Give up the soul to this Guide. (*The Evangelist.*) *The Spirit of Truth*:—This appellation teaches that He is the soul of truth, the life inside the truth, the sap within the gospel doctrines, keeping them fresh and green. But for the Spirit as a circulating, vitalizing sap within them, they would all shrivel up; the tree of life would wither and die, and its leaves would all drop to the ground. Examine the truths contained in other religions—how withered and dry they look. Examine the same truths in the religion of Christ—they throb with life and are clothed with verdure. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *The Holy Spirit our Guide*:—People making the journey from earth to heaven need a guide. This they have in the Holy Spirit. I. THIS PROMISE WAS MADE TO THE APOSTLES TO QUALIFY THEM FOR THEIR OFFICE. It included —1. The coming of the Spirit at a set time. 2. To guide them into all truth. 3.

To show them things to come. II. THIS PROMISE WAS FULFILLED—1. In the Pentecostal baptism. 2. In their preaching the risen Saviour. 3. In their founding the Christian Church. 4. In their writing the New Testament. III. THIS PROMISE EXTENDS TO US. 1. In our reading the Bible. 2. In our understanding its truths. 3. In our living a life in conformity therewith. IV. INFERENCES. 1. We have the power to accept or to reject the Holy Spirit as our Guide. 2. If we reject Him He will reprove us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. 3. If we accept Him He will dwell in us that we may know the things that are freely given us of God (1 Cor. ii. 9-16). (*L. O. Thompson.*) *The Spirit guiding into all truth:*—Truth may be compared to some cave or grotto, with wondrous stalactites hanging from the roof, and others starting from the floor; a cavern glittering with spar and abounding in marvels. Before entering the cavern you inquire for a guide, who comes with his lighted flambeau. He conducts you down to a considerable depth, and you find yourself in the midst of the cave. He leads you through different chambers. Here he points you to a little stream rushing from amid the rocks, and indicates its rise and progress; there he points to some peculiar rock and tells you its name, then takes you into a large natural hall, tells you how many persons once feasted in it, and so on. Truth is a grand series of caverns, it is our glory to have so great and wise a Conductor as the Holy Spirit. Imagine that we are coming to the darkness of it. He is a light shining in the midst of us to guide us. And by the light He shows us wondrous things. He teaches us by suggestion, direction, and illumination. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The progressive revelation of truth by the Spirit:*—In theology, as in every other department of human knowledge, there is a law of progress. Truths which in one age are almost latent, or recognized simply and insulatedly by faith, on the authority of a positive declaration, are brought out more distinctly by subsequent ages, and ranged in their mutual connection—in their position as parts of the system of truth. Not, however, that this progress is always an advance along the line of truth in theology any more than in other sciences. Man's path bends aside, winds, twists, seems almost to return up on itself. His orbit has its aphelia as well as its perihelia. When he has made a lodgment in a new field of knowledge, he will set about building a tower, the top of which, he fancies, shall reach to heaven; and generations, it may be, will spend their lives in working at such a tower (*e.g.*, the schoolmen), until the Spirit of division and confusion comes down among the workmen. Thus, one system after another has passed away, each, however, leaving behind some contribution greater or less, to the general stock of theological truth. Meanwhile, God's word stands fast, even as the heavens and the earth. To the words of Scripture we cannot add; nor may we take away from them. But truth is set before us livingly, by examples, by principles, in the germ, not by the enunciation of a formal dogmatic system, according to which the thoughts of men were to be classed and rubricated for ever after; nor can any human scheme or system make out a title to the possession of such an absolute conclusive ultimatum. The right theory of development by no means implies that each later age must necessarily have a fuller and deeper knowledge of Divine things than its predecessors, the very reverse having notoriously been often the case. For the world is ever wrestling to draw man away from the truth, and will often prevail, as Jacob did over the angel; and when faith is at a low ebb, when the visible and material predominate in men's hearts and minds over the invisible, the ideal, the spiritual theology, must needs dwindle and decay. But when there is a revival of faith, if this revival coincides with, or is succeeded by a period of energetic thought, a deeper or clearer insight will be gained into certain portions of truth, especially appropriate to the circumstances and exigencies of the age, and which have not yet been set forth in their fulness—the true doctrine of the Trinity, *e.g.*, in the fourth century, and that of justification in the sixteenth. (*Archdeacon Hare.*) *The Holy Ghost the Great Teacher:*—Here is—I. AN ATTAINMENT MENTIONED—knowledge of all truth. 1. Nature itself gives us a strong desire to know all truth. What we call curiosity is something given us of God impelling us to search into the knowledge of natural things; that curiosity, sanctified by the Spirit, is also brought to bear in matters of heavenly science. A true Christian is always searching the Scripture that he may be able to certify himself as to its main and cardinal truths. 2. A knowledge of all truth is very essential for our comfort. Many persons have been distressed half their lives from the fact that they had not clear views of truth. Many souls—*e.g.*, under conviction—abide in sorrow because they have no one to instruct them about justification. Give me the congregation

whose faces are bright with joy at the sound of the gospel, then will I believe that it is God's own words they are receiving. 3. This knowledge will keep us out of danger. No doctrine is so calculated to preserve a man from sin as the doctrine of the grace of God. Those who call it a licentious doctrine know nothing about it. A man cannot have an erroneous belief without by and by having an erroneous life. Keep the head right, and especially keep the heart right with regard to truth, and your feet will not go far astray. 4. This knowledge will make us useful. There will be no character, however perplexing may be its peculiar phase, but we shall be able to speak to it and comfort it. Almost every man whom God has blessed to the building up of the Church in prosperity, has been a man who has held firmly free grace through the finished salvation of Christ. The sturdy truth of God touches every chord in every man's heart. II. A DIFFICULTY SUGGESTED. We require a guide. Truth is not so easy to discover. Why this? Because of—1. The intricacy of truth itself. Those who fancy they know everything of course see no difficulties; but the most earnest student of Scripture will find things which puzzle him. Truth is a path so narrow that two can scarce walk together in it; we usually tread the narrow way in single file. If you step an inch aside you are in a dangerous error. On the one hand there is a huge precipice, and on the other a deep morass; and unless you keep to the true line, to the breadth of a hair, you will go astray. Truth is like the veins of metal in a mine, it is often of excessive thinness, and runs not in one continued layer. Lose it once, and you may dig for miles and not discover it again; the eye must watch perpetually the direction of the lode. Grains of truth are like the grains of gold in the rivers of Australia, they must be shaken by the hands of patience, and washed in the stream of honesty, or the fine gold will be mingled with sand. 2. The insidiousness of error. It easily steals upon us, and we are often like men in a fog. We think, surely this is the right path; and the voice of the evil one whispers, "That is the way, walk ye in it." You do so, and you find that you have been walking in the paths of unrighteousness and error. The way of life is a labyrinth; the grassiest paths and the most bewitching are the farthest away from right. There is not a counterfeit coin in the world so much like a genuine one, as some errors are like the truth. 3. We are so prone to go astray. If grace did not guide a man, he would go astray, though there were hand-posts all the way to heaven. III. A PERSON PROVIDED. 1. Infallible. If I pin my sleeve to another man's coat, he may lead me part of the way rightly, but by and by he will go wrong himself, and I shall be led astray with him. But if I give myself to the Holy Ghost and ask His guidance, there is no fear of my wandering. 2. Ever present. When we have no commentator or minister, we have still the Holy Spirit. Whenever you cannot understand a text, pray over it, and if it does not open itself, try again. If prayer does not explain it, it is one of the things God did not intend you to know, and you may be content to be ignorant of it. There is no college for holy education like that of the blessed Spirit, for He is an ever-present tutor. 3. Guides "into" the truth. Now, man can guide us to a truth, but it is only the Holy Spirit who can "guide us into a truth." There are many of my hearers who are brought to the truth of their depravity; but they are not brought into it, and made to feel it. Some of you are brought to know the truth that God keeps us from day to day; but you rarely get into it, so as to live in continual dependence upon God the Holy Ghost, and draw fresh supplies from Him. The thing is, to get inside it. A Christian should do with truth as a snail does with his shell, live inside it, as well as carry it on his back. IV. A METHOD SUGGESTED. He guides us into all truth—1. By suggesting it. There are thoughts that dwell in our minds that were not born there, but which were exotics brought from heaven and put there by the Spirit. Have you not at times had unaccountably—in the middle of your business—a thought concerning God and heavenly things, and could not tell whence it came? 2. By direction, not so much putting a boat on the stream as steering it when it is there. Time after time have you commenced a meditation on a certain doctrine and, unaccountably, you were gradually led away into another, and you saw how one doctrine leaned on another, as the stones in the arch all hanging on the keystone of Jesus Christ crucified. 3. By illumination. There is nothing like reading an illuminated Bible. You may read to all eternity, and never learn anything by it, unless it is illuminated by the Spirit; and then the words shine forth like stars. V. AN EVIDENCE. You may know the Spirit's influence by—1. Its unity. The Spirit never says one thing at one time and another thing at another. It has been always held as a first principle that truth is one thing. But some persons say, "I find

one thing in one part of the Bible, and another thing in another, and though it contradicts itself I must believe it." All quite right, if it did contradict itself; but the fault is not in the wood but in the carpenter. Many carpenters do not understand dove-tailing; so there are many preachers who do not understand dove-tailing. 2. Its universality. The true child of God will not be led into some truth but into all truth. When first he starts he will not know half the truth, he will believe it but not understand it. Certain doctrines take years to develop themselves. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Heavenly Teacher:*—I. THE NAME HE BEARS. "The Spirit of truth" descriptive of—1. His nature—Spirit. In this different from Christ who was God in human form. 2. His character—true. Implied in His designation—Spirit of truth. 3. His intelligence—involved in the fact that He is the possessor of truth. 4. His Divinity—if the possessor of truth He must be Divine. II. THE SCHOLARS HE INSTRUCTS. The disciples of Christ. 1. The apostles. 2. Pastors (2 Cor. iii. 6; 2 Tim. i. 6, 14). 3. The universal company of believers—the Spirit dwelling in them (1 Cor. iii. 16), helping their infirmities (Rom. viii. 26), and leading them into all the truth. III. THE LESSONS HE IMPARTS. All the truth, not ordinary, scientific or philosophic truth, but truth—1. Heard from the Father, therefore Divine. 2. Relating to Christ, hence specifically Christian. IV. THE AIM HE PURSUES. The glory of Christ. For this end He exhibits Christ—1. As the possessor of the truth (ver. 14). 2. As the substance of the truth (chap. xiv. 6). 3. As the end of the truth—persuading men and enabling them to rest on Christ. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The necessity of the Spirit's teaching to the right understanding of the Scriptures:*—I. THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE—of faith, of repentance. Simon Magus believed and remained in the gall of bitterness. Paul believed and became a Christian. In both cases there was a persuasion of the truth. Simon believed when he saw miracles; Paul when Christ was revealed in him. Judas repented when he saw the evil consequences of his treachery; Peter when he saw his conduct in its true character. So there is a simple intellectual knowledge of the truth, and there is a spiritual knowledge and discernment. II. HOW ARE THESE RELATED? How do they agree and differ? The things known and the act of knowing are the same. But the spiritual excellence of the object is not apprehended in the one case, while it is in the other. This may be illustrated by the case of the discernment of beauty. Now, with regard to the knowledge of the Scriptures, there is no reason why the unrenewed man, without any special aid of the Spirit, should not acquire that knowledge, as well as the knowledge of any similar volume under the same conditions. 1. Assiduous study. 2. In the right method and in the use of the right means. 3. Impartiality and honesty. Now, although this is possible, it is in reference to the Scriptures difficult and rare, because of the opposition of the heart to Bible doctrines, and because the judgments of men are so largely determined by their feelings. Therefore, for the attainment of this intellectual knowledge there is great need of the Spirit's guidance to produce docility, and to prevent opposition to the truth blinding the mind. III. FOR SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE THE CASE IS PLAIN. The Scriptures teach—1. The absolute necessity of Divine teaching. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," &c. The Bible abounds in prayers for Divine teaching, and Paul declares all external teaching vain without it. 2. The cause of this ignorance, blindness, and inability to know the things of God arises from two sources. (1) Our depravity. We are natural, carnal—the opposite of the Spiritual—which we cannot, therefore, discern. (2) The god of this world blinds the eyes. He persuades men to reject the truth, raises objections, and excites the enmity of the heart. 3. It is a solemn fact, therefore, that those only who are led by the Spirit come to a knowledge of the truth. This is His great office, must be recognized and accepted. Correct speculative knowledge and spiritual knowledge experience teaches do not admit of protracted separation. Orthodoxy will not last long without piety. An unconverted ministry forsakes the truth. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*)

Ver. 14. **He shall glorify Me.**—*Christ glorified by the Spirit:*—This is the crowning and has been the constant work of the Spirit. He glorified Christ in the prophecies, sacrifices and promises of the ancient economy, in the sinless humanity with which He clothed Him; in the public ministry to which He set Him apart; in the holy life He caused Him to live; in the sufferings He enabled Him to endure; in His glorious resurrection, ascension and triumphs in the day of Pentecost. But the text points beyond these. Our Lord referred to the spiritual illumination which

would make men acquainted with Him, so that whereas He had before been treated ignominiously would in future be honoured for ever. The Spirit would lead men to glorify Christ—I. BY THE VIEWS WHICH HE WOULD ENLIGHTEN THEM TO ENTERTAIN OF HIM. This implies that there is in Christ that which no eye can discover until opened by the Spirit of God. This our Lord intimated to Peter—"flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee," &c. The illumination of the Spirit leads to a saving discovery of the glory of—1. Christ's Person, into the mystery of Godliness. 2. His work of redemption. 3. His offices, as Prophet, Priest and King. II. BY THE AFFECTIONS WHICH HE CAUSES HIS PEOPLE TO CHERISH TOWARDS HIM, which are highly honourable to Him. 1. Faith. What an honour to receive the trust of a redeemed world. 2. Gratitude. 3. Love. 4. Hope. 5. Joy. Men are honoured by these affections; but we can only exercise them in part because of the defectiveness of the worthiest objects. It is Christ's glory to be worthy of them and to receive them completely. III. BY THE SUPREMACY WHICH HE CLAIMS AND SECURES FOR HIM AMONG ALL THE CREATURES OF GOD. Christ is now supreme—1. Over every heart that is given to Him. 2. Over His own Church. 3. Over the world. 4. Over other worlds. This supremacy will, under the guidance of the Spirit, be eventually acknowledged. IV. BY THE LIFE WHICH HE INDUCES HIS PEOPLE TO LIVE FOR HIS SAKE. "Let your light so shine," &c. "Ye are not your own," &c. In this life the believer joyfully acquiesces. How honourable to Christ the lives of saintly men! V. BY THE PRAISES WHICH SHALL COMPASS HIM ABOUT FOR EVER. 1. Of angels. 2. His redeemed. 3. Every creature. Conclusion: If we would glorify Christ we must—1. Be taught by the Spirit. 2. Be quickened by the Spirit. 3. Be sanctified by the Spirit. 4. Submit to a supremacy which the Spirit claims for Christ. 5. Be "made meet for the inheritance of the saints to light." (*J. Morgan, D.D.*)

The glory of Christ in the mission of the Holy Ghost:—I. CONTEMPLATE THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT.—1. He awakens the attention of the thoughtless and slumbering world to the truth of God. 2. He convinces of sin. 3. He regenerates the soul. 4. He is the Comforter. II. THE GREAT AND DIVINE AGENT IS THE MESSENGER OF CHRIST. III. HIS MISSION ILLUSTRATES THE GLORY OF CHRIST. 1. Furnishing additional proof of the great facts which form the substance of Christianity. 2. Giving efficacy to the work already accomplished by Christ's death and resurrection. 3. Enabling us to form some estimate of the blessings Christ bestows. 4. Giving hope to the world. (*G. Spring, D.D.*)

The Holy Spirit glorifying Christ:—We shall use our text—I. AS A TEST. There are a thousand things that claim to be of the Holy Ghost; how can we know whether they are or not? Here is a simple mode. Apply this test—1. To ministries. Now, there are some ministries which clearly are not of the Holy Ghost, because they—(1) Glorify ceremonies. (2) Extol doctrine. Against a sound creed we have not a word to say; but still we must exalt Christ rather than Calvinism, or any other system of theology. (3) Magnify a certain experience—If you have felt thus, and thus, no words of praise can be too strong for you; but if you have been led in another way, you never knew vital godliness at all. I say not a word against experimental preaching, but it must be experience about Christ. (4) Exalt morality. If we will do this, and that, and the other we shall be saved. But if any man put the works of flesh before the finished work of Christ, his ministry is not of the Holy Ghost. (5) And what might I say of many who produce their pretty little essays, and high-sounding periods, but that they are as "sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal," inasmuch as they forget Christ. How bitterly shall we lament much of our ministry because it hath not glorified Christ on our dying beds. What joy it shall be to remember that, however feebly, we did extol Him. 2. To doctrine. Any teaching, whatever authority it may claim, which does not glorify Christ, is most assuredly false. Socinianism must be utterly abhorred of us, for it strikes at once at the Deity of our blessed Lord and Master. If, on the other hand, a doctrine layeth man in the dust and lifteth up Christ as a Saviour, the Alpha and Omega of salvation, you may safely say that is the Holy Ghost's doctrine, for He shall glorify Christ. 3. To the conviction through which a sinner passes. In the first dawn of our spiritual life, a mighty tempest of spiritual influence sweeps over the heart. The Holy Ghost is active, and the Prince of the Power of the air is active too. How, in this confusion, can a man know what part of his conviction is of God, and what part of the devil? You have a thought in your head that you are too great a sinner to be saved. That is not of the Holy Ghost, clearly, because it detracts from the power of Christ as a Saviour. "I am not fit to come to Christ." Surely this is not of the Holy Ghost. What, are you to make yourself fit to come to Christ? Why that is making you a Christ.

"But I heard Mr. So-and-So say, that when he was converted, he seemed to be dragged by the hair of his head to the very depths of hell, lost beyond the reach of mercy." No doubt that was his experience; but do you want to experience every piece of devilry that a good man has known? Much of what your friend felt was not of God, but of his own corrupt heart. If the Lord brings thee to put thy soul just as it is into the hands of the Redeemer, honouring him by a childlike trust, thou hast an experience infinitely more precious than the ravings of thy proud heart could ever yield thee. 4. To what is called experience. Much of the experience of a Christian is not Christian experience. If any person should mount the platform and inform us that he had been five times tried at the Old Bailey, you would say, "Well, you may have experienced that disgrace, but it is not fair to call it human experience." So, a Christian man may fall into great darkness, and sin. But if he shall set up his darkness and sin as being Christian experience, we say, "No; you may be a Christian and know all this, but we cannot allow you to decide our spiritual state according to your peculiar method of feeling." When we get to that which cometh from beneath we ought to say "Oh! wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord." That only which glorifies Christ is true Christian experience. 5. To ourselves. Art thou saved or not? If saved, the tenor of thy life is to glorify Christ. What sayest thou in looking back? And what about the present and the future? II. A DIRECTION. How are we to glorify Christ? We must have the Holy Spirit. Let our text, then—1. Be sanctified to our humiliation. Here are we saved, and yet such weak things that we cannot glorify Christ without the Holy Ghost. Thou hast ten talents, but those ten talents shall make thee ten times a worse defaulter to thy Master unless the Holy Ghost help thee. 2. Be an excitement to earnest prayer. 3. Teach us entire dependence upon the Holy Spirit. All the farmers in England cannot make it leave off raining, but when it does leave off, and the sun shines, they can get their wheat in as quick as they can. All the sailors on the ocean cannot make a capful of wind; but when the wind does blow they can crowd on every yard of canvas. So all the Christians in the world cannot make the Holy Spirit work. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," &c., but when we have the Holy Spirit, we can use Him; when He is with us we can work. III. A STIMULUS. Does the Holy Ghost glorify Christ? Then—1. How should we aim to do it! You have been in a large way of business. Could you say that your object was to honour Christ in it? You have come down in the world; but suppose you can glorify God more. Then you are in a better position than you used to be. 2. While we make this our aim, let us take every opportunity of glorifying Christ. We throw thousands of opportunities away. Whether ye work at a lapstone, or drive a plough, or lay the stones in a building, or are diligent with the pen, or buy and sell, do all, even to your eating or your drinking, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and so, like the Holy Spirit, let it be said of you, "He shall glorify Me." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Holy Spirit the Revealer of Christ:*—We are living in the dispensation of the Spirit. What does that mean? It means that we are living on a higher plane than ever has been occupied before. We gather this—1. From a comparison of this dispensation with others that have preceded it. True religion is more widely disseminated in this than it has been in any preceding dispensation. 2. We know that this Dispensation is an advance, because God Himself is advance—progress. He never goes backward. 3. The same fact is clear from the structure of Scripture. 4. The whole historic development of man, looked at in the line of the plan of redemption, is clearly enough in this upward direction. The work of God is from matter toward spirit. The child leaves his playthings behind, and comes to despise them. The college student turns his back on the pleasures and games of his boyhood. The professional man has forgotten the rivalries of college life—as narrow as its walls; and the mellowed and matured philosopher "lives already amid the peace and the power of invisible scenes," and draws from above and beyond him the springs of incentive and action. The same principle holds throughout nature. Time and again our attention is drawn to the fact that there is an invisible world, and that that invisible world bears down upon and overpowers the visible. That thought and feeling and volition are stronger than substance and quality and force, and that from within what is unseen and supersensible and supernatural flow the "upper springs" of all inferior energy and action. 5. But we are not left to gather up an inference from observation, nor speculation, nor from logic. "Our Saviour Himself now assures us, that if we believe in Him we shall do greater works than even those which He performed on earth, and that we shall do them precisely

because He goes to the Father." I. THE ONE ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION IS THE REVELATION OF CHRIST. How essential this is may be gathered from reason, from conscience, and from the light of the Scriptures. 1. From reason. Nowhere, outside the radius of Christianity, is there either holiness or peace. Look at Africa. Look at China. He who knows anything of the history of moral light knows that it has followed, as its centre, the planting of the cross of Christ—that just as races have receded from the light of God in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, so they have sunken to a brutish level, and have died in the distractions of an utter unrest. 2. Conscience affirms the same truth. Conscience, in every man, says: "You are guilty! You are a sinner! God is holy. He cannot acquit!" Conscience, whatever modern thought may say, cries—"Eternal Justice is Eternal Fact, and God is just; and How can justice clear the guilty?" and to this cry of conscience is no answer but in Christ and in the sacrifice of Christ. 3. And these deductions of our reason and our conscience are confirmed by Scripture. Now the Bible affirms. It comes straight out and says: "Apart from the knowledge of Christ there is no salvation." II. THE HOLY GHOST IS THE ONLY REVEALER OF CHRIST. He alone makes Christ glorious. The Holy Ghost has given us all the knowledge that we have of Jesus Christ. Where do we get that knowledge? How do we know that there is such a thing as a Saviour? From the Bible. Outside the covers of this Book there is not a hint of a Christ. And whence came the Bible? It was inspired. Who inspired it? God, the Holy Ghost. Not only so, but, with the Bible in our hands, how can we know anything of Christ, save as the Spirit reveals Him? Miracle never changed any man. Appearances—like that of the angels to Abraham. Abraham saw Christ's day. How did he see it? By illumination—by the Holy Ghost. Moses recognized God at Horeb. How? By the fire? No, but by God speaking out of the midst of the bush. Ezekiel was transformed at Chebar. How? By the wheels? No, but "the Spirit," he says, "entered in me." Israel was to be revived under Elijah. How? By the wind? By the earthquake? By the fire? By any sensible or ocular demonstration? No; but by the still small voice. That was the lesson taught to the prophet. The same fact comes out in the New Testament. How many saw Christ—touched Christ—said they believed on Christ in the flesh, who never went beyond impressions of their outward senses. What makes a Christian is the spiritual apprehension of Christ, and the Holy Ghost alone can reveal Him. Take the Levitical sacrifices—how without these could we explain the Atonement? Yet only a few who read them under the Old Dispensation saw Christ in these Scriptures, and why? Because they needed more than the most perfect description. They needed light on the light. They needed, like David, to have their eyes opened to see wondrous things out of God's law. The same thing is true of the New Testament. The Holy Ghost reveals Christ. He glorifies Christ. Notice: He does not create Christ; He shows Him. When we were sailing in the Grecian Archipelago we came, at dawn of day, to the Island of Rhodes. At first we saw only a grey indistinctness—the shapeless outline of vast rocks rising out of the water. Then as the sun came up, how glorious! There lay the harbour once bestridden by the famous Colossus, the sapphire ripplings of the water touched with rose and gold—the ships, the flappings of their sails stirred lightly by the morning breeze. There stretched away the green fields and the mountains round which poetry had thrown her charm; midway in the perspective rose the ancient castellated ramparts of the fortress of the Knights of St. John, all flashing, glowing, burning, touched and "transfigured by the ministry of light." "That which doth make manifest is light." The Holy Ghost is the only revealer of Jesus. And the Holy Ghost glorifies Christ or reveals Him in His true glory now, as He could not possibly do were Christ present. The apostles loved Christ too much, as the carnal loves the carnal. That is the error of Rome, with her crucifixes, her Mass, and her sensuous ecstasies. Read the memoirs of Santa Teresa and of St. John of the Cross, and you will find the love they express for the Saviour is sensuous—carnal. There is something lurid about it. You are afraid of it. It was necessary that that sort of thing should be broken—that there should come an experience, which, permit me to say it, should emancipate Christ—should burst the tomb and the grave-clothes, and set Him Infinite, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Heavenly—working above, as ever in, and through His Church—an experience like that of St. Paul when he says: "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." We only know Him as the Spirit reveals Him. You have known a man by his clothes—by his face—now you come to know him by his character. Something reveals him in his abilities, in his

integrity, in his truth, as your friend. The Holy Ghost reveals Christ. But let us come closer; the ulterior and special object of the Spirit's revelation is God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ. III. "He shall glorify"—"MAKE ME GLORIOUS." St. Paul expands our Saviour's statement in these words: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The world without Christ, or Christ in twilight—beneath the dawn-line of the Old Testament—beneath the histories, and types, and prophecies—beneath the horizon of an Arctic winter, and then, and all at once, and for ever, the Sun of Righteousness is visible perfection of His glory—the Mystery of Godliness—the Day-spring from on high! The statement of this point involves, of course, three. That there is such a thing as the knowledge of the glory of God—that this knowledge is unfolded in the face of Jesus Christ, and that it comes by a Divine in-shining. 1. The knowledge of the glory of God. If God be God, He is glorious, for glory is manifested excellence, and God is most excellent, and cannot be hid. The glory of God is not only His greatness, but the equipoise of His character. Satan is great, *i.e.*, in faculties, but he is in no wise glorious, but infamous, because of the defect of his character. God's glory is the equipoise of His attributes. With Him nowhere is there too much—nowhere a deficit. It is important to put emphasis upon the fact before us, because the effort of to-day is to destroy the balance of the attributes of God—to posit in that justice, for example—and in measurement and in adjustment everything comes back to the straight line—that justice in God is a merely optional attribute. "How can God," says one of our modern neologians, "how can God be free if He be the slave of His own justice?" As well ask, "How can I be free if I cannot rid myself of my backbone? I am the slave, then, of my backbone. But how can I be a man and have no backbone?" For God to be free from His justice would be for Him to be free from Himself as moral, and therefore immoral; for justice is simply looking on things as they are, and treating them accordingly, and to deny this is to deny rectitude, and to deny rectitude is to deny God and make Him immoral. Justice optional! What should we think of a man to whom it were optional to be just, or to be unjust? The moral grandeur of God is His balance, His poise, that He rights Himself. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" 2. The glory of God then, as it stands revealed in vast concentric haloes, circles upon circles of immeasurable excellence, is at its brightest spot—its centre—and when focalized and gathered to one burning-point, nothing more, nothing less than conciliation of justice and grace. "How can God be just and justify the guilty?" lies at the root of the gospel. The answer to that question is the gospel, and Christ on the cross is its sum. Christ on the cross, not Christ in pre-existence, transcending thought as is the mystery of everlasting generation. Not Christ again in all the grand kaleidoscopic aspects of His ministry, as miracles spring up beneath His footsteps like fresh flowers. Not Christ in any, nor in all, these revelations, glorious as they are, but still subordinate, but Christ upon the tree. It was there seen that God could not swerve—that sin must be punished. What is the upshot of this? The upshot is that from the instant you and I look away to Christ as our Substitute, we are eternally saved. Is not that glorious? Bursts there not a glory from that torn flesh which hangs and writhes upon those ragged nails, which challenges all suns to rival it in splendour? Is not here God's glory focalized, as it swings low and kisses even your and my horizon? When we were at the North Cape, at midnight, a French gentleman took out a sun-glass and burned a hole in his hat with it. Low as the sun was, he was still clothed with all his burning power. So it was with our Saviour on the cross. "For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth." 3. This glory hath in-shined—that is the third point. It hath shined not historically—not in the face of a physical Christ, although these, of course, are included; but through the veil of the heart. Christ's glory to mere worldly men is a veiled glory; "the veil" says the Apostle, "is upon their heart." That veil has been rent—not from our side—from God's side. God hath "shined in"—not into the world only, that is not enough—could not be, for "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." Into believing hearts God hath shined. It is not simply knowledge, but it is the light of the knowledge. It is not Church instruction, but heart-work—interior regeneration. "When it pleased God," says Paul, "to reveal His Son within me, immediately I took no conference with flesh and blood." How then do we see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? 1. One way, by faith. Faith is the great opened eye of the soul. 2. Another way the light shines in us is by the witness of the Spirit. What is that witness if not

a supernatural spiritual emphasis put on the assurances and promises of God, which makes them true to us without a question? 3. A third way light shines in is by consciousness. Consciousness of breathing goes with breathing. Consciousness of walking goes with walking. Consciousness of life and vigour goes with power. A man full of the Holy Ghost knows what he is full of, and that he is not empty. He knows that his light is not darkness—that his joy is not despair, and that his power is something other and more than physical elation or physical energy. "Can He not, through some interior eye which we know not, and for which we have no name, pour into us the radiance of His own infinite glory, though He be the King invisible, whom no man has seen, nor can see?" Can He not manifest Himself to the eye of interior consciousness with a distinctness of spiritual presence as satisfying as that which His bodily form gave to the external vision of His disciples? This revelation of Christ—fresh revelation I mean, satisfying our souls, filling, flooding—enlarging us with the light, and the love, and the joy, and the strength of the Lord is what we need. (*G. S. Bishop, D.D.*) *The promise of the Spirit —the fulness of Christ*:—"He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine," &c., might be liable to misconstruction, and indicate that Christ would have Himself to be glorified, apart from the Father, and His own fulness drawn upon independently. As if to obviate this, Christ hastens to account for His having said it. "It is of the Father's after all that He takes, when He takes of Mine. It is the Father whom He glorifies when He glorifies Me." But the Lord had undoubtedly another reason. It is for their sakes, rather than His own, that He announces this truth, "I would not have said that were it not that all things which the Father hath are Mine; for otherwise it would have been poor consolation to you." We are therefore naturally led, first, to consider what Christ has before examining the promise concerning what the Holy Ghost is to do. The Lord might say, "All things that the Father hath are Mine," in respect of—I. HIS ORIGINAL GODHEAD; and but for this He could not, without blasphemy, have said it. This the Jews well understood, when, for similar language, "they took up stones to stone Him," and when they cried out at His trial, "He hath spoken blasphemy." For it is impossible to explain away this claim of a right of property in all that is the Father's, or to justify it if made by a creature. Often, during the days of His flesh, do we find Him dwelling with a holy and blessed complacency on thoughts connected with His being "in the bosom of the Father." II. HIS SUFFERING MANHOOD. It is this consideration, indeed, which makes the statement practically important in its application to us, viz., as being in our nature. Such is the glory of His person, as combining the Divine nature with the human; and such the value of His work that whatsoever is comprehended in the fulness of the Godhead is centred in "the Man Christ Jesus," considered as obedient to the Father, "even unto death." And as the recompense of that work, He receives, in His human nature, an interest in all that the Father hath. Hence the blessedness of His assurance, that "as the Son of Man He has power on earth to forgive sins." Hence also the value of that deed of grant, by which, "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself, that the Son also may quicken whom He will." And hence the importance of the Father's surrender, as it were, of the right of rule or judgment into the hands of the Son, for this very reason, that "He is the Son of Man." These are among the things which the Father has, and these He has given to the Son. Now, in respect of His original Godhead, these things cannot be said to be given to Him. They belong to Him by necessity of nature. But as the Son of Man He receives this threefold prerogative as the gift of the Father. III. HIS HEADSHIP OF THE CHURCH. In one sense, it is true, even as regards the wicked, that all things which the Father hath, He hath given unto the Son. The impenitent and unbelieving are consigned to His disposal; and on Him it devolves to award and inflict eternal judgment. But it is His own people that Christ has chiefly in His eye here. 1. They themselves belong to the Father. "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." "All that the Father giveth Me, shall come unto thee." All that the Father has are dear to Him as belonging to the Father, and as the gift of the Father, pledged to Him in the everlasting covenant, and bestowed in recompense of His making His soul an offering for sin. 2. And taking this people as His own, uniting Himself to them, identifying Himself with them, He says "All things that the Father hath are Mine," for them, as "His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." For them, "when He ascended up on high, He received gifts." He has righteousness for them so that in Him the righteous God is well pleased. He has life with the Father, so that "they may live also." He has the everlasting

love of the Father. So that "the love wherewith the Father hath loved Him may be in them." He has glory that they may "behold the glory which He had with the Father before the world was." Conclusion: The Father entrusts His all to Christ, and so surely we might venture to entrust our all to Him. The Father's glory is safe in His keeping; the Father's riches of wisdom and grace and love are well and wisely expended by Him. Is it to such a Saviour that you, oh sinner, will hesitate about committing your soul? If He can take charge of all that is the Father's as His own, may He not take charge of all that is yours? *(J. S. Candlish, D.D.)* *The promise of the Spirit—taking and showing what is Christ's:*—In the words, "He shall receive of Mine," &c., the Spirit stands in a twofold relation and discharges a twofold function—towards Christ on the one hand, and toward His believing people on the other. I. HE SHALL TAKE OR RECEIVE OF MINE. 1. He is well entitled to take of what is Christ's, because He is Himself a Divine person. The manner in which the Holy Ghost is here associated with the Father and the Son clearly shows that He is such. In truth, for any other than a Divine Person to take part in this transaction were a liberty not to be tolerated. But the Holy Ghost, being Himself God, is a party to the whole arrangement by which all things that the Father hath become Christ's: nay, more, He is a party to the carrying of that arrangement into effect. For consider how large a share the Holy Ghost had in the whole of that mediatorial work of Christ, which is the main ground of His saying, "All things that the Father hath are Mine." His very coming into the world was by the Holy Ghost, by whom a body was prepared for Him. He was "anointed by the Holy Ghost without measure," for the doing of His Father's will. "Through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself, without spot, to God;" and He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, by His resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness." In all the critical circumstances of His arduous undertaking, in His birth, His baptism, &c., the Holy Ghost stood by Him sustaining His human soul, and conveying to it the Father's love. 2. Nor is He less qualified and able, than He is entitled, to receive of what is Christ's. For, having been with the Father and the Son in the ordering of the plan from all eternity, and having been with Christ all along in the accomplishment of it, "He searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God:" and in dealing with what is Christ's, He is in His element, so to speak, and at home (ver. 13). He can make us know "the things which are freely given to us of God;" past, present, and future; "opening our eyes to behold wondrous things out of God's law." 3. He is One whom Christ is, altogether willing to have taking of His. It is not a stranger who disposes of another's property, or builds on another's foundation. It is no rash or rude hand, indifferent to His interest or honour, that rifles His treasury and steals from His unsearchable riches. "He shall glorify Me," says Christ Himself. He is of My council, and His sole aim is to carry out My work and to exalt My name. II. WHAT THE SPIRIT THUS TAKES OR RECEIVES OF CHRIST'S, HE SHOWS TO HIS PEOPLE. 1. What kind of showing is it that we need? How is it that what the Spirit takes of Christ's must be revealed? Will it suffice to set before our eyes what is to be shown? Alas! the experience of the Lord's actual sojourn here below gives but a sad reply. Nor is the case altered now. In the written Word, in the preaching of the gospel, in all the means and ordinances by which Christ and His salvation are brought before the minds of men and pressed upon their regard, the Holy Ghost is "taking of what is Christ's and showing it," and every time you open the Bible, or wait on the preaching of Christ crucified, if you continue unaffected and unmoved, you are resisting the Spirit. But there must be a showing of another kind; a work of discovery within, an opening of the eye of the carnal mind; a dispelling of the darkness of the evil heart, that "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" may shine. Now for this kind of showing, the Holy Ghost is the fitting agent. For being pure Spirit, He has access immediately to your spirits: and being almighty, He turns them whithersoever He will. 2. Mark the progress of the Spirit's work, in showing you what He takes of Christ's. (1) Call to mind the first awakening of your soul to the apprehension of things divine. Think on the time, when, after a sudden and decided call perhaps, or a slower and more doubtful process of conviction, you have felt as if, all at once, the clouds broke and the sky cleared. What of Christ's was it that the Spirit was then showing you? Did He not show you the Son obedient, and the Father well pleased: the righteous and holy love of God, which is Christ's as the reward of His obedience unto death, in all its fulness and freeness? (2) Or again, if you go back to any season of peculiar spiritual prosperity, what was it that quickened your holy graces,

filled you with hatred of sin, and made duties a delight? What did the Spirit show to you of Christ's then? What of holy beauty, or meek endurance, or tender sympathy in Christ? What of venerable authority and benignant complacency in God His Father? (3) Learn to note in some such way as this the agency of the Holy Spirit in you, by observing what it is that He shows you of Christ's and of the Father's, in the critical periods of your Christian pilgrimage. See how He has used the "unsearchable riches of Christ" for the satisfying of your wants; how in your ignorance He has opened to you "the riches of His wisdom and knowledge;" in your waywardness and backsliding; "the riches of His forbearance" in your grief and despondency "the riches of His grace;" and amid the terrors of death "the riches of His glory." Thus you will be able to stir up the gift that is in you, and to improve the Spirit's gracious dealings with you to the uttermost. 3. Observe as an encouragement how this whole work of the Spirit is carried on, not against, but by means of our natural faculties of understanding and conscience. If He shows you must look. It is in the Word that Christ is set forth. Let the Word of Christ then dwell in you richly. Then will the Spirit be ever showing you out of the word by His inward teaching, more and more of what is Christ's and opening your eyes more and more to "behold wondrous things out of His law." And this the rather because—4. The work is according to the mind of Christ. He is the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit that dwelt in Him. And if the very Spirit that dwelt in Christ, and was intimately cognisant of all that passed through His soul in all His life of sorrows, and His death of shame, and His resurrection to glory, dwell in you; have you not here a connecting link which will give you a quick understanding and discernment of all that is Christ's, and cause you to realize it as your own? Conclusion: 1. The doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity is brought out in this, as it generally is in other passages of the Word, not abstractly and in the way of a naked statement of the truth, but practically, and with reference to what they severally do in the economy of grace. 2. The manner of intercourse between heaven and earth is here presented. The chain is formed—fixed on the throne of God at one end, twined round your heart at the other—waiting but the touch of the heavenly fire, the swift and secret influence of the Heavenly Spirit, to make it all instinct with life and meaning, so that signs and tokens may pass between. The ladder is set—reaching from the sanctuary above to the sanctuary of every church, home, and closet. And not angels only are ascending and descending on this ladder, which is none other than the mediation of the Son of Man—but the Lord Himself—the Spirit—is moving to and fro, communicating the fulness of the Father, through the Son. (*Ibid.*) *The Holy Spirit revealing the things of Christ:*—As the page may bear upon its surface writings traced in viewless ink, which are there, and yet are as if they were not, until the nearness of the fire shall call them out into a new distinctness, so may all truth be written on the mind of man, and yet be dead and meaningless, until called into power and being by the falling on it of these rays of the heavenly fire; and then every word of Scripture, every voice of God in His Church, every sacrament, comes forth into shape and completeness, as Christ is seen by the soul to be there. (*Bp. S. Wilberforce.*)

Ver. 15. **All things that the Father hath are Mine.**—*The fulness that is in Christ:*—I. CHRIST HAS A LEGAL RIGHT TO THE PROPERTY OF THE FATHER. Because He has—1. A natural right to it, as He is God. 2. A federal right as Mediator, *i.e.*, God the Father and God the Son are represented in Scripture as having agreed together in a covenant respecting the salvation of the human race. It was in this agreement that God the Father made over all the blessings that He had unto Jesus Christ. 3. A donative right as Saviour (chap. iii. 35). 4. An acquisitive right as Conqueror. Suppose two individuals are combating for some property or privilege, and this is to belong to the individual who comes off victorious; you say of him afterwards, "he has acquired that." Just so Christ came into the world to contend with sin and Satan for us, and He came off victorious. 5. A hereditary right as God's Son and Heir (Heb. i. 2.) II. SOME OF THOSE "ALL THINGS" WHICH JESUS CHRIST IS SAID TO HAVE. 1. All the perfections of God. If, as is said, in 1 Cor. i. 24, He is the power of God and the wisdom of God, then all the rest must be His. 2. The glory of the Father (Heb. i. 3). 3. All the fulness of the Father (Col. i. 19; ii. 19). III. IN WHAT SENSE ARE ALL THINGS CHRIST'S? 1. Substantially, not figuratively or nominally, but really. 2. Communicatively. Some persons may possess great and inestimable treasures, but they may not have the power of communicating them. But Christ possesses "all things" for the

express purpose of communicating them (chap. i. 16). He has pardon for our sins, and we have received it; He has justification for our souls, and He has imputed it, &c. 3. Sufficiently (Psa. cvii. 9). 4. Efficiently. It shall be really applied to the heart, and go to the extent which necessity requires. There may be many things that may be said to be sufficient and yet not efficient. Some of us may have enough for ourselves and others, but it is not efficient unless they partake of it. 5. Unchangeably. 6. Eternally. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." IV. FOR WHAT REASON IT IS SO ARRANGED THAT THE FATHER'S PROPERTY IS CHRIST'S. 1. The right and the property of no party is lost. The Father has the same property as the Son, and the Son has the same property as the Spirit. 2. Herein is seen the pleasure of the Father, the pleasure of the Son, and the pleasure of the Holy Spirit. 3. Here is God's honour in choosing His people, Christ's honour in redeeming them, and the Spirit's honour in regenerating them. (*T. B. Baker, M.A.*) *The joint proprietorship of the Father and the children*:—I once heard a father tell, that when he removed his family to a new residence, where the accommodation was much more ample, and the substance much more rich and varied, his youngest son, yet a lisping infant, ran round every room, and scanned every article with ecstasy, calling out, in childish wonder at every new sight, "Is this ours, father? and is this ours?" The child did not say "yours," and I observed that the father while he told the story was not offended with the freedom. You could read in his glistening eye that the infant's confidence in appropriating as his own all that his father had, was an important element in his satisfaction. Such, I suppose, will be the surprise, and joy, and appropriating confidence, with which the child of our Father's family will count all his own, when he is removed from the comparatively mean condition of things present, and enters the infinite of things to come. When the glories of heaven burst upon his view, he does not stand at a distance, like a stranger, saying, "O God, these are Thine." He bounds forward to touch and taste every provision which those blessed mansions contain, exclaiming, as he looks in the Father's face, "Father, this and this is ours." The dear child is glad of all the Father's riches, and the Father is gladder of His dear child. (*W. Arnot.*) *The revealing work of the Spirit*:—The Holy Spirit is given for the purpose of restoring to spiritual truth its natural and reasonable efficiency. It is as though we had our eyes fixed on a book in the deep gloom of twilight. We believe that the page reveals truth, we know the language in which it is written; but the light is so imperfect, that, though here and there we can distinguish a capital letter, and now and then decipher a word, yet we are unable to make out distinctly a single sentence. But let light now fall upon the page, and every word and every letter is instantly revealed, the thought of the writer beams upon our understanding, and the channel of communication between His mind and ours is, for the time, fully established. Very similar to this is the case before us. We read and we hear about God, the Judge of all, and Christ, the Redeemer of men, about sin and repentance, heaven and hell, the wages of guilt and the reward of holiness, and we care so little about them that the words hardly awaken a thought, or leave a trace upon our recollection. But let now the Holy Spirit show these things of Christ unto us, and they are at once invested with the terrors or the joys of a most solemn reality. (*F. Wayland, D.D.*)

Vers. 16-22. **A little while and ye shall not see Me.**—*Christ visible to loving hearts*:—This was a strange saying, and a stranger reason. How should His going away be the pledge of their seeing Him again? There have already been three manifestations of our Lord, and there shall be yet a fourth—the three first ascending to the last, which shall be full, perfect, eternal. First, He has been seen by the eye, when He came in our manhood (1 Tim. iii. 16; John i. 14). But this is not the manifestation promised here. That was but local, partial, transitory; this is something larger and more abiding. Again, He has also manifested Himself to the ear. Who has not heard of Him, young and old, high and low, wise and simple? But neither is this the promised manifestation; for this, too, is an exterior revelation, made to all alike, to the good and to the evil, to those that love Him and to those that love Him not. What He here promises is something special and interior, deeper and more intimate, the peculiar gift of those who "keep His commandments." It is a manifestation, not to the eye or to the ear, but to a sense above both hearing and sight; a spiritual sense, comprehending all powers of perception, to which all other senses are but avenues (chap. xiv. 21). And this, "because I go to the Father." When I am ascended I will return with a presence,

not local, but in and above all place; not transient, but abiding; not visible to the eye, but to the heart, by a power of spiritual intuition. Let us take an example. What does the sight of any one, as, for instance, of a friend, bestow upon us? What are its effects? 1. The first effect it produces in us is a sense of his presence. We know what his coming and going awakens. It may be we were waiting for his arrival, full of other thoughts, busy or weary, or musing, or all but forgetful. When he came we were wakened up in every pulse. Our hearts go forth to meet him. 2. Another effect wrought by the sight of a friend is a perception of his character. When Christ shows Himself by the illumination of the heart, then all we have read turns into reality. The holy Gospels rise up into a living person; they live and breath before us. Then we understand and perceive, by a spiritual appreciation, His sanctity and pureness, His lowliness and patience, His meekness and tenderness, His love and sympathy. We "taste that the Lord is gracious." Now this is a spiritual perception which only spiritual communion can bestow. And by this communion, in a way transcending the senses of our earthly nature, He manifests His character to those who love Him. This spiritual perception of His character by love is the beginning of His likeness in us. Love likens us to each other, and above all to Him. 3. Take one more effect of sight—a consciousness of the love of a friend for us. There is something in his eye, look, and bearing, which is expressive above all words, and emphatic above all speech. When God was made Man, He put on human affections and human sympathies. He loved according to the love of kinsman and of friends. Particular affections, we know, are consistent with perfect love. The very name of "the beloved disciple" is witness enough. Out of His followers He even loves with especial love the children of the beatitudes. He loves, with a distinguishing love of friendship, those who are most like Himself. "I *will* love Him." There is a love with which, as God, He loved all mankind eternally; and another deeper love, with which He loved all whom He foreknew would love Him again. But there is a deeper mystery still. The Word was made flesh, and, as Man, comes down in this world of time; He sees, one by one, those whom He foreknew made perfect in actual obedience. As, one by one, they love Him, He loves them, and shows Himself to them. (*Archdeacon Manning.*) *Our Lord's two little whiles*:—I. THE LITTLE WHILES. 1. The little while of vision. Negatively described; rather as an anticipation of non-vision. The words of one conscious of impending death, and the quick completion of aims; but also confident of final triumph. (1) It is a note of attention. "Let every faculty be on the alert. Do not misinterpret the signs, or be disconcerted. Your great work just now is 'witnessing.'" (2) A placing of His earthly manifestation in its proper light. His teaching and miracles were not to go on indefinitely, as if they were ends in themselves. They were but a small portion of a vast scheme, most of which had to be carried out in the unseen world. There was to be a measure, an economy in His earthly manifestation. 2. This little while of darkness. (1) The epithet is here applied in gracious consideration and sympathy. It is only a "little" while. Graciously curtailed, graciously interpreted. Let them not sink into despair. They are ceaselessly and diligently to "look for His appearing." (2) His next manifestation must needs be consummative. He will tell them then of a finished work and triumph over sin and death. Its glory will compensate for their gloom and trials. Therefore—(3) They are to look forward, not backward. This is the hopeful, watchful attitude of all true disciples. Our service will have to be completed, as it will have to be accounted for, when He appears. The Lord's Supper is only "until I come." II. WHAT THEY PREPARED FOR. They are evidently related and seem to divide the entire future of Christianity in this world. They led up therefore—1. To a grander conception of Christ and His work. To many He might be lost to view; but to them He was to be as a fixed star, nay, the Sun of a new and eternal day. 2. To a spiritual vision. As they were to look through His words and works His whole manifestation, whilst He was with them, in order to perceive its inner Divine meaning; so, when He disappeared from view, they were still to contemplate Him by faith (chap xv. 18–19). Have *we* seen the spiritual Christ? It is He alone that is risen, that liveth evermore, and worketh mightily in them that believe. (*St. John A. Frere, M.A.*) *Heaven almost in sight*:—One should go to sleep at night as homesick passengers do, saying, "Perhaps in the morning we shall see the shore." To us who are Christians, it is not a solemn, but a delightful thought, that perhaps nothing but the opaque, bodily eye prevents us from beholding the gate which is open just before us, and nothing but the dull ear prevents us from hearing the ringing of those bells of joy which welcome us to the heavenly

land. That we are so near death is too good to be believed. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

What is this that He saith.—*Christ's going and coming:*—I. THE DEEP TEACHING OF OUR LORD ABOUT THE TIMES OF DISAPPEARANCE AND OF SIGHT. The words are plain enough; the difficulty lies in the determination of the periods. It is quite clear that the first of the "little whiles" is the few hours that intervened between His speaking and the Cross, and that His death and burial began the period during which they were not to see Him. But where does the second period begin, during which they are to see Him? Is it at His resurrection or at His ascension, when the process of going "to the Father" was complete; or at Pentecost, when the Spirit, by whom He was to be made visible, was poured out. The answer is, perhaps, not to be restricted to any one of these periods; but I think if we consider that all disciples have a portion in all these great discourses, and the absence of any hint that the promised seeing of Christ was ever to terminate, and the diversity of words under which the two manners of vision are described, and, above all, the close connection of these words with those which precede, we shall come to the conclusion that the full realization of this great promise did not begin until that time when the Spirit opened the eyes of His servants, and they saw His glory. But, however we settle the minor question of chronology, the thing that we want to fasten upon for ourselves is this. 1. We all, if we will, may have a vision of Christ as close, as real, as if He stood there, visible to our senses. That is personal Christianity. Oh! how that conviction would—(1) Lift us up above temptation! "He endured as seeing Him who is invisible." What should terrify or charm us if we saw Him? Competing glories and attractions would fade before His presence, as a dim candle dies at noon. (2) Make all life full of a blessed companionship. Who could feel that life was dreary if that Friend was by his side? 2. And how are we to get it? Remember the connection. It is because there is a Divine Spirit to show men the things that are Christ's, that therefore, unseen, He is visible to the eye of faith. But besides this there are conditions of discipline which must be fulfilled. If you want to see Jesus Christ—(1) Think about Him. If men in the city walk with their eyes fixed upon the gutters, what does it matter though all the glories of a sunset are dyeing the western sky? And if Christ stood beside you, if your eyes were fixed upon the trivialities of this poor present, you would see not Him. (2) Shut out competing objects, and the dazzling cross-lights that come in and hide Him from us. There must be a "looking *off* unto Jesus." If we would see, and have our hearts filled with, the calm sublimity of the solemn white wedge that lifts itself into the far off blue, we must not let our gaze stop on the busy life of the valleys or the green slopes of the lower Alps, but must lift it and keep it fixed aloft. (3) Do His will. One act of obedience has more power to clear a man's eyes than hours of idle contemplation; and one act of disobedience has more power to dim his eyes than anything besides. Rebellious tears blind our eyes, as Mary's did, so that she did not know the Master, and took Him for the gardener. Submissive tears purge the eyes and wash them clean to see His face. II. THE BEWILDERED DISCIPLES. We find in the early portion of these discourses that twice they ventured to interrupt our Lord with more or less relevant questions, but as the wonderful words flowed on, they seem to have been awed into silence; and our Lord Himself almost complains of them that "None of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou." The inexhaustible truths that He had spoken seem to have gone clear over their heads, but the verbal repetition of the "little whiles" and the recurring ring of the sentence seems to have struck upon their ears. The Revised Version is probably correct in omitting the clause in our Lord's words, "Because I go to the Father." The disciples seem to have quoted from the clause, "Because I go to My Father and ye see Me no more." The contradiction seems to strike them. These disciples in their bewilderment represent some very common faults which we all commit in our dealing with the Lord's words. Note—1. How they pass by the greatest truths in order to fasten upon a smaller outstanding difficulty. They have no questions to ask about the gifts of the Spirit, the unity of Christ and His disciples, the love that lays down its life for its friends. But when He comes into the region of chronology, they are all agog to know the "when" about which He is so enigmatically speaking. Now is not that exactly like us, and does not the Christianity of this day want the hint to pay most attention to the greatest truths, and let the little difficulties fall into their subordinate place? The truth that Christ is the Son of God, who has died for our salvation—that is the heart of the gospel. And why should we make our faith in that, and our living by it contingent on the clearing up of certain external and

secondary questions? And why should men be so occupied in jangling about the latter as that the towering supremacy of the former should be lost sight of. What would you think of a man in a fire who, when they brought the fire-escape to him, said, "I decline to trust myself to it until you first of all explain to me the principles of its construction; and, secondly, tell me all about who made it; and, thirdly, inform me where all the materials of which it is made came from." 2. How they fling up the attempt to apprehend the obscurity in a very swift despair. "We cannot tell what He saith." And we are not going to try any more. It is all cloudland and chaos altogether. Intellectual indolence, spiritual carelessness, deal so with outstanding difficulties. Although there are no gratuitous obscurities in Christ's teaching, He said a great many things which could not possibly be understood at the time, in order that the disciples might stretch up towards what was above them, and, by stretching up, might grow. I do not think it is a good thing to break the children's bread too small. A wise teacher will now and then blend with the utmost simplicity something that is just a little in advance of the capacity of the listener, and so encourage a little hand to stretch itself out, and the arm to grow because it is stretched. Truth is sometimes hidden in a well in order that we may have the blessing of the search, and that the truth found after the search may be more precious. The tropics with their easy luxuriant growth grow languid men, and our less smiling latitude grows strenuous ones. 3. How they have no patience to wait for time and growth to solve the difficulty. They want to know all about it now, or not at all. If they had waited for six weeks Pentecost would, as it did, explain it all. We, too, are often in a hurry. There is nothing that the ordinary mind, and often the educated mind, detests so much as uncertainty and being baffled. And in order to escape that uneasiness men are dogmatical when they should be doubtful, and positive when it would be a great deal more for the health of their souls and their listeners to say, "Well, really I do not know, and I am content to wait." For our own difficulties, and for the difficulties of the world, there is nothing like time and patience. The mysteries that used to plague us when we were boys melted away when we grew up. And many questions which trouble me to-day, if I lay them aside, and go about my ordinary duties, and back to them to-morrow with a fresh eye and an unwearied brain, will have straightened themselves out and become clear. So for our own sorrows, questions, pains, griefs, and for all the riddle of this painful world. III. THE PATIENT TEACHER (ver. 19). 1. He knows all our perplexities. He had not a word of rebuke for the slowness of their apprehension. He never rebukes us either for our stupidity or for our carelessness, but has long patience with us. Yet He does give them a kind of a rebuke. "Do ye inquire among yourselves?" Inquiry "among yourselves" is folly; to ask Him is wisdom. We can do much for one another, but the deepest riddles and mysteries can only be wisely dealt with in one way. Tell Him about them. 2. Christ does not explain to the disciples the precise point that troubled them. Olivet and Pentecost were to do that; but He gives them what will tide them over the time. And so with us there is a great deal that must remain mysterious. But if we will speak plainly to Him, He will send us triumphant hope and large confidence of a coming joy that will float us over the bar and make us feel that the burden is no longer painful to carry. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The relation of Christ to the intellectual perplexities of His disciples:*—I. HE FREQUENTLY OCCASIONS THEM. He did so here, and He did so elsewhere, by His symbolical and enigmatical language. We see good reasons for this. It would serve—1. To impress them with their ignorance—the first step to knowledge. 2. To stimulate their thoughts. It would break the monotony of their minds, and urge them to inquiry. Difficulties are essential to educational work. A school-book mastered becomes obsolete. II. HE IS ALWAYS ACQUAINTED WITH THEM (ver. 19). No other teacher had such a thorough acquaintance with the unspoken thoughts which coursed through the minds of His hearers. This fact—1. Should encourage us to search the Scriptures. Our difficulties in understanding ancient authors are not known to them, nor have they the power to help us. But Christ is ready, if we ask Him to yield a satisfactory solution when we study the problems of His Word. 2. Urge us to cultivate sincerity in our thoughts. For us to profess to know things of which we are ignorant, to believe in things of which we are sceptical, is to insult His omniscience. Our prayer should be: "Teach me, O God, and know my heart," &c. III. HE WILL FURNISH A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION OF THEM IF DESIRED. Because desirous, He gives the disciples the explanation of vers. 20–24; viz.—1. That His departure would involve them in great sorrow, whilst the world would be rejoicing. 2. That His return will

change their sorrow into high joy. That joy—(1) Will be intensified by their previous distress (ver. 21). (2) It will be beyond the power of man to take away. A man may take away your property, health, life, but your joy never. (3) It will be associated with the power of obtaining all spiritual blessings from the Father. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Ver. 19. **Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask Him.**—*Christ's knowledge of our thoughts:*—I. CHRIST PERFECTLY KNOWS OUR THOUGHTS. He knew, and knows, "what is in man." 1. All the evil thoughts of His adversaries. When He forgave the man sick of the palsy He heard the whisper "within themselves, this man blasphemeth." Beneath every specious pretext and subtle question He detected the hatred that was aiming at His destruction. Was He not the express image of the Father who is kind to the unthankful and the evil. Well may Paul ask, "Despisest thou the riches of His goodness," &c. 2. He knew all the sorrowful thoughts of sinners about themselves. No one but Jesus knew that the paralytic was more troubled about sin than about sickness. So when the sinful woman fell at His feet, His eye scanned her past history. Hence we may encourage those who have much more consciousness of guilt than they can express, to believe that He knows the worst of them. 3. He knew the half-formed purposes of His disciples. He foresaw that Judas would betray Him, that Peter would deny Him, before either supposed that He would do so. He knew the secret strivings of the brethren as to which should be greatest. But He bore with their imperfections, talked with them as familiarly, and trusted them as completely, as if they could never be disloyal. If we knew all the secret thoughts of our professed friends, and foresaw how they would fail us, how far our feeling would be from Christ's. II. THAT CHRIST LOVINGLY SYMPATHIZES WITH OUR QUESTIONINGS. The disciples were entertaining a question they hesitated to ask; but He expressed it for them, and met it not with rebuke, but with teaching. They might have known that He would do this, for when they asked Him, "Why could we not cast him out?" or "Lord, declare unto us this parable," He had always met their difficulties. Nor was it otherwise during His resurrection life. He "reasoned" with the two going to Emmaus, and gave evidence to Thomas. His own knowledge was absolute, but He recognized that finite minds could only "know in part," and was satisfied if they were humble and loyal. How unjustifiable, then, for us, with our fallibility, to judge those who do not exactly see with us. This has had disastrous effects on thoughtful inquirers. There are still Thomas's as well as John's in the world—and how many of the former may be brought to say "My Lord and my God" by Christly treatment? III. THAT CHRIST WISELY ORDAINS THE INCOMPLETENESS OF OUR PRESENT KNOWLEDGE. He did not answer the question of the disciples so completely as to clear up all their difficulties. They were left to the twilight till the dawn of the resurrection morning. On all sides now we hear cries for certainty which positivism has harmonized into a song. But these demands are the outcome of the impatience which will not wait, of the self-confidence which would make us gods. "We have but faith, we cannot know. For knowledge is of things we see," &c. It is well for us this is so. We have a more heroic temper when we have "fought our doubts and gathered strength:" Scripture becomes dearer as we search it to discover the mysteries it alone reveals; and in the growing consciousness that spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned, we are brought to Jesus' feet to listen to Him and leave much to Him, concerning which He says, "I have many things," &c. When He refuses to reveal, He only acts as any wise father would do. If your child asks you a question which you cannot answer for his good, you say, "I will tell you some day—trust me to tell you at the right time." (*A. Rowland, LL.B.*)

Vers. 20–22. **Verily, verily I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament.**—*Sorrow and joy:*—I. THE FORETOLD SORROW, arising, *i.e.*—1. From their own sense of loss and bereavement. In the death of Jesus these men lost for a season their dearest, most honoured, and trusted Friend. 2. From their sympathy with their Lord's sufferings. His betrayal, humiliation, agony, crucifixion, went to their hearts. 3. From the disappointment of their hopes. Looking forward to the establishment of a Messianic kingdom, they were overwhelmed with dismay at what they saw. II. THE FORETOLD JOY. This, when it came, was, perhaps, all the livelier and brighter by contrast with the gloom from which these sensitive and sympathizing natures emerged. It was the joy of—1. Renewed friendship. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." 2. Hope revived. The cloud was dispersed, the

sun shone again. Once more they trusted that He would redeem Israel. 3. Victory. Their Lord was Conqueror, and in triumph there is ever gladness and rejoicing. 4. New humanity. In the resurrection of Christ was born the regenerated race. By the first throes of anguish came into being the Church of the Redeemer, the inheriter of earth and heaven. 5. Eternal, which none could take from them. (*Family Churchman.*) *Sorrow at the cross turned into joy*:—It is most instructive that the apostles do not speak of the death of our Lord with any kind of regret. The Gospels mention their distress during their actual occurrence, but after the Resurrection, and Pentecost, we hear of no such grief; on the contrary, there are many expressions which treat of the Crucifixion in the spirit of exalting joy. "God forbid that I should glory," &c. The "three hours' agony," the darkened church, the altar in mourning, the tolling of a bell, and all the other mock funereal rites of superstition, have not the least encouragement from the spirit and language of the apostles. I. THE DEATH OF OUR LORD WAS AND IS A THEME FOR SORROW. 1. It was so, because to the disciples—(1) It was the loss of His personal presence. They felt that they would be sheep without a shepherd: orphans bereft of their best friend and helper. What would you think if your best earthly friend was hurried away from you by a shameful death? (2) The world would be rejoicing because their Lord was gone. You know when you are in sorrow, how bitter is the coarse laugh of an adversary who exults over your misery and extracts mirth from your tears. This made the disciples smart at their Lord's death. (3) His death was for a time the disappointment of all their hopes. They at first had fondly looked for a temporal kingdom. How can they be happy who have seen an end of their fairest life-dream? (4) Added to this was the sight which many of them had of their beloved Master in His agonies. 2. Now, even at the recollection of what our Lord endured, every Christian feels sympathy with Him. You cannot read the story without feeling that the minor key befits your voice at such a time, if you at all attempt to sing. One of the sharpest points about our sorrow is this—that we were the cause of it. We virtually crucified the Lord, seeing it was because we were sinners that He must needs be made a sacrifice. II. THIS SORROW IS CHANGED INTO JOY. Not exchanged for joy, but actually transmuted, so that the grief becomes joy. 1. That Jesus died for our sins is a sharp sorrow: and yet this is the greatest joy of all. If each one of us can say, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me," we are truly happy. Because God hath condemned sin in the flesh of Jesus Christ, therefore He will no more condemn us. 2. Jesus has now suffered all that was required of Him. That He should suffer was cause for grief, but that He has now suffered all is equal cause for joy. When a champion returns from the wars bearing the scars of conflict by which he gained his honours, does any one lament over his campaigns? Let us not mourn, then; for Christ's agony is all over now, and He is none the worse for having endured it. 3. Our Lord has survived His pains. He died a real death, but now He lives a real life. The Lord is risen indeed. He has lost no dominion, He claims superior rights and rules over a new empire. He is a gainer by His losses, He has risen by His descent. 4. The grand end which His death was meant to accomplish is all attained, viz.—(1) The putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (2) The salvation of His chosen. (3) The glory of God. 5. The greatest possible blessings accrue to us, because He was made a curse for us. Through His death came pardon, reconciliation, access, acceptance, heaven. 6. Because He died there is a kingdom set up in the world, which never can be moved. 7. This joy is—(1) Right hearty joy. Ours is no superficial mirth. (2) Abiding joy. "Your joy no man taketh from you." III. THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE INVOLVED IN THIS ONE PARTICULAR INSTANCE, viz., that in connection with Christ you must expect to have sorrow. But whatever sorrow you feel there is this consolation—the pangs are all birth-pangs, they are all the necessary preliminaries of an ever-increasing joy. 1. Since you have come to know Christ you have felt a smarter grief on account of sin. Let it continue with you, for it is working holiness in you, and holiness is happiness. 2. You have felt a keener sensibility on account of the sins of those around you, do not wish to be deprived of it, it will be the means of your loving them more, and seeking more their good. 3. Perhaps you have had to bear a little persecution, hard words, and the cold shoulder. Do not fret, for all this is needful to make you have fellowship with Christ's sufferings that you may know more of Him, and may become more like Him. 4. You sometimes see the cause of Christ as it were dead, and you are grieved about it, as well you may be. It is well, but in that very feeling there should be the full persuasion that the truth of Christ cannot long be buried, but waits to rise again with power. 5. By

and by will come your last sorrow. Look forward to it without the slightest alarm. Death is the gate of endless joy, and shall we dread to enter there? Conclusion: The world shall rejoice: "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Now, what is implied there to complete the sentence? Why, that the world's joy shall be turned into sorrow. There is not a pleasure which the ungodly man enjoys but what will curdle into grief and be his sorrow for ever. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Joy and sorrow mingled:*—Joy lives in the midst of the sorrow; the sorrow springs from the same root as the gladness. The two do not clash against each other or reduce the emotion to a neutral indifference, but they blend into one another; just as in arctic regions, deep down beneath the cold snow, with its white desolation and its barren death, you shall find the budding of the early spring flowers and the fresh green grass; just as some kinds of fire burn below the water; just as in the midst of the barren and undrinkable sea here may be welling up some little fountain of fresh water that comes from a deeper depth than the great ocean around it, and pours its sweet streams along the surface of the salt waste. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Sorrow turned into joy:*—I. THE PROMISE OF A JOY WHICH IS A TRANSFORMED SORROW. "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy," not merely that the one emotion is substituted for the other, but, as it were, becomes the other. This can only mean that that which was the cause of the one reverses its action. Of course the historical and immediate fulfilment of these words lies in the double result of Christ's Cross upon His servants. That Cross, which for some few hours was pain, and all but ruin, has ever since been the centre of the deepest gladness and confidence of a thousand generations. 1. Estimate the value as an evidence of the historical veracity of the Gospel story, of this sudden and complete revolution in that handful of believers. A dead Christ was the Church's despair; a dead and risen Christ the Church's triumph. 2. This principle covers the whole ground of devout men's sorrows. Every thunder-cloud has a rainbow lying in its depths when the sun smites upon it. And our purest and noblest joys are transformed sorrows. The sorrow of contrite hearts becomes the gladness of pardoned children; the sorrow of bereaved empty hearts may become the gladness of hearts filled with God. Every stroke of the ploughshare, and every dark winter's day are represented in the broad acres waving with the golden grain. II. THIS IS A JOY FOUNDED UPON THE CONSCIOUSNESS THAT CHRIST'S EYE IS UPON US. 1. "I will see you again," &c. Elsewhere the form of the promise is the converse—"Yet a little while and ye shall see Me." "Ye shall see Me" fixes attention upon us and our perception of Him. "I will see you" fixes attention upon Him and His beholding of us. "Ye shall see Me" speaks of our going out after Him and being satisfied in Him. "I will see you" speaks of His perfect knowledge, loving care, tender, ever-watchful eye. 2. And so it requires a loving heart to find joy in such a promise. He sees all men, but unless our hearts cleave to Him, then "I will see you again" is a threat. "I know thy works" brought no joy to the lukewarm professors at Laodicea, nor to the church at Ephesus. But to the faithful souls in Philadelphia and Sardis it was blessedness and life. 3. Is there any joy to us in the thought that the Lord Christ sees us? Oh, if our hearts are really His, then all that we need will be given to us, in the belief that His eye is fixed upon us. "There be many that say, who will show us any good," &c. One look towards Christ will more than repay and abolish earth's sorrow. One look from Christ will fill our hearts with sunshine. All tears are dried on eyes that meet His. If one could take a bit of the Arctic world and float it down into the tropics, the ice would all melt, and the grey dreariness would disappear, and a new splendour of colour and light would clothe the fields, and an unwonted vegetation would spring up where barrenness had been. And if you and I will only float our lives southward beneath the direct vertical rays of that great Sun of Righteousness, then all the dreary winter and ice of our sorrows will melt, and joy will spring. III. NOTE HOW OUR LORD SETS FORTH HIS DISCIPLES' JOY AS ONE BEYOND THE REACH OF VIOLENCE AND INDEPENDENT OF EXTERNALS. "No man taketh it from you." 1. Much of our joy, of course, depends upon our fellows, and disappears when they fade. And much of our joy depends upon the goodwill and help of our fellows, and they can snatch away all that so depends. But no man but myself can put a roof over my head to shut me out from God and Christ. And as long as I have a clear sky over head, it matters very little how high may be the walls, and how close, that foes pile around me. 2. And much of our joy necessarily depends upon and fluctuates with external circumstances of a hundred different kinds. But we do not need to have all our joy fed from these surface springs. We may dig deeper down. If we are Christians, we have, like some

beleaguered garrison in a fortress, a well in the courtyard that nobody can get at. 3. But remember, though externals have no power to rob us of our joy, they can interfere with that faith which is the essential condition of our joy. They cannot force us away from Christ, but they may tempt us away. The sunshine did for the traveller in the old fable what the storm could not do; and the world may cause you to think so much about it that you forget your Master. Its joys may compel Him to hide His face, and may so fill your eyes that you do not care to look at His face. IV. THIS LIFE OF JOY IS MADE CERTAIN BY THE PROMISE OF A FAITHFUL CHRIST. "Verily! verily! I say unto you." 1. He was accustomed to use that impressive and solemn formula when He was about to speak words beyond the reach of human wisdom or of prime importance. He tells these men, who had nothing but His bare word, that the astonishing thing which He is going to promise them will certainly come to pass. He puts His own character, so to speak, in pawn. His words are precisely equivalent in meaning to the solemn Old Testament words which are represented as being the oath of God—"As I live, saith the Lord." So Christ puts His whole truthfulness at stake, as it were; and if any man that has ever loved Jesus Christ and trusted Him aright has not found this "joy unspeakable and full of glory," then Jesus Christ has said the thing that is not. 2. Then why is it that so many professing Christians have such joyless lives? Simply because they do not keep the conditions. If you know but little of this joy it is your fault, and not His. (*Ibid.*) **Your joy no man taketh from you.**—*Christian joy*:—I. THAT OUR HAPPINESS IS LARGELY IN THE POWER OF OTHER PEOPLE is a conviction which we reach very early. 1. The child, the merchant, the thinker, the public man, are all illustrations of this. No man can shut his gates and say, "I will find my happiness only in myself, and what I find no man shall take away." It seems as if all our social arrangements and relationships were not more fitted to make us furnishers of joy to one another than they are to give to every man the chance to pluck away our happiness. Husband and wife, father and child, teacher and scholar, master and servant—how they all hold each other's pleasures at their will! This view of life, which is perpetually presenting itself, stands up face to face with the thought, which all self-reliant and strong men try to keep hold of, viz., self-sufficiency. To have the sources of all happiness in our own lives is a thought which no man can wholly cast away. It never finds its realisation; it always meets the interference of our brethren. Practically, almost all men's lives vacillate between the two. II. IN THE MIDST OF A BEWILDERMENT LIKE THIS CHRIST COMES IN WITH THESE WORDS. There is a limit to our power over one another; there is a chamber of our inner selves where we may turn the key and no one can come in. The very fact that there is such a limit interests us. 1. We can see how good it is that, while there should be great regions of happiness which are involved with what others are and do, there should be also others which no one but ourselves can touch. The completest house is one whose outer rooms are hospitably open, but which has inner chambers where only the master of the house and his household have a right to enter. The best stock of ideas which any man can keep is that which, while it is subject to the influence of others, yet has at its heart convictions, which are the man's own, and which no other can invade. It is the same with regard to happiness. There would be something terrible if each of us held his power of happiness untouchable. Think how much of the finest of our intercourse, how much of the purest motive for self-sacrifice would be lost if we had no power of interfering with each other's joy. It would be almost a world of chartered selfishness. The necessary condition of your filling your child's life with sunshine is the power of darkening it with a heavy cloud. What would you care for any man's sympathy or approbation if all the while you knew that that same man's sneer or coldness would not give you even a twinge of pain? 2. And yet we can see just as clearly how dreadful it would be if this power reached in to our deepest happinesses. All of us practically insist that there shall be some enjoyments with which no man shall interfere, and which no human malice can poison. 3. Now hear what Jesus says to His disciples. (1) Nature was not to be changed in their case nor even their relations with their fellow-men to be robbed of the power of painfulness. Still, if you stabbed them they would bleed, if you burnt them they would smart. But behind all this His words revealed to them a something which no fellow-man could touch. As I think about their after lives, I can see them letting other joys go and not hating the hands which robbed them of them in the consciousness of this inmost joy, which no intrusion could invade. (2) Jesus tells His disciples that the power of this secret joy is to be His presence with them—"I will see you again,"

&c. It is not that they are to develop some interior strength, or to drift into calm indifference where the influences of their fellow-men shall not touch them any longer. It is that they are to come to a new life with Him. (3) How natural this is! Only the association of some higher and stronger person can save one from the contamination of lower persons who are swamping and ruining his life. Suppose you have a boy who is being overwhelmed and lost by and through his faculties of companionship. Have you not learned that it is through these same faculties of companionship that he must be saved? It will not be simply by forbidding him to have connection with his base companions, nor by shutting him in upon himself, that you will save him. A stronger person must be his saviour. Now this is just what Jesus did. Some men make the influence of Jesus a mere sentimental thing. They dwell upon the love which He poured out upon His friends. Other men talk about the mastery of Christ. He gave His servants things to do. He shaped their lives into new habits. It was not either of these alone. Until we grasp them both into one thought we have not understood His power. He brings love, awakening love, and authority demanding obedience. Let us try to bear this in mind as we pass on now to speak of—III. SOME OF THE INTERFERENCES WITH THE PLEASURES OF LIFE WHICH COME FROM OUR FELLOW-MEN, AND OF THE WAY IN WHICH THE SOUL'S LIFE WITH CHRIST PUTS THOSE SAME PLEASURES OUT OF THE REACH OF ANY FELLOW-MAN'S INTRUSION. 1. The pleasure of energetic action, which makes life bright to the best men. Oh, the poor creatures whom their father's money or their own sluggish wills have robbed of the great human delight of action! But opposition, criticism, and ingratitude are the ways in which other men meet an active man, and make his work a drudgery. Here is a man in public life. The happiness of dealing with the state's affairs is what his soul is full of; he has dreamed of it while he was a boy, and now all his manhood triumphs in it. But other men have stepped across his path, and hindered him from doing what he meant to do; or have told the world and him how far what he has done is from what it ought to be; or those for whom he laboured have gone away, giving him curses instead of thanks. Now he may still work on from habit or duty, but the joy is departed. Is there any help for that? If not it is a dreadful world to live and work in. But now suppose that Christ had been with that man; that behind every other motive there had been the love of Christ. Would that have made no difference? Like an electric atmosphere poured around the shrine in which a jewel rests, so that no hand can be thrust through to steal it; so round the work, full of its joy, is poured the love of Christ, out of which no man can snatch it. (1) Suppose that some opponent hinders him in doing what he wants to do—he knows that no man can thwart his Master's will. (2) Suppose that men taunt him with his action's incompleteness. The incompleteness of his action is absorbed in the larger completeness of his Master. (3) Suppose that men turn from Him with ingratitude. Christ says, "Well done," and that is the only praise he really values. To every consecrated labourer who works for Christ there is a joy in working which no man can take away from him. 2. See how all this is true of Christian thought and the struggle after truth. These are the best joys of the best men. To make some few steps forward on the journey which stretches out into eternity; to add some new stone to the structure whose lines already prophesy an infinite height for the far topstone,—he has not lived who has not felt this pleasure. But yet every thinking man discovers that the joy of thought is one that lies peculiarly within the power of our fellow-men. And why? It is not that our fellow-men may contradict and abuse our opinions. If we do really hold it perfectly as true, that is a little thing. But the trouble is that the more one thinks and studies, the more he becomes aware how infinite is truth. The truth which he has learned on any subject, he becomes aware, is not the whole. Every time, then, that any reasoner impugns our truth it starts up this consciousness. We see how far we are, even upon the subject which we know best, from having reached the end of things and laid our faith securely. This is the reason why so many people, when their faith is once attained, keep it not merely as a very precious but as a very frail and brittle thing. They will not talk with any one about it. They will not read anything upon the other side. We know this is not good; and yet we very often do not see how it is to be escaped. The real escape, I think, lies here. The Christian faith is primarily a belief in Christ. All truth which we believe, we believe in and because of Him. We know that though we have taken Him for our Master, He is very far yet from having told us all that He has to tell. That knowledge does not decrease our satisfaction in believing Him; it increases it; for it

binds us to Him not merely by what He has already taught us, but by the far greater truth which He is keeping for us, which it is a pleasure to wait for now, as it will be a pleasure to take it when the time shall come. Now, let a believer have this consciousness; and then let the unbeliever come up to him, to pluck away his joy. Always it is the surrounding of the doctrinal faith by the personal faith that keeps the joy of the doctrinal faith safe from attack or theft. 3. Follow our subject into the region of character. Can a man have such joy in his own character that no other man can take his joy away from him? Just as soon as we ask that, how our imperfections and sins start up before us! What idlest chatterer cannot pluck away our self-satisfaction, and steal the last trace of joy in our own characters? And yet, with all this true, it is not all the truth. There are two different conceptions of character, one of which looks at it in itself; the other looks at it as it is involved with the powers which are at work upon it to make it what it is capable of being. A block lying alone upon a hill-top may be uninteresting. The same block brought into a sculptor's workshop, though his hands may not have touched it, or may have only rudely blocked out his design, may be a thing to reverence. And can we not think that as it lies upon the hill-top it may be ready to accept everybody's disesteem; but when it comes into the sculptor's hands, it may gain such new sense of its capacity under that wise and loving power that no man's sneer can cloud the pleasure that it feels in the new revelation and hope of its true self which, under those hands, have come to it? Now read the parable. I am a poor, weak, wicked man; I know it; I do not need that you should tell me of it. Any small joy in myself which I have been able to conceive, your well-deserved scorn can steal from me in an instant. But now suppose that Christ takes me into His hands. I am a poor dull block still, but I am His, and His great hands have just begun to shape His purpose in me. Is not the whole thing changed? Now there is a joy in character which is not present consciousness, but certain prophecy. (*Phillips Brooks, D.D.*) *When Christ is present believers should rejoice*:—I have been so long away from England that I do not know where our Queen is residing just now; but if I had the wings of a dove, and could mount into the upper air, I would soon find out. I should look for the royal standard. I should see it floating over Windsor or Osborne, and by this token I should espy the royal abode. Fling out the banner to the breeze when the King is within. Is the King at home with you, dear brother? Do not forget to display the standard of holy joy. Hoist it, and keep it flying. Ring the joy-bells! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 23–27. **And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing.**—*The characteristics of the Christian age*:—I. COMPLETE REVELATION. 1. The subject: the Father; His nature: God; His character: love; His purpose: salvation. 2. The medium: Christ; the Father's Son, Ambassador, Revealer. II. ADEQUATE ILLUMINATION. 1. Clear. No longer in proverbs, parables, or veiled forms is the truth presented by the Spirit, but in plain and easy-to-be-understood propositions (ver. 25). 2. Sufficient. Enjoying the Spirit's teaching, the Christian needs not to ask of any external authority (ver. 23; *cf.* Heb. viii. 11). III. PERFECT COMMUNION. 1. On the part of the Christian. (1) Liberty in prayer. He may ask of the Father anything (vers. 23–26). (2) Success in prayer—guaranteed by the Christian's plea, Christ's name (vers. 24, 26); the Saviour's intercession (ver. 26); the Father's love (ver. 27). 2. On the part of the Father. (1) Loving Christ's people (ver. 27). (2) Granting their requests (ver. 23). IV. AUGMENTING EXULTATION. 1. The nature of it. The joy of the Christian is always—(1) Inward. (2) Spiritual. (3) Progressive. (4) Permanent. 2. The cause of it. (1) The Spirit's indwelling. (2) The soul's beholding of Christ (ver. 22). (3) The Father's giving (ver. 23). Lessons: 1. The superiority of the Christian age to all that have preceded. 2. The increased responsibility of all who live in it. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *What that day will bring forth*:—There are here three jewels which Christ sets in a cluster, the juxtaposition making each brighter, and gives to us for a parting keepsake. Our English word "ask" means two things, either to question in order to get information or to beseech, in order to get gifts. In the former sense the word is employed in the first clause with distinct reference to the disciples' desire to ask Him a very foolish question a moment or two before; and in the second it is employed in the central portion of my text. I. NO MORE QUESTIONINGS. 1. Do not you think that the disciples would be tempted to say, "Then what are we to do?" To them the thought was despair rather than advance; but in Christ's eyes it was progress. It is better for a boy to puzzle out the meaning of a Latin book by his own brains

and a lexicon than lazily to use an interlinear translation. Many eager Christian souls, hungering after certainty and rest, have cast themselves into the arms of an infallible pope. I doubt whether any such questioning mind has found what it sought; and I am sure that it has taken a step downwards. We gain by losing the visible Christ. 2. For what have we instead? (1) A completed revelation. Unspeakably precious as were and are the words of Christ, His deeds are far more. The death of Christ has told us things that Christ before His death could not tell. His resurrection has cast light upon all the darkest places of man's destiny which before He could not by any words so illuminate. The ascension of Christ has opened doors for thought, for faith, for hope which were fast closed, until He had burst them asunder and passed to His throne. We have a completed revelation, and therefore we need ask Him nothing. (2) A Divine Spirit to teach us by blessing the exercise of our own faculties, and guiding us, not, indeed, into all the intellectual aspects of Christian truth, but into the loving possession, as a power in our lives, of all the truth that we need to raise us to the likeness of Christ. 3. Only remember that such a method of teaching needs that we use that revelation and submit ourselves to the teaching of that Spirit, and make everything that we know a factor in shaping what we do and are. And if we do this we shall not need to envy those that could go to Him with their questions, for He will come to us with His all-satisfying answers. 4. Ah! but you say, look at a divided Christendom and at my own difficulties. Well, as for a divided Christendom, saintly souls are all of one Church. And however they may formulate the intellectual aspects of their creed, when they come to pray they say the same things, and we all sing their songs. So the divisions are like the surface cracks on a dry field, and a few inches down there is continuity. And as for the difficulty of knowing what I am to believe about controverted questions, no doubt there will remain many gaps in the circle of our knowledge and much left obscure; but if we will keep ourselves near the Master, and use the helps that He gives us we shall not walk in darkness, but shall have light enough to be the Light of Life. II. SATISFIED DESIRES. 1. This second great promise substantially appeared in a former part of these discourses with a very significant difference. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name that will I do." "If ye shall ask anything in My name I will do it." There Christ presented Himself as the Answerer, because His purpose was to set forth His going to the Father as His elevation to a yet loftier position. Here He sets forth the Father as the Answerer, because His purpose is to point away from undue dependence on His own corporeal presence. But consider how much is involved in that fact, that, as a matter of course, our Lord alternates the two forms, and sometimes says, "I will do it," and sometimes says, "The Father will do it." Does it not point to that great and blessed truth, "Whatsoever thing the Father doeth that also doeth the Son likewise." 2. But passing from that, note the limitation to the broad universality of the declaration. "If ye shall ask anything in My name." There is the definition of Christian prayer. And what does it mean? (1) Is a prayer which is reeking with self-will hallowed because the man says, as a kind of charm at the end of it, "For Christ's sake. Amen?" Surely not! The name of Christ is His whole revealed character. So these disciples could not pray in His name "hitherto," because His character was not all revealed. Therefore, to pray in His name is to pray recognizing what He is, as revealed in His life and death and resurrection and ascension, and to base all our dependence for acceptance of our prayers upon that revealed character. (2) Are any kind of wishes which are presented in dependence upon Christ certain to be fulfilled? Certainly not! "My name" means exactly what the same phrase means when it is applied to us. If I do something in your name I do it on your behalf, as your representative. And if we pray in Christ's name, that implies the harmony of our wills with His. Heathen prayer is the violent effort to make God will what I wish. Christian prayer is the submissive effort to make my wish what God wills. 3. Notice how certain such prayer is of being answered. If it is in harmony with the will of God, it is sure not to be offered in vain. Our Revised Version reads, "He will give it you in My name." God's gifts come down through the same channel through which our prayer goes up. But, whether that be the true collocation or no, mark the plain principle, that only desires which are in harmony with the Divine will are sure of being satisfied. What is a bad thing for a child cannot be a good thing for a man. If you want to spoil your child you say, "What do you want, my dear? tell me and you shall have it." God knows a great deal better what is good for us; and so He says: "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He will give thee the desires of thine heart." He who

prays in Christ's name must pray Christ's prayer, "Not My will but Thine be done." To him who can thus pray, every door in God's treasure-house flies open, and he may take as much of the treasure as he desires. And the Master bends lovingly over such a soul, and says: "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." III. THE PERFECT JOY WHICH FOLLOWS UPON THESE TWO. Is it possible, then, that amidst all changes and the sorrows we may have a deep and stable joy? "That your joy may be full," says my text, or "fulfilled," like some jewelled, golden cup charged to the very brim with rich and quickening wine, so that there is no room for a drop more. Was anybody ever so blessed that he could not be more so? Jesus Christ says it may be so, and He tells us how. Bring your desires into harmony with God's, and you will have nothing unsatisfied amongst them; and so you will be blessed to the full. And though sorrow comes, still we may be blessed. There are some flowers which only bloom in the night; and white blossoms are visible with startling plainness in the twilight, when all the flaunting purples and reds are hid. Conclusion: There are only two courses before us. Either a life with superficial, transitory, incomplete gladnesses, and an aching centre of vacuity and pain, or one which in its outward aspects has much about it that is sad and trying, but down in the heart of it is calm and joyful. "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful," &c. But the "ransomed of the Lord shall return," &c. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

All questions answered:—Many were the questions which the disciples had put to their Lord in the pride and ignorance of their as yet imperfectly spiritualized hearts (see Matt. xviii. 1; Luke ix. 54; Acts i. 6). But our Lord says that in that day, when He shall have given them the Comforter, they shall ask Him no more such questions, for that He should guide them into all truth. I. THIS PROMISE HAS COME DOWN TO EVERY DISCIPLE OF CHRIST. What question is there that we need to put to our Lord? The grand question of all—"What shall I do to be saved?" has long ago been distinctly answered. But, for the sake of illustration, let us put this question under some of its particulars. Shall a man ask of Christ—1. "Are my sins forgiven me? answer me by showing me some token of it." He has been answered already. Instead of asking Christ he has to ask his own heart and conscience before Christ. Have they been truly turned unto Him? Is the heart in communion with the Holy Spirit? Is the conscience directed by Christ's Word? Are thus sins forsaken? Then there is at once a plain answer. 2. "Wilt Thou be my Helper and Defender?" He has been answered already. Does he make Christ his Help and Defence, his Rock and his Fortress? Does he use the means which He has furnished? If so, then he has received a clear answer, and needs no other. 3. "Shall I inherit eternal life?" He has been answered already. Is he really seeking eternal life, striving with all his strength to enter in? Are his affections set on the things which are above? If his heart and conscience tell him this, he has had an answer sufficient. Will he tempt Christ by asking twice over? 4. And in the last hour shall a man ask of Christ, "Whither am I going?" He has been answered already most distinctly. Let him ask his own heart and conscience upon which road he has been travelling; where has the Lord found him when the fear of approaching death surprised him. Was he on the narrow road of holiness, or on the broad road of sin? If he will ask this of his heart and conscience they will tell him at once, and may warn him to such repentance as may yet be possible. But if he decline this search, then assuredly instead of having an answer from Christ, who is the Truth, he will have it from the father of lies. II. SEE, THEREFORE, THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN. 1. He has no doubts; the words of his Master are yea and amen, and he has heard them. That is surely but an indifferent servant who requires his orders to be repeated from his master's mouth. 2. He has no perplexities. The direction of the Lord, and the truth and comfort of the Holy Spirit, drive away all darkness and uncertainty. 3. He has no fears, he is a soldier that can both endure hardness and stand in the fight. He is content to await in patience the sign of the Son of Man, and meanwhile gathers clearer and clearer answers from a heart and conscience well questioned, daily examined. III. THUS WE SHALL PROCEED IN A WAY OF PREPARATION FOR THE LAST SEARCHING EXAMINATION, when we shall have to give answers to our Lord and Judge concerning all that He hath given and taught us. All questioning will then be openly on His side, and all answering openly also on ours. Even the prayer of our petitions will then cease, for there will be nothing left to ask for in that day. Only the prayer of praise, adoration, and thanksgiving shall remain, and that shall remain for all eternity. (*R. W. Evans, B.D.*)

No want in the presence of Jesus:—Why does Christ's

personal presence in heaven, now that He is glorified, take away the necessity for prayer in the case of the glorified? Because—I. GOD IS IN CHRIST, AND GOD IS AN OPEN FOUNTAIN OF GOOD TO EVERY BEING IN FRIENDSHIP WITH HIM. Who asks for water when he is standing by a fountain? Who asks for light when the summer sun at the meridian is shining upon him? And who asks to be blessed when God fully blesses him? II. CHRIST'S LOVE FOR HIS DISCIPLES IS SUCH THAT HE CANNOT BE WITH THEM WITHOUT FILLING THEM WITH GOOD. When "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," He could never be with His disciples without blessing them. How much more now in His state of glorification! Because the crown of Christ is as much yours as His Cross. He died for you, and it is an equally glorious truth that He lives for you. So it is utterly impossible that you can lack, when with Christ, any good thing. III. THE MINISTRATIONS OF THE SAVIOUR, WHEN OUR HEARTS ARE RIGHT, AS THEY WILL BE VERY SOON, CANNOT FAIL TO SATISFY US. At present even God, the Father of all, does not please you. You have made a sort of calculation of what God should give you in the shape of temporal good. If that be given, you are pleased and thankful, but if that be withheld, you murmur. Why? Because you do not trust the Giver. In the degree of your love and trust, you see that "all things work together for good." IV. PRAYER CAN ONLY BE MADE IN WANT. Prayer is asking God to supply our need. Now, when all our need is supplied, the necessity for prayer is, of course, taken away. Prayer is not consistent with a perfect state of being. It is the cry of infancy. You will in heaven be men. Prayer is the call of helplessness and the wail of sorrow. But "in that day Christ will open Himself to you as a fountain of good, and then ye shall ask nothing." Meetness for that place consists in the spirit of praise, and not in the spirit of prayer. Conclusion: 1. Persevere in prayer even when prayer is hard work, for the labour and agony connected with prayer are only temporal. Great burthens are easily carried if we be only told that we have to carry them over a short distance. Shortly, you will have everything you can desire. 2. Anticipate joyously the future. You will have, most likely, a night of tribulation to go through, but born of that night will be the brightest of days. (*S. Martin.*) **Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name He will give it you.**—*Praying in the name of Jesus Christ.* I. WHAT IT IS TO PRAY IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST. Negatively, it is not a bare mentioning His name in prayer, and concluding our prayers therewith (Matt. vii. 21). We must begin, carry on, and conclude our prayers in the name of Christ (Col. iii. 17). The saints use the words, "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 57); but the virtue is not in the words, but in the faith wherewith they are used. But, alas! these are often produced as an empty scabbard, while the sword is away. Positively: we may take it up in these four things. 1. We must go to God at Christ's command, and by order from Him (Matt. xviii. 20). If a poor body can get a recommendation from a friend to one that is able to help him, he comes with confidence and tells such a one has sent me to you. Christ is such a friend (ver. 24). This implies—(1) The soul's being come to Christ in the first place (chap. xv. 7). (2) That, however, believers in Christ are relieved of the burden of total indigence (chap. iv. 14), yet while they are in the world they are still compassed with wants. In heaven they shall be set down at the fountain; but now the law of the house is, "Ask, and ye shall receive" (Matt. vii. 7). (3) That Christ sends His people to God by prayer for the supply of their wants. This He does by His word, commanding them to go, and by His Spirit inclining them to go (Eph. ii. 18). (4) That acceptable prayer is performed under the sense of the command of a God in Christ (Isa. xxxiii. 22), where majesty and mercy are mixed in it; and that is son-like service. (5) That the acceptable petitioner's encouragement to pray is from Jesus Christ (Heb. iv. 14-16). 2. We must pray for Christ's sake, as our motive to the duty (Mark ix. 41). This implies—(1) A high esteem of Christ (1 Pet. ii. 7), for God is honoured in His Son (chap. v. 23). (2) Complying with the duty out of love to Christ (Heb. vi. 10). (3) Complying with the duty out of respect to His honour and glory. (4) Doing it with heart and good-will (Isa. lxiv. 5). 3. We must in prayer act in the strength of Christ. (1) What this pre-supposes. (*a*) That praying acceptably is a work quite beyond any power in us (2 Cor. iii. 5). (*b*) That there is a stock of grace and strength in Jesus Christ for our help as to other duties, so for this duty of prayer (2 Cor. xii. 9; Col. i. 19). (*c*) Sinners are welcome to partake of this stock of grace and strength in Christ (2 Tim. ii. 1). (*d*) We must be united to Christ as members to the head and branches to the vine, if we would act in prayer or any other duty in the strength of Christ (chap. xv. 5). We cannot partake of the stock of grace and strength for duty in Christ without partaking of Himself (Rom. viii. 32). As the

soul in a separate state doth not quicken the body, so the soul not united to Christ cannot be fitted for duty by strength derived from Him. The graft must knit with the stock ere it can partake of the sap. (2) Wherein acting in prayer in the strength of Christ lies. (*a*) The soul's going out of itself for strength to the duty; that is, renouncing all confidence in itself for the right management of it (2 Cor. iii. 5). (*b*) The soul's going to Christ for strength to duty by trusting on Him for it (Isa. xxvi. 4; Psalm lxxi. 16). 4. We must pray for Christ's sake, as the only procuring cause of the success of our prayers. (1) What is pre-supposed in this. (*a*) That sinners in themselves are quite unacceptable in heaven, even in their religious duties (Prov. xv. 8; Isa. lxiv. 6). (*b*) Christ is most acceptable there (Matt. iii.; Eph. v. 2). (*c*) Sinners are warranted to come to the throne of grace in His name (Heb. iv. 15, 16; 1 John ii. 1). The petitions put into His hand cannot miscarry. (2) Wherein this praying to God for Christ's sake consists. (*a*) In general, in our relying on the Lord Jesus only for the success of our prayers in heaven. Consider that we are in this matter to rely on Him only for access to God in our prayers (Eph. iii. 12; John xiv. 6). For acceptance of our prayers (Eph. i. 6). For the gracious answer of prayer, and consider how we are to eye Christ as the object of this reliance—viz., as our great High Priest (Heb. iv. 15, 16). And here we find the infinite merit of His sacrifice (Rom. iii. 25), and His never-failing intercession to rely on (Heb. vii. 25). (*b*) More particularly, praying in the name of Christ, and for His sake consists in renouncing all merit and worth in ourselves, in point of access, acceptance, and gracious answer (Gen. xxxii. 10); believing that however great the mercies are, and however unworthy we are, yet we may obtain them from God through Jesus Christ (Heb. iv. 15, 16). In seeking in prayer the mercies we need of God for Christ's sake accordingly (John xvi. 24). In pleading His merit and intercession (Psalm lxxxiv. 9); in trusting that we shall obtain a gracious answer for His sake (Mark xi. 24). III. WHY ACCEPTABLE PRAYER MUST BE IN THE NAME OF CHRIST. Because—1. Sinners can have no access to God without a Mediator, and there is no other Mediator but He (Isa. lix. 2; 1 Tim. ii. 5). 2. The promises of the covenant were all made to Jesus Christ, as the party who fulfilled the condition of the covenant (Gal. iii. 16). 3. Our praying in the name of Christ is a part of the reward of Christ's voluntary humiliation for God's glory and the salvation of sinners (Phil. ii. 9, 10). 4. It is not consistent with the honour of God to give sinners a favourable hearing otherwise (chap. ix. 31, with 2 Cor. v. 19, 21). They dishonour God, His Son, and His mercies, that ask anything but in the name of Christ. 5. Nothing can savour with God that comes from a sinner, but what is perfumed with the merit and intercession of Christ (2 Cor. ii. 15; Eph. i. 6). 6. The stated way of all gracious communication between heaven and earth is through Jesus Christ, who opened a communication between them by His blood, when it was blocked up by the breach of the first covenant (chap. xiv. 6). IV. PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT. 1. From this doctrine we learn—(1) What a holy God we have to do with in prayer (Lev. x. 3). His very throne of grace, from which He breathes love and good-will to sinners, is founded on justice and judgment (Psalm lxxxix. 14). (2) Let us prize the love of Christ in making an entrance for us into the holy place, through the veil of His flesh (Heb. x. 20). The flaming sword of justice, which guarded the way to the tree of life, was bathed in His blood, to procure us access to God. (3) There can be no acceptable praying to God but by believers united to Christ having on the garment of His righteousness (chap. ix. 31). (4) Even believers cannot pray in the name of Christ, and so not acceptably, without faith in exercise (Gal. ii. 20). (5) We have great need not to be rash in our approaches to God in prayer, but that we prepare our hearts and compose them aforehand for such a solemn duty (Eccles. v. 1). 2. Let those stand reproved who —(1) Make approach unto God in prayer, as an absolute God, without consideration of the Mediator (chap. v. 23; Eph. ii. 18). (2) Put other things in the room of the Mediator, or join other things with Him. (*a*) Their own worth in respect of their qualifications and good things done by them (Luke xviii. 11, 12). (*b*) The mercy of God considered without a view to the satisfaction of His justice by the Mediator. (*c*) The manner of their performing the duty itself (Isa. lviii. 3). (*d*) Their own necessity (Hos. vii. 14). 3. Wherefore rely on Christ, and on Him only, for access to God in, and acceptance of, your prayers; that is, pray in the name of Christ. (1) In this way of praying ye may obtain anything ye really need. (2) There is no access to God, nor acceptance of prayer another way (chap. xiv. 6). (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Prayer in Christ's name*:—I. THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH ALL PRAYER SUGGESTS. 1. One cause of these is to be found in the variations of our inner life.

Our faith in the spiritual is at some moments so full of power that thoughts too large for words ascend to the Eternal in unclothed aspirations. And at other times it is so weak and dead that we doubt whether it has not altogether vanished to return no more. Thus there are times when to pray is the hardest of all tasks; when God appears to be far off. Chilled thus by the world of sense, the fire of devotion frequently appears to have almost died out, having left only cold ashes on the altar of the heart. 2. But apart from these changes of the inner life, there are two great difficulties surrounding every act of prayer. (1) Look at prayer for material blessings. If we believe that such prayer will be answered we are constantly met by the awful thought that God has ordered eternally all the circumstances of life for the best and wisest ends. Under the pressure of that fact, look at the cries of prayer—the utterances of the child of yesterday, whose life is but a span, who knows not what he really is, nor what he really wants! Can we believe that they will be answered?—that they will bring the blessings they crave? (2) Again, we know that God's love cannot be deepened. Is not God always giving? Does He need the utterance of our wants when He detects the secret desire in the heart trembling into words? II. THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN PRAYER. We shall perceive how both the difficulties we have noticed vanish before the true meaning of Christ's promise. The word "whatsoever" must be taken simply and literally. The words "in My name" must be taken as simply and literally; for they explain the "whatsoever." 1. The words "in My name" refer to the new meaning which Christ had given to prayer. (1) Men in old time had cried earnestly to God under the pressure of the struggles and doubts of life, but they could not pray in the Christian sense. To them there often seemed to be two great powers in the universe—the divine and the evil, and in their darkness they cried to Him whom they felt was true, though they understood not how. Christ came into the world to reveal what God was and to explain His plan. He showed that God was willing all good to His creatures, and overcoming all evil—that the eternal love was shining behind all the clouds of suffering and sorrow. Here, then, was a new revelation of the meaning of prayer. Men were not to pray because they hoped to change God's plan, but because God's plan was the wisest and most loving. They were not to pray with the idea of inducing God to become kind, but because He was kind. (2) Again, men in the old time were often tempted to fancy that God was far off, and cared little for their necessities; Christ revealed God as everywhere —working in every life, searching every soul. Because God knew their wants, men were to ask. Because He was love, they were to pray. To pray not with the notion of changing God's plan, but because that plan is the best. Hence we see at once that many prayers are not Christian. For instance, men ask for success: do they mean they cannot forego their desires—that they cannot confront failure? If so, can they thus pray in His name who renounced Himself, and whose career, judged by man's standard, was a mighty failure? Or do they, because they believe God is all-wise, ask to be able to bear success if it be His will it should come, and if not, to be enabled to stand failure?—that is to pray in Christ's name. Men ask for happiness: do they mean that they are afraid of sorrow—they cannot bear the Cross? If so, can they pray that prayer in the name of Him who gave up all happiness for man, who endured the Cross and the shame, who, because it was the Father's will, bore all sorrow and made it holy? Or do they mean, "enable Me to bear happiness or sorrow?"—"If it be possible let sorrow pass from Me—nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." That is to pray in Christ's name. 2. Prayer in Christ's name clears away the two great difficulties to which I have referred. (1) It brings us into harmony with God's eternal plan. I do not believe that God changes. The sceptic asks, "Does God ever stop the working of His laws to save the man who prays?" No; but a Divine influence may prepare him to receive whatever comes. (2) It prepares us to receive God's noblest gifts of love. It does not make Him more loving, but it fits us to obtain what He is willing to bestow. In the highest sense a man can only receive what he feels he needs. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *Prayer in the name of Christ*:—A wealthy heir presents thee with a cheque, signed with his name, for a sum of money which thou art to fetch from his father. Without the cheque thou wouldest receive nothing, for the father of the heir knows nothing of thy name; but because he sees written there the name of his son he presents thee with the whole amount which his son has commissioned thee to receive. In like manner has the Lord Jesus given to His people a cheque of prayer upon the love of His Father, which they must present to Him—a blank page (*charta blanca*) as Spencer says. At the bottom His holy name stands written; the

upper part we ourselves must fill up with our prayers; the Father will honour the draft to the whole amount for the sake of His dear Son; because whatever we are minded to ask in the name of Jesus, the Father will give us. (*R. Besser, D.D.*)

Prayer answered:—Some years ago, a poor woman accompanied by two of her neighbours, came to my vestry in deep distress. Her husband had fled the country; in her sorrow she went to the house of God, and something I said in the sermon made her think I was personally familiar with her case. Of course I had known nothing about her. It was a general illustration that fitted a particular case. She told me her story, and a sad one it was. I said, "There is nothing that we can do but to kneel down and cry to the Lord for the immediate conversion of your husband." We knelt down, and I prayed that the Lord would touch the heart of the deserter, and convert his soul, and bring him back home. When we rose, I said to the poor woman, "Do not fret about the matter. I feel sure your husband will come home, and that he will yet become connected with our church." She went away, and I forgot all about it. Some months after, she re-appeared with her neighbours, and a man whom she introduced to me as her husband. He had, indeed, come back, and a converted man. On making inquiry and comparing notes, we found that, on the very day on which we had prayed for his conversion, he, being at that time on board a ship far away on the sea, stumbled most unexpectedly upon a stray copy of one of my sermons. He read it, the truth went to his heart. He repented and sought the Lord, and as soon as possible, returned to his wife and his daily calling. He was admitted a member, and his wife, who up to that time had not been a member, was also received among us. That woman does not doubt the power of prayer. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Learning to pray:—We must be taught how to pray just as we must be taught how to walk. Sometimes when a child comes home from school, after a long and expensive education, the parent finds that he has learnt nothing aright. He has been taught arithmetic, yet he cannot work a single rule properly. He has been tanght music, yet he plays without feeling, and incorrectly. He has been taught to draw, yet an artist detects at once that he does not know the very A B C of art. In religion the same thing often occurs. There are people who have "said their prayers" all through life, and, perhaps, never really prayed once. They have got into a habit of using certain words, without thinking of their meaning, and so have become mere machines, like those musical boxes which reel off their fixed number of tunes, and then are silent. There are thousands of letters posted every year which end in the dead letter office, either because they are wrongly directed, or not directed at all, and there are thousands of dead prayers which never reach God for the same reason. Then there are prayers which ask for wrong things, or they ask in a wrong way, and so they are wasted. You know that every man in a high office receives a vast number of letters, many of them very foolish, and even wicked. But he is far too wise to answer them. Think how many improper, foolish, and even downright wicked prayers are addressed to the All-wise God! Can we wonder that He does not answer them? I. How to pray. What is meant by asking in Christ's name? Well, it means this. If a warrant, or other legal document is to take effect, it must be endorsed by the name of some one in authority, otherwise it is so much waste paper. So our prayers must be endorsed, so to speak, with the name of Jesus. He must consider them fit to be offered in His name, or they are useless. Have not some of you prayed, looking upon God's mercy and grace as a sort of lottery, where you may draw a prize, but where you rather expect a blank? Such faithless prayers cannot have the name of Jesus attached to them, they cannot be accepted. Our Lord never worked a miracle unless the person asking for help showed faith. Then there are prayers, so full of self that there is no room for Jesus in them. He has given us a pattern prayer—"Not as I will but as Thou wilt." With us too often it is just the other way: "My will be done." We must lighten our prayers by casting out self if they are to rise to the throne of God. Again, there are prayers which seem unanswered because we have asked amiss. If we ask our Heavenly Father for bread, He will not give us a stone. But often, like foolish children, we ask him for a stone, or a scorpion. Instead of allowing our conscience to lead us, we follow conscience as a man follows a wheelbarrow, driving it on before him. Above all, prayer must have love in it. There was a little boy once whose mother lay ill in the hospital. The child fancied his mother would not have left him if she had loved him, and determined to send her a letter, and find out. He was quite unable to write, but he scrawled all over the paper, as little children will, and begged his friends to carry it to his mother, "then," said he, "I

shall see if she loves me." The messenger laughed at the strange letter, and declared that no one could make it out. "Mother will understand," said the child. And when Eddie's scrawl was given to her, she recognized at once the work of her child's fingers, and understood his meaning. My brothers, our prayers are often as badly put together as Eddie's scrawl, but the good God knows His children's meaning. II. WHEN TO PRAY—1. Always. Do not wait to go to church, or till bed-time, or rising-time; these are special occasions, the general time for prayer is all day long. A Christian man who believes in prayer, ought to be able to speak to God anywhere. We should not hear so much about bad servants, and dishonest traders, if men would only pray over their work. The man who could really pray in his place of business would not be able to tell a lie over the counter. A man with a prayer in his mouth would have no room for an oath, or a bad story. Let the people who lose their temper so easily, and say words which they bitterly repent, pray more frequently, and the bitter words would be turned into blessing. 2. Then there are special occasions when we need to pray for a special object—(1) In all cases of danger and difficulty. When Jehoshaphat was besieged by his enemies, he prayed solemnly to God for guidance. The Romans of old never undertook a war, or any serious matter, without consulting an oracle. *Our* oracle is the living God, and whenever we are in doubt, or difficulty, or danger, let us ask God about it. (2) On every occasion when we have to make an important choice, let us pray about it, even as Jesus prayed before He chose His disciples, and the apostles before the election of Matthias. There would not be so many unhappy marriages, discontented workers, and wrong men in wrong places, if we would pray before making a solemn choice. (3) Whenever we take a journey, let us pray about it, as St. Paul did at Miletus, before he set out on his perilous voyage to Rome. For my own part, I never enter a railway carriage without a prayer, and I advise you to do the like, then, come what will, we have put the matter in God's hands. (*H. J. W. Buxton.*)

Vers. 25–28. **These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs.**—*Christ in heaven, the Church on earth*:—I. CHRIST IN HEAVEN. 1. As the Revealer of the Father. He came to be this here, and did reveal the Father, but chiefly in parables, figures, dark sayings. There was a sort of veil over what He said regarding the Father. But when He departed, all that dimness went. From Pentecost there was the plain and full revelation of the Father. This the Epistles contain. There may be in them things hard to be understood: but they are the plainest and fullest revelation that man has had. This unfolding is what the world needed and needs still. Acquaintance with God removes the world's darkness, and heals its wounds. 2. As the medium of communication between us and the Father. He is in heaven as Advocate and High Priest. As such He carries on the intercourse between us and God, and through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. "I do not say that I will pray (or make inquiries for you like the high priest with Urim and Thummim) the Father"; *i.e.*, "I need not say that I will act thus as your High Priest, and yet this is not because the Father requires to be persuaded to love you; for He loves you already." II. THE CHURCH ON EARTH. 1. Receiving revelations of the Father. He speaks and she listens. As a willing listener to what Jesus speaks of to the Father, she goes on her way here and does the Father's work. She learns each day more fully the meaning of the marvellous words, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love," &c. It is this revelation that she preaches us glad tidings of great joy. 2. Praying in Christ's name. In a sense, that name had been known from the beginning. The seed of the woman with the bruised heel was known as He through whom all communications were made between the sinner and God. On the credit of His name, prayer got its answer all along. But still that name was but dimly known, and not known as that of Jesus of Nazareth. Henceforth in that name all prayer was to be presented, and success thus assured. Christ gives us this name to make use of in all our dealings with God, and we need nothing else. Never, then, let us go to God without it, but going with it, let us be confident. Let us not dishonour that name by distrust. 3. Enjoying the Father's love. This is no doubtful thing, but as sure as it is blessed. This love is the sunshine of life. But it is love through Christ. God loves us as lovers of, and believers in, His Son. 4. Loving the Son. In an unloving world, the Church loves Him whom the Father loveth. This marks her out from all around. To her He is the "altogether lovely." "My Beloved" is the name she gives Him. The question He asks is, "Lovest thou Me?" 5. Believing that He came out from God. This

is the first thing though it comes last. This brings us into the circle of discipleship and sonship. What think ye, then, of Christ? (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *The day of the Spirit*:—"That day" is—1. A long day. It began at Pentecost, and will last till the "restitution of all things." 2. It is the best day that has dawned on humanity since the Fall—better than the prophetic day, or the day of Christ's earthly ministry. 3. It is a day that will grow brighter and brighter until it floods all souls with the sunshine of infinite love. 4. It is "the notable day of the Lord," a day in which moral wonders multiply every hour. 5. It runs into the endless day of retribution. The text suggests two thoughts concerning it. It is a day—I. IN WHICH CHRISTLY TEACHING BECOMES MORE AND MORE INDEPENDENT OF WORDS. "Proverbs," words, language, are not truth; at best they are mere vehicles. They are no more truth than water pipes are water. The pipes may be broken, but the water still flows, and will find other channels. Christ used words to convey truth. Sometimes they conveyed truth to His disciples' spirits, sometimes not. When He says, therefore, "I will no more speak unto you in proverbs," He points to a more direct, thorough, and effective way, the way in which the Paraclete would bring all things to their remembrance. The men who are under the influence of this Paraclete are seldom able to trace their most sacred impressions, aspirations, resolves, experiences to any words. No words, *e.g.*, can "plainly show" the Father. He can only be seen by the loving and pure heart. II. WHEN FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER BECOMES MORE AND MORE INDEPENDENT OF THE MEDIATION, Christ seems to say, in illustration of this—1. That His disciples in this day will pray in His name, and therefore will not require Him to pray for them (ver. 26). He had just said, "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name." Why? At that time they had not received the Paraclete; but when He came, they would pray in His name, *i.e.*, the Holy Spirit would so inspire them with the sentiments and purposes of Christ, that they would always pray in the spirit of Christ, and therefore their prayer would be real and effective. 2. That His disciples will have a special sense of the Father's love (ver. 27). Observe—(1) That God loves men individually. He loves all, but does not overlook the individual in the millions. His love embraces each, as if each were the whole. (2) That God loves the individuals especially who love His Son. He loves all, but He has a special love for those who love His Son. No man can love the Father who does not love His image and Revealer. And no man who does not love the Father can be conscious of the Father's love for him. The mutual love provides direct communication. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 26, 27. **I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you.**—*No need of an intercessor*:—Our Lord would teach that the Father is ready to receive our petitions directly, because He loveth us. We have here—I. A NEW CONCEPTION OF GOD. 1. New to the Jew with his elaborate sacrificial and mediatorial scheme. 2. New to us who, conscious of sin and of God's anger against it, could never have hoped that He would view us in any other light but that of aliens. II. THE ANXIETY OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN CLOSE RELATIONS WITH HIS CHILDREN. The mediation of Christ is a means to the end of bringing us to God (1 Peter iii. 18). III. THE ERROR OF MULTIPLYING THE MEDIATIONS BETWEEN THE SOUL AND GOD. Remove God afar off, confine Him to the heavens, then priests mediating for men, and saints mediating for priests, is rational; but how does it comport with this saying and the whole teaching of Scripture, which reveals a God dwelling in the heart, and jealous of everything that comes between Him and the soul He has redeemed. IV. THE COMFORTABLE BELIEF THAT CHRIST MAKES INTERCESSION FOR US. Christ does not decline to pray for us. He only makes known God's willingness to hear us directly. But all the while we know He ever liveth to make intercession for us. (*H. M. Jackson.*) *The intercession of Christ*:—1. In three passages from the Epistles, we find a notable *consensus* of statement on the present work of Christ as our Intercessor. St. John lays stress on the basis of this advocacy; it is His own personal righteousness and His propitiatory atonement. St. Paul makes intercession the climax of that splendid series of facts on which reposes the safety of a believer: Christ not only died and rose, He even ascended to the Father's side, and there, says he, He "also maketh intercession." In the Epistle to the Hebrews, emphasis lies on the ceaselessness of that intercession, which is offered not by a mortal priest, but by One who ever liveth, and whose priesthood is unchangeable. 2. How admirably all this fits into the wants of our nature! Even had there been no sin to be dealt with, humanity might have found its way to the Father best

through a mediator. As it is, not without some reconciling Go-between to act for him and to speak for him, does the criminal venture to approach his Judge. Even after we know that satisfaction has been made, there still remain the hesitation and the awe of conscious unworthiness. Now, the appropriate and very tender response which God has given to this reserve on our part is the Divine Man. The awful fact of incarnation creates at once a Spokesman, into whose ear we need have less fear to whisper our confessions or our needs, and whose lips are clean enough to speak for us to the Father. 3. But while Christ's advocacy for us is a valuable part of His mediation and a comfort to timid petitioners, it is exposed to misconception. Jesus is our priestly Suppliant, who entreats mercy on the ground of His sacrifice; our Advocate, who represents our case to the Judge; our powerful Patron, who moves the Father to do at His instance what He would not do for our deserving. The first of these modes of representing the intercession is biblical and harmless. The others suggests false associations. In Asiatic states, and even under Roman law, patronage was nearly everything. To get some one in high position or close friendship with the judge to speak for you, was, as it still is in the East, the only line of safety. It is plain that where men's minds were steeped in associations of this description, it would be natural to transfer similar ideas to the Divine Advocate in heaven. What a miserably false conception this suggests of the Divine character! How it reduces the righteous and impartial God to the weakness of a corruptible earthly sovereign! How it makes the Saviour's plea a plea not of equity addressed to righteous love, but of affection addressed to the indulgence of partiality! It splits the Divine character in two, and apportions its features between the First and Second of the blessed Persons, and gathers into the remoter Father, at whose judgment-seat Jesus pleads, all the sterner attributes of anger, rigorous justice, and hardness to be won: while Jesus Christ become the placable and gentle Friend, on whose good offices, with His Father, we have to build our hope. 4. Any one who is familiar with the popular working of Catholicism in modern times will know how, in the Church of Rome, this process has gone even a step further. Having thrust back the Son into the Father's supposed place, the Church has consistently thrust Mary in the Son's. For all practical purposes of religious worship, or pious hope, Christ's mother is now the benignant patroness, to whose maternal persuasions the soul may trust for final mercy. Nay, this generation of Catholics has begun to carry the process one step further still. Since Mary was declared to be immaculate, the Catholic heart seeks now an intercessor with the Virgin. Joseph must plead now with the awful mother, that she may plead with her more awful Son. Horrible as all this sounds in a Protestant ear, yet it is possible to say, "Jesus, pray for us!" and mean what is quite as dishonouring to the infinite charity of the Godhead, as though we said, "Mary, pray for us!" or "Joseph, pray for us!" If the intercession which we solicit means in either case the extorting of boons from an unwilling hand, then the one conception is just as heathenish and unscriptural as the other. 5. None of the apostolic writers has been led to say one word to guard against an abuse so monstrous, but their far-sighted Master had before protested against it by anticipation, in the text which was spoken only a few minutes before He lifted up His voice in that wonderful intercession, and that lest the apostles should suppose the Father's love to be in the least inferior to His own, or to need any prompting from Him. It was the special work of Jesus to discover to us, not Himself, but His Father; or Himself only as the Incarnate image of His Father. As this was His business, so, being a true Son, it was also His delight. What vexed Him was that the disciples would not, or could not, look through and past Himself to the Greater One, whose Image and Messenger He was. Hence there grew up in Him a consuming anxiety that men would honour the Father, and an alarm lest they should be led to think less of the Father's love than of His own. This alarm it is which finds vent in the text. 6. How, then, are we to represent to ourselves the intercession of Christ while guarding the spontaneous love of the Father? Take the case of a guilty penitent who approaches the Divine seat for pardon. He is certain that the heart of God is as the heart of a father. He knows, therefore, that the Father Himself loves him, and of His own accord will bend a favourable ear to his request. But he is no less certain that pardon is a judicial act on the part of God, an act which He can only do in consideration of previous satisfaction for sin. The guilty petitioner, therefore, approaches with his mind full of the Atonement, recognizing in it the supreme generosity of God clearing away every obstacle to his forgiveness, and he begs for the Father's mercy in the name of Jesus. Let him now be told that Jesus Himself is to be thought of as a priestly Advocate by

the Father's side, to sustain each earthly cry for mercy with the plea of His own finished atonement. What does the petitioner learn from that? That the Father cares less about forgiving him than the Son? That forgiveness is not only to be wrung through personal interest? No, but this—that the judicial basis on which the righteous Father can grant the pardon which He longs to grant is now for ever present to the Father's mind, and for ever avails to sustain the sinner's plea for mercy. (*J. O. Dykes, D.D.*) **The Father Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me.**—*The Father's love*:—I. ITS NATURE. It is—1. A redeeming love. "God so loved the world," &c. 2. A calling love. "No man cometh unto Me except the Father draw him." 3. An adopting love. "Behold what manner of love," &c. 4. A protecting love. Babes, children, want guardian care. "Can a mother forget," &c. 5. A sanctifying love. As we all desire to see our children grow, so our Father desires to see us grow in grace. "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth." 6. An everlasting love (Jer. xxxi.). II. ITS CLAIMS. "My Son, give Me Thy heart." God claims our—1. Supreme love—a love of Him above every creature whatsoever. 2. Practical love (chap. xiv. 21; 1 John iii. 18). 3. Expansive love. It must embrace all God's family for His sake. Apply this in the way of—(1) Remonstrance. (2) Encouragement. (*Bp. Montagu Villiers.*) *Mutual love*:—We have here—I. AN AMIABLE CHARACTER. The saint's love is the love of—1. Of a debtor to his surety. 2. One friend to another. 3. A brother. 4. A wife to her husband. 5. A scholar to his teacher. 6. A servant to his master. 7. A loyal subject to his king. II. A DISTINGUISHING PRIVILEGE. 1. God's love to us is prior to our love to Christ. 2. Our love to Christ is not the cause but the effect of God's love to us. 3. God's love to us is infinitely superior to our love to Christ. 4. Though God's love is the same to all the saints, yet the manifestations of it are not so. Conclusion: 1. Serious self-examination, "Lovest thou Me." 2. Subjects for astonishment, gratitude and praise. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *Going to God through Christ*:—Did you ever observe the difference there sometimes is between father and mother, in regard to gaining the confidence and affection of their children? Here are two equally good parents, but they are very diverse in their dispositions, and the children make an election of one of them in preference to the other. The father is great-hearted and noble, but rugged, firm, stern, and inflexible; and the children do not like to climb up the steep sides of his disposition. If they are in trouble, they say, "Do not let us go to father first: let us go to mother first, and she will tell it to father." It is a level, grassy, flowery slope to her heart, and the children go to her first because she receives them so kindly. If they want to go to the father, they go to him through her. Now I think it is exactly so in respect to going to God the Father, through Christ, regarded as a Being characterised by love and tenderness and pity and sympathy; but all the gentle elements of disposition which we see displayed in men—only in Him they exist in a state of glorious perfection, while in us they are but imperfectly developed. He invites us to come to Him with our troubles and sorrows, and we feel drawn to Him because He is so placable and, we may say, so persuadable—though no man ever did persuade Christ. No tears or implorations ever persuaded Him. He never was persuaded by anything. There never was a time when His mercy was not ahead of our requests. When a heart comes to Him asking for a blessing, quicker than a flash of lightning the thought of God leaps to the conclusion of mercy. When we plead for the smallest favour, which in His wisdom He sees that we need, before we have half done our prayer, He has granted it. He is always ahead of us in this way. Do you not see such things among men? (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The love of God*:—"Mary," said a missionary to a pious woman, a negro—"Mary, is not the love of God wonderful?" "Massa, me no tink it so wonderful," she replied; "it's just like Him." *The love of God*:—A mother, whose daughter had behaved very badly, and at length had run away from home, thought of a singular plan in order to find the wanderer and draw her back to her home. After having exhausted the ordinary means, she had her own portrait fixed on a large handbill, and pasted on the walls of the town where she supposed her daughter to be concealed. The portrait, without name, had these words—"I love thee always." Crowds stopped before the strange handbill, trying to guess its meaning, Days elapsed, when a young girl at last passed by, and in her turn, lifted her eyes to the singular placard. "Can it be? Yes, truly it is the picture of my mother. Those eyes full of tenderness, I know them from childhood. Why is it here?" She approaches nearer and reads, "I love thee always." She understood; this was a message for her. Her mother loved her—pardoned her. Those words transformed her. Never had she

felt her sin or ingratitude so deeply. She was unworthy of such love. "She loves me always," she cried. If she had ever doubted that love, if in moments of distress she had feared to return home, those doubts were all gone now. She set out for the house of her mother; at last she crosses the threshold, is in her mother's arms. "My child!" cried the mother, as she presses her repentant daughter to her heart; "I have never ceased to love thee." (*La bonne Nouvelle.*)

Ver. 28. **I came forth from the Father.**—*From the Father and to the Father:*—These majestic and strange words are the proper close of our Lord's discourse, what follows being rather a reply to the disciples' exclamation. I. THE DWELLING WITH THE FATHER. The most probable reading is more forcible. "I came forth out of the Father" implies a far deeper and closer relation than even that of juxtaposition, companionship, or outward presence. In these words there is involved that, during His earthly life, our Lord bore about with Him the remembrance and consciousness of an individual existence prior to His life on earth. "Before Abraham was, I am." But beyond that, they are the assertion of a previous, deep, mysterious, ineffable union with the Father. If this fourth Gospel be a genuine record of the teaching of Jesus Christ (and, if it is not, what genius was he who wrote it?), then nothing is more plain than that. Over and over again He reiterated this tremendous claim to have dwelt in the bosom of the Father long before He lay on the breast of Mary. Note that the meekest, most sane and wise of religious teachers made this claim, which is either true, and lifts Him into the region of the Deity, or else is fatal to His pretensions to be a teacher that it is worth our while to listen to. II. THE VOLUNTARY COMING INTO THE WORLD. We all talk in a loose way about men coming into the world when they are born; but the weight of the words and the solemnity of the occasion, and the purpose, forbid us to see such a mere platitude as that in the words here. "I am come into the world." There has been a Man who chose to be born. Now this voluntary entrance of Jesus Christ into our human life—1. Underlies the whole value of that life. It underlies, *e.g.*, the personal sinlessness of Jesus, and hence His power to bring a new beginning of pure and perfect life into the midst of humanity. All the rest of mankind, knit together by that mysterious bond of natural descent which only now for the first time is beginning to receive its due attention on the part of men of science, by heredity have the taint upon them. And unless Christ came in another fashion from all the rest of us, He came with the same sin as all the rest of us, and is no deliverer. The stream is fouled from its source, and flows on, every successive drop participant of the primeval pollution. But down from the white snows of the eternal hills of God there comes into it an affluent which has no stain on its pure waters, and so can purge that into which it enters. Jesus Christ willed to be born, and to plant a new beginning of holy life in the very heart of humanity which henceforth should work as leaven. 2. Unless we preserve this clear in our minds and hearts, the power to sway our affections is struck away from Christ. Unless He voluntarily took upon Himself the nature which He meant to redeem, why should I be thankful to Him for what He did? We talk about kings leaving their palaces and putting on the rags of the beggar, and learning "love in huts where poor man lie," and making experience of the conditions of their lowliest subjects. But here is a fact infinitely beyond all these legends. And we may learn there what it is that gives Him His supreme right to our devotion and our surrender—viz., that, being in the form of God, He thought not equality with God a thing to be covetously retained, "but made Himself of no reputation," &c. III. THE VOLUNTARY LEAVING THE WORLD. 1. The stages of that departure are not distinguished. They are threefold in fact. (1) There was a voluntary death. We have our Lord's own words about His having power to lay down His life. We have in the story of the Passion hints that His relation to death was altogether different from that of ours. "Into Thy hands I commit My Spirit"; and He gave up the Spirit. We have hints of a similar nature in the very swiftness of His death and unexpected brevity of His suffering, to be accounted for by no natural result of the physical process of crucifixion. The fact is, that Jesus Christ is the Lord of death, and was so even when He seemed to be its servant, and that He never showed Himself more completely the Prince of Life and the Conqueror of Death than when He gave up His life and died, not because He must, but because He would. (2) There was a voluntary resurrection, for although Scripture represents His rising sometimes as being the Father's attestation of the Son's finished work, it also represents it as being in accordance with His own claim of "power to lay down My life, and to take it again;" the Son's triumphant egress

from the prison into which, for the moment, He willed to pass. (3) And there was a voluntary ascension. There was no need for Elijah's chariot, nor any external agency. The cords of duty which bound Him to earth being cut, He rose to His own native sphere; and the natural forces of His supernatural life bore Him, by inverted gravitation, upward to the place which was His own. 2. And thus, by a voluntary death, He became the Sacrifice for our sins; by the might of His self-effected resurrection proclaimed Himself the Lord of death, and the Resurrection for all that trust Him; and by that ascending up on high draws our heart's desires after Him, so that we, too, as we see Him lost from our sight, behind the bright Shekinah cloud, may return to our lowly work with great joy, and set our affections on things above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. IV. THE DWELLING AGAIN WITH THE FATHER. But that final dwelling with God is not wholly identical with the initial one. The earthly life was no mere parenthesis. He carried with Him the manhood which He had assumed into the glory in which the Word had dwelt from the beginning. And this is the true consolation which Christ offered to these His servants, and which He still offers to us His waiting children. And if that be so, it is no mere abstract dogma of theology, but it touches our daily life at all points, and is essential to the fulness of our satisfaction and our rest in Christ. 1. Our brother is elevated to the throne, and He makes the fortunes of the family, and none of them will be poor as long as He is so rich. He sends us from the far-off land where He is gone precious gifts of its produce, and He will send for us to share His throne one day. 2. This elevation fills heaven for our faith, our imagination, and our hearts. Without an ascended Christ we recoil from the cold splendours of an unknown heaven, as a savage might from the unintelligible magnificence of a palace. But if we believe that He is at the right hand of God, then the far-off becomes near, and the vague becomes definite, and the unsubstantial becomes solid, and what was a fear becomes a joy, and we can trust ourselves and the dear dead in His hands, knowing that where He is they are, and that in Him they and we have all we need. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *From the Father to the Father*:—I. CHRIST HAS BEEN HERE AND GONE. 1. This is one of the best attested facts in the world's history. It is attested by contemporaries and by the accumulating moral and social influences of eighteen centuries. 2. It is the most glorious fact in the world's history. Nothing has so blessed the world. It was the creation of a sun in man's moral heaven, the opening of a fountain in man's moral desert. All that is wholesome in the governments, pure in the morals, benevolent in the institutions, holy in the spirit and manners of the world owes its existence to this fact. Insignificant as this planet is compared with other orbs, the fact that Christ has trod its soil has given it a lustre that pales the brightness of them all. II. CHRIST HAS BEEN HERE AND GONE BY HIS OWN CHOICE. Who else could have said this! All others have been *sent*, Christ *came*. He fixed His own time, birthplace, country, parentage, circumstances. In the same way He departed—"I leave"—when I please; now or in the future; how I please; by a natural or violent death—"I have power to lay down My life," *&c.* We are sent away, often by means most revolting, and at a time most dreaded. III. CHRIST IN VISITING THIS EARTH AND DEPARTING FROM IT WAS THE CONSCIOUS MESSENGER OF THE FATHER. The language suggests—1. The life of true souls. Coming from the Father with our motives, inspirations, and directions from His service, and returning with the results of our labours. As rivers have their existence by rolling from ocean to ocean, so the true life of souls is unconsciously moving from God to God—the cause and end of all activities. 2. The interference of the world with this life. Christ speaks as if, when in the world, He was away from the Father. At times the Father's face seemed eclipsed, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" So with us the power of the senses, physical suffering, secular enjoyments, and social trials often interrupt Divine communion. But when we leave the world we shall be for ever with Him. Conclusion: 1. With what holy gratitude should we celebrate Christ's advent and departure! 2. Alas! how many who come into this world depart not to the Father, but to the devil. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 29–32. **Now speakest Thou plainly.**—*The disciples' confession and the Master's warning*:—The first words of these discourses were, "Let not your heart be troubled." The aim of all was to bring peace and confidence to the disciples. And this joyful burst shows that the aim has been reached. The last sublime utterance had gathered all the scattered rays into a beam so bright that the blindest could not but see, and the coldest could not but be warmed. But yet the calm,

clear eye of Christ sees something not wholly satisfactory in this out-pouring of the disciples' confidence. I. THE DISCIPLES' JOYFUL CONFESSION. Their words are permeated with allusions to previous sayings of our Lord, and show how shallow was their understanding of what they thought was plain. He had said to them that in that coming day He would speak to them no more in proverbs; and they answer that the promised day has come. If they had understood what He meant could they have spoken thus, or have left Him so soon? 1. They begin with what they believed to be a fact, His clear utterance. Then follows a conviction. He had said, "In that day ye shall ask Me nothing." And from the fact that He had interpreted their unspoken words they rightly draw the conclusion of His Divine Omniscience. And they think that therein is the fulfilment of that great promise. Was that all that He meant. No! He meant, "Ye shall ask Me nothing because you will have an illuminating Spirit." And so, again, a shallow interpretation empties the words which they accept of their deepest and most precious meaning. 2. They take a further step. They begin with a fact; then they infer a conviction; and now, upon the basis of the inferred conviction, they rear a faith. "We believe that Thou camest forth from God." But what they meant by "coming forth from God" fell far short of what He meant. And so their confession is a strangely mingled warp and woof of insight and of ignorance. 3. Note the lessons. We learn—(1) What it is that gives life to a creed—experience. These men had, over and over again, heard the declaration, "I came forth from God"; and in a sort of fashion they believed it. But, as so many of our convictions do, it lay dormant and half dead in their souls. But now experience had brought them into contact with a manifest proof of His Divine Omniscience; and the torpid conviction flashes all up at once into vitality. That is the only thing that teaches us the articles of our creed in a way worth learning them. We do not know the use of the sword until we are in the battle. Until the shipwreck comes no man puts on the lifebelt. Of all our teachers who turn beliefs assented to into beliefs really believed none is so mighty as sorrow. For that makes a man lay a firm hold on the deep things of God's word. (2) The bold avowal that always accompanies certitude. These men's stammering tongues are loosed. They have a fact to base themselves upon. They have a faith built upon the certitude of what they know. Having this, out it all comes in a gush. No man that believes with all his heart can help speaking. You silent Christians are so because you do not more than half grasp the truth that you say you hold. (3) Take care of indolently supposing that you understand the depths of God's truth. These apostles fancied that they had grasped the whole meaning of the Master's words, and were glad in them. And there are only too many of us who are disposed to grasp at the most superficial interpretation of Christian truth, and lazily to rest ourselves in that. Better that we should feel that the smallest word that comes from God is like some little leaf of a water plant on the surface of a pond; if you lift that you draw a whole trail after it; and nobody knows how far off and how deep down are the roots. II. THE SAD QUESTIONS AND FOREBODINGS OF THE MASTER. He does not reject their imperfect homage, though He discerns its imperfection and transiency; but sadly warns them to beware of the fleeting nature of their present emotion; and would seek to prepare them, by the knowledge, for the terrible storm that is going to break upon them. Note, then, that—1. The dear Lord accepts imperfect surrender. If He did not, what would become of us all? He was willing to put up with what you and I will not put up with; and to accept what we reject; and be pleased that they gave Him even that. 2. The need for Christian men to make sure that their inward life corresponds with their words and professions. Our words and acts of Christian profession and service are like bank notes. And what will be the end if there is a whole ream of such going up and down the world, and no balance of bullion in the cellars to meet them? Nothing but bankruptcy. Do you see to it that your reserve of gold, deep down in your hearts, always leaves a margin beyond the notes in circulation issued by you. And in the midst of your professions hear the Master saying, "Do ye now believe?" 3. Trust no emotions, no religious experiences, but only Him to whom they turn. These men were perfectly sincere, and there was a glow of gladness in their hearts, and a real though imperfect faith when they spoke. In an hour's time where were they? "We trust*ed*." Ah! what a world of sorrow there is in those two final letters of that word. "We trust*ed* that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel." But they do not trust it any more, and so why should they put themselves in peril for One on whom their faith can no longer build? Would you and I have been any better if we had been there? Suppose you had stood afar off and seen

Jesus die on the cross, would your faith have lived? Let us all, recognizing our own weakness, trust to nothing, but only to Him, and cry, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." III. THE LONELY CHRIST AND HIS COMPANION. 1. Jesus was the loneliest man that ever lived. All other forms of human solitude were concentrated in His. He knew the pain of unappreciated aims, unaccepted love, unbelieved teachings, a heart thrown back upon itself. Solitude was no small part of the pain of His passion. Remember the pitiful appeals in Gethsemane. Now, some of us no doubt have to live outwardly solitary lives. Physicists tell us that in the most solid bodies the atoms do not touch. Hearts come closer than atoms, but yet after all, we die alone, and in the depths of our souls we all live alone. So let us be thankful that the Master knows the bitterness of solitude, and has Himself trod that path. 2. Then we have the calm consciousness of unbroken communion. Jesus Christ's sense of union with the Father was deep, close, constant, in manner and measure altogether transcending any experience of ours. But still He sets before us a pattern of what we should aim at in these great words. They show the path of comfort for every lonely heart. If the world with its millions seems to have none in it for us, let us turn to Him who never leaves us. If dear ones are torn from our grasp, let us clasp God. It is not all loss if the trees which with their leafy beauty shut out the sky from us, are felled and so we see the blue. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Faith in the chamber and faith in the world*:—I. THE DISCIPLES PROFESSED TO BELIEVE, BUT THEY DID NOT KNOW WHY. 1. Here was a great, though natural mistake. (1) It was a vast conclusion to draw from Christ's knowing what was passing in their minds now, that He came from the Father, and knew all things. Any man present that evening might have known that. They had worn their hearts on their sleeves! (2) They made another mistake. They thought that Christ spoke plainly now and therefore believed, when in fact He had (chap. xiv. 2, 12, 28; xv. 26; xvi. 20) said the same thing before. We all know how easy 'tis to reflect ourselves upon the speaker, and, if we think we comprehend his meaning better than we did, to attribute it to his improved lucidity of exposition. But in thinking that they understood him, they were mistaken also. It would be impossible to discover the precise ideas they affixed to Christ's language. But it is clear that they did not think of His dying or rising at all. Christ's words on these subjects are clear enough to us, for we look at them through plain history; but they were anything but clear to those who looked at them through beliefs entirely incompatible with their occurrence. 2. And yet they did believe. They believed more than they thought, and better. They knew the Teacher, if not the lesson. While they were basing their faith on knowledge of His meaning, they had a faith already built on a surer foundation than that; and while they were rejoicing in a confidence which had no support but a mistake, they felt a deeper, stronger confidence which rested on no mistake at all. We too feel more than we understand. It were a poor thing if our confidence in Christ and Christianity were based on learning and logic, or even distinct opinions. A man may believe in Christ, and cleave to Him, and follow Him, and yet be miserably at a loss if asked for a scientific or a satisfactory exposition of his faith. II. THEY BELIEVED, BUT THEY DID NOT KNOW HOW. Christ did not mean to question the reality of their faith but its intensity. They always had believed, and, under the influence of this affecting scene, and thinking that they understood His meaning, believed more than ever. But they little knew how frail and feeble was their faith in comparison with the burden it would have to bear. They felt strong, like a convalescent invalid, but as soon as strain and pressure were on them, their strength was that of a little child. Apply this thought—1. To the faith of contemplation and the faith of action; to man looking on truth as an object, and obeying it as a claim. While the disciples had Christ before them, and had only to listen to and behold Him, they believed; but when they had to follow Him, to show their practical regard, "they all forsook Him and fled." And still there is a difference between the quiet thought of truth, and its embodiment in act. "Faith worketh by love." No other faith can save a man. How "can faith save," if it does nothing? How can it save from sins, if it does not destroy sin? Truth is given us, not to be a pleasant object but a living power. The Word of God is "a lamp to the feet," not only to the eye. It is very possible to have faith in Christ when beholding the graces of His character, the credentials of His mission, and the glory of His work, and to be sadly wanting in loving and daily obedience to His will; possible to have faith in propositions, with practical unbelief in duties; and yet the faith which is "more precious than gold," must bear the test of gold. 2. To the faith which receives Christ in peace and

prosperity, and that which receives Him when His claims conflict with our fond beliefs and wishes. *We* can think calmly and speak eloquently of the goodness and equity of Providence when "the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places," but how mysterious it becomes when He "destroyeth the hope of man." What was a pleasant study becomes a perplexing, perhaps insoluble problem. We can recommend so persuasively the cheerful drinking of the cup of sorrow when in the hand of others, but what wry faces we make when put into our own! It is as it was in that upper room: Jesus in peace and safety, speaking of a dear Father, His joyful home, His love to His disciples, and great comforts in store for them, is one Christ; but Jesus betrayed and seized is quite another. 3. To faith in enjoyment of strong and stimulating privileges and faith deprived of them. There was everything in that upper room to excite and gratify every religious and Christian feeling. As men, the disciples were with brethren; as Jews, they had observed one of the most solemn and delightful festivals of their nation; as friends of Jesus, they had seen Him open His heart as He had never done before. But when this scene had passed as a dissolving view, and wintry barrenness had taken the place of summer loveliness—when the spell had been broken, and nature was left to its ordinary action—faith failed. We know what times of unwonted spiritual impression and excitement are, when the spiritual world seems opened to our view; when "alone" with Jesus, "He expounds all things to His disciples;" and when they "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." But these times do not last. And how soon the fair vision vanishes! A return to the worldly lot and the society of man dissipates it all; and it requires all our effort and care not to "leave," in heart, the Jesus we had felt to be our "Life," and "Peace," and "Hope." Conclusion: The subject teaches us how to try ourselves and others. Not by clearness of views or sensibility of feelings, but life. (*A. J. Morris.*)

Ver. 31. **Do ye now believe?**—*Love's farewell:*—I. A KIND INQUIRY (ver. 31). A question. 1. Authoritative. Put by Him who alone has a right to do so. 2. Necessary. The existence of faith (chap. ix. 35; Mark iv. 40) the one thing needful (Luke xviii. 8; Heb. xi. 6). 3. Urgent. Then the time was short—Christ was on the eve of departure. Now the time is short (1 Cor. vii. 29)—The Lord is at hand (Phil. iv. 5; James v. 8). 4. Personal. The question was addressed to the disciples individually. So must each soul consider and reply for himself. II. A GENTLE ADMONITION (ver. 32). A warning. 1. Startling. Otherwise it would have been worthless. 2. Painful; intimating the fact of their impending desertion: hence suggesting the propriety of examining whether their faith was capable of enduring the coming strain. 3. Softened. Their dispersion would leave Him alone in the hands of His enemies; yet as if to mitigate the blow of this allusion to their apostasy He adds that the Father would be with Him. III. A CHEERING PREDICTION (ver. 33). 1. The blessing. Christ desired that they might have peace. It was His dying legacy (chap. xiv. 27) and His purpose in all His conversation and labours. 2. The sphere. It could only be secured by vital union with Himself (Rom. viii. 6, xiv. 17; Eph. ii. 14; Phil. iv. 7). IV. A COMFORTING CONSOLATION. Christ had overcome the world—1. For Himself. Hence they need not doubt that He was the Father's Son and the Saviour of men, or question His ability to support and succour them. 2. For them. If they continued one with Him, in and through Him they would be victorious over all tribulation (Rom. viii. 37; Rev. vii. 14). Lessons: 1. The gentleness of Christ. 2. The weakness of men. 3. The blessedness of faith. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Rebuke and warning:*—I. THE REBUKE. The words, "Do ye now believe?" seem to charge the faith, that the disciples had now professed, with a threefold defect—1. That it was late. Why did ye not believe sooner? Have you not had sufficient means of conviction till now? 2. That it was cheap. What does it cost you to believe? What temptation have you to the contrary? Your faith now only lays hold of My promises, and is not at all discouraged by any of your own fears. 3. That it was mistaken. Are you sure that you do believe? Do you not think too indulgently of yourselves? Have you examined your own hearts, and secured the ground of your confidence? A true faith will never be a deserter; but you will by and by desert Me. Perhaps all these three defects were to be found in the present faith of the disciples, at least in some measure: I am sure they are actually and ordinarily found in the faith of common professors. II. THE WARNING. In the remainder of the text, "Behold, the hour cometh," &c., we observe, that, as the disciples' crime was the leaving of their Master, so the occasion of that crime was their scattering; and the reason of their

scattering was the concern that each of them had for "his own." From these two propositions I shall infer—1. That when Christians divide, they leave their Master; and—2. That it is our own things, and not the things of Christ, that make us divide (Rom. xvi. 17, 18; Phil. ii. 20, 21). (*Dean Young.*)

Ver. 32. **Ye shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.**—*Solitude:*—1. There are two kinds of solitude—visible and inward. When we are not seen, we say that we are alone; however, it is not always a true isolation. The fisherman does not feel himself alone when he passes his nights on the immense ocean; he thinks of his family quietly sheltered; it is for them he is working, their love fills his heart. The watching soldier, in the lonely picket, does not feel himself alone; for he feels that on him rests the honour of the flag and the safety of his fellow-soldiers. The workwoman, in her garret, is not alone, for the work which she will finish before dawn will procure for those she loves the next day's bread. 2. One can, on the contrary, be surrounded by the busiest crowd, and feel more isolated than in a desert. There are persons whose contact causes no sympathetic cord to vibrate in the soul. There have been days in which, coming back from the cemetery where you have buried a part of your heart and your life, the noise, the movement of the world seemed empty, cold and derisive. 3. Of these two solitudes I need not say which is the hardest to bear. To feel oneself lost in this vast universe, knowing that there is no one to whom we are dear, is there a more miserable condition? Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged there is a class of men who would willingly take their part in it. To have nothing in common with others, to climb a summit inaccessible, to sit there in pride, is a destiny which attracts them. Such is the greatness of selfishness, of Satan! But the gospel offers us in Christ a greatness of another nature. It does not tread sympathy under foot; it lays claim to it, it needs it. Look at Gethsemane; the Son of Man going three times to His disciples and asking them to watch with Him. How small the solitary pride of the egoist is beside that greatness! I. WHAT THE CAUSES OF CHRIST'S SOLITUDE ARE. 1. When a man wishes to serve truth or righteousness, he must expect sooner or later to be lonely. Every truth has begun by being misunderstood; it has been a subject of reproach to those who have been its first apostles. This is above all realized in religious truth, which, by its very holiness, humiliates and bruises our pride, and consequently all human passions are leagued against it. The witnesses of eternal righteousness here below have all been at times lonely, misconstrued, slighted. Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, John the Baptist, and St. Paul. Imagine, then, the holy and the just One and you may well divine that He will be lonely amongst men. He is alone when seeking the glory of God amid people who are forgetting Him; when preaching His spiritual law in the midst of a nation attached to forms; when denouncing iniquity and hypocrisy amid a crowd whom the Pharisees dominate; amongst His disciples who do not understand His sublime mission; and in the last hour. Now, what happens to the Leader must happen to all His disciples. 2. Now, this inevitable solitude brings with it—(1) Temptations from doubt: to be alone in believing a truth, and in proclaiming it, is a formidable trial. When we feel ourselves lost in the midst of that crowd whose thronging waves environ us, there are moments when a secret voice says to us: "Art thou certain of having the truth thyself?" (2) To that temptation add a temptation of barrenness for the heart. The heart lives by sympathy. But to be alone in loving an absent God, to appeal to a sympathy which is wanting, what a subject for sadness! There is a risk then of the heart being thrown back on itself, and of being consumed in melancholy. (3) How should not this double trial of the intellect and of the heart exercise a baleful influence on life! We must be understood in order to act. The idea of having spectators or witnesses doubles our natural energy. The most impossible works have been accomplished by united men. (4) What will it be then if to this general trial are added still more special trials, if sickness and death come and make a void around us and render that solitude more complete. II. HIS CONSOLATION. "I am not alone," &c. There is what made the strength of Jesus. What are all the desertions of earth in presence of communion with God? He might well feel that precious communion, for He only wanted, loved, accomplished the Father's will; but can we forget that there was a mysterious, dreadful day when the Father Himself failed Him? But if Jesus has known that terrible forsaking, it was that we should never know it. When faith united us to Him we obtained the right to come to God, and to call Him our Father; then in our turn we could repeat those words. That is what constitutes the Christian's strength and consola-

tion. 1. You are alone, and perhaps are doubting. Who are you to oppose your thought to the thoughts of the crowd, to believe what others deny? In that sorrowful anxiety, I know of only one refuge; it is this thought: "The Father is with me." If it was your thought only the waves of doubt would soon carry you away; but when you have God for you nothing should stop you. It was that which made all God's prophets strong, when they had to protest against some dominant iniquity? Neither Moses, nor Elijah, nor St. Paul have drawn from their own character that superhuman energy which made them giants in the moral order; they themselves tell us that it is God who calls them and sends them. So Luther. To divine the secret of his strength, he should be seen on his knees before going to the Diet of Worms, saying: "My God, Thou dost know well that I do not wish to resist such great lords, but it is Thy cause not mine." And behold, he, the son of a peasant, overthrew in his weakness the secular yoke of Rome which philosophy had not been able to move! 2. There is that barrenness which isolation produces. Ah! if the affection of men fail us, do you not believe that the love of God is infinite enough to fill our heart? Is not God the very source of love? Do you believe that God would leave empty, arid, and barren, a heart which the world forsakes? 3. As opposed to discouragement nothing is more powerful than the thought that the Father is with us. "My right is with the Lord, and my work is with my God;" yes, his work, small, hidden, obscure as it may be, if that work is only a prayer, a sigh, a tear, which seems lost. What immense encouragement such a thought is! If I am alone, that work will not perish with me, I have brought my stone to an eternal building which is continued along the centuries; for it is God's work. (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) *Loneliness*:—Many a one is cast down and weary because he feels alone; nought so dispirits as loneliness; and yet one may be more alone in a crowd than anywhere when all unknown and uncared for. All must feel it in some shape: the old who sit and gaze in the fire, and see many a cherished scheme lying in the dull white ash; old friends, loved ones, gone, one by one; new faces and new ways, belonging to a new generation, cluster round, and loneliness pours in upon the soul —a loneliness too deep for human words to describe. When you have a sorrow, you feel that he that hath known a little sorrow will give the warmest sympathy. The memory of the trial, illumined by the after-knowledge of its blessing, will give a loving, tender power to the counsel of the friend. Whose sorrow like that sorrow! Whose loneliness as that of Jesus, when His bitter cry startled the assembled throng! He knows it all. Bring, then, thy care here, and gather comfort. Not very long ago one of our English officers, when riding full speed across the sand after the enemy, saw one of his men laid on the ground with his side torn open by a shell, and fast sinking. Reining up his horse he said, "My lad, you must not think me unkind if I leave you alone in your agony; but you know I must ride on, Duty commands me!" I shall never forget, said that officer, the answer I got. "Sir," said he, "I am not alone. I have with me the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother!" That brave English soldier knew the glorious truth of the ever-present Jesus, who, by the memory of that bitter cry, would never leave a child of His to be alone in the hour of need. Oh, Jesus, let me glean and keep that precious thought. I am not left as an orphan alone to fight and struggle in the great battle of life. The fierceness of the pain full often makes men long for something to lull the pain; the heart gives way before the long future that seems to stretch on and on without a ray of hope. "Face it," says the doctor, "the pain may be for a time the fiercer, but the operation will relieve." Or if it be a soul-agony, and sin to crucify, nails to be driven through our tenderest places. "Face it," cries the Great Physician, "suffer, but win!" Deluded souls fly to the giddy throng, and try by pleasures to drown thought, or by the fatal wine cup to forget in a momentary false excitement, the hard facts of every-day life. Let us at least meet our trials awake. Meet them in the power of the Crucified and His example. A great Italian bishop was noted for his calm resignation, and when asked how it was, replied, "I look around and think how many are worse off than I am; I look down and think how soon it will all be over; I look up and think how happy it will be there!" (*W. H. Jones.*) *Charms of solitude*:—Charles the Fifth, after a life spent in military exploits and the active and energetic prosecution of ambitious projects, resigned, as is well known, his crown, sated with its enjoyment. He left these words, as a testimony behind him: "I have tasted more satisfaction in my solitude in one day than in all the triumphs of my former reign. The sincere study, profession, and practice of the Christian religion have in them such joy as is seldom found in courts and grandeur." *The loneliness of Christ*:—1. There are two

kinds of solitude: that of insulation in space, and that of isolation of spirit. (1) The first is simply separation by distance. This is not real solitude: for sympathy can people that with a crowd. The traveller is not alone when the faces which will greet him on his arrival seem to beam upon him as he trudges on—the solitary student is not alone when he feels that human hearts will respond to the truths which he is preparing to address to them. (2) The other is loneliness of soul. There are times when hands touch ours, but only send an icy chill of unsympathising indifference to the heart: when words pass from our lips, but only come back as an echo without reply: when the multitude throng and press us, and we cannot say, as Christ said, "Somebody hath touched Me." 2. And there are two kinds of men who feel this last solitude. (1) The men of self-reliance: who can go sternly through duty, and scarcely shrink let what will be crushed in them. Such men are invaluable in all those professions in which sensitive feeling would be a superfluity; they make iron commanders and surgeons, and statesmen who do not flinch for the dread of unpopularity. But mere self-dependence is weakness: and the conflict is terrible when a human sense of weakness is felt by such men. Jacob was alone when he slept in his way to Padan Aram, and Elijah in the wilderness. But the loneliness of the tender Jacob was very different from that of the stern Elijah. To Jacob the sympathy he yearned for was realized. A ladder raised from earth to heaven figured the possibility of communion between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. In Elijah's case, the storm, the earthquake, and the fire did their convulsing work in the soul, before a still, small voice told him that he was not alone. (2) The men who live in sympathy. These tremble at the thought of being alone, not from want of courage but from the intensity of their affections. They want not aid, nor even countenance: but only sympathy. And the trial comes to them when they are called upon to perform a duty on which the world looks coldly. It is to this latter class that we must look if we would understand the spirit of the text. The deep humanity of the soul of Christ was gifted with those finer sensibilities of affectionate nature which stand in need of sympathy. He who selected the gentle John to be His friend—who found solace in female society—who in the trial hour could not bear even to pray without the human presence, had nothing in Him of the hard, merely self-dependent character. Note, then—I. THE LONELINESS OF CHRIST. 1. This loneliness was caused by the Divine elevation of His character. (1) There is a second-rate greatness which the world can comprehend. Contrast the Son of Man and John the Baptist. John's life had a rude, rugged goodness, on which was written, in characters which required no magnifying-glass to read, spiritual excellence. The world on the whole accepted him, and if he had not crossed the path of a weak prince and a revengeful woman, John might have finished his course with joy, recognized as irreproachable. Why did the world accept John and reject Christ? In physical nature, the naturalist finds no difficulty in comprehending the simple structure of the lowest organizations of animal life. But when he comes to study the complex anatomy of man, he has the labour of a lifetime before him. It is not difficult to master the constitution of a single country; but when you try to understand the universe, you find infinite appearances of contradiction. That which the structure of man is to the structure of the limpet: that which the universe is to a single country, the complex and boundless soul of Christ was to the souls of other men. Therefore, to the superficial observer, His life was a mass of inconsistencies and contradictions. And hence that acceptance which had marked the earlier stage of His career melted away. First the Pharisees took the alarm: then the Sadducees: then the Herodians: then the people. That was the most terrible of all: for the enmity of the upper classes is impotent; but when that cry of brute force is stirred from the deeps of society, the heart of mere earthly oak quails before it. The apostles, at all events, did quail. One denied: another betrayed: all deserted. They "were scattered, each to his own:" and the Truth Himself was left alone in Pilate's judgment-hall. (2) Now learn from this a very important distinction. To feel solitary is no uncommon thing. In every place victims of diseased sensibility are to be found, and they might find a weakening satisfaction in observing a parallel between their own feelings and those of Jesus. But before that, be sure that it is, the elevation of your character which severs you from your species. The world has small sympathy for Divine goodness: but it also has little for a great many other qualities which are disagreeable to it. You find yourself unpopular. Well? Is that because you are above the world offending it by your purity and unworldliness? Or is it that you are wrapped up in self—cold, disobliging, sentimental? (3) The first time Christ

felt this loneliness was when He was but twelve years old, amongst the doctors and asking them questions. High thoughts were in the Child's soul: larger views of duty and destiny. There is a moment in every true life—to some it comes very early—when the old routine of duty is not large enough—when the parental roof seems too low, because the Infinite above is arching over the soul—when the old formulas seem to be narrow, and they must either be thrown aside or else transformed into living and breathing realities—when the earthly father's authority is being superseded by the claims of a Father in heaven. 2. That solitude was felt by Christ in trial. In the desert, in Pilate's judgment-hall, in the garden, He was alone—and alone must every son of man meet his trial-hour. The individuality of the soul necessitates that. Each man's temptations are made up of a host of peculiarities which no other mind can measure. You are tried alone—alone you pass into the desert—alone you must bear and conquer in the agony—alone you must be sifted by the world. And there are trials more terrible. A temptation, in which the lower nature struggles for mastery, can be met by the whole united force of the spirit. But it is when obedience to a heavenly Father can be only paid by disobedience to an earthly one: or fidelity to duty can be only kept by infidelity to some entangling engagement: or the straight path must be taken over the misery of others: or the counsel of the affectionate friend must be met with a "Get thee behind Me, Satan." It is then, when human advice is unavailable, that the soul feels what it is to be alone. 3. The Redeemer's soul was alone in dying. The hour had come—they were all gone, and He was, as He predicted, left alone. All that is human drops from us in that hour. "I shall die alone"—yes, and alone you live. No atom in creation touches another—they only approach within a certain distance; then the attraction ceases, and an invisible something repels—they only seem to touch. No soul touches another soul except at one or two points; and those chiefly external. Death only realizes that which has been the fact all along. In the central deeps of our being we are alone. II. THE SPIRIT OR TEMPER OF THAT SOLITUDE. 1. Observe its grandeur. I am alone, yet not alone. There is a feeble and sentimental way in which we speak of the Man of sorrows. We turn to the cross and the loneliness to arouse compassion. You degrade that loneliness. Compassion for Him! Adore if you will; but no pity: let it draw out the firmer and manlier graces of the soul. Even in human things, the strength that is in a man can be only learnt when he is thrown upon his own resources and left alone. It is one thing to defend the truth when you know that your audience are already prepossessed, and another to hold it when met by unsympathizing suspicion. It is one thing to rush on to danger with the shouts of numbers, and another when the lonely captain of the sinking ship sees the last boatful disengage itself, and folds his arms to go down into the majesty of darkness, crushed, but not subdued. Such and greater far was the strength and majesty of the Saviour's solitariness. It was not the trial of the lonely hermit. There is a certain pleasing melancholy in his life. But there are the forms of nature to speak to him, and he has not the positive opposition of mankind if he has the absence of actual sympathy. But the solitude of Christ was the solitude of a crowd. In that single human bosom dwelt the thought which was to be the germ of the world's life: a thought unshared, misunderstood, or rejected. 2. Learn from these words self-reliance. Alone the Son of Man was content to be. He threw Himself on His own solitary thought: did not go down to meet the world; but waited, though it might be for ages, till the world should come round to Him. This is self-reliance—to believe that what is truest in you is true for all: to abide by that, and not be over-anxious to be understood, or sympathized with, certain that at last all must acknowledge the same, and that while you stand firm, the world will come round to you. There is a cowardice in this age which is not Christian. We shrink from the consequences of truth. We ask what men will think—what others will say. He who is calculating that will accomplish nothing. The Father—the Father who is with us and in us—what does He think? 3. Remark the humility of this loneliness. Had the Son of Man simply said, I can be alone, He would have said no more than any proud man can say. But when He added, "because the Father is with Me," that independence assumed another character, and self-reliance became only another form of reliance upon God. Distinguish between genuine and spurious humility. There is a false humility which says, "It is my own poor thought, and I must not trust it. Is not trust in self the great fault of our fallen nature?" Very well. Now remember something else. There is a Spirit which beareth witness with our spirits—there is a "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The thought of

your mind perchance is the thought of God. To refuse to follow that may be to disown God. To take the judgment and conscience of other men to live by—where is the humility of that? From whence did their conscience and judgment come? Was the fountain from which they drew exhausted for you? (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Cure of loneliness*:—A poor woman living alone in a small cottage in the forest was asked if she did not feel the loneliness of the place. "Oh no," was her reply, "for Faith closes the door at night, and Mercy opens it in the morning." (*Sunday at Home.*) *Alone, yet not alone*:—I. WE HAVE NO REASON TO SAY THAT IT IS WRONG TO RECOIL FROM BEING ALONE. 1. Adam was unfallen when God saw that it was "not good for him to be alone." Sin has always a tendency to isolate—grace to draw out the social affections. Whoever thinks of solitude in heaven? 2. Therefore, it is nothing strange that Christ should place solitude among His sorrows. The desire which brought Him down here was a longing to have a people with Him. He could not be that "grain of wheat which abideth alone." No wonder, then, that the first act of His public life was to secure companionship. And there is not a more touching trait of His whole life than that yearning after human sympathy, in the agony of Gethsemane. And, plainly, it was not for His disciples' sake that He loved to take them about with Him everywhere. Even the transfiguration would have been incomplete without the three. And after the resurrection, the only thought on which we know that He dwelt with pleasure is, "I will meet you in Galilee." And do you think that it was only for us He said it, "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also?" We can quite understand, therefore, that in the enumeration of His sorrows, such stress was laid upon the fact that "He trod the wine-press alone;"—and how that desertion of His friends struck so cold and so painfully, that He at once looked out for a refuge, "Ye shall leave Me alone, and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with Me." And then, you remember, presently came that passage which was the most tremendous of all solitude—"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" I say, then, that we have the highest warrant to affirm that solitude is to be deprecated, and that one great end of our religion is to provide the exemption. II. THE GREATEST PART OF HIS LIFE EVERY MAN IS ALONE. 1. Count up the hours of life, and most of them are passed alone. Besides, there is a moral solitude far greater than physical. Who has not felt the deep solitude of a crowd? 2. The most dangerous, because the most subtle, temptations come to us when we are alone. An unoccupied state is sure to foster what is bad in us, and our lonely hours are generally our most unoccupied ones. It was in a solitude that even our Lord had His fiercest attacks. See how it is. (1) You are by yourself—you look into yourself, and you get morbid. Things unreal take possession of your mind.—you become dreamy, unpractical—an easy prey to cankerous thought, delusion, doubt, and all unhealthy things (2) Or, the mind, alone, having no present, goes back into the past—you re-live it—old sorrows, which were healed, open again—old sins, which were forgiven, rise up—you doubt whether you have ever been pardoned—and you are most unprofitably and injuriously wretched. (3) Or, some future, which, when it really comes, will come minute by minute, now swells before you all in one black mass, casting its big, dark shadow upon the path, and you feel quite overwhelmed by it, simply because you are merely passive. As soon as you only become active the passive pain will be almost gone. III. IT IS OF IMMENSE IMPORTANCE TO HAVE A REMEDY FOR SOLITUDE. If Jesus Himself, in His perfect innocence, felt it—how much we? What shall we do? 1. Occupy solitude. Never allow sheer solitude for solitude's sake. Let there, for instance, be a distinct subject of thought. Solitude should always be preparatory to something which is to follow it—never an end, always a means. Jesus' solitudes appear to have been always preparatory to work. 2. People your solitudes with realized presences; bring in the communion of saints. It is not necessary that they be actually there. And that will make solitude more than safe—holy, helpful. 3. Far more than both, feel the close presence of a living Saviour. Christians do not attach sufficient weight to the actual presence of Christ as a brother. Most minds are occupied with the death of Christ, but it is the few who think as they ought of the actual, living, present Christ. Then, where is solitude? What the Father was to Jesus, that, Jesus, or rather the Father in Jesus, is to you. IV. LIFE WILL BE A VERY DIFFERENT THING TO YOU FROM THE TIME THAT YOU HAVE LEARNT THIS SECURITY OF SOLITUDE. 1. Your own room will then be another place to you. To go up there will not be to go up to be "alone." Rather, no other place upon this whole earth so sweetly full—no company so good, no fellowship so rich. It will not be dull, it will not be unwholesome, it will not be perilous, to be there. And it

will be a very poor thing, in comparison, to go down from angels, and from saints, and from Jesus, to the common-places, the presences of life. 2. And yet, even in these common-places, the presences will be there. 3. And in things more testing still. If there be a desolating moment, it is when you are first called to do alone something which you have been wont to do with one with whom you can never do that thing again. The pleasant part is gone, for that dear one is gone. But those spirits are not gone—Jesus is not gone. It is a true word—you are "alone;" but it is truer still, "not alone." 4. And presently you will have to die. And it is a very solitary thing to die. Those who love you may go with you to the brink, but they cannot cross with you. I shudder to think of the solitariness of the feeling of the death of the man of the world. But you will not be "alone"—never so tended, never so encompassed with the loving, the lovely, and the true—"Alone, yet not alone, for the Father is with you." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Alone, yet not alone:*—I. THE LONELINESS OF JESUS. 1. In the mystery of His person. 2. In the elevation of His Spirit. 3. In the intensity of His suffering. 4. In the character of His work. 5. In the extent of His influence. II. THE SOCIETY OF JESUS. The Father was with Christ—1. In personal union with His Godhead. 2. In active co-operation with His Divine manhood. 3. In the exercise of spiritual communion. 4. In the manifestation of paternal sympathy. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*)

Ver. 33. **These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace.**—*These things, or Christ's secrets:*—I. The secret of COMMUNION (chap. xiv. 25). II. The secret of JOY (chap. xv. 11). III. The secret of STEADFASTNESS (chap. xvi. 1). IV. The secret of PRAYER (ver. 25). V. The secret of PEACE AND VICTORY (text). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The peace which Jesus promises:*—I. THE PEACE HERE PROMISED. 1. It is spiritual peace. This is plain from the fact that it was to be enjoyed during tribulation, and it is the peace which Jesus promises in these words: "Peace I leave with you, not as the world giveth." From the connection in which it is evident that it is a fruit of the Spirit. It flows from a well-grounded persuasion of our reconciliation to God. We can enjoy no true happiness of which God is not both the Author and Finisher. There is an inseparable connection between holiness and happiness. 2. This peace is peculiar to the friends of Jesus. In Me ye shall have peace. He addresses His friends only. They are all united to Christ by the Spirit who dwells in Him and them, and are all furnished with that faith by which they obtain peace. All the wicked are entire strangers to it, because they are separated from the Prince of Peace. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." 3. The enjoyment of this peace is not at all inconsistent with the endurance of tribulation. It is seated in the mind. In his body the Christian may feel sickness and pain; in his estate he may suffer damage and loss; and, in his character and friends, he may suffer injury and loss; and yet the peace of his mind, on the whole, may remain unruffled and undiminished. In the history of the apostles, after the Ascension, we have an ample proof of this delightful truth. Rude and frequent as the tempests were by which they were assailed, they could not even check the growth of that fair plant of heavenly origin, peace of mind, which their Saviour had planted in their souls. 4. The tribulations of the world have a tendency to interrupt, and often do interrupt this peace. This is plainly implied in these words, "Be of good cheer," &c. The Christian has his days of sweet sunshine, but also his nights of gloomy darkness. 5. This peace shall never be totally or finally taken away from the Christian. "Your joy no man taketh from you." II. THE WORDS OF CHRIST ARE FITTED TO MAINTAIN THE PEACE OF HIS PEOPLE AMIDST ALL THE TRIBULATIONS OF LIFE. 1. They tell Christians beforehand what they have to expect in the world, viz., tribulation; and, therefore, teach them to make preparation for it. A principal part of the misery of mankind arises from want of attention to such information. Men suffer the many keen pangs of disappointment, because they will indulge those wishes and hopes which general experience, the dictates of sober reason, and the word of God, pronounce to be groundless and extravagant. 2. In the season of tribulation, the words of Christ direct the mind to effectual sources of consolation. They teach us, that all our afflictions come from God; that God has a gracious design in afflicting us; that the same God, who is our God in the time of health and prosperity, is also our God in the time of trouble and adversity; that all things shall work together for our good. 3. They teach us that the time of our warfare and suffering is but short, and that all our tribulations shall come to a perpetual end, and immortal joy succeed. Conclusion: From this subject learn—1. To rejoice in all your tribula-

tions. This is, indeed, a very difficult lesson: none but Christ can teach it, and none but a true Christian can learn it. But to learn it is possible; for we hear Paul saying, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities," &c. 2. To make yourselves familiarly acquainted with the words of Christ. How can they afford us rich and lasting consolation if we are ignorant of them. 3. Never to forget that you have to contend only with vanquished enemies. (*J. Clapperton.*) *The believer's peace*:—It is often surprising to see how much pain there may be in the sensibility, and yet peace in the depths of the mind. In crossing the Atlantic some years ago we were overtaken by a gale of wind. Upon the deck the roar and confusion was terrific. The spray from the crests of the waves blew upon the face with almost force enough to blister it. The noise of the waves howling and roaring and foaming was almost deafening. But when I stepped into the engine-room everything was quiet. The mighty engine was moving with a quietness and stillness in striking contrast with the roar without. It reminded me of the peace that can reign in the soul while storms and tempests are howling without. (*C. G. Finney.*) *The Christian above disquietude*:—A ship's compass is so adjusted as to keep its level amidst all the heavings of the sea. Though forming part of a structure that feels every motion of the restless waves, it has an arrangement of its own that keeps it always in place, and in working order. Look at it when you will, it is pointing—trembling, perhaps, but truly—to the pole. So each soul in this life needs an adjustment of its own, that amid the fluctuations of the "earthen vessel" it may be kept ever in a position to feel the power of its great attraction in the skies." (*Christian Treasury.*) *Victory over tribulation*:—When Samuel Rutherford was sentenced to imprisonment in the city of Aberdeen "for righteousness sake," he wrote to a friend: "The Lord is with me; I care not what man can do. I burden no man, and I want nothing. No being is better provided for than I am. My chains are over-gilded with gold. No pen, no words, no engine can express to you the loveliness of my only, only Lord Jesus." *Peace in Christ*:—1. There is clearly a negative rolled up in this sentence, viz., that there is no "peace" out of Christ. Every promise involves a negative. There will be no negatives in heaven. And this is the more to be observed, because almost all that we know of heaven itself, as yet, is negative. But where there is nothing but Christ, there can be nothing but "peace." 2. These words were the last Christ said before His teaching turned, as by a necessary transition, into prayer. Jesus says that the whole of His teaching never swerved from that one end. The duty of the fourteenth, the union of the fifteenth, the coming of the Spirit in the sixteenth chapters all pointed to "peace." And, beyond those three peerless chapters, it was the property of Christ's whole doctrine upon earth. No one ever said severer things than Christ; but it was a severity only to "peace." He saddened to gladden, He stirred the deepest waters of the soul that He might make the greater calm. What a lesson to ministers! And you—see what your religion is!—peace—not fear, not condemnation, not excitement, not controversy. I. LET US UNDERSTAND WHAT THIS PEACE IS. 1. It is the feeling of being forgiven—a quiet conscience—a stilling sense of the love of God. 2. Then, growing out of that, it is a certain contemplative habit of mind, which lives up high enough not to be anxious much about the matters of this world. For it is the repose of faith, a trust in promises, a sense of a Father's love, the hush of a little child on the bosom. II. IT IS OF IMMENSE IMPORTANCE TO HAVE THAT PEACE, because—1. It is the only satisfying of all possessions. Pleasure is man's delight, but "peace" is man's necessity. No man knows the capabilities of his own existence, or what enjoyment is, till he is at "peace." 2. Peace is the root of all holiness. To believe that you are pardoned, to carry a conscience at ease, to take the unruffled reflection of Christ, even as Christ did of the Father, that is the atmosphere of a daily religious life, and that is the secret of every good thing. 3. Peace is the fulfilment of the work of Christ. Then, He "sees of the travail of His soul" in you, "and is satisfied." III. WHAT ARE THE CAUSES WHY YOU ARE NOT AT "PEACE." 1. A want of seriousness and earnestness about your salvation. 2. Or, it may be that you do not see the perfect freeness of this precious gift of "peace." You are trying to work up to it, when you ought to be trying to work from it. 3. Or, you are grieving the Holy Spirit by some continual sin. 4. Or, you are pre-occupied—your mind is cumbered with care, and a crowd of worldly thoughts oppress you, and "peace" will not, cannot come to dwell with what is so turbid, or breathes so thick an air. IV. RULES FOR PEACE. Be more decided. Decision is the parent of "peace." 1. Take some step at once heavenward, and it may be that one step will land you in "peace." 2. Confess Christ.

If you honour Him He will honour you. And "peace" is the seal of an honoured and an honouring Saviour. 3. Go up and down more in Christ—His work, His work, His person, His beauty, His grace. See all your evidences in Him, realize your union with Him, listen for His "still small voice." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Peace and victory*:—I. THE INWARD PEACE. 1. Peace is not lethargy; and it is very remarkable that, in immediate connection, there are words of tribulation and battle. The Christian life moves in two realms—"in Me" and "in the world." And the predicates and characteristics of these are opposite. The tree will stand, with its deep roots and its firm bole, unmoved, though wildest winds may toss its branches and scatter its leaves. In the fortress, beleagured by the sternest foes, there may be, right in the very centre of the citadal, a quiet oratory, through whose thick walls the noise of battle and the shout of victory or defeat can never penetrate. So we may live in a centre of rest, however wild may be the uproar in the circumference. 2. But, then, note that this peace depends upon certain conditions. (1) It is peace in Him. We are in Him as in an atmosphere; as a tree in the soil; as a branch in the vine; as the members in a body; as the residents in a house. We are in Him by the trust that rests all upon Him, by the love that finds all in Him, by the obedience that does all for Him. And it is only when we are in Christ that we realize peace. All else brings distraction. Even delights trouble. Let nothing tempt us down from the heights, and out from the citadel where alone we are at rest. Keep on the lee side of the breakwater and your little cock-boat will ride out the gale. (2) Christ speaks these great words that they may bring to us peace. Think of how He has spoken of our Brother's Ascension to prepare a place for us, &c. If we believed all these things, and lived in the faith of them, how should anything be able to disturb us? We find peace nowhere else but where Mary found her repose, and could shake off care and trouble about many things, sitting at the feet of Jesus, wrapt in His love, and listening to His word. II. THE OUTWARD TRIBULATION WHICH IS THE CERTAIN FATE OF HIS FOLLOWERS. 1. Of course there is very sad and true sense in which the warning, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," applies to all men. Pain and sickness, loss and death, and all the other ills that flesh is heir to afflict us all. But our Lord is not speaking here about the troubles that befall men as men, nor about the chastisement that befalls them as sinners, but of the yet more mysterious sorrows which fall upon them because they are good. 2. I have already said that the Christian life moves in two spheres, and hence there must necessarily be conflict. Whoever realizes the inward life in Christ will more or less find himself coming into hostile collision with lives which only move on the surface and belong to the world. 3. No doubt the form of the antagonism varies. No doubt the more the world is penetrated by Christian principles the less vehement and painful will the collision be. No doubt some portion of the battlements of organized Christianity has tumbled into the ditch and made it a little less deep. Christian men and women have dropped their standard far too much, and so the antagonism is not so plain as it ought to be. But there it is, and if you are going to live out and out like a Christian man, you will get the old sneers flung at you. We have all, in our several ways, to bear the Cross. Do not let us be ashamed of it, and, above all, for the sake of easing our shoulders, do not let us be unfaithful to our Master. III. THE COURAGEOUS CONFIDENCE WHICH COMES FROM THE LORD'S VICTORY. "Be of good cheer." 1. It is the old commandment that rung out to Joshua on the departure of Moses, "Be strong and of a good courage," &c. So says the Captain of salvation. Like some leader who has climbed the ramparts, or hewed his way through the broken ranks of the enemies, and rings out the voice of encouragement and call to his followers, our Captain sets before us His own example. 2. Notice, then, how our Lord's life was a true battle. The world tried to draw him away from God by appealing to things desirable to sense, as in the wilderness; or to things dreadful to sense, as on the cross; and both the one and the other form of temptation He faced and conquered. It was no shadow fight which evoked this pæan of victory. 3. Our Lord's life is the type of all victorious life. The world conquers me when it draws me away from God, when it makes me its slave, when it coaxes me to trust it, and to despair if I lose it. And I conquer the world when I put my foot upon its temptations, when I crush it down, when I shake off its bonds, and when nothing that time and sense, with their delights or their dreadfulnesses, can bring, prevents me from cleaving to my Father with all my heart. Whoso thus coerces Time and Sense to be the servants of his filial love has conquered them both. And whoso lets them draw him away from God is beaten, however successful he may dream

himself to be, and men may call him. 4. Our share in the Master's victory—"I have overcome the world. Be ye of good cheer." That seems an irrelevant way of arguing. What does it matter to me though He has overcome? So much the better for Him; but what good is it to me? It may aid us somewhat to more strenuous fighting if we know that a Brother has fought and conquered. But the victory of Christ is of extremely little practical use to me, if all the use is to show me how to fight. You must go deeper than that. "I have overcome the world," and "I will come and put My overcoming Spirit into your weakness, and be in you the conquering and omnipotent power." 5. The condition of that victory's being ours is the simple act of reliance upon Him and upon it. The man that goes into the battle as that little army of the Hebrews did against the wide-stretching hosts of the enemy, saying, "O Lord! we know not what to do, but our eyes are up unto Thee," will come out more than conqueror through Him that loved him. And "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Peace and victory*:—I. TRIBULATION IN THE WORLD. 1. Christians may expect to experience the ordinary trials characteristic of the human lot. 2. To these are added those temptations which beset such as earnestly desire to do the will of God, and follow in the steps of Christ. 3. And in the case of some persecutions are encountered for the sake of righteousness. II. PEACE IN CHRIST. 1. Christ was the author and bringer of peace, which was announced as the result of His Advent, and bequeathed by Him as His legacy. 2. Peace is enjoyed through spiritual union with Christ—"In Me." 3. Peace with God is followed by peace with men, and produces peace even within the troubled soul. 4. Such inward peace renders its possessor largely independent of adverse external circumstances. III. VICTORY WITH CHRIST. 1. As a matter of fact Christ did overcome the world. In His life, on the cross, in His resurrection. 2. Through participation with Him Christians share His victory. Conflict is to be maintained, and victory won over the world, self, sin. The victory shall be perfected and manifested when the triumphant soldier of the Cross shall sit down with Christ on the throne. IV. ENCOURAGEMENT FROM CHRIST. "Be of good cheer!" We hear His voice in the storm, "It is I, be not afraid." We hear His voice amid the flames, "Fear not for I am with you." We hear His voice upon the battlefield, "Be thou faithful unto death," &c. (*Family Churchman.*) *Worldly and Christian tribulation*:—In the Pitti Palace, at Florence, there are two pictures which hang side by side. One represents a stormy sea with its wild waves, and black clouds and fierce lightnings flashing across the sky. In the waters a human face is seen, wearing an expression of the utmost agony and despair. The other picture also represents a sea, tossed by as fierce a storm, with as dark clouds; but out of the midst of the waves a rock rises, against which the waters dash in vain. In a cleft of the rock are some tufts of grass and green herbage, with sweet flowers, and amid these a dove is seen sitting on her nest, quiet and undisturbed by the wild fury of the storm. The first picture fitly represents the sorrow of the world when all is helpless and despairing; and the other, the sorrow of the Christian, no less severe, but in which he is kept in perfect peace, because he nestles in the bosom of God's unchanging love. (*S. S. Times.*) *The necessity for tribulation*:—If because you are Christians you promise yourselves a long lease of temporal happiness, free from troubles and afflictions, it is as if a soldier going to the wars should promise himself peace and continual truce with the enemy; or as if a mariner committing himself to the sea for a long voyage should promise himself nothing but fair and calm weather, without waves and storms;—so irrational it is for a Christian to promise himself rest here upon earth. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Need for tribulation*:—Cloudless skies drop no rain. We may bathe ourselves in the unclouded sunshine for days and for weeks, thinking that, if the blue of the heavens were nevermore veiled by the blackness of the storm, we at least would be perfectly satisfied. But as the unclouded days pass on, the parched earth begins to gape to heaven for water, the flowers fade, the grass is burned up, and men and beasts droop in the merciless heat, which now seems no longer the messenger of life, but the angel of death. For need like that there is no help in cloudless skies; the sign of deliverance rather comes in the livid thunder-cloud, the flashing lightning, and the pouring rain. There is a like need of the rain-cloud in the inner life. There is a parching and deadening influence even here in too much sunshine; and the storm-cloud of pain or of sorrow, which drenches our heart-soil with the rain of tears, alone makes possible the continued growth of that which is best in our heart-culture. We do right to thank God for cloudless days; but we do wrong if we do not thank

Him also for days not cloudless. If the one gives the sunshine, the other gives the rain; and without either there would be no increase. (*S. S. Times.*) *Christ's conquest of the world*:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE WORLD. In St. John's writings the word occurs more than one hundred times, and mostly from our Lord's lips. It is used sometimes as equivalent to—1. The universe. "The world was made by Him." 2. The race of men. "God so loved the world." 3. But here it cannot mean either of these, because the world in one sense is the revelation of God, and in the other the object of Christian love as the purchase of Christ's blood. 4. What is it then? It refuses to be described. It eludes our mental grasp. It is not a person, nor a multidude, nor anything on which we can fix responsibility. It is not civilization, though it hangs on its outskirts. It is not sin, though it produces and is produced by it. It is not the wicked, though they are its victims. It is not Satan, though he is its prince. It is an atmosphere, a temper, a spirit, a power most real and energetic, but dead and invisible—a miasma which has arisen from the putrefying corpses if all the sins which have been committed since the Fall. It has hung for ages like a dark, murky cloud over the heart of humanity. It poisons the very air we breathe. 5. But what is it in its essence? It is that warp in the aim and affections of the soul which makes of each of the objects of the visible creation and of the circumstances of life a distinct hindrance to getting to heaven. It is, says St. John, "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the age and the pride of life." It is putting the creature in the place of the Creator. Friends, business, books, &c., may become incorporate with the world. Solomon has told us how his palace, gardens, slaves, singers, &c., were to him the world. Though Haman had an establishment which rivalled that of Ahashuerus, yet this one object—the humiliation of Mordecai formed for him his world. Dives found a world in his purple and fine linen; the young ruler in his great possessions; Felix in the favour of Cæsar. 6. We are all familiar with the phrase, "the spirit of the age," and know how one line of thought rules in one age, and another in another. Well, then, the world is a mighty tradition of all the thought and feeling that the human race has accumulated round itself since the Fall, and that is hostile to the rights of God. It is like a great river which rolls its dark volume across the ages, while a thousand civilizations and races and nations have poured their successive contributions, like so many rivulets, the tyrant as well as the handiwork of the human soul. It is like the November fog which hangs over our vast metropolis, the product of its countless homes and the proof of its vast industries; and yet the veil which shuts out from it the light of heaven destroys the colour on its works of art; the unwholesome vapour which clogs vitality and undermines health, and from which the Londoner escapes that he may see the sun, and the face of nature, and feels what it is to live. Even thus the world hangs over the soul, flapping its wings like the evil bird in the fable, or penetrating it like a subtle poison to sap its vigour and its life. II. Note THE CHARACTER OF ITS INFLUENCE. 1. It works secretly and without being suspected. (1) When we speak of it, it is as something outside us. We are in private life, perhaps, in narrow circumstances, and we regard royal pageants, &c., as the pomps of the world. Or we have been brought up in comfort, in a Christian family shielded from temptation, and as we read the newspaper reports of crime and sin we shrug our shoulders and say "What things do go on in the world!" Or we have just been married, and we look from our happiness upon the worn faces around us, on which gain, pleasure, &c., have traced lines of care and say, "The world knows nothing of real joy." Or in deep affliction we reproach the hard, heartless world. (2) The world in fact disguises itself. It can be prudent, like the old prophet; wise like Ahitophel; courageous like Saul; zealous like Jehu; industrious and public-spirited like Herod; honest like Gallio; very pious like the false apostles at Corinth. 2. Which leads to another characteristic, viz., its marvellous versatility, and power of adaptation to all ages, races, classes. We speak of the Roman, Greek, French, and English world: the truth is, that the great world comprises many worlds or schools, the literary, commercial, political, clerical—each has its special work, but each contributes its quota to the whole. And thus the labourer, needlewoman, crossing-sweeper has as real a world as the monarch or statesman. 3. It is contagious. It may be conveyed by a hint, attitude, fashion, dress. Ancient monarchs lived in fear of the poison which might lurk in every dish, and we may well suspect each object around us of harbouring poisonous attractions. III. THE RESULT OF ITS INFLUENCES ON THIS AGE. 1. Its view of sin is that of something which interferes with the comfort and well-being of society. Hence it is at times unjustly lax and unjustly severe. 2. It

neutralizes the truth that, living or dying, each soul lives in awful solitude beneath the eye of God, by suggesting that we are merely members of a family, town or nation. 3. God is retained just as we might keep a piece of antiquity, or the apex of a theory, or a mere abstraction. From God it turns away to created life and proclaims its supreme importance. What St. John calls sensuality, the world terms enjoying life. What He calls covetousness, the world terms doing the best you can for yourself. What He calls pride, the world calls taking your proper place. Look how it treats the political adventurer, the literary character, the capitalist who have made their way through villainy. It "goes wondering after the beast;" and proclaims the libertine not so very bad after all. IV. THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST TOWARDS IT. 1. Between Him and the world of His day there was a profound and necessary hostility. He began with the world of a little provincial town—Nazareth—and passed to what resembled the world of our manufacturing districts, Capernaum, Bethsaida, &c. Then He passed to the London world of Palestine to Jesusalem. Here you see Him receiving deputations from the various sections of the world: from the popular religious teachers, the Pharisees; the sceptical intellectualists, the Sadducees; the political adventurers, the Herodians. He passes to the world of the lower classes, and mixes with publicans, Samaritans, Greeks. He entered into society; for He was at the marriage at Cana, and dined with the Pharisee, &c.; and the world condemned and rejected Him, and He measured the world and condemned it. There was no mistake on either side. It crucified Him, but the Resurrection was a triumph over the power that killed Him. He had conquered the world by His doctrine, His moral beauty, His death; but, in view of His Easter victory, He said, "I have overcome the world." 2. Only as the ages pass is that victory slowly developing its vast results. You see some of them in the world-wide establishment of His Church, in the ruin of the heathen empire, in the conquest of human thought, power, hearts, new races, and lands. And He is certain of the future. The theatre of the struggle indeed is shifted. It is now the Christian soul. Twice, especially does the world make an effort to dethrone Him—at conversion, and at the period when the soul is moved to dedicate itself to Him perfectly. Meet the world's enchantment by a greater—that of Christ, His conquest, and the heaven He won for you. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The world's conquerors*:—I. WHAT WORLD DOES HE MEAN? 1. Not this physical world, so well ordered and beautiful. No, that world was made by Him, and every Christian should find in it tokens of His presence. He was "in the world," and where He was it is an honour to go. 2. The world is that which did not know Him or the Father, which was in antagonism to the authority of Divine law, and the munificence of Divine love. He might have been here not of the world, and the world would, as far as it knew of Him, have admired Him. But He came to the front and manifested His unworldliness; hence the world hated Him. II. IN WHAT MANNER DID OUR LORD OVERCOME THE WORLD. 1. He overcame the world's falsehood by the power of His truth. Others were sent to denounce the falsehood, but the world smiled or frowned on them, and silenced them by its seductions or threats, and many of them learned to repeat the wicked shibboleths. The faithful were murdered, one after another, and finally Christ came, born to this end to bear witness to the truth, and sealed His testimony with His blood, and by so doing won a victory such as the Church does not need to win again. 2. He overcame the world's wickedness by His holiness. Till He came, the idea of absolute holiness was never presented to the mind of man. But He presented to the end an image of perfect purity. 3. He overcame the world's malice by His infinite love. Only love can be victorious. The measure of malignity is the measure of defeat. Animosity is only roused by those who have in some sense gained an advantage over us. Here, then, is the peculiarity of the Lord's triumph. He was at war with the world openly and persistently, but the world never had a better friend; and He turned its murderous rage into an occasion for manifesting His most benignant gifts. III. THE USE WHICH CHRIST TEACHES US TO MAKE OF HIS VICTORY. "Be of good cheer,"—a word of large meaning and frequently on our Lord's lips. 1. The original thought is courage, which expresses itself in confidence. The Old Testament rendering is "Be of good courage." 2. The next effect is sure to bring refreshment, when fear is quelled, and agitation has ceased: then the word is "Be of good comfort." 3. But this passes into the higher domain of gladness, for courage wins the victory, and he who triumphs is clothed with smiles and sings the song: hence the word repeatedly is "Be of good cheer." Conclusion: The promise is to conquerors. Some of you are fighting on the wrong and losing side. Christ invites you to the winning side of truth, holiness,

and love. (*J. Aldis.*) *The world-conquest:*—1. In addressing His disciples, Christ never concealed from them the difficulties which awaited them. He purchased no discipleship by politic extenuation or concealment. We have therefore placed before us, in unmistakeable terms, the fact that, "through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom." The modern notion that it is possible without much difficulty to be religious, cannot plead the sanction of the highest teaching. 2. But Christ never stated a difficulty, without at the same time inspiring with courage to meet it. He has given the true disciple in every age glimpses of the difficulties with which he will have to wrestle, only that He may be induced to turn his inward eye towards a never-failing source of strength. I. THE DISCIPLE'S TRIBULATION. 1. Taking the term "tribulation" in its widest sense, it is obviously an inevitable condition of human life. "Man is born to trouble as the spark flieth upwards." What a fearful amount of suffering there is in the world, into which character does not enter as an element! 2. But admit character, and the conflict waxes infinitely more dire. As long as conscience speaks, and any God-ward sentiment impels, there will remain enough to engage the forces of the soul in fiercest conflict. 3. Extending our view to what is called practical life, as long as any considerable portion of mankind remained alien from God, the world must be expected to be, to the earnest disciple of Christ, a scene of conflict. (1) The conflict varies with the age. Christianity, in its first stages, and whenever a period somewhat analogous has been repeated, had to encounter all the forces of a steady, malignant opposition. At such times, the battle ground is more clear, the ranks better defined. But the conflict of this period, when a considerable assimilation of society has taken place, assumes generally another form; an enemy less bold and courageous, but more subtle and more difficult to resist, enters the field. Where there was once opposition, there is now allurement. Of the first period the cardinal virtue is courage; of the second, watchfulness. (2) The conflict varies with the individual. Ordinary Christian virtue is a far easier attainment to some than it is to others, for the obvious reason that it has so much less to contend with. The cost of some is comparatively a rapid pace along an easy, open path; that of others is an ever thwarted step through a tangled forest; with the former it is a triumphant pursuit of a retreating enemy, with the latter every inch of ground must be fiercely fought through blood and fire. II. THE MASTER'S VICTORY. 1. That over which the conquest was obtained. The imagination stands appalled and paralysed at its vastness. "The world!" It must consist of all that is alien from God in human nature itself, and as its propensities are embodied in habit, custom, institution, and society. (1) Opposing Himself to "the world," as we have just characterized it, so entirely that He was the incarnate good in incessant conflict with all surrounding evil, He still preserved Himself "holy and undefiled." This constituted a part of His victory. To be able thus to work out in His own career, thwarted by prejudice, stratagem, and open enmity, and tempted by all that could alarm, bribe, or allure, for the human race, an ideal towards which all after ages could only aspire, is surely to conquer for Himself the world. (2) But Christ not only maintained His personal superiority over sin, but has arrested, in a way peculiar to Himself, its course in the world. There has been in His life and death that which has ever since modified the course of human history, in favour of the good and against the evil. Evil has since then, though surrounded with most auspicious circumstances, reared a form less erect and shown a brow more abashed, as it has had to encounter in combat less equal, as the centuries roll away, "one stronger than itself." Since then a new element, the main, and the most influential one, has been thrown into the loftiest struggles of advancing nations, and which has been always working, however silently and invisibly, for the "first good and the first fair." All the best features of modern times obviously bear His impress. 2. "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world!" (1) With what strange meaning must these words have been inspired! The circumstances in which the speaker then stood, must have presented, to the outward eye, a startling contrast to His singular and lofty assurance. (2) His conquests are ours. From our vital alliance with Him, faith derives its unconquerable power, hope borrows its brightest radiance, and charity is supplied with its perennial motive. Yes, the conqueror of the world is leading us onwards! His victory includes as its prize more than a world redeemed! (*D. M. Evans.*) *Christ, the overcomer of the world:*—The Lord Jesus must be more than man from the tone which He assumed. There is a great deal of presumption, pride, egotism, in this man if He be nothing more than a man. We can imagine Napoleon speaking thus when he had crushed the nations beneath his feet, and

shaped the map of Europe to his will. We can imagine Alexander speaking thus when he had rifled the palaces of Persia, and led her monarchs captive. But who is this that speaketh in this wise? It is a Galilean, who wears a peasant's garment. He is about to be betrayed by His own base follower. He is casting an eye to His Cross with all its shame. And yet He saith, "I have overcome the world." I. WHAT IS THIS WORLD WHICH HE IS REFERRING TO? The world here meant is that which "lieth in the wicked one." The invisible embodiment of that spirit of evil, and which now worketh in the children of disobedience; the human form of the same evil force with which our Lord contended when He overcame the devil. The devil is the god of this world, and its prince. It is the opposite of the Church, "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Hence it is called "this present evil world," while the kingdom of grace is spoken of as "the world to come." "The world" includes—1. The ungodly themselves. 2. Certain customs, fashions, maxims, forces, principles, desires, governments. Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and Paul says, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed." 3. The present constitution and arrangement of all things in this fallen state, for everything has come under vanity by reason of sin. 4. It is a thing out of which tribulation will be sure to come to us. It may come in the form of temporal trial, of temptation, or persecution. We are sojourners in an enemy's country. II. HOW HAS CHRIST OVERCOME THE WORLD? 1. In His life. Those thirty years of which we know so little were a wonderful preparation for His conflict. In the patience which made Him bide His time we see the dawn of the victory. When He appears upon the scene of public action, He overcomes the world—(1) By remaining always faithful to His testimony. He never modified it. He was no guarder of truth. He allowed truth to fight her own battles in her own way. His speech was confident, for He knew that truth would conquer in the long run. (2) By His calmness. (*a*) When the world smiled. Our Lord was popular to a very high degree at certain times, but He never lost His self-possession. He leaves acclamations to refresh Himself by prayer. He communed with God, and so lived above the praises of men. (*b*) When the world frowned. If calumnies were heaped upon Him, He went on as calmly as if they had not abused Him. Point me to an impatient word—there is not even a tradition of an angry look at any offence rendered to Himself. (3) By the unselfishness of His aims. With whatever evil the most spiteful infidels have ever charged our Lord, they have never accused Him of avarice. (4) By never stooping to use its power. He might have gathered a troop about Him, and His heroic example, together with His miraculous power, must soon have swept away the Roman empire, and converted the Jew. (5) By His fearlessness of the world's *élite*, for many a man who have braved the frowns of the multitude cannot bear the criticism of the few. But Christ meets the Pharisee, and pays no honour to His phylactery; He confronts the Sadducee and yields not to his cold philosophy; and He braves also the Herodian, who is the worldly politican, and He gives him an unanswerable reply. (6) By the constancy of His love. He loved the most unlovely men. 2. Christ by His death overcame the world, because—(1) By a wondrous act of self-sacrifice, He smote to the heart the principles of selfishness, which is the very soul and life-blood of the world. (2) By redeeming man He lifted him up from the power which the world exercises over him. (3) By reconciling men unto God through His great atonement; also He has removed them from the despair which else had kept them down in sin, and made them the willing slaves of the world. 3. But chiefly has He overcome by His rising and His reigning, for when He rose He bruised the serpent's head, and that serpent is the prince of this world, and hath dominion over it. 4. He has overcome the world by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has set up a rival kingdom now: a kingdom of love and righteousness; already the world feels its power by the Spirit. Every year the name of Jesus brings more light to this poor world. III. WHAT CHEER IS THERE HERE FOR US? Why—1. That if Christ has overcome the world at its worst, we who are in Him shall overcome the world too through the same power which dwelt in Him. He has put His life into His people, He has given His Spirit to dwell in them, and they shall be more than conquerors. 2. Besides, He overcame the world when nobody else had overcome it. Now if our great Samson did tear this young lion, and fling it down as a vanquished thing, now it is an old lion, we, having the Lord's life and power in us, will overcome it too. 3. Remember He overcame the world as our Head and representative, and it may truly be said that if the members do not overcome, then the Head has not perfectly gained the victory. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

CHAPTER XVII.

Whole chapter.—*The prayer of Christ:*—It was with a shout of triumph that Jesus concluded His conversations with His disciples; but his triumph was an anticipation of faith. To transform the present reality into victory, nothing less than Omnipotence was needed, and to this Jesus appeals. The prayer is generally divided into supplication—I. For Himself (vers. 1–5). II. For His apostles (vers. 6–19). III. For the Church (vers. 20–26). But when Jesus prayed for Himself, He had in view not His own person, but the work of God (vers. 1, 2). When He prayed for the apostles, it was as the instruments and continuers of this same work; and when He commended to God all believers it was as the objects of that work, and because their souls were to be the theatre on which the Father's glory was to be displayed. Thus the leading thought is the Father's work, or, which comes to the same thing, the glory of God. This prayer is throughout inspired by Christ's mission and filial affection. He thanks God for what has already been given Him to do for His cause, and asks for the more effectual means which are henceforth indispensable for the completion of the work now begun. The prayer is more than a mere meditation. Jesus had acted (chap. xiii.) and spoken (chap. xiv.–xvi.); He now used that language which is at the same time action—He prayed. And He not only prayed, but prayed aloud; which proves that while speaking to God, He was also speaking for those around Him. He desired to initiate them into that close communion which He maintained with the Father, and, if possible, to lead them to pray with Him. It is an anticipatory realization of ver. 14. He raises them to that Divine sphere in which He Himself dwells. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Christ's prayer for His disciples:*—I. The personal element in this prayer is very noticeable. It is offered in behalf of His disciples, but it is also His own. His position is most pathetic. II. This prayer is a mine of precious truth. 1. The Divinity of our Lord everywhere flashes forth. He is conscious of a pre-existence. To this He twice definitely refers (vers. 5 and 24). 2. The mission of the Son, in one aspect, is to reveal to men the Father. With "Father" He begins His prayer. God is our heavenly Father. There is heart in God. To Christ He is "Holy Father," "Righteous Father." 3. The definition of eternal life is one of the gems of this prayer (ver. 3). 4. This prayer instructs us as to the nature of Christ's intercession. III. What is it, then, for which our Lord prays in behalf of His disciples? 1. "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me" (ver. 11). He is about to leave them in a hostile world. 2. "Sanctify them" is His second petition. "I sanctify Myself," He also says. In both these cases "sanctify" means evidently to set apart for God's service. In the case of the disciples it means also "make holy," as a preparation for God's use. 3. "That they may be one" is Christ's cherished desire, repeated again and again. "I in them" (ver. 26)—the echo of the prayer—is the secret of this unity. 4. Our Lord's last petition is very touching. In childlike simplicity, and yet with the confidence of the "well beloved Son," He says, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am," and then, with the delight of a loving bridegroom who brings to his home for the first time his faithful bride, He adds, "that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me." 5. It is profitable to note what Christ omits in this most earnest prayer for those He loved so much. He knows that they are likely to be poor, but He prays not that they may have gold or lands or houses or even homes. He knows that they will be reproached, but He prays not that they may receive applause or position. (*Boston Homilies.*) *Christ's prayer for His disciples:*—I. The prayer for Himself. It was the prayer for the perfect closing of His life-work. The season of His deepest agony was at hand. This was not a petition for mere honour or safety. The glory He sought was the revelation of the Divine love through all the approaching sufferings. II. The prayer for His disciples. This prayer is pathos itself. A brief analysis of a few thoughts in the prayer that contains volumes will reveal its spirit. 1. Their sacred calling. Their hearts must have throbbed in surprise when He confessed: "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." He called them "the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world." 2. The keeping power of Christ. "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept." The meaning of such words was covered in the varied experiences of the past three years. The powers of darkness required a

stronger than arm of flesh to ward them back. Man needs God. 3. The place of the disciples in the world. It is not the Divine way to shun the obstacles which lie in the path of duty. 4. The basis of the disciples' power. Apart from His own presence. Christ placed the hope of His disciples in the Word of God: "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me. . . . I have given them Thy word. . . . Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." 5. The disciples' service. In the oneness of the disciple with the Master, and in Christ's analogy as to the likeness of His service and our own, we observe the transcendent importance of the Christian's calling. In a reverent sense, the great utilitarian of the universe is God. His plans are all directed with a purpose. (*David O. Mears.*) *Analysis of the intercessory prayer of our Lord*:—Carefully studied, it reveals a clear order of thought. Four petitions in behalf of believers comprehend everything desirable for them, and the order cannot be changed. I. SECURITY. The same grace that saves from sin saves from falling. God must keep us. We have no greater foe than the world; its antidote is the power of the world to come. Security is to be found in separation. This is demanded by the law of the new nature—for Christianity is essentially unworldly: by God's design, choosing us out of the world (chap. xv. 19), by the testimony we are to bear (chap. vii. 7), and by the conditions of growth (Matt. xiii. 22). II. SANCTITY. The word is the main instrument. 1. It determines our conceptions of truth and duty. 2. Stores the memory. 3. Corrects and enlightens conscience. 4. Moulds practical life. III. UNITY. Here is a hint. 1. As to its character: such as exists between the Father and Son, a unity of sympathy, love, nature. 2. Its dependence on sanctity. Disciples get nearer each other as they get nearer to Christ. 3. Power as a witness to the world. 4. Perfection of fellowship in heaven. IV. GLORY consists—1. In being with Jesus, where He is. 2. Beholding and reflecting His glory. 3. Knowing God as revealed in Christ. 4. Sharing His glory and reign. (*A. T. Pierson, D.D.*) *The best sermon followed by the best prayer*:—The best sermon ever preached was followed by the best prayer ever offered. (*J. Traill.*) *The characteristics of the intercessory prayer*:—This was a prayer after sermon, a prayer after sacrament, a family prayer, a parting prayer, a prayer before a sacrifice, a prayer which was a specimen of Christ's intercession. (*M. Henry.*) *The intercessory prayer used in the hour of death*:—It was read sixty times to Bossuet on his deathbed. When John Knox come to die he asked for it to be read to him; and Spener, though he had never been willing to preach from it, because it seemed to transcend his powers, had it read to him three times when dying.

Vers. 1–5. **These words spake Jesus.**—*Christ's prayer for Himself*:—I. THE CIRCUMSTANCE. 1. The place—probably the west bank of the Kidron; but to a devout soul any spot serves as an oratory (chap. iv. 21; 1 Tim. ii. 8). 2. The time—the last night of His life. Not surprising that sinful men should pray then: and comforting to know that the Sinless One then found solace in prayer. 3. The audience—not in solitude as oftentimes before (chap. vi. 15; Matt. xiv. 23; Luke ix. 28), or in the company of strangers (chap. xi. 41; Matt. xi. 25), but in the hearing of His disciples. Note the distinction between private and public prayer—the former for individual profit, the latter the advantage of others as well. II. THE SPIRIT. 1. Reverential—lifted up His eyes. It becomes those who approach the throne of grace to remember whose throne it is (Psa. xi. 4; xlv. 6), to cherish exalted views of His majesty (Psa. xxxi. 8; lxxxix. 7), and to show them by corresponding outward postures (Exod. iii. 5; Heb. xii. 28). 2. Filial—"Father." In the Spirit of a Son He maintained communion with the Father, which is also the true Spirit for us (Rom. viii. 15). 3. Believing. Shown by the appeal Christ makes to the arrival of His hour as a reason why His prayer should be heard. The hour being prearranged by the Father, He intercedes for the fulfilment of the promise which was bound up with it. True prayer ever springs from faith in the Father's promise (Psa. cxix. 49; Heb. xi. 6). 4. Urgent. Revealed by the action above described, and by the twofold recurrence of the main petition (vers. 1–5). Fervent importunity a characteristic of right prayer. III. THE PETITION. "Father, glorify," &c. 1. What it implied. (1) That the praying Son had been in existence before the world was (ver. 5). (2) That though the Son He was not in that glory. (3) That He had laid aside that glory in order to become the Father's servant (Phil. ii. 6, 7). 2. What it desired. (1) Not posthumous fame through the influence of the gospel (Psa. lxxii. 17); this He could not have had before the world was. (2) That having finished the Father's work, He might resume His pre-existent glory in an incarnate

form. IV. THE PLEAS. 1. The honour of the Father. He saw that the cause the Father had at heart could be more successfully carried forward by the Son on the throne of the universe. 2. The salvation of the Church. The work of bestowing eternal life on dead souls would proceed more efficaciously were He in heaven. 3. The recompense of Himself (ver. 4). Yet Christ employs this argument only in the third place. Learn—1. The Fatherhood of God is the best refuge for dying men. 2. The chief end of man is to glorify God. 3. Eternal life is impossible apart from the grace of God and the revelation of Christ. 4. The best preparation for heaven is the faithful execution of God's will on earth. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The prayer of Christ:*—Between this and the one offered in Gethsemane there is a difference we cannot help observing. Both were offered on the same night, yet in the one Christ is filled with calmness and triumph, and in the other with agony and dejection. This has been seized by sceptics as proof of the untrustworthiness of Scripture. But note—1. That whilst Christ was Divine He was also human. In proportion as human nature is refined and sensitive it is liable to varying moods arising out of the different influences which play upon it. Christ's humanity was peculiarly so. 2. That Christ was wont, at times, to dwell upon separate aspects of His destiny. Some were bright, others dark. What more natural in pondering the former as He does here, He should rise into ecstasy. 3. That whatever the Saviour's mood, He was always true to His redeeming purpose. Proceeding to the prayer, note—I. THAT JESUS SPEAKS TO GOD ON THE GROUND OF GOD'S FATHERLY RELATION. He does not go as servant or subject, but as child, and says "Father" six times in the prayer. Mark—1. How unrestrictedly the name is used. Not "My" Father. He had already taught His disciples to say "Our Father;" so now He makes no selfish appropriation of the name: teaching us Christ's perfect oneness with ourselves, and our privilege to trust in the love of God. 2. How reverently the name is spoken! The tone we cannot hear; but the gesture suggests it, and the epithets of vers. 11 and 25. When you go to the Father never lose sight of the Sovereign, lest you dishonour Him and disgrace yourselves. II. THAT JESUS CONFESSES TO GOD HIS CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE NEAR FULFILMENT OF HIS MISSION. "The hour is come." No hour of His life was unimportant, but one hour overshadowed all others—the hour of His sacrificial death. Take that away and what is there left? To Him it was the hour of agony, but of triumph also. To us it is the hour of life and joy, shaded by the thought that to be such to us it was necessary that it should be terrible to Him. III. THAT JESUS PRESENTS TO GOD A PETITION RESPECTING THE ISSUE OF THE CRISIS TO WHICH HE HAD COME. Although perfect He had to fortify Himself for the trial by prayer. 1. "Father, glorify Thy Son." (1) By inspiring Him with strength and courage. (2) By maintaining His integrity. (3) By giving Him victory. (4) By making the bruising of His heel to be the breaking of the serpent's head. (5) By raising Him from the dead and setting Him at Thy right hand. 2. "That Thy Son also may glorify Thee"—beautiful unselfishness! (1) By showing to men that Thou art the Father, enabling Him to suffer and triumph on their behalf. (2) By vindicating to men the grandeur of Thy attributes, and the rightness of Thy claims. (3) By revealing to men the purposes of Thy love and the promises of Thy grace. (4) By bringing men, through the power of His sacrifice, into loving worship at Thy feet and into the enjoyment of everlasting life in Thy presence. (*B. Wilkinson, F.G.S.*) *A petition urged by a threefold argument:*—I. THE PETITION. A vindication of Christ's character. "Glorify Thy Son." Answered by—1. The signs at His death. 2. His resurrection. 3. His ascension. II. THE ARGUMENT is—1. Christ's relation to the Father. Influence increases in proportion to the nearness of relationship (Heb. i. 3; Col. i. 15). 2. Christ's relation to time and to a special period. There is a special hour in every conflict which determines the value of all that has gone before, and gives defeat to one side and victory to the other. So this hour in Christ's conflict with the powers of evil. 3. Christ's relation to the glory of the Father. That which would bring honour to Christ would bring honour to God, inasmuch as He claimed to be the revealer of the Father. Lessons from this answered prayer: 1. It is not only for our comfort, but God's glory that prayer in accordance with His will should be answered. 2. It is right to ask for a vindication of our character when under a cloud, not only for our own sake but for that of others. (*W. Harris.*) *God has no son without prayer:*—"What strange condescension, that He who hath the key of David should knock at the Father's gate, and receive His own heaven by gift and entreaty!" These are Manton's words of surprise at the first sentences of our Lord's prayer in John xvii.: "Father, glorify Thy Son."

Even to Jesus it is said, "Ask of Me." God had one Son without sin, but never a son who did not pray. The cry of "Abba, Father!" is the mark of sonship. True prayer is the sign of a true-born child of God: "Behold, he prayeth" is the token by which each heir of glory is known. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Supreme things in man's spiritual history*:—I. The supreme PURPOSE OF EXISTENCE—to glorify the Father. What is this? Not laudation however enthusiastic; not contributing to His blessedness and grandeur, this is impossible—but the revelation of Him in our character and life. Whatever creature works out the nature that God has given him in harmony with His will glorifies Him. It is here indicated that we can only glorify God as He glorifies us. There is more of God seen in a Divinely-inspired and righteously-regulated soul than in all the splendour of the heavens. II. The supreme MISSION OF CHRIST. In ver. 2 it is suggested—1. That Christ is Master of the race. "Power over all flesh." His authority is absolute and independent, yet never interfering with the freedom of any of His subjects, and estimating their services not by their amount but their motive. 2. That Christ is Master by Divine appointment. The Divine rights of kings is an impious fiction, but Christ reigns by right divine, and therefore we should obey Him and rejoice in His government. 3. That Christ is thus Divinely appointed in order to make us happy. Eternal life or goodness is the supreme necessity of man. Goodness is eternal because God is eternal. Sin is death. III. The supreme SCIENCE OF MAN (ver. 3). Physical science is promoted and extolled amongst us. But compared with this knowledge all else is a meteor flash. I only really know the man with whose character I have an intense sympathy. Only so can I know God, and thus knowing God I have eternal life. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **The hour is come.**—*The supreme hour*:—When regarded aright, no hour of any human life can be considered unimportant. It is a portion, and a necessary portion, of one great whole. It may seem to be trivial. We may treat it as though it were of little worth, casting it from us as something we can afford to waste; but that is to act with ignorance, if not with criminality. Examine any building from the foundation to the top-stone, and the architect, who sees the meaning of every stone and the reason of its position, will tell you that all the stones are needed for strength, for symmetry, or for beauty. Remove one, misplace one, and its importance will be evident, for to that degree the structure is imperfect. It is so with our life—the hours of which it is composed are of untold value in their relation to each other and the great whole of which they are parts, so that we dare not be indifferent concerning any one. This is further manifest if we remember that any hour may be to us the most momentous hour of all. Yesterday is the parent of to-day, and by an inexorable law, to-day's history makes the facts of to-morrow. So that it may be said that in the present hour, as the germ in the seed, lies our coming destiny. How, then, can we call any period unimportant, if it leads on to the most important of all? It becomes great by what it helps to bring. And to every life some great and solemn period comes—a period that may be called the greatest—a period that is decisive—a period that seems to condense in itself all others—for which all others have prepared—just as it is said the hundred years of patient culture have prepared the aloe-tree for the single year in which it blossoms into flower—a period when we are tested—when it is seen what our real characters are—a period which we each may describe as "My hour." Then we may win everything or lose everything that is worth having. These hours may come in youth or middle age. They do come to us in our temporal affairs and in our spiritual history. Now, the two facts of which I have been speaking are in an infinitely higher degree true of Jesus Christ. There was no season or event in His career that was in any sense unimportant. Knowing who He was—the Divine Man, the world's Saviour—it is impossible to think of even His simplest action as without significance. Yet we notice that even in His life, in which every moment was supremely great, there was a period which stood forth to His own mind, and which appears in the history as overshadowing all other periods, and, indeed, giving new importance to them all. We have here a remarkable illustration of—I. A DESTINY FORESEEN. It has been maintained by some that there is a certain fixed plan or destiny for every life. The mere statement of such a theory is sufficient to suggest immediately the immense difficulties with which it is surrounded. For you begin to think upon the multitude of gross, wicked, worthless, and suffering lives that are passed in the world, and to wonder whether they are all according to the appointment and will of God. Yet it is impossible not to be convinced that if there be a God, wise, powerful, good, He must have some plan and purpose for all human lives. This, in few words, is our

conception of Divine Providence—it is care for the whole, and care for each part. God is the God of order, and if He had not a purpose and a plan, and consequently what we may term a destiny, for each human soul, He would be working without order, and chance and accident would be the governors of the world, and not God. This we can never believe. That it is possible to get out of this order, and to follow our own blind and foolish wills, choosing our own path rather than God's, seems to me also undeniable. Just as a father, looking upon his son, shall say, "I will educate and prepare my boy for such a business or profession; he shall go to this school for so many years, and then at such an age he shall be placed yonder, and I shall have great comfort when I am an old man in seeing him fulfil all those purposes which I have cherished as the best ambition of my life." All fathers, I suppose, have some such ideas as these. But how few are realised? The son begins to exercise his own freedom of choice, and sometimes bounds off in a directly opposite road—and all the plans seem confused and broken and worthless. Is not the whole Bible a record of the fact that men constantly choose a way that is not His way, and seem to frustrate the destiny for which they were appointed? All sin is a disturbing element in God's plans. Yet with this in view we are compelled to believe in the existence of a sovereignty that is able to see all possible contingencies, to estimate and provide for every catastrophe, to compel all things to work out His designs. If I did not hold fast to that, the world would appear to me a chaotic confusion, a terrible place of disorder—no lordship, no mastery—and, therefore, an unaccountable mistake. We come into life for a purpose. What that is seems hidden from us. We learn by experience; all is concealed, and it is only afterwards we see God's purposes, just as Joseph, when in Egypt, saw them. He could not understand his destiny when taunted and sold by envious brothers. It was all mystery when, through a false charge, he was thrust into prison. Some men, however, have seemed to be inspired by an almost supernatural belief that they were sent into the world to accomplish an object very clear to their own minds. The great moral and spiritual reformers of every age have expressed themselves as Divinely inspired and delegated to fulfil the great mission to which they have given their energies—until it was accomplished their hour had not come. Now when we speak of Jesus Christ in such a connection as this we do not forget what and who He was, and that His mission was one of grander importance than that of any other being who has entered our world. He acts and speaks as though He knew and could see that His life and His death are all the result of a prearranged plan. There was to be nothing accidental—nothing that could be attributed to the wild uncertainties of chance. He came not so much to live as to die. That was the supreme hour of His life. For then He became the Lamb of God bearing the sins of the world. Then He accomplished the purpose of Divine mercy; revealed as it was never before revealed the infinite love of God's heart to a race that regarded Him with fear and suspicion and hatred. That was Christ's hour—an hour of untold sorrow, but an hour of wondrous triumph and glory. Do you not see that distinct plan—luminous, certain, inevitable in our Lord's life? Is it not the thing in His life? Take that away, and what is left? The meaning has gone. The beauty is marred. Like music without the leading part, the air, there may be harmony, but the chief significance is altogether wanting—you can make nothing of it. II. A FORESEEN DESTINY TRIUMPHING OVER ALL OBSTACLES. We have said that this object lay before Christ all through His life, that all pointed to that supreme hour. But have you ever thought what wonderful preservations there were which prevented any failure? To most of us the thought of Christ's failure is overwhelmingly terrible, for it means to us the quenching of all hope, a night of bitter despair. A world such as this without a Saviour is the most frightful of all conceptions. What more fearful spectacle can we imagine than that of a company of wretched shipwrecked men fixing all their hopes upon a lifeboat that has started to save them, and yet doomed to see it and their would-be saviours overwhelmed and drowned by the angry sea? But, thank God! that was impossible. Yet He was tried. The devil tried Him in those fierce wilderness-temptations. He would have had Him show His power then, and so gain triumph. When He was in the midst of a multitude teaching them the great truths of the kingdom, His very relatives came and attempted to seize Him, declaring that He was mad. The Pharisees and scribes, with some of His own friends, urged Him to work miracles, and by some grand display of power win a victory over all hearts. Nor, on the other hand, could evil pervert or hinder Him. Persecution ever dogged His steps seeking occasion to destroy Him, but it could not

prevail against Him. But His hour was not yet come, and He calmly passed through the midst of them and went His way. Twice the same reason is assigned for His preservation. What was it made them so helpless, then, in comparison with the time shortly after, when they could take and maltreat and crucify Him according to their own wicked will? What was it? Surely the might of God. These facts are rich with comfort to all the faithful servants of Christ in times of anxiety and trouble about their own lives and their work. If we have yielded our hearts to Divine guidance, and are striving in all we do to subordinate our wills to God's will, to work out His plans in our life, then we have a right to believe that He is ever presiding over our course, arranging and controlling events and circumstances by a wise, unerring, merciful Providence, and that in all He is working out His gracious purposes. So that no room is left for fear. So, on the other side, if any should fear lest the final hour will come and cut them off from achieving the work on which their heart is set—illness, sudden feebleness, even early death—let such be comforted. There is a grand truth in the familiar phrase, "Man is immortal till his work is done." (*W. Braden.*) *The momentous hour*:—1. In every man's history there are hours of peculiar importance. When a young man leaves home for the first time, and when he becomes his own master; when the man of enterprise wins his first battle and establishes his claim to the public confidence; when the scientific or literary man publishes his first or his greatest work; when the mother gives birth to her first child; when we die. 2. Note the deep interest our Lord attaches to this hour. It was always present to His imagination: In the brighest hours of His life, as at Cana and the Transfiguration and when the Greeks came to Him, and at the darkest, in Gethsemane. I. JUSTIFY THE INTEREST WHICH ALL DEVOUT MINDS ATTACH TO THIS HOUR, not only in earth, but in heaven (Rev. v. 11, 12). 1. The estimate which God forms of it. As there are some seasons on which man fixes with peculiar interest, so with God—the day of creation, the day of the deluge, the day of the Lord, but beyond all is the day of the Son of Man—his birth hour and death hour. 2. The long train of dispensations which preceded it and pointed it out. This is the key of them all. When God at sundry times and in divers manners spake to the fathers, it was but to point to the hour when He should more fully speak unto us by His Son. If He manifests Himself to patriarchs, it is to point out to them His day; if He chooses a peculiar people it is to make them depositaries of the promises of His coming; if He appoints sacrifices and ceremonies, it is but to typify His death. 3. The great work that was accomplished in that hour. (1) Man's redemption. (2) Satan's overthrow. (3) The harmony of the Divine perfections. (4) The opening of the gates of heaven. II. WITH WHAT FEELINGS SHOULD WE REVERT TO THE TRANSACTIONS OF THIS HOUR? 1. With the deepest humiliation that such a sacrifice was needed on our part. 2. With a humble determination to apply its benefits. (*Homiletic Magazine.*) *The supreme hour*:—"Father, the hour is come." The hour; the hour of all hours the most important. What hour like that in interest, what hour so big with momentous issues on all the past, and on all the future! That was the central hour of all time's hours. The confluence of the two eternities was at that time-point. That hour was the keystone of time's huge arch, that arch which rests on the one side, and the other on eternity. Many hours in the world's history are marked and memorable. The hour of the birth or death, the crisis-hour of one of the world's great ones, a thinker, worker, statesman, or warrior; the hour which gave birth to and introduced some mighty revolution, which proved to be the birth or death hour of a nation, altering the destiny of millions of our race for weal or for woe, is important and to be marked; but what hour like this! an hour which had its bearing on the whole universe, and whose transactions were to effect eternally God and man, angels and devils. It was for this hour that the great clock of Time was set in motion at first. It was for this hour that the world was created and upheld; for this hour Heaven's justice waited; in it sin was made an end of, and transgression was finished; in it the law of God was magnified, and made honourable; holiness was vindicated; the devil and his work virtually destroyed; death slain, and God's chosen people saved with an everlasting salvation. The hour is come. The time was numbered to an hour. The betrayer had gone forth on his fell errand; the machinery of death was prepared, and the Victim was ready to bleed and die on the altar. And He it is who reminds the Father that the hour is come. It is Isaac that tells Abraham that it is time he should be laid on the wood and the knife be upraised. The Lamb of God says, It is time He should die, to take away the sin of the world. The hour is come: how solemn and how applicable are the words!

This hour was long in coming, but it has come at last. The eye of many a priest and prophet, king and peasant, of the olden time, had been strained in looking earnestly across the intervening ages towards that hour; but, one by one, the eye of these men grew dim with age and closed in death, and still it came not. (*T. Alexander, M.A.*) *The final hour of the Son of God*:—This hour was marked by the union of wide extremes, by strange contrasts, and wondrous results. This will appear if we consider it—I. AS THE HOUR OF THE DEEPEST HUMILIATION AND YET OF TRANSCENDENT GLORY. 1. The Son of God was humbled by taking our nature upon Him, and by the poverty and reproaches which He endured; but all these were nothing compared with the humiliations of this hour. 2. Yet it was the hour of His glory. Sense saw nothing but the darkest clouds of shame; faith beholds those clouds gilded with heavenly splendour. (1) The highest virtues were displayed in that hour—fortitude, meekness, submission, forgiveness, filial tenderness, above all, love. (2) He was glorified by God. As there were miracles at His birth, at His baptism, in His ministry, so in His death. As on Mount Tabor He received glory and honour, so on Mount Calvary. II. AS MARKED BY THE GREATEST OF HUMAN CRIMES AND THE MOST AFFECTING DISPLAYS OF THE DIVINE MERCY. 1. Jesus made His appearance in a wicked age; among other reasons for this, to show that the worst may find mercy. In this hour every evil appears under its greatest aggravations. Hatred of goodness, resistance to the authority of heaven, opposition to the evidence of truth, ingratitude. 2. The hour was not less distinguished by the mercy of God. The murderers were spared to be the subjects of grace. The Sufferer whom they hurried to Calvary was then bearing the punishment of their sins. He whom they stretched upon the cross was the atoning Lamb then laid upon that rude altar. The blood which they drew was then flowing to wash away the guilt even of their sins, and to sprinkle the mercy-seat to give their prayers acceptance. III. AS EXHIBITING WICKED MEN AND THE EVER-BLESSED GOD ACCOMPLISHING OPPOSITE AND CONTRARY PURPOSES. The intention of the Jews was obvious. 1. It was to destroy Christ and His religion together, and they seemed fully to have accomplished their purpose. Ah, the blindness of man! Christ was put to death by wicked men; but in this they only accomplished "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Their success was their failure. They conceived that they had disproved His claims to the Messiahship by killing Him; but of the truth of these claims His death was one of the strongest evidences. It accomplished the prophecies and fulfilled the types. 2. They expected, too, to maintain the honour of their law against Him who, as they conceived, proposed to destroy it; but by the very means of His death that law was abrogated. When Christ said, "It is finished," the shadowy dispensation passed away. IV. AS BEING THE HOUR OF THE TRIUMPH AND OVERTHROW OF HELL. 1. The tyrant Death triumphed over Him who declared Himself to be "the Resurrection and the Life." Satan triumphed over the Church. The disciples were dispersed, and hope was gone. 2. But this very hour of triumph was hell's overthrow. Approaching it Christ rejoiced in spirit, and said, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." The arm extended on the cross was extended that it might shake down the kingdom of Satan. The head was bowed that it might wear crowns won from the destroyer. He suffered the stroke of death only to rob the monster of his sting; and He sunk into the grave only to seize the key of its power, to open the gloomy realms, and call forth the prisoners to everlasting life. And the triumph over the Church was but temporary. The disciples were scattered only to be gathered again; discouraged only to be emboldened. V. AS DISTINGUISHED FROM EVERY OTHER as a point of time standing between the eternity of the past and the future, and related to each in a manner which marks no other. 1. From eternity it was regarded by God. His plans of creation, providence, and grace were all arranged with respect to it. The law was given and types were set up all with reference to it. To it the patriarchs looked with intense feeling. The prophets inquired diligently into the import of their own predictions. 2. Through time and the eternity which follows there will be a constant looking back upon this hour. The Saviour looks back upon His sorrows. He remembers what it cost Him to redeem; and He will not therefore hastily destroy. Penitents look back to that hour, and hope for pardon, holiness, and eternal life. Saints look back upon it; and it fires their love and kindles their joys. The glorified spirits of believers will for ever look back upon it, and exclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb," &c. Conclusion: This eventful hour suggests—1. The infinite evil of sin. 2. Motives of—(1) The strongest hope. "He that spared not His own Son," &c. (2) Love and

obedience. How can we sufficiently love Him who has shown all this love for us? (3) Holy fear. "Where much is given, much is also required." (*R. Watson.*) **Glorify Thy Son.**—*The Divine glorification:*—I. THE FACT. "Father, the hour is come." He does not say "Our Father" as He had taught His disciples to say, for that would have seemed to place Him on a level with them; nor "My Father," as this might seem to suggest separation; but He says simply "Father!" that great name which He alone had fully unfolded as summing up all the grace of His nature and all the mystery of redemption. The "hour" was the hour of—1. Mysterious suffering. 2. Mortal conflict (chap. xiv. 30). Satan's hosts were to be overthrown and the world emancipated from their grasp. 3. Glorious exploit. It was the crisis of the world's history and hope. II. THE PETITION. Jesus here speaks in the third person—"Thy Son," not "Glorify Me"; as if to indicate still more impressively the relationship between Him and the Father. But this was not all that was meant. The voice from the celestial presence had again and again declared, "This is My beloved Son," &c. The Saviour here, as it were, reminds the Father of this. The words "glory" and "glorify" vary in signification according to circumstances. Glory to a man engaged in earnest conflict would be victory; to a man struggling with poverty affluence; to a man in sickness, health. So Christ has in view the hour of agony, and the completion of His work and His glorification has, therefore, a special relation to that. The petition comprehended—1. Divine recognition. "Own Me as Thy Son." And this glorification was given Him. Nature sympathized with the mysterious Sufferer, and the Roman centurion was constrained to say, "Truly this was the Son of God." Especially by the Resurrection was He "declared to be the Son of God with power." 2. All-sufficient support, that He might bear up under all and go through all as became Him who had undertaken the work of human salvation. 3. Perfect success. He had come to do a glorious work, and its accomplishment was essential to His glory. III. THE OBJECT. "That Thy Son also may glorify Thee." Do not these words bear decisive testimony to the Godhead of our Saviour? What mere creature could presume to ask this? The Divine glory would be secured by Christ's suffering, for it was—1. The vindication of the Divine authority which had been defied. Sin could not pass unpunished in the universe of a holy God. Therefore the incarnate Son gave Himself to the cross as heaven's protest against hellish falsehood and man's iniquity, and to make an end of sin. 2. A new revelation of the Divine character. Evil had darkened the human mind so that the knowledge of God among men became lost. The Creator was looked upon with dislike and distrust. Jesus came to reveal the Father. Men would see in the Cross more gloriously than anywhere besides the perfections of the loving, righteous, and merciful God. 3. The triumph of the Divine grace. Jehovah's highest honour amongst men is in the pardon of sin and the salvation of the lost, and in the bringing of many sons unto glory. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The mediatorial glory of Christ:*—The Lord Jesus is here praying in His mediatorial character. He is praying not as God alone, nor as man alone, but as God-man. And praying thus as God-man, He seeks that the Father may glorify Him. In the fifth verse we are told distinctly what the glory was which He sought. It was the very same glory which He had with the Father, when He dwelt in His bosom before the forthgoings of all time. As God He needed not to seek this glory. As God it was His of eternal and natural right. But as God-man, as the Covenant-head and Surety of His people, it was the promised reward of His work, sufferings and death. It was not all the reward, but it was part of it. He shall see His seed. He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. These were parts of it, but this glory was part of it also. As the one only Covenant head of His people—as the one Daysman between God and man—as uniting in his own person the Divine nature and the human, and in that person doing a work, He was to be exalted, and that above every name, thing and power. He was to be uplifted, as the representative of His Church, to the supreme seat of the universe, as God-man in glorified humanity, He was to be surrounded with the full blaze of the glory of eternity, to be made the centre of every holy eye, the joy of every holy heart, the love of every ransomed soul. He, the Sun of Righteousness, was to ray forth every beam of the Father's love, power, excellence, and perfection. As the Head of His Church—the representative of His people—all honour and all glory were to be His, the full glory of the Godhead was to be His; the glory of the triune Jehovah, as it existed before the birth of time, in the remotest silence of the past and unpeopled eternity, was to be His, and for an inheritance for ever. As the Eternal Son, and so as God, He had

a right of nature to the undivided glory of the triune Jehovah, but as God-man, and as the Substitute of His people, He stood on other ground. Ere He could possess this glory, as Mediator, He had a work to perform. He had the law to obey, its curse to endure, and God to glorify on the earth; and, in consideration of this work and as a reward for it, as God-man, this, the accumulated glory of eternity, was to be conferred upon Him by the Father. (*T. Alexander, M.A.*) **As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh.**—*The royal prerogative*:—I. THE POSITION ASSIGNED TO CHRIST. It is of mediatorial supremacy. The word rendered "power" is "authority"—the right of dominion. 1. The source of this authority was God (chap. v. 22–26). 2. Its nature is power to legislate and rule. 3. Its extent is universal—not the race of mankind only. His dominion as the Christ extends to all life that has been damaged by the Fall and cursed by sin. 4. This supremacy is not a matter of mere doctrinal importance, it is of momentous interest and highest encouragement. He who rules over us is one of ourselves, with human feelings and human sympathies, and yet altogether free from human imperfections. II. THE PREROGATIVE WHICH CHRIST IS TO EXERCISE. 1. Its object is to give eternal life to man. (1) It presupposes that men are doomed to die or are dead. (2) But there is life, and Christ Jesus is invested with mediatorial power to give it (1 John v. 12). 2. Its extent. "To as many," &c. The interests and affections of the Father and the Son must be identical; still there is the truth that the Father's gift to the Son measures the Son's gift of life to men. But vast is the gift which the Father has given to the Son (Psa. ii. 8; Heb. ii. 10; Rev. vii. 9). 3. Christ exercises this prerogative personally and directly. Human governments influence their subjects indirectly; but life comes straight from Christ to every one of His disciples through the quickening grace of His Holy Spirit. He has entrusted to no Church, system, set of men, this power. Hence every one of His disciples may say as truly as St. Paul, "He loved me and gave Himself for me"; and exclaim with St. Thomas, in adoration and worship, "My Lord and my God." (*Ibid.*) *Christ's authority*:—1. As the text stands it is sometimes interpreted to mean that God gave Christ power over all flesh in order that He should impart eternal life to a certain number selected by the Father and given over to Him. In the stricter rendering, the meaning appears rather to be that God has given Christ authority over all flesh, that to all given to Him He might give eternal life; thus suggesting that it is God's plan to give Him authority over all in order that He may give eternal life to all. Then if that be the case, if any do not receive that life it is because they resist the authority. It is their own fault. In the contrary view not only does it appear unnecessary to have given Him a universal power for a partial work; but those who do not receive the life are not to be blamed, as they never had the opportunity of receiving it. If I were to gather fifty people and say, "I have received authority from a person whom you ought to obey to offer you a gift, which I hold in my hand for those who wish to have it"; supposing some turned away, the blame would be their own if they did not receive it. But if I brought the same persons together, and said, "I have authority to offer some of you, privately selected, a gift which I have here"; you could not find great fault if some sat still and said, "We do not see why you have summoned any except those chosen favourites, and we will wait to see if we are among them." In the one we see what looks like a flaw in the perfect justice of God, which we do not see in the other. 2. But some people will say we have no right to sit, so to speak, in judgment on the perfect justice of God. Do you remember John Knox's answer when Queen Mary asked him who was he that presumed to school the nobles and the sovereign of her realm? "A subject, madam," said he, "born within the same." Birth has its rights; and one of the birthrights of God's children is to form their own judgment of their Father's dealings with them. Does God's character come fairly out of a transaction such as has been described? Why authorize Christ to say, "Come unto Me all ye that labour," &c.; when the real meaning is—"You may all come, but there is rest for the souls of only a certain number." Now, the meaning which we find in the most literal rendering of this text is most in agreement with the righteous character of God. Let us see what the statement teaches us. I. GOD HAS GIVEN CHRIST AUTHORITY OVER ALL FLESH. 1. Authority is a higher thing than power, for it appeals to that which is within a man, while power appeals to the outward man. Though I had no rightful authority over a man, I might have such a power over him as to force him to do my will; but my power could not coerce his reason or conscience. It is to these authority appeals. It may rule these though it has no outward strength, and may

be powerless and yet be none the less authority. Christ's authority over all men was the same when He hung upon the cross as when He raised the dead. For it was not an official authority such as that of viceroy, which ceases when he is recalled; such as that of the priest who claims to absolve the sinner and direct the conscience, because he has been ordained by a bishop. It was not an authority which He had won for Himself by His displays of power, and which was lost when these were made no longer. It was the authority of the Divine character of the perfect Man swaying, because of His Divine perfectness, the hearts and minds of men. 2. We are helped to understand this when we compare with this chap. v. 27. Christ receives authority to judge men because Himself a Man, and yet the embodiment and example of the sinlessness of which they fall short. The authority which Christ has over us is the authority of love. And there is no authority like this, because you see Him to be the worthiest of your love and in whose love for you you have full confidence. II. OUR POSITION IN REGARD TO THIS AUTHORITY. 1. Had He an absolute power over us, then of course there would be no resisting. We should be forced to yield to Him. But this authority we can resist, or we can yield to it. What it expects from us is spiritual submission. In thus yielding to Him we are carrying out the desire and design of God. We are working together with Him, so are working out our own salvation; for the end for which God has planted this Divine authority in Christ is that we should have "eternal life." 2. This is eternal life—to enter into the light and freedom and blessedness of a true knowledge of God as He is revealed in Christ. It is the life of the spirit, the life which is akin to God's and can never taste of death. We enter on this through yielding to the authority of Christ. The essence of the eternal life is not endless existence. That might be a curse rather than a blessing. Let us understand—1. That God has given His Son authority to win us by love, not to sway us by force. 2. That God does not work in order to bless any one section of mankind, but to bless the race at large. The authority of Christ is co-extensive with that dominion of God which is over all His works. 3. To trust this all-embracing love and goodwill, and do what we can to meet it, and to show in our own lives its sanctifying power. 4. To feel our responsibility. (*R. H. Story.*)

Ver. 3. **This is life eternal.**—*The everlasting life*:—I. THE INESTIMABLE BLESSING OF WHICH OUR LORD SPEAKS. Life is a great boon. "My kingdom," a dying monarch is reported to have said, "for an inch of time." Yet after all what is this present life in itself (James iv. 14)? And when it is most eagerly prized and most hilariously spent, its possessor may in the saddest sense be dead (Rom. viii. 6). Eternal life is the highest possible life for man. Two causes may end our life on earth. It may be terminated by external force or by inward disease. Eternal life—1. Has nothing to terminate it from without. Force from God alone can end life; and the Divine power is entirely on the side of this life. 2. Is without anything to end it from within. Disease destroys physical life. But eternal life is the progress and consummation of a life begun on earth by a new birth from God, and has in it no element of evil. II. HOW CAN THIS LIFE BE REALIZED? It is not that this knowledge leads or points out the way to attain it. Life itself consists in this knowledge—1. God and Christ are its objects. The Father is called "the true God" in opposition to false deities. The juxtaposition of Christ with the Father, and the knowledge of both being defined to be eternal life, is the strongest inferential evidence of the Godhead of the Son. But why does Jesus, as Mediator, thus make the knowledge of Himself essential to life? (1) Because the Father can be known only through the Son; and (2) known as gracious towards mankind only in Him. 2. But we must not suppose that this is bare intellectual knowledge. It is the conscious possession of God. Certain truths about God may be seen in many ways and everywhere; but the spiritual perception of God Himself can only be reached in Christ. 3. This knowledge involves spiritual submission to God, or the personal reception of Him. Only to the soul that receives Him will He reveal His glory (Rev. iii. 20; John xiv. 23). To all who receive Him, He manifests Himself as He does not unto the world. With respect to our fellow-men, we frequently use such language as this: "I scarcely know him," or "I know him well," and the phraseology varies according to our acquaintance with the man's character or his moral and social qualities. We may believe from report in a man's generosity; but how different is our estimate or appreciation of his character when we can say from experience that we know it. Abraham believed God and obeyed; but when the Divine promise was fulfilled, and the Divine faithfulness proved, the patriarch

know God in a way that he did not know Him before. III. How comes it that this true knowledge of God is life? We know what connection there is between knowledge and the energy and enjoyment of our every-day life. "Knowledge is power." It has the power of salvation, transformation, progress. It is knowledge which lifts up the life of the savage. The highest knowledge for man must be the highest life. 1. The true knowledge of our heavenly Father involves the communication of influence, and influence flowing forth from God is quickening. Real knowledge cannot be received without a healthful influence on the soul. A penitent child cannot know that his father has forgiven him without feeling emotions of tenderness and joy. What, then, must be the influence of the knowledge of the true God, our God and Father! 2. This knowledge promotes fellowship and communion with God, which is life. To man, as a social being, fellowship with others is life. The contact of thought with thought, and the communion of affection with affection, are elements of men's true life on earth. What, then, must be the fellowship of the soul with God, but life of the highest order? 3. This knowledge promotes likeness to God; and this assimilation to God is the very highest life (1 Col. iii. 10). (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The knowledge of God is eternal life:*—I. What is comprised in the knowledge of God? 1. In answering this question, we need hardly remark that it implies a knowledge of God's existence. The remark is self-evident. The knowledge that He is the beginning of all knowledge of God. But whilst this is comprised in a knowledge of God, it does not constitute *the* knowledge. A man may know that there is a God; he may not only know it from the statements of others, but he may have actually examined it, and may be well conversant with the evidence of God's existence with which nature abounds, and be able to give to every man that asketh him a reason for his belief, and yet he may be destitute of that knowledge which is "eternal life." How exquisitely the Scripture speaks upon this point! "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble." You need to know something more—something that devils do not, and cannot, know—in order to the enjoyment of eternal life. 2. Again, it comprises a knowledge of God's attributes, such as His eternity. His omnipresence—that, as He existed throughout all time, so He fills all space and pervades all worlds. His omniscience—that, existing throughout all time, and pervading all space, He knows all things. Such are some of the attributes which are essential to Divinity; and I need not say that the knowledge of these is comprised in a knowledge of God. But, then, all that, along with the knowledge of God's existence, does not constitute the knowledge of which our text speaks. There is reason to believe that devils know God's nature as well as existence; and yet they tremble. Ah, my brother, this knowledge might well drive thee to despair: but it cannot give thee peace. It may convince thee of sin, and fill thee with alarm, but it cannot give thee peace. The knowledge of something more than this is necessary to eternal life. 3. In proceeding to show what it is which constitutes this knowledge, I beg you to notice that it is what is described in the text as the knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom God has sent. It is so described because it is through Christ that the knowledge is communicated. (1) And, first of all, you have in Christ a manifestation of God's hatred of sin. In proof of this I might refer you to the distance at which He kept Himself from all that was sinful, though inhabiting a world in which sin was fashionable, and where temptations to sin were abounding. Not at a distance as regards locality, but distance as regards character. I might refer you, too, to the manner in which He denounced the wickedness of those over whose sin He mourned and wept. If God did not wink at sin in the person of His own Son, how, think you, will He wink at sin in you? If it could not be allowed to pass unpunished when it was beheld in Christ, though He prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me," will it be allowed to pass unpunished if found in you? You think God is merciful, so He is; but He is just, and He is holy—a God of spotless purity. This truth, at first sight, may excite your fears; yet it is needful for you to know it, because it supplies a powerful motive which is necessary to keep you back from sin; to lead you to mortify sin, and thus to produce in you meetness for heaven—the truth that it is not enough to know that God hates sin. This will never give you a title to heaven, nor will it produce in you a meetness for the enjoyment of eternal life. 2. You need to have something more than this, in order to your enjoying eternal life; and this leads me to observe, secondly, that in Christ you have a manifestation of the love of God. But even this is not enough. It is not enough to know that God loves us; that though He is just, He must punish sin. You need have something

more in order to your enjoying life eternal. Oh, then, ponder the statements of God's Word in which that truth is found; and until it falls on your understanding, until it is impressed on your hearts, never to be erased—and, thank God, you need not wait long—for oh, it is plain and easy, and even now you may open your hearts to the perception of it, and even now you may enter into faith; even now you may look up to your God as your Father and your Friend; for both by word and by deed does God say, "I have accepted My Son's work for thee, O sinner; I was well pleased with what He has done for thee; His death is a perfect atonement for all thy sins; I am satisfied with it; be thou satisfied with it, be at peace, be thou reconciled to God." I do not mean to say that what I have set before you contains anything like full knowledge of God. No man can find out the Almighty to perfection. It does not amount to even an index of what might be known; it is only of the knowledge which is necessary to life. II. And now let me proceed, in the second place, to show, as briefly as I can, HOW THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE, or in what sense it is. 1. And, first of all, it is so, if you consider eternal life as consisting in the enjoyment of God's favour. We read in this book, "And in His favour is life." Now, the knowledge of God is essential to the enjoyment of His favour. It is true that His favour rests on men, whether they know Him or not; for how else could they account for the varied blessings which they are daily receiving? But, then, though it rests on them, they do not enjoy it whilst they do not know Him. Their own feelings are just as unpleasant; their relation to God is as painful; they are as much alienated from God as if He were really their enemy. 2. And, then, again, the knowledge of God is eternal life, if you regard eternal life as signifying the privileges and enjoyments of the heavenly cities. The knowledge of God imparts that character, or produces in man that character, which increases the enjoyment of heaven. The character on which heaven is conferred is "conformed into God's image"—sympathy with his feelings and his desires; or, in other words, it is living in a oneness with God. Now, the knowledge of God necessarily and invariably produces this character in man. The Cross of Christ contains a motive power which the human heart, depraved as it is, cannot both contemplate and resist. No man can truly and intelligibly say that Christ died for me, and gave Himself for me; God's wrath was suspended over me, the Saviour stepped between me and that wrath, that it might fall on Him, and that I might be saved—no man can say that without loving God in return. 3. And then, again, the knowledge of God is eternal life, if you understand the knowledge of God as heavenly happiness. Whence, let me ask, do the redeemed in heaven derive their happiness? Is it from the splendour of the place which they occupy? from the beauty and sublimity of scenes upon which they gaze? is it from the music with which their ears are charmed, or from the delicious fruits with which they regale themselves, or from their exalted companionship? No. They know that God is love, and that is their happiness. God is set forth to their contemplation as a God of love, and they find their employment, and their enjoyment too, in meditating on the proofs of His love with which the universe abounds—every new discovery giving a new impulse to their zeal and a new zest to their praise. And, hence, you find John speaking as if this were the consummation of the saint's desire: "We know that when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (*W. Landels.*) *Eternal life in the knowledge of God and Christ:*—1. When Jesus said these words, the transitoriness of life was pressing upon Him and His disciples. When life seemed frailest and most unreliable, they heard Him praying, "This is life eternal." The assertion of something in life, which lasted and did not go to pieces, must have come in very solidly and nobly. So often when we are most conscious of mortality, when disease is triumphing over that which disease can touch, the least reminder of that which is immortal restores us, puts courage into our frightened hearts. 2. What is it, then, whose eternity Jesus proclaims so confidently? When everything else decays, what is it that is imperishable? Jesus says it is the knowledge of God and of Himself. Now, remember that the knowledge of God and Christ must mean, and in the Bible always does mean, a personal relationship with God and Christ. It is not mere absolute knowledge. It is what He is to us, not what He is to Himself, that we may know of God. So that to know Christ and God is to have to do with Christ and God in the way of love and service. And Jesus says that the permanent part of our life is the part which has to do with God. 3. Here is a very clear and simple test of all our life. Our houses must decay. What is there in them that will last? That which had to do with God. Not their bricks and mortar, but the tempers and the hearts that

were cultivated in them. Our institutions will perish—even our churches. But that which really knew God in them no tooth of time can touch. Our friendships and relationships have a promise of permanence only as they are real spiritual intimacies knit in with one common union to God. 4. When we fasten our thoughts on this, how it changes the whole aspect of the lives and deaths of men! Here is a poor, holy man dying. How little difference death makes to him! He is to keep all that has to do with God, and to lose all the rest. What is there for him to lose? How much there is that he will keep! But another man, so much richer, lies dying. What an enormous change death is to him! All his life has been worldly. What is there that he can keep? How almost everything he must lose! 5. Thus the eternal part of us is not that which God shall choose at some future day to endow with everlasting life. Eternity is a true quality in the thing itself. This really brings me to what I wanted to preach about—the regulative and shaping power of a Christian faith in this life. What are the great deficiencies of daily moral life? I. THE DIFFICULT BALANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY. Men know what duty is, but the even, steady pressure of duty upon the whole surface of a man's life is something which thoughtful men are always missing. On one day the sense of responsibility is overwhelming. The next day it is all gone. The consequence is doubly bad. Some tasks are wholly neglected, and others are done under a burden and a strain which exhaust us. Our life grows all spasmodic. Oh, for some power which, with broad, even weight, should press every duty into its place, coming down from such a height that it should be independent of their whims and moods, and weigh upon to-morrow and to-day alike, calm, serene, eternal. Now hear our text. There is the answer to our longing! To love God out of gratitude, and to want to serve Him out of love—there is the rescue! The doing of all duty, not only for itself, but for His sake who wants it done—this is what puts force and pliability at once into duty, making it strong enough for the largest, and supple enough for the smallest tasks, giving it that power which the great steam engine has, with equal fidelity to strike down a mountain and to pick up a pebble, adapting its movements to such different work. Is not that the redemption of responsibility? II. THE DIFFICULT SENSE OF BROTHERHOOD. The decay of the power of feeling this is one of the sad things of all advancing life. It is not so hard for children. The young man has not settled yet into the fixed tastes and occupations which decide for him with whom he should have to do. And so he easily strikes hands with everybody, and has a certain superficial brotherhood with every one he meets. But as the man grows older his life draws in. He cannot reach out and take in a larger circle. Even patriotism is harder than it used to be. And to let his affection go sweeping out to the ends of the earth and down into the gutter where the outcasts lie—this seems preposterous. How can one keep and grow humane? "This is life eternal," &c. If I have lost sight of my brethren, I must go back to my Father to find them. It is the Father's house that we must meet. I am not merely a merchant among the merchants, a lawyer among the lawyers, a minister among the minister. I am a son of God, doing His will out of love; a son of God among the sons of God. III. THE BEARING OF TROUBLE. Trouble comes to everybody, and what men ordinarily call bearing it, is apt to be one of the dreariest and forlornest things conceivable. How you hate and dread to go into that house of suffering. What you do find is apt to be either a man all crushed and broken into fragments, or else a man proud, cold, stern, hard, whom you pity all the more for the wretchedness of his proud, hard misery. But now neither of these men is really bearing his sorrow. Neither of them has really taken his trouble on his shoulders, to carry it whither he pleases. Each of them, in different ways, is borne by his sorrow. And now, what is the matter with both these men? Simply that they laid out a plan of life which was not broad enough or deep enough to have any place for trouble. When they designed their lives, they left sorrow out. So many lives are like ships sailing for Europe in the brilliant morning of a summer's day, and, by and by, when they are out in mid-ocean, and the night comes, and the sky and water both grow black, finding that they have brought no lights of any kind. And then, if I turn aside and find a man who really does bear his sorrow, what is it that is different in him? It must be this: that he has some notion of life which is large enough to take in trouble. The Christian enters into the profoundness of consolation because he loves his Governor and his Educator. "This is life eternal," &c. IV. THE LACK OF NOBLENESS. There come occasional moments in every man's long life when he feels that he is living nobly. Something makes him forget himself, with ardent enthusiasm

fire up for a principle, with easy scorn push back temptation, with deep delight glory in some friend's greatness, greater than his own. The man is pitiable who has known no such moments. But one or two such in a man's life only show out by contrast the general low level at which our lives are lived. There is a littleness that wearies us. There is a drag to everything, that makes us ask: "Is it worth while?" Now all these qualities which make up nobleness must become permanent and constant in any man who really knows and loves God and Jesus Christ? Be a Christian constantly, and you must be noble constantly. Know Christ's redemption, and, seeing all things redeemed in Him, their possibilities, their ideas must shine out to you. Unite your life to God's, and it must glow with the enthusiasm of His certain hopes. Give yourself up to your Redeemer, and you must be rescued from selfishness. Love God, and you must hate His enemies, treading sin under foot with all His contempt and indignation. (*Phillips Brooks, D.D.*) *On knowing God*:—I. THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. 1. The existence of God lies at the foundation of all religion: and, therefore, the knowledge of God is the touch-stone of its principles. Error and falsehood are not going to yield to any science but that of Deity. 2. It is the lack of this knowledge which sustains impiety. The stupidity of sinners would be gone if they saw clearly what God is. That one thing they shun. They do not like to retain God in their knowledge. 3. If Christians knew God better, their piety would be increased. Those ancient saints, whose happy attainments held them superior to the world, always nurtured their piety by much study and fellowship with God. 4. This subject of knowledge can never be exhausted. A finite mind, perhaps, may reach some point in eternity when it shall have compassed all other subjects, and be able to look down upon and over all other fields of knowledge without darkness and without a doubt. But God still lies above it—beyond it! 5. By a true knowledge of God, we shall have a clear and experimental discernment of the beauty and grandeur of His character. Hence, we shall feel the desirableness of being like Him. 6. Our relations to God are such that we ought greatly to desire to know Him well. He is our Maker; He will be our Judge. II. SOME ARGUMENTS FOR THIS STUDY. This knowledge of God tends—1. To humble us. When we know Him best we know ourselves best. It is this that dissipates our delusions. "Woe is me! I am undone." Why? "Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." 2. To crucify us to the world. To have a spiritual understanding of the exceeding excellencies of God makes the world seem but a very little thing. It shows us its emptiness. The heart uses that new arithmetic, to count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 3. To purify the heart. No sight is so transforming as that of God. When we can have our minds and hearts brought so as to see with open face the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. 4. To confirm and establish the believer's heart. Speculation cannot do this. Self-examination, submission to creeds and forms, and all study of doctrines, cannot do it. To have full views of God; to know Him by direct fellowship; to live in His presence, and lie down and feel that the everlasting arms are around him, shows to the believer the fulness and the faithfulness of God, and confirms his heart in something like the full assurance of hope. Now he can call God his Father. 5. Hence such a knowledge of God is most satisfying and safe. (*I. S. Spencer, D.D.*) *The knowledge of God*:—The Holy Scriptures often use the phrase, "knowledge of God," or "the knowledge of the Lord," as a character of true religion. This phrase is particularly applied to that promised period in which the power of religion shall universally prevail. "They shall all know Me, from the least unto the greatest." "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth," &c. In the ancient Scriptures the knowledge of God was usually propounded simply; *here* it is propounded in a manner corresponding to the clearer light of the Christian dispensation in its inseparable connection with the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And note that our Saviour connects the knowledge of God with the universal prevalence of Divine truth (ver. 2). I. THE NATURE AND PROPERTY OF THIS KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. It comprehends—1. A just conception of His existence, attributes, and administration—*i.e.*, of Him as "the only true God." Consider—(1) His matchless Deity. (2) His inimitable truth. "The true God," says our Lord—(*a*) In opposition to all the false deities. (*b*) In His enactments, promises, threatenings; so that He will in no sense deny Himself. (*c*) As the sole and inexhaustible source of truth. (3) His exclusive claim—"the *only* true God." 2. Experimental acquaintance with Him as our God and Father and our portion. This is knowledge of the heart. By the other the eyes of the understanding are

enlightened; by this the desires and affections of our hearts are filled and sanctified. It is this knowledge of God which is of the utmost importance. It is not speculation which may teach you to inquire, but faith, which constrains you to trust, which gives you the right knowledge of God. 3. A practical acknowledgment of His authority and government. This last particular shows that the true knowledge of God embraces all religion, as it elevates the mind, sanctifies the heart, and regulates the conduct. "The children of Eli knew not the Lord"; that is, they gave practical evidence that they were utterly estranged from an obedient acknowledgment of Him. "And thou Solomon, my son," says David, "know thou the God of thy father." He amplifies and explains that direction in what follows:—"And serve him with a perfect heart," &c. II. THE APPOINTED METHOD IN WHICH THIS KNOWLEDGE IS ATTAINABLE BY US. By approaching Him through the believing knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent as our Saviour. 1. Man, until visited by the "Day Spring from on high," is destitute of the knowledge of God. Is not his mind covered with darkness? Is not his heart alienated by guilt and depravity? Is not his life one continued scene of rebellion against the Most High? 2. This knowledge of God cannot be obtained by man alone. Man has had opportunities to try to do so on the largest scale. Go, then, through all the resources of human wisdom, the splendid scenes with which His universal temple is hung around; listen to all the voices which are incessantly sounding in our ears and proclaiming our Creator and Preserver; traverse the spacious Temple, mark its stately proportions, and gaze on its sublime beauty; and when you have done all, inquire, "What must I do to be saved?" There is nothing in all this that teaches me, a guilty and fallen creature, the way to God. 3. This is the way—the way which is opened by Jesus Christ. You cannot come to God as your Father, especially to God as your reconciled and gracious Father, but by Jesus Christ. III. THE INESTIMABLE BLESSING WITH WHICH THIS KNOWLEDGE IS IDENTIFIED. "This is life eternal." Consider the knowledge of God in Christ—1. In its commencement. Go to that simple and happy Christian believer who has just found this knowledge. He will give you, perhaps, not a doctrinal statement, but a living pattern, which in many respects is better. While he speaks of the knowledge of God in Christ, he associates it with inward experience. He will testify that he who believeth in the Son of God hath everlasting life; that he has the life of pardon and peace. He was "dead in trespasses and sins," but he is "quickened together with Christ." 2. In its more mature progress. Go to the experienced Christian. He may be an unlettered man, perhaps, and be perplexed if you asked him a definition, or to expound a difficult passage of the Holy Scripture; but, under the assistance of the Spirit of God, he has embraced the system of truth itself. In all his course, the knowledge of God in Christ has been inseparable from advancement in the Divine life. 3. In its consummation. Then we shall "see as we are seen, and know also as we are known." Conclusion: 1. Have we acquired this knowledge? If we have not, may I not say, "Some of you have not the knowledge of Christ; I speak this to your shame." Have you spent twenty, thirty, forty, or more years, yet dark, dead, rebels against God? 2. Let me earnestly exhort you who are in quest of this knowledge of your God, that you seek it in the right way. "Yea, doubtless," says the Apostle, "and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." To know Him is to know the way that leads to the Father. 3. Let me exhort you to do all you possibly can to promote this knowledge of God in Christ. We ought to do that on a large scale; we ought to unite in those truly sublime societies which are aiming to extend the knowledge of God in Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth. But if it be valuable for the ends of the earth, it is valuable for your own homes. If pagan families and vicinities ought to have it, yours ought to have it. (*J. Hannah, D.D.*) *Knowledge—power in religion* (Text, and Hos. 4–6):—The adage, "knowledge is power," is of universal application. That many act contrary to the truth in their possession is no proof that this is not so. That the wicked remain wicked, the drunkards remain drunkards, the selfish selfish, only proves there is another power within them which decides their course rather than the dictates of knowledge. I. THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE RECOGNIZED IN THE SCRIPTURES. 1. Moses commanded the Israelites to teach their children (Deut. vi. 9). 2. The prophets were teachers. 3. The Levitical tribe was not only a tribe of priests, but also of teachers. 4. Christ Himself is a Prophet. 5. The apostles were instruments of salvation by proclaiming its principles. 6. The work of the Church in all ages is to bear witness to the truth—to make it known. II. HOW IS KNOWLEDGE POWER IN RELIGION? 1. Neces-

sary to begin a new life. (1) We are to know God, His law, duty, and our failure to obey, in order to repent. (2) We are to know Christ, His power, His acceptableness to God. His willingness to save, in order to believe in Him. "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" 2. Knowledge necessary to the growth of the new life. Life must be fed—vegetable, animal, intellectual, and spiritual life. 3. Knowledge necessary to be useful. I do not underrate silent influence of the faithful. But still the Church needs—(1) Fathers and mothers. (2) Sabbath-school teachers. (3) Superintendents. (4) Helpers in prayer meetings. (5) Church officers, and—(6) Christians in the walks of private life, with copious religious knowledge. III. HOW IS KNOWLEDGE TO BE SECURED? 1. In the early Church it was chiefly oral instruction by preaching and catechizing. 2. In palmy days of European Protestantism it was—(1) Family catechizing. (2) Extensive religious instruction in common schools, religious text-books. (3) Catechizing by the Church authorities before confirmation. 3. With us the Sabbath School largely takes the place of these. 4. What are we to do? (1) Seek to appreciate the fact stated in the text. "Destruction for lack of knowledge," and "Life eternal by knowledge." (2) Return to perform the parental duties of instructing the young. (3) Literature inculcating fact rather than fiction, *e.g.*, sacred history, Church history, history of the Reformation, doctrine. (*W. Veenschoten*) *Saving knowledge*:—I. SALVATION CONSISTS IN THE POSSESSION OF LIFE. It is clear from the previous verse that the two are synonymous, and it is easy to see from the frequent connection of the two by Christ and the apostles how accurate it is to call salvation eternal life. Men as sinners are spiritually dead (Eph. ii. 1). The power of evil has so worked upon their souls as to make them deaf to the voice, insensible to the goodness, and indifferent to the claims of God. So far, then, as the life of love, trust, and obedience, and joy are concerned, sinners are dead. What they need, then, is a salvation which shall put them in possession of life, which shall consist in the quickening of their dormant powers, in the righting of their perverted affections, in the bringing back of their souls into likeness to, and fellowship with, the living God. This was just the salvation Christ was sent to impart, and for which He had power over all flesh. Consequently, this is "life eternal," not as being a life that belongs to eternity, but a life that is distinct from and opposed to temporal, earthly and carnal—eternal in its quality. From the moment that we accept Christ as our Saviour it is ours (chap. x. 27, 28; 1 John v. 13). II. THE LIFE IN WHICH SALVATION CONSISTS HAS ITS ROOT AND GROUND IN KNOWLEDGE. The words must be taken as they stand. This knowledge is not the means of, but *is* eternal life—a representation to which attention needs to be called now-a-days. Many attach to knowledge a subsidiary importance in relation to the spiritual life. There is no statement more common in certain quarters than that religion is not a creed, but a life. This divorces religion from the intellect and makes it a purely emotional thing. Christ here declares that eternal life is founded on knowledge, thus teaching that before Christianity can be a life it must be a creed. Learn here—1. The sacredness of knowledge. 2. Its importance. 3. Its perpetuity. III. THIS KNOWLEDGE IS THAT OF GOD AND CHRIST. 1. Of God. (1) There is a sense in which God cannot be known. He is so different from ourselves in the constitution of His Being, and so superior to us in His attributes, that there is a great gulf which no thought or imagination can overpass (Job xi. 7, 8). Indeed, if we could know God as we know one another, He would not be God. He would not be infinite, for the finite cannot comprehend the infinite. (2) But there is a sense in which we can know Him; in so far as He has revealed Himself in the gospel, and sufficient for intelligent and trustful love. This knowledge then—(*a*) Is not simply the knowledge that we can glean from God's works. Here we can know God's power, skill, thought, care; but not Himself: just as from a book we may get occasional glimpses of the working of the author's mind and the features of his character, but fail in any real measure to know the man. (*b*) Is not merely the knowledge we can gain from His Word. We may be familiar with the contents of Scripture and yet know no more of God Himself than we do of a man from what others have written about him. (*c*) Is the knowledge which comes also from fellowship between our souls and God. This is the true ground of our knowledge of others. Souls must reveal themselves to souls through friendship. 1. We must study God's works and read His Word, but besides this we must get into cordial fellowship. In this we must ask for the help of His Spirit, and lay ourselves open to what His Spirit shall teach. 2. Of Christ also. The line of thought just pursued must be followed here. The persons are two, but the knowledge is the same. And for this reason the mission of Christ was the manifestation of the Father.

Exactly in the degree in which we know Christ the Revealer shall we know God the Revealed. This knowledge must come—(1) Through the Scriptures that teach us concerning Him. (2) Through the fellowship which unites us to Him. (3) Through the Spirit who takes of the things of Him and shows them unto us. When in these ways the mind has come to accept Christ, and in the acceptance of Christ has accepted God in Him, eternal life is ours. (*B. Wilkinson, F.G.S.*) *Death of Fisher*:—When Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, came out of the Tower of London and saw the scaffold on which he was to be beheaded, he took out of his pocket a Greek Testament, and, looking up to heaven, he exclaimed, "Now, oh Lord, direct to some passage which may support me through this awful scene." He opened the book and his eye glanced at this text. He instantly closed it and said, "Praised be the Lord! this is sufficient for me and for eternity." (*W. Baxendale.*)

Vers. 4, 5. **I have glorified Thee on the earth.**—*The glorification of God*:—The words may be considered—I. IN A MEDIATORY SENSE; so they are proper to Christ; 1. "I have glorified Thee." Christ glorified God—(1) By His person (Heb. i. 3). (2) By His life and perfect obedience (chap. viii. 46, 49). (3) By discovering God's mercy (chap. i. 14). (4) By His miracles (Matt. ix. 8; Mark xv. 31). (5) By His passion. (6) In His doctrine. God was much glorified in the Creation (Psa. xix. 1), in His providences; but mostly in Christ, redemption being the most noble work with which He was ever acquainted. In creation, the wisdom, goodness, and power of God appeared; in providence, the justice, mercy, and truth of God; but these in Christ in a more raised degree. 2. "I have finished the work," &c., implies—(1) The submission, faithfulness, and diligence of Christ (Phil. ii. 7; John xiii. 1). (2) The completeness of our redemption (Heb. x. 14; Rom. viii. 1). (3) The Divine appointment of His work (Psa. xl. 7, 8). II. IN A MORAL SENSE in which they apply to us. 1. What it is to glorify God upon earth, &c. (1) What? God is glorified passively. So all things shall at length glorify God (Psa. lxxvi. 10; Rom. iii. 5, 7). This is no thanks to them, but to God's wise and powerful government. We glorify God actively when we set ourselves to this work, and make it our end and scope. Thus actively to glorify God is—(*a*) To acknowledge His excellency upon all occasions (Psa. l. 23; cxlv. 10). (*b*) To resign our wills to His. Verbal praises merely are but an empty prattle (2 Thess. i. 11, 12). God is most glorified in the creatures' obedience. First, to His laws, when we study to please Him in all things (Col. i. 10). Second, to His providence. It is an honour to Him when we are contented to be what God will have us to be, and can prefer His glory before our own ease, His honour before our plenty (Phil. i. 20). (*c*) To entertain the impressions of His glory upon us, *i.e.*, when we grow most like Him, and show forth His virtues (1 Pet. ii. 9; Eph. i. 12). A Christian's life is a hymn to God; his circumspect walking proclaims God's wisdom; His awfulness and watchfulness against sin, His Majesty; His cheerful and ready obedience, His goodness; His purity, God's holiness. (*d*) To do those things which tend to the honour of God's name, and to bring Him into request in the world (1 Pet. ii. 12; Matt. v. 16; chap. xv. 8). (*e*) To promote His interests in the world. This is the method of the Lord's prayer, "Hallowed be Thy name;" and then, "Thy kingdom come." (*f*) To do the work which He hath given us to do. First, the duty of our particular relations. If poor, I glorify God by my diligence, patience, innocence, contentedness; if rich, I glorify God by a humble mind; if well, I glorify God by my health; if sick, by meekness under His hand; if a magistrate, by my zeal (Neh. i. 11); if a minister, by my watchfulness; if a tradesman, by my righteousness. From the king to the scullion, all are to work for God. Second, the duty of our vocation and calling. Every Christian hath his way and place, some work which God gave him. (*g*) To make God the great scope and end of our lives and actions. In our ordinary actions (1 Cor. x. 31). So in acts of grace. (2) Where? On earth. (*a*) Where so few mind God's glory, but seek their own things (Phil. iii. 20). (*b*) Which is the place of our trial? Many expect to glorify God in heaven, but take no care to glorify God on earth. But here where the danger is there is the duty and trial (Matt. x. 32). (3) How? "I have finished," &c. (*a*) It is work that glorifieth God; not empty praises, but a holy conversation (Matt. v. 16; Psa. l. 23; John xv. 8). (*b*) Every man has his work. Life was given to us for somewhat; not merely that we might fill up the number of things in the world, as stones and rubbish: not to grow in stature, like the plants; nor merely to taste pleasures, like the beasts. God gave man faculties of reason and conscience to manage some work and business for the glory of God and his own eternal happi-

ness. The world was never made to be a hive for drones and idle ones. (*c*) This work is given us by God. By His word. There is no course of service good but what is agreeable to the word of God (Psa. cxix. 105; Titus ii. 12). By His providence, which ruleth in everything that falleth out. But how should a man glorify God in his place and station wherein God hath set him? Be content with it; God is the Master of the scenes, and appoints which part to act. With patience digest the inconveniences of your calling. (*d*) This work must be finished and perfected (Rev. ii. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8). 2. Why this should be our great care? (1) This is the end why all creatures were made (Rom. xi. 36; Prov. xvi. 4). (2) God has a right and interest in us (Rom. xiv. 7, 8; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). (3) We shall be called to an account (Luke xix. 23). (4) Great benefit will come to us by it. God noteth it (chap. xvii. 10), and rewards it (Matt. xix. 28). (5) This ennobles a man. (6) God will have His glory upon you, if not from you, for He is resolved not to be a loser (Prov. xvi. 4; Lev. x. 3). (7) When we come to die this will be our comfort. Christ hath left us a pattern here; and Hezekiah (Isa. xxxviii. 3), and Paul (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The heavenly glorification*:—1. Our Lord presents as a plea that He might be glorified—the fidelity and completeness with which He had discharged His trust. This petition rises beyond that in the first. In the first He prayed for glorification on earth, that He might be borne triumphantly, as the Divine testimony to His success. Here He prays for glorification in heaven, that He might be raised to that position of honour which by Divine right belonged to Him from eternity. 2. It is wonderful and encouraging that the Son of God should not only pray, but should use arguments for His requests. Thus, as in all things, He was made like unto His brethren. Notice—I. CHRIST'S DECLARATION CONCERNING HIS COURSE ON EARTH—"I have glorified Thee," &c. 1. His mission was a work; not a course of influence, or teaching only, but of glorious action, viz., the redemption of mankind from the power and consequences of sin. 2. This work was the result of Divine arrangement. Long before His advent He had declared, "Lo, I come," &c. (Psa. xl. 7, 8; *cf.* Heb. x. 7). So that Father, Son, and Spirit, were alike interested in the accomplishment of redemption. Yet the work was specially personal to Christ. Great undertakings require great qualifications. Hence this work was laid on the "strong Son of God," who alone could accomplish it. 3. This world was the scene or sphere of the Saviour's work. In heaven God is ever glorified. How fitting, then, and necessary, that God should be glorified where He had been dishonoured. And mark what emphasis is laid on the personal element. Adam fell from his original innocence, and thus failed in glorifying God, and all his posterity have followed in his downward course. Jesus, the second Adam alone, could say, "*I* have finished the work of God, *I* have glorified the Father." 4. It is not difficult to see that the bearing of the Saviour's course on earth was for the glorification of the Father, although at the same time it had its relation and design in regard to man. His course was a constant acknowledgment of God. The thought of the Father was always first. He connected all that He said and all that He did with the Father. Men's minds were always directed by Him up to God. For the first time in history the Divine law, in all its extent and spirituality, found complete illustration and fulfilment. In Him we behold the personal revelation of God. In Him the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. Men beheld the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. 5. Christ, however, speaks of the completion of His course before it was actually closed—"I have finished." But it was virtually ended. Having asked to be glorified, He had no doubt of the issue. His active life of ceaseless beneficence and spotless innocence had run its course, and His work was accomplished. His words combine the profoundest humility with the loftiest dignity. II. THE SAVIOUR'S REQUEST FOR HIS MEDIATORIAL CROWN IN HEAVEN (ver. 5). These words assume that Christ had an existence before His appearance on earth; and that in His pre-existence He had Divine glory; and that His true and eternal glory, when He became incarnate, was necessarily veiled. Now He prays that, having accomplished His enterprise, He may resume His majesty, and rise again to His glory in heaven. This glorification involved—1. The enthronement of His person, with the new element of humanity added to His Divine nature. As relating to our nature, this was a marvellous request, and what a stimulus it is for us! With what a dignity does it invest our nature! Christ's love to humanity was so strong that He would not return to heaven without our nature. 2. The exhibition of His perfection. It was necessary that all the principalities and powers of heaven subject unto Him should see that His assumption of

humanity brought no flaw to His infinite perfection; that His personal glory suffered no abatement from its new association. Hence, in the visions of the Apocalypse, we find angels and saints uniting in the new song of adoration to the Redeemer (Rev. v. 13). 3. The establishment and triumph of His kingdom. If the end for which He took our nature were not realized, how could He be glorified? The complete success of His mission was essential to His glory with the Father. Hence, as this kingdom advances, and this principle triumphs, He is glorified on His throne. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Christ's retrospect of life*:—Jesus brought honour to God—I. BECAUSE HE SO LIVED AS TO MAKE OTHER MEN THINK MORE ABOUT GOD. "Out of sight, out of mind" is the old adage; and because God is always invisible, therefore He is often forgotten. Whatever makes men think about God with reverence and gratitude thereby promotes His glory. In this sense, "the heavens declare His glory." They suggest to men's minds thoughts of His wisdom, power, and greatness. For service of this kind was there ever anything in the world like the words and deeds of Jesus? Jesus might not have mentioned the name of God, but do you think that you could have been in His presence one hour and not have had your thoughts elevated Godward? Men saw Him heal the sick, raise the dead, &c.; was it possible for them to see and hear these things, and not recognize the power and love of God? The morality of Jesus' teaching must have been a great power to startle men who had buried themselves in unmindfulness of the Most High. There was something in Jesus Himself that made men think of God. It is not possible for us to imitate the miracles of Christ; but it is possible for a man to manifest such a temper, that wherever he goes he will suggest thoughts of God. II. BY HELPING MEN TO THINK OF GOD MORE CORRECTLY. We ofttimes make mistakes about each others' character, and sometimes to their advantage. We give men credit for what they are not and have not. But no thought of ours ever goes beyond the truth about God. His character is nobler and greater than my best conception can be: therefore whatever helps me to see Him more perfectly, and corrects my mistakes about Him, promotes His glory. Was there ever anything in the world that had such power to clear the darkness that hid the glory of God, as the life and labour, the words and works of Jesus? Could men see and hear these things and help thinking better of God? Could they go on and not think of Him whose care is over all creation? III. BY A CONSTANT RECOGNITION OF HIS AUTHORITY AND HELP. How careful He was to make men understand that He was not in the world to pursue His own plans, or to follow His own purpose! He called His miracles the works of the Father. The habit of thanking God for all things became a conspicuous feature in His character, as we learn from this fact—that by means of it two of His disciples recognized Him after He came from the dead. When men see in us this constant recognition of Divine authority, help, and mercy, then in our way we can say with Jesus, "I have glorified Thee on the earth." Then, again, by His obedience to the Divine laws, His cheerful contentment with God's dispensations, His unfaltering trust in God, Jesus glorified God. Conclusion: 1. It is easy to think of glorifying God in heaven, where every heart is pure; but Jesus said, "I have glorified Thee on the earth"—in life's difficulties, trials, temptations—where sin abounds. 2. It is a simple contradiction for a man to call himself a Christian and not to have an increasing anxiety to regard God's authority, submit to His will, give Him thanks for His kindness, and live to His praise and glory. (*C. Vince.*) *Christ's a great work on earth*:—The Son glorified the Father on the earth by finishing the work which He had given Him to do. It was a great work. None but the Eternal Son could have finished it. The dignity of the eternal law, which man had broken, had to be vindicated and upheld; the full weight of an infinite curse had to be endured. Each of the sins of all His people, which cleaved to them as a leprosy, had to be borne and carried away. The prince of this world had to be met and conquered on his own ground, the battle-field of this world. All this work had to be done in the face of the full strength and opposition of hell and all the powers thereof; in face, and in spite of the apathy and indifference, the ignorance and folly of His own, and the rage and antagonism of the powers of this world. The work had to be done, moreover, in man's nature. The nature that sinned behoved also to be the nature that suffered. (*T. Alexander, M.A.*) *The Messianic purpose*:—I. IT WAS CHRIST'S END IN EXECUTING HIS MEDIATORY OFFICE TO GLORIFY GOD. 1. What is it to glorify God? (Psa. lxxxvi. 11; Rev. iv. 11). (1) Not to add glory to Him (Psa. viii. 1; cvi. 2). (2) But to declare the glory that is in Him (Matt. v. 16, xv. 31; John xii. 28, xvi. 14). 2. This was

Christ's end (John vii. 18). (1) Not His own glory (John viii. 50; Heb. xii. 2). (2) Not ultimately man's happiness (Phil. i. 11. ii. 11), for—(*a*) God does all things for His own glory (Psa. xlvi. 10; Prov. xvi. 14). (*b*) All creatures are bound to glorify Him (Lev. x. 3; 1 Cor. x. 31; 1 Pet. iv. 11). (*c*) His glory is the best end (Rom. xi. 36). 3. How did Christ glorify His Father? (John xiv. 13)—(1) By declaring His holiness (ver. 11). (2) By showing forth His praise (Matt. xi. 25). (3) By the works He did in His name (John x. 25, xi. 40). (4) By the occasions He gave others to bless and praise God (Luke xvii. 18, xviii. 43; Phil. i. 11). (5) By teaching His disciples to ascribe all glory to Him (Matt. vi. 13). (6) By the holiness of His life (Matt. v. 16). (7) By the manner of His death (John xxi. 19; Phil. ii. 8, 11). (8) By the conquest thereby obtained over the devil (Heb. ii. 14). (9) By His glorious resurrection and ascension (Rom. i. 4; Luke xxiv. 51–53). 4. Uses—(1) Comfort to believers, that their salvation is for God's glory (1 Tim. ii. 4). (2) Exhortation to follow Christ in glorifying God (1 Cor. x. 31). (*a*) In your thoughts (Prov. xii. 5; Isa. lv. 7). (*b*) In your affections (Gal. v. 24; Col. iii. 2, 3). (*c*) In your words (James iii. 6–9). (*d*) In your actions (1 Pet. ii. 12). II. CHRIST HAS FINISHED THE WORK WHICH GOD GAVE HIM TO DO (John iv. 34). 1. What was this work? The recovery of fallen man (1 Tim. ii. 6). (1) To this end the Father accepted Him as our ransom (John iii. 16; 2 Cor. v. 19–21). (2) He, to capacitate Himself for this great work, assumed our nature and became man (John i. 14; 1 Tim. i. 15). (3) Being thus made man, the Father exacted of Him (Isa. lxi. 1–3; 1 Tim. ii. 6)—(*a*) An entire obedience to His laws (Heb. vii. 26). (*b*) To undergo suffering for sin (Isa. liii. 6; 2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. ii. 9). (4) By complying with such terms Christ effected our redemption (Heb. iv. 15; Rom. i. 16; 1 Cor. i. 30, 31). 2. How did Christ finish it? (1) As to all sorts and kinds, He died and suffered (Phil. ii. 8). (2) As to all parts, everything required. (3) As to all degrees, His obedience was perfect (1 Pet. ii. 22); and His sufferings were infinitely meritorious (1 John ii. 2; Acts xx. 28). (4) As to all the times of obedience, He continued in all things (Gal. iii. 10). 3. What benefits accrue to us hereby? (1) We are redeemed from all evil (Isa. xxxiii. 22; 1 Pet. iii. 13). (*a*) From the wrath of God (Rom. v. 9). (*b*) From the power of Satan (John xvi. 11; 1 John iii. 8). (*c*) From the prevalency of sin (Acts iii. 26). (*d*) From the curse of the law (Gal. iii. 13). (*e*) From eternal torments (Rom. viii. 1; 1 Thess. i. 10). (2) Instatement in all good (Rom. viii. 32; 1 Cor. iii. 22). (*a*) In the love of God (Rom. v. 1). (*b*) In a justified estate (Rom. iii. 24). (*c*) In the power of holiness (1 Pet. i. 18). (*d*) In a title to eternal happiness (John xiv. 2). III. WE, IN IMITATION OF CHRIST, OUGHT TO FINISH THE WORK WHICH GOD HAS GIVEN US TO DO (1 Pet. ii. 21; 1 Cor. xi. 1). 1. To glorify God. (1) By acknowledging our dependence on Him, and honouring Him accordingly (Psa. lxxxvi. 9). (2) By discovering His glory and perfections one to another (Psa. ix. 11). (3) By blessing and praising Him (Psa. lxxxvi. 12; Luke v. 25; 2 Cor. ix. 13). (4) By confession of sins (1 John i. 9; Jer. xiii. 16). (5) By a dedication of the whole man to Him (1 Cor. vi. 20). (6) By being fruitful in holiness (John xv. 8). 2. Why should we finish this work? This is the end—(1) Of our coming into the world (Psa. cxlix. 2; Prov. xvi. 4; Rev. iv. 11). (2) Of our being endowed with rational souls capable of this work (Job xxxv. 10, 11; Acts xvii. 26, 27). (3) Of our preservation, and all the blessings we receive from Him (Acts xvii. 28; Heb. i. 3; Psa. cvii. 8). (4) Of all other works He enables us to do (Matt. v. 16; 1 Cor. x. 31). (5) Of the gracious manifestations of His will to us (1 Pet. ii. 9). (6) Of the glorious hope set before us (Col. i. 27, 28; Heb. vii. 19). 3. How may we finish this work? We must celebrate—(1) His omnipresence and omniscience by acknowledgemeut (Psa. cxxxix. 7, 8), by suitable behaviour (Psa. xvi. 8), by sincerity in all our ways (Job. xi. 11; 2 Cor. i. 12). (2) His omnipotence, by praying to Him (Eph. vi. 18), by depending on Him (Rom. iv. 20, 21), by fearing Him (John iv. 24; Isa. viii. 13), and humbling ourselves before Him (Isa. ii. 10-12). (3) His wisdom, by admiring it (Rom. xi. 33). (4) His sovereignty by submitting to it (1 Sam. iii. 18). (5) His goodness, by loving Him (Deut. vi. 5), longing for Him (Psa. xlii. 1, 2), rejoicing in Him (Phil. iv. 4). (6) His veracity, by believing Him (1 John v. 10), and so with His other perfections, mercy, justice, spirituality, &c. Conclusion: Glorify God because—1. He made you. 2. What you have He gave you. 3. He gave it for His glory. 4. The angels glorify Him. 5. He is highly offended in those who will not give Him glory (Mal. ii. 2; Acts xii. 23). 6. Glorify Him, and He will glorify you (1 Sam. ii. 30). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) **I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.** *Work*:—1. It is work that glorifies God. 2. Each one

has his proper work assigned Him of God. 3. This work must be finished on earth. 4. To have finished this work is the most consolatory death-bed reflection. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Christ's finished work*:—I. A WORK GIVEN TO CHRIST, AND UNDERTAKEN BY HIM—salvation-work. It was a prescribed work, a definite work, a complete work. We have a summary of it in Dan. ix. 24. 1. He was "to finish the transgression." He did that by fulfilling the law, which demanded two things—obedience, and, failing obedience, satisfaction. Christ met the law in both ways. 2. He was "to make an end of sin." To seal it up (Rev. xx. 3). 3. He was "to make reconciliation for iniquity;" by giving up Himself, "the just for the unjust." 4. He was "to bring in an everlasting righteousness" Himself, the righteousness of God (Rom. iii. 21; 2 Cor. v. 21). 5. He was to "seal up the vision and prophecy;" that is, "to consummate, ratify, and fulfil them;" to secure all their precious promises, and to preserve them for His people—because a seal protects and preserves. II. THIS WORK CHRIST FINISHED. Redemption is finished, the types and the shadows finished, forgiveness sealed and finished, the separation which sin had made between the sinner and God, and between the members in the body of Christ, finished, the distance annihilated, those who were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. III. THIS WAS NO LIGHT WORK. All the angels in heaven could not have accomplished it (Isa. lix. 16). 1. It was no insufficient work; the Lord Jesus left nothing for any to do. 2. It was no disappointing work; it did not disappoint the Father, nor the Son, nor the Holy Ghost, and it will not disappoint you (Rom. x. 11). 3. It was no uncertain work; some people seem to think as if its completion depended upon whether they consented or not. 4. It is no unsatisfying work; try it! 5. It was no unnecessary work; without it no sinner could be saved; you cannot get to heaven by any other way, you cannot approach God in any other name; do not talk about your works, prayers, intentions, charity:—"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," &c. (*M. Rainsford.*) *Life's work should be completed*:—If any of you should die to-day, could you say to God, "Lord, here is my life work. Thou didst send me into life with a handful of seeds, and here is my heart, like a garden, full of flowers"? (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ's reward His finished work*:—I. CHRIST'S FINISHED WORK. 1. It is true of all men in a sense that they must finish the work given them to do. It may be well done or ill done, but we must each of us weave into the web of human story that bit of the pattern, be it dark or bright, which has been allotted to us. But though we have to finish our task, it may be anything but a finished piece of work for all that. The true soul looking back on its past cannot think but its life has been a poor thing after all. It is a thing of patches and broken ends, of wasted powers, opportunities lost, and the result is a lame and blemished offering that I am ashamed of, as I well might be. 2. But consider how entirely different the attitude of Christ is here. Though like us, having the same burden, and the same life of faith by which to direct His steps, and coming so near to us, yet what a gulf lies between Him and us in virtue of this one fact, that He was wholly without sin. Hence, when He comes to the brink of life, He can look back without one regret, and say, "I have finished the work," &c., so finished it that it needs no supplement, that it will tolerate no amendment. It had been given Him to reveal the Father, and He had discovered to us the brightness of His glory, &c. It had been given to Him to show us the path of life, and through the world's thorns and briers. He had walked on straight and undefiled in the way everlasting. It had been given to Him to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, and with every human sympathy He had reached out and laid hold on all the ills of men, and made them all His own. It had been given Him to make His soul an offering for sin, and He was waiting, ready to be offered up. There was nothing which He undertook which He had not fulfilled, no opportunity given Him which He had failed to use. It looks, indeed, a broken life, when we think how brief it was, yet it was the only whole life ever lived on earth. 3. What encouragement lies for us in this, and how it helps to assure our heart before God. The glory which He claimed as His due is to be paid to Him in His people; it was for them that He finished His work, it is for them that He asks His reward. And as He had no misgivings about His right, no more should we when we are pleading in His name. II. THE PRAYER (ver. 5). It must have been a strange thing, even to those who had accompanied Him so long, to listen to those words. No saying of Christ contains a suggestion of stronger and grander importance than this. 1. Jesus in the solemn simplicity of prayer takes it on Him to speak to the Eternal Father about a time when as yet there was neither heaven nor earth, and as it were reminds His Father that even

then He was not companionless, neither did Divine love shrivel into mere self-love. And the strange thing is to think of Him who called Himself the Son of Man calmly recalling these mysterious communings as part of His personal experience. 2. And now, as to the nature of that glory whose restoration He prays for. (1) We are apt, in a somewhat carnal way, to picture for the risen Lord that kind of regal magnificence which has always been the ideal of Eastern monarchs. Their notion of glory is to absorb to themselves all power and praise, and then to withdraw into privacies of undisturbed delight where toil and trouble may not enter, nor the cry of the afflicted or the groan of the oppressed. Christ never wore, nor wished to wear, such a crown, and was more glorious even in His crown of thorns than He would be with such honours. It was a true song the angels sang at Bethlehem, "glory to God in the highest" when God was lying there in the stable; and to exchange the grandeur of that humility for any kind of state and magnificence would be to fall away from the reality of greatness and to get mere empty show and display. (2) What, then, was that glory? We read of the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and the "Lamb foreordained from the foundation of the world." Words like these remind us that, far back in a past eternity, the spirit of the Son was the same as now. His was an eternal spirit of obedience, sacrifice, and love. Because of this the Father loved Him and delighted in Him; this was His honour, to be the symbol and the revelation of Divine love. 3. That is the one side of the medal, and the other presents exactly the same picture. The heavens have now received Him, but heaven is partly opened to show us what He now is; "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" is exalted still as a slain Lamb. There is change of place and circumstances, but no change of spirit. There are songs of praise sung to Him, there are crowns put upon His head, there are crowns cast at His feet, but He is still the slain Lamb to whom honours and dignities are nothing except as giving Him power to work out the purpose of His life. His new power is only the means of new services, and His glory is to give us repentance and remission of our sins. It is as if the Cross were planted between the two eternities, whether we look backward or forward, it is the same glorious vision we behold. III. WHATEVER GLORY CHRIST ASKS IS FOR HIS PEOPLE'S SAKE (ver. 10). He desires to realize it in them. The holy angels, and all the saints who have washed their robes, &c., cannot help singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," &c. But He turns from them all to His Church, and the thought of His heart is, "Father, let Me be glorified in them." The reward He sought and still seeks is that we should obtain His spirit; that we should be able to finish our work as He finished His, that He may be able to say of us one day, "Well done good and faithful servant." In a measure, it depends upon us whether the longing of Christ's soul is to be satisfied or not; He would be glorified in us, but if we are full of envy and malice and hatred, He is not glorified, He is dishonoured in us; He would be glorified in us, but if we are carnally-minded and selfish, caring only for the treasures that corrupt and perish, we do not glorify, we bring reproach upon Jesus. He would be glorified in us, but if we are slack in His work, counting His service a burden, He is not glorified in us, and He may well be ashamed to call Himself our God. But we are His glory, and crown, and rejoicing when in meekness, love, patience, righteousness, &c., we are doing in this world as He did; dead to it and laying up for ourselves the treasures which are unseen and eternal. See to it that you are going to be a crown of rejoicing to Him, and not a fresh crown of thorns. (*W. C. Smith, D.D.*) *The complete work*:—These are words which no other man who has ever left this world has dared to say, or could say. Even the best men say, when they realise their approaching death, "I would that I might have lived to complete this work." Or, more often, "I feel as if my whole work were just beginning!" Or, oftener yet, "I have done nothing!" The only perfect work is Christ's. Has anything in nature fulfilled all its purpose? Is any rose without a blemish? Is any pleasure—is any affection—all it could be? Does He not "charge His angels with folly?" and are not "the heavens unclean in His sight?" The ancient artists, in a true sense of the incompleteness of all which a human hand could ever do, were wont to inscribe on their highest works not "he painted it;" or "he sculptured it;" but "he was painting it." To Christ only, of all that ever trod this earth, it belongs to say, "I have finished." What then was this "work?" I. TO BE A MODEL MAN. Therefore, as His great type and forerunner, David, went through almost all the vicissitudes of human life that he might write the Psalms, that keystone to every heart—so Christ passed through so many chapters of life, and filled so many relations, that He might be a Pattern to every

one. II. To BE A TEACHER. Therefore He is called "The Word," for as a word conveys mind to mind, so Christ conveys the mind of God to the mind of man. With this end in view, He was always changing the letter of law into its spirit; making the obedience at once far more strict, and infinitely more free. III. To BE A SACRIFICE FOR SIN. This vast "work" Christ "finished" on the cross, so "finished" that it does not require or admit one iota of addition on your part. The worst thing you can do in the world is to treat that as unfinished! The unbelief in the finished work—giving God the lie, disparaging the work of Christ, and "limiting the Holy One of Israel"—is a greater sin than all the guilt for which you may be now wishing and doubting whether you are forgiven. IV. To BE THE MYSTICAL HEAD OF A MYSTICAL BODY. As such He died, rose, ascended. And every believer is a member in that mystical body. Therefore, believer, your death is past, and your resurrection and ascension are sure. V. To GLORIFY GOD. The two in His mind stand as one. And nothing has ever reached its resting-place till it rests there. This only is final—and the final is the test of everything—"Does it glorify God." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Life's work well done:*—1. We naturally link with these words Christ's last words (chap. xix. 30). When men come to die, the mind naturally reviews the past and forecasts the future. As Paul lay awaiting death, he looked over the past and his mind rested with satisfaction on the fact that he had fought a good fight, &c. Then he looked forward, and the outlook was bright. "There is laid up for me a crown." As Jesus was brought face to face with death He looked back to see what He had done, and forward to see the final outcome of His life-work, He cried, "It is finished." 2. Those granite columns in our cemeteries are parables of human life. Over some graves the pillar rises full and high, signifying a completed life. Over other graves the column is broken off abruptly, half way or near the top. Many a man's career in this world is like those broken columns. Men are naturally anxious to bring their undertakings to a successful completion before they die. But how many fail! The field is left half ploughed. The author is called away when his book is only partially written. The mother dies before the children are grown. Die when man may, he generally leaves something unfinished. But it was not so with our Lord. He had been sent of God to do a certain work, and He early apprehended it. "I must be about My Father's business." In this work He never faltered. I. EVERY MAN HAS A WORK TO DO FOR GOD IN THIS WORLD, and should find it out and do it. "The latest gospel," says Carlyle, "is, know thy work and do it." Fill the place God has ordained you to fill. Alas! many never consider the meaning and purpose of their life. Suppose you should see an angel flying through space and you should hail him, "Whither bound?" and he should answer back, "Nowhere." Suppose you should signal a ship on the sea and say, "Whither bound?" and the answer came back, "Nowhere." How many in life are like that. II. THE SECRET OF EVERY GREAT AND TRUE LIFE LIES IN GRASPING THIS TRUTH—*e.g.*, Moses and Paul. William, Prince of Orange, laboured in the conviction that God had called him to his special work, and that he must finish it before he died. Oliver Cromwell realized the same truth. To those who were convened to judge the king he said, "If any one had voluntarily proposed to me to judge and punish the king I should have looked upon him as a prodigy of treason, but since Providence and necessity have imposed this upon me, I pray heaven to bless your deliberations." On his death-bed he prayed, saying, "Lord, Thou art my witness, that if I still desire to live, it is to glorify Thy name and to complete Thy work." Columbus was inspired to heroic endurance by the same conviction. "Man," he said, "is an instrument that must work until it breaks in the hand of Providence, who uses it for His own purposes." General Gordon's magnificent life was inspired by the same conviction. Nothing was created in vain. Every created object in the wide universe, from the mote that floats in the sunbeam to the archangel that serves next the throne, has a place and a work in the plan of the Creator. It is man's highest privilege and first duty to discover what God's plan or purpose of life for him is. To find that out and do it is to live to some purpose. "He always wins who sides with God." Some say, "This is all true of the great ones of the earth, but my life is so insignificant that I cannot believe that God has any special work for me to do." No life is insignificant or worthless. The smallest cog in the smallest wheel of the great manufactory has its place to fill and work to do. III. DO NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE YOUR LIFE'S WORTH AND WORK. Your life is worth something to God. Multitudes of men and women fail in duty because they under-estimate their worth. What is one star among the myriads above? What is one leaf or blade of grass to the million forms of vege-

table life that mantle the earth with beauty? But let us not be oppressed with the thought of our littleness. A human soul is the highest of all created things. Man has a mind that, in some measure, can comprehend the vastness of creation. To man God has given dominion over all works. So that there is nothing great in the world but man, and nothing great in man but mind or soul. Do not think little of your place and work in God's vast universe. It makes little difference what work is assigned us of God so long as we do that work faithfully and well. IV. A MAN'S BEST WORK IS OFTEN THAT WHICH GROWS OUT OF WHAT HE BEGAN. Look at the engine that George Stephenson used in 1825. What a poor affair it is alongside of those magnificent engines of modern make. And yet that old crippled engine was the mother of them all. What you do may be insignificant in itself, but out of that may grow a work that will bless a world. The seed you plant may grow a mighty tree, whose wide branches may shelter the weary and whose rich fruit may feed the hungry long after you have passed away. Here is a merchant prince. He is forward in every good work. You inquire into his life, and this is the story: "In early days I was brought up among the poor and profane of a great city. I was induced to enter a mission school. My teacher was a gentle Christian woman. What she was and did and said touched my heart and waked up my better nature. I would give thousands to-day to know where she is, that I might thank her." The mission teacher went home many a night with a sore discouraged heart. What surprise of joy there will be in heaven when the faithful workers meet there, for the first time, the results of their work on earth. V. THERE IS A DIVISION OF LABOUR. This is of God's ordaining. To one man God has given the talent of invention, to another he has given the skill of the artizan, to others musical faculties, eloquence, aptness for commercial life, or medicine. Each should cultivate and develop his special faculty, feeling that his work is God-given. If God should send His angels to this world and commission the one to rule a kingdom and the other to plough a field or sweep a room, and if each did the work assigned them, they would each be equally rewarded and commended by Him who sent them. Robert Browning teaches this truth in that little poem, "The Boy and the Angel." This view dignifies labour of every kind. Here is a blacksmith welding together links of a great chain. He does his work faithfully and well. His work is a part of his religion. Years go by. The old blacksmith is dead and forgotten. A ship is on the sea and a wild storm is raging. The anchor is dropped. The safety of the whole ships crew and passengers depend on the chain that holds the anchor. All through the dark night and the wild storm the ship is held fast and sure. At last, when the storm is ended all gather on deck and with glad and reverent heart join in hymns of thanksgiving to God for deliverance. Yes, praise God for safety and praise God because that old God-fearing blacksmith put his conscience in the chain he made for the cable. Heaven will disclose heroes and heroines whom this world never dreamed of. Multitudes of them will come from humble homes and obscure corners. VI. LET US SEE TO IT THAT WE FULFIL THE PURPOSE OF OUR EXISTENCE. They tell us that it is a serious thing to die; it is a more serious thing to live. Sad beyond expression will it be, to pass from this earth, so crammed with opportunity of usefulness, to the judgment-seat of Christ with our God-given work unfinished, and at last compelled to face the terrible fact that life is done and life's great work undone. It were better never to have had an existence than having it, fail in fulfilling the Divine purpose of our being. (*J. B. Silcox.*)

Vers. 6–8. **I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me.**—*Christ's work upon earth:*—I. ITS NATURE. The manifestation of the name of God. (ver. 6). In Himself invisible and incomprehensible (chap. i. 18, vi. 46; Job xi. 7, xxxvii. 23; 1 Tim. vi. 16), who and what He was must have remained a secret. (Gen. xxxii. 29; Judg. xiii. 18), had not God been pleased to make some disclosure thereof. This He did in creation (Psa. viii. 1, xix. 1–3; Rom. i. 20), and still does in Providence (Dan. iv. 34, 35; Rom. xi. 36; Eph. i. 11). A further revelation He furnished to the Jews; but never till Christ came, who was the Image of the invisible God (Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 2); and who could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (chap. xiv. 9), was God completely manifested. Besides publishing to men the fact of the Divine existence, Christ unfolded.—1. The nearness of God to man, and conversely man's nearness to God, a thought so little understood that even the Jews with Psa. cxxxix. to guide them had no proper conception of God as a heavenly Friend. 2. The holiness of God—which, though dimly apprehended and vaguely believed in before the Advent, was never adequately comprehended until embodied

in Christ (Heb. vii. 26). 3. The graciousness of God, which though referred to (Psa. ciii. 13; Mal. ii. 10) was imperfectly realized until Christ taught men to say "Our Father." 4. The helpfulness of God. No one who looked on Christ healing the sick, pardoning the guilty, &c., could doubt that, if He was God's image, God could also relieve the needy. 5. The blessedness of God or, more correctly, the eternal life which is in God (1 John i. 1). II. ITS SUBJECTS. 1. The world. Although throughout this prayer a distinction is drawn between the world and the Church (ver. 6), and the Saviour's intercession is for the latter rather than for the former (ver. 9), yet Christ's manifestation of the Father's name has an outlook to the race no less than to believers. Of this perhaps a hint is furnished by the word "men" (ver. 6). 2. The Church. Christ describes those in whom His work took effect as persons who had been—(1) Separated from the race (ver. 6), *i.e.*, in their characters as believers, while the world remained in unbelief (ver. 25, vii. 7; 1 John v. 19), separated by grace, which alone made them to differ (1 Cor. iv. 7, xv. 10), and separated unto the purposes of the gospel (Rom. i. 1; Gal. i. 15). (2) Owned by the Father—"Thine they were"—as His creatures (Ezek. xviii. 4), as being born of God (chap. i. 13), and so inwardly disposed to hear and obey God's voice (chap. viii. 47; xviii. 37). 3. Given to Christ—"Thou gavest them Me," (Eph. i. 4, 5; John vi. 45). III. ITS RESULTS. 1. The reception of Christ's words (ver. 8). This world had rejected Christ's words (chap. xii. 48); the disciples had believed them (xvi. 27). A gracious soul desirous of learning the Father's name does not begin by criticising Christ's teaching, but with docility receives it into his understanding and heart (1 Sam. iii. 9; Psa. lxxxv. 8; 1 Pet. ii. 2; James i. 29). 2. The recognition of Christ's words as the Father's (ver. 7; *cf* vii. 17; 1 Thess. ii. 13). 3. The preservation of the Father's words (ver. 6). To keep God's word means more than to remember it—viz., to enshrine it in the spirit, to give it a chief place in the affections, to subject to it the entire being, intellect, heart, conscience, will. Lessons: 1. Who would know God must study Him as revealed in Christ. 2. Who would be wise unto salvation must learn at Christ's feet. 3. Who would reach eternal glory must keep the Father's words. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The Divine instruction*:—We now come to the second part of this prayer, the intercessory portion of it. But before offering any special petition Christ states several preliminary pleas. These pleas are contained in the text. We have here:—I. THE SCHOLARS. The Lord's words regarding them express a threefold relationship. 1. To the world. "The men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world." Originally these disciples, as they came into the world, belonged to it, with tastes, desires, and modes of thinking, &c, like the men around them. But they had been given "out of the world" to Christ, so that their position in it and their relationship to it were alike changed. So it is with all the people of God; they are given to Christ "out of the world," to be taught and trained for service here and glory hereafter. But, alas! what a commentary does the conduct of myriads supply on these words, when the world seems to bound their ambition and contain their all. 2. To God "Thine they were." They were His by the law of their original creation, by the ties of providential preservation and blessing, and by all the bonds of moral obligation. 3. To Christ. "Thou gavest them Me." By giving them to the Son, the Father did not part with His property or His pleasure in them, for they were given to Christ in pursuance of a gracious purpose, and by the arrangements of an all-wise providence. This was the first small instalment of the promise that Jesus as mediatorial King should have the heathen given Him as His inheritance, &c. II. THE INSTRUCTION GIVEN. This, generally, was the manifestation of the Divine name. The name of God is often put for God Himself (Prov. xviii. 10; Exod. xxxiv. 5, 7). How often in aspects of attraction and grace is the name of God put before men in His Word. There he presents Himself as *Jehovah-jireh*, ever ready to provide for the wants of His people; as *Jehovah-nissi*, ever willing to defend them and lead them to victory; as *Jehovah-tsidkenu*, working out and bringing near to them an all-sufficient righteousness for their salvation; as *Jehovah-shammah*, blessing with His presence every spot to which His providence may bring them. But it was Jesus who manifested the Divine name in all its fulness of glory How did He do it? 1. By what He was. He came to be the representative amongst men of the infinite God. He was "the brightness of His glory," &c. Every element of the Divine glory had its perfect and practical embodiment in Him, so that in His personal history we have a living map of the boundless expanse of the Divine perfections reduced to the scale which our humanity can contemplate and study. 2. By what He said. (ver. 8). Every considerable human teacher has

some theme or some aspect of a subject with which he is more especially familiar, to which his own taste inclines him, and on which he loves chiefly to dilate. Christ Jesus was master of all truth, but especially did He dwell on the glory and excellence of the Father's character. 3. By that which He did. He went about doing good. As His words were not His own, but His Father's, so also were His works (chap. x. 37, v. 17). III. THE ATTAINMENTS MADE BY THEM. 1. They accepted Christ's words. "They have received them." If His words commanded the attention and admiration of His foes, much more might be expected of His disciples; they devoutly received His words. Attention was not enough, nor admiration, nor mere assent: the words of Jesus dropped into the souls of these disciples as Divine seeds of thought, germs of higher life and hope. 2. They had some apprehension of the Divine glory of Christ—"They have known," &c. They recognised—(1) The Divinity of His doctrine. They felt that His words were the truth of God; for they had in them the glow and glory of Divinity. (2) The Divinity of His person: "That I came out from Thee." He that could teach such truth about God, and do such works, and produce such impressions, must have come out from the Father (chap. vi. 69). (3) The Divinity of His mission—"That Thou didst send Me." They mistook, indeed, for a long time its true nature and glorious design; but they recognized its Divinity. This apprehension of the glory of Christ is the highest attainment for men on earth, even as the contemplation of it will be the blessedness of heaven. To discover Christ and trust in Him is the triumph and turning-point of any human life here. 3. They clung to Christ; they maintained adherence to His truth. "They have kept Thy Word." Continuance was essential as it is still. To keep God's word was to obey it, walk in it, and abide by it. They were neither stony-ground hearers nor wayside hearers. Christ will not acknowledge any as His disciples who do not keep His word and endure unto the end. (Heb. iii. 14) (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The Lord Jesus manifested the Father's name*:—1. By what He was. He was the representative of God upon the earth. 2. The Lord Jesus manifested the Father's "name" by what He spake. In His teaching He set forth the Father in His nature and character. 3. By what He did, the Lord Jesus manifested His Father's "name." As His words were not His own but His Father's, so His works were the Father's also. (*T. Alexander, M.A.*) *The apostolic community*:—Christ here states two facts concerning the school He had established for the diffusion of His doctrines and Spirit—one infinitely superior to those established by any philosopher of ancient or modern times. I. THEY ARE GIVEN TO HIM BY THE FATHER. What does this mean? 1. Negatively—(1) Not that a certain number were given Him in "the councils of Eternity," on the ground that He would become their substitute, and the rest passed by. This covenant is not found in the Bible, and seems derogatory to the Father, who is Love. (2) Not that men are so given to Christ as to interfere with their freedom as responsible beings. This would reduce men to mere animated machines. (3) Not that men are so given to Christ as to lessen God's claim upon them; nor—(4) So as to render their salvation absolutely certain. If that were the case why does Christ pray for them? And why was Judas, who also was given Him, lost? 2. Positively. This means that Christ, as the Model of Piety, ascribes everything He has to His Father. The power of Pilate to condemn He regarded as the gift of God. The cup of suffering in Gethsemane was also the Father's gift. So with all things—"All power is given unto Me." So pastors are God's gift to a Church, &c. II. THEY ARE BELIEVERS IN THE FATHER THROUGH HIM. They believed the Father so as—1. To obey His will. "They have kept Thy word." 2. To accept Christ as His Messenger. They were led to regard Christ as—(1) The Administrator of the Father's blessings. (2) The Revealer of the Father's character. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Disciples, God's gift to Christ*:—Thou gavest them Me—1. As sheep to the shepherd to be kept. 2. As patients to the physician to be cured. 3. As children to a tutor to be educated. (*M. Henry.*) *The Father's gift to the Son*:—I. ALL BELIEVERS ARE GIVEN TO CHRIST. As—1. His purchase and His charge. 2. His subjects. 3. The members of His body. II. NONE ARE GIVEN TO CHRIST BUT THOSE WHO WERE FIRST THE FATHER'S. III. ALL THOSE WHO ARE GIVEN TO CHRIST KEEP HIS WORD. (*W. Burkitt.*) *Believers, the Father's gift to Christ*:—The Son loved them as the Father's choice, He loved them as the Father's gift to Him. These are some of the bonds of the everlasting covenant which binds His people around the heart of His Son. They were beloved of His Father with an everlasting love. His Father chose them and set His heart upon them. He gave them to the Son as a gift of His love. Therefore the Son loved them.

There are other, and strong, cords that bind Christ and His people together, but these are good and strong. How we love, how highly we prize a Father's gift! (*T. Alexander, M.A.*) *Christian privilege and duty*:—Note—I. THAT CHRISTIANS BELONG TO GOD. "Thine they were." 1. By creative right—as a man has a right to the products of his skill and industry. 2. By sovereign right—as a monarch has a right to the loyalty of his subjects. 3. By Fatherly right—as a parent has a right to the affection and obedience of his children If, then, we belong to God—(1) We belong to One who is wise to guide us, strong to defend us, authoritative to govern us, kind and wealthy to supply all our need. (2) How safe we are! (3) How happy and grateful we should be! II. THAT THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN BY GOD TO CHRIST. 1. In answer to prayer. "Ask of Me and I shall give thee," &c., and as we are given to, so are we kept by Christ in response to prayer (ver. 11). 2. As the purchase of redemption. "We were not redeemed with corruptible things," &c. 3. As the reward of conflict. Slaves of Satan are rescued and transformed into sons of God and joint heirs with Christ by the Saviour's conquering might. Learn, then—(1) How precious we are to Christ. What so precious as a father's gift, a costly purchase, a trophy of fierce conflict? (2) How honoured we are by God! No higher dignity could be conferred upon us than to be given to Christ. (3) How imperative are God's claims! These are not relinquished, but emphasized. "All Mine are Thine." III. THAT CHRIST HAS MANIFESTED TO THEM GOD'S NAME. 1. Literally. The "Father's" name was little more than a sublime guess and a devout hope before Christ came. But He taught His disciples to say "Our Father." 2. Exemplarily. "My name is in Him." "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." All the perfections of the Divine character were embodied in Christ. The Father's wisdom in His teaching; the Father's power in His miracles; the Father's love and justice in His death. 3. Experimentally. "To as many as received Him," &c. (Rom. viii. 15–17; Gal. iv. 4–7). This being so—(1) Study the revelation of the Father in Christ's word and life. (2) Live up to your privilege as children of God. IV. THAT THEY KEEP GOD'S WORD. This is their distinguishing characteristic and their imperative duty. It covers everything in Christian practice. He keeps this word—1. In their minds by understanding and remembering it. 2. In their hearts by loving it. 3. In their lives by practising it. (*J. W. Burn.*) **I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me.**—*The fountain of Christian theology*:—On the truth of this saying stands the whole fabric of creeds and doctrines. It is the ground of authority to the preacher, of assurance to the believer, of existence to the Church. It is the source from which the perpetual stream of Christian teaching flows. All our testimonies, instructions, exhortations derive their first origin and continuous power from the fact that the Father has given to the Son, the Son has given to His servants, the words of truth and life. (*Canon T. D. Bernard.*)

Vers. 9–16. **I pray for them.**—*The keeping of the saints*:—I. THE PERSONS. "Those whom Thou hast given Me." The disciples in contrast—1. With the world (ver. 9). Christ meant, not that men, as men, were excluded from His intercessions, but that they were not then the object of His pleadings. He was then acting as the Church's High Priest, preparing to sanctify Himself as a sacrifice for His believing people. Hence the unbelieving world had no direct interest in the blessings He was asking. 2. With the son of perdition. Judas had by this time been excluded from the apostolic circle (chap. xiii. 30). II. THE BLESSING—preservation in—1. Unity (ver. 11), such as expresses itself in one faith, one love, one body, one life (Eph. iv. 3–6). This is not only the subject of Christ's intercession with the Father, but the object of the Father's keeping of the saints. He keeps them, not by forcible compulsion, but by spiritual persuasion, helping them to understand the oneness of love, life, power subsisting between the Father and the Son, in such fashion that they earnestly desire and labour after such oneness among themselves; in this showing that they follow God as dear children. 2. In safety (ver. 15). One can imagine reasons why Christ should have prayed that the disciples should be taken from the world with Himself, *e.g.*, He would rather be accompanied by those who had loved Him; and that it would be better for them than to be left exposed to the world (Phil. i. 23). But He discerns grounds why it was better that they should be left—(1) For themselves, inasmuch as they were as yet imperfectly sanctified. (2) For Christ, for the vindication of His honour, for the propagation of His truth. (3) For the world. They were to remain as salt to preserve it, as light to illuminate it, as leaven to work in it. Hence Christ prayed that they might be

shielded from evil, from hurtful things (Mark xvi. 18; Luke x. 19; Acts xviii. 10); from wicked men (2 Thess. iii. 2); from the evil one (1 John v. 8). 3. In felicity (ver. 13). III. THE ARGUMENTS. 1. They belonged to Him, the Father (ver. 9). Believers are God's—(1) By nature, as His creatures. (2) By grace, as His children. (3) By community of interest with Christ (ver. 10). 2. Christ's glory was involved in their preservation (ver. 10). In them the world would behold His glorification, and the character of His religion. By them His glorification would be proclaimed, and the glory of His kingdom advanced (Acts ii. 33; iii. 13). 3. They were about to be deprived of His presence (ver. 11). Up to then Christ had shielded them; accordingly, like a dying parent, He commends them to His Heavenly Father's care. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The Divine Suppliant*:—The truths in this part of the prayer are—I. THAT THE SUPREME GOOD OF MAN IS SPIRITUAL AND NOT TEMPORAL. Christ prays that they may be "kept from the evil," "sanctified," and "be one" with themselves, Him, and the Father. He does not pray that they may be healthy in body, prosperous in circumstances, or long-lived. He does not undervalue these things, but temporal prosperity to Him was insignificant compared with spiritual. There are good reasons for this. Temporal prosperity is—1. Insufficient to satisfy the cravings of the human soul. "A man's life [happiness] consisteth not in the abundance of things," &c. "What shall it profit a man," &c. 2. Often leads to spiritual adversity and ruin. How often it happens that the higher a man rises in worldly things, the lower he sinks in moral destitution. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." II. THAT THERE IS A COMPLETE UNITY OF INTEREST BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE FATHER. "All Mine are Thine," &c. This is—1. True absolutely. God is the universal Proprietor. We are only trustees, not owners. 2. True subjectively. "Thine are Mine." III. THAT SINCE THE DEPARTURE OF CHRIST THE PRESERVATION OF A GOOD MAN IN HIS GOODNESS DEPENDS ON THE AGENCY OF THE GREAT FATHER (ver. 11). The meaning is, "I have taken care of them until now; now I commend them to Thee." Note—1. The way of keeping them. "Through Thine own Name," *i.e.*, His moral character. This is enough to convert them to, and to keep them in goodness. 2. The reason for keeping them, "that they may be one as we are," *i.e.*, in supreme purpose, inspiring spirit, moral character. What attraction is in the material world, love is in the moral. IV. THAT AMONGST THOSE WHO ARE GIVEN BY GOD TO THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST THERE ARE BAD MEN AS WELL AS GOOD (ver. 12). There has ever been a Judas in Christian communities: tares as well as wheat; goats as well as sheep. Bad men as well as good are—1. The property of God. He can give them. 2. Under the direction of God. Judas did not go into Christ's school by accident, but that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. 3. Employed in the service of God. Judas did a useful work. 4. Must meet with a terrible end. The "son of perdition" went to his own place. It is better for a man to fall from the level sands than from a lofty cliff; to fall into ruin from a corrupt world than from the height of Christian privilege. V. THAT THE GRAND DESIRE OF CHRIST IS THAT ALL HIS DISCIPLES SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN HIS JOY (ver. 13). 1. Although in one sense "a Man of Sorrows," no man had so much joy as Christ. The joy of—(1) An innocent conscience. (2) Disinterested love. (3) Close communion with the Father. 2. Now His desire is that His disciples should participate in this joy, and—3. At last "enter into the joy of the Lord." VI. THAT THE FAITHFUL CARRYING OUT OF CHRIST'S DESIRE WILL EXCITE THE WORLD'S HATRED (ver. 14). The world is ever in direct antagonism to the teaching and life of Christ. The man, therefore, who will act out the one and live the other will ever come in antagonism with the world's passions and prejudices. The conduct of the godly acts on the sensibilities of the corrupt as the sun on diseased eyes, and music on diseased auricular nerves. VII. THAT IT IS POSSIBLE SO TO LIVE IN THE WORLD AS NOT TO BELONG TO IT (ver. 16). (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Why Christ prayed for the disciples*:—Before proceeding to the more special petitions Jesus reproduces the two principal claims of the disciples to the Divine interest. I. THOU HAST GIVEN THEM TO ME—watch over Thine own gift; and the more since, in becoming Mine, they have not ceased to belong to Thee, but have even become more than ever Thine. For what I receive from Thee, I receive only to restore to Thee, and to ensure to Thee its possession. The present "*are* Thine" is purposely substituted for the imperfect "*were* Thine" (ver. 6), to express the idea that the gift of them to the Son has only confirmed their being God's. II. THEY HAVE BECOME DEPOSITARIES OF THE SON'S GLORY. Notwithstanding His form as a Servant, Jesus had appeared to their hearts in all His beauty as the Son of God. Even before restoration to His glory, He had regained it in them by the fact that they had recognized Him for

what He truly was (vers. 7, 8). (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Why Christ did not pray for the world*:—Jesus has not the same reasons to bring forward in favour of the world, nor the same request to make for it. Luther justly says, "What must be asked for the world is that it may be converted, not that it may be sanctified or kept." Assuredly the statement of Jesus is no absolute one. He said on the cross, "Father, forgive them." Was not this to pray for the world? Only He did not then, as He does now, bring forward as a reason "they have known" (ver. 8), but, on the contrary, "they know not what they do"; and instead of appealing, as here, to the care of God for beings precious and belonging to Himself, He invokes His compassion for beings guilty and perishing. The saying in ver. 21, "that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me," contains an implicit prayer for the world (*cf.* chap. ii. 16). The statement of Jesus, that He prays not for the world, only becomes absolute in proportion as its moral characteristic of opposition to God is fixed, and as it becomes the association of those who are not only enemies of God, but who desire to remain such. (*Ibid.*) *The mediatorial plea*:—I. A GRACIOUS ANNOUNCEMENT—"I pray for them." 1. The words which follow seem at first startling. Does He mean that the world had no place in His desires and formed no object of His supplications? No, for He had said, "God so loved the world," &c., and was so soon to pray on the cross for His murderers. It is simply as if He had said, "I am not now at this moment praying for the world at large," or else, "I pray not in this way for the world." For the world He does pray (ver. 20, 21), but He prays in another manner, viz., that it may cease to be what it is, attain to knowledge which it does not possess, and realize a life which it does not know, while in praying for His disciples He asks that they may be perfected in what they have received, confirmed in their faith, and so preserved from forgetting or losing that which they know. 2. "I pray for them." The word pray here is a word which Christ Jesus alone uses in relation to His prayers. The Saviour never uses the word ordinarily used to express prayers by man, but one which has the sense of authority in it, and which therefore it is not proper for us to use. How much, then, is involved in this announcement! Frequently in the course of social intercourse we say to a friend in difficulty or affliction, when we feel that our poor thoughts, counsels, or help can be of little or no avail, "I will pray for you." Does that not include the highest thought, and the most effective aid that we can reach? What magnitude and depth of meaning, then, must there be in our Saviour's words, "I pray for you"! The Lord who prayed for these disciples intercedes for His people now. There is not a single day of our life, how full soever of duty, difficulty, or darkness, in which we may not derive encouragement and comfort from this gracious word of Christ. II. AN EXPLANATION. The disciples—1. Belonged to God—"They are Thine." (1) He had created them, selected them out of the many thousands of Israel, to be trained by His Son. The preparation they received under the ministry of Jesus was altogether of God; and the very variety of their dispositions, qualifying them for varied service and duty, was due to His wisdom and power. It is one thing to be God's creatures, made originally in His image; it is much higher and grander to be God's men, created anew in Christ Jesus. (2) This interest was reciprocal: "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine." In the Father's interest the Son had an interest, and in the Father's property the Son had an equal right (chap. v. 19). No language could more impressively show the Godhead and glory of Jesus than this claim of kindred interests. 2. Christ, as Mediator and Saviour, had an interest in these disciples peculiar to Himself: "I am glorified in them." (1) It may well excite our wonder and adoration that He, "without whom was not anything made that was made," should have glory in feeble, ignorant, and imperfect men, and only in the little band was He glorified. The life and attractiveness of the vine are in its branches, foliage, and fruit; and as Jesus said, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches," His honour was essentially connected with them, as the first-fruits of a multitude of followers. (2) How was Jesus glorified? To draw men to Himself, to secure their devotedness for God, that they might be redeemed from sin, and be made partakers of the Divine nature, was the very purpose for which He came into the world; and in these disciples, who were lovingly drawn around Him as the first-fruits of His advent, was He glorified. There is a depth and breadth of meaning in these words which we cannot fully comprehend. When the hero of many battles receives the thanks of a grateful country, and says in reply "that he could have nothing but for the bravery and devotion of the troops under his command," we can appreciate his modesty and admire his candour. But when the strong Son of God says, "I am glorified in them"—these My disciples, few and weak—we cannot refuse our admiration and our love. (*J. Spence, D.D.*)

Ver. 10. **All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine.**—I. THE SAME NAMES AND TITLES: Jehovah (Heb. i. 10); God (Rom. ix. 11; 1 Tim. iii. 16). II. THE SAME NATURE AND ESSENCE: "I and My Father are one." III. THE SAME PROPERTIES: Eternity (chap. i. 1); omnipotence, as seen in Christ's miracles; omniscience: "He knew what was in man"; omnipresence: "Lo, I am with you alway." IV. THE SAME WORKS (chap. v. 17, 19). V. THE SAME WILL AND PURPOSE (Matt. xxvi. 39). VI. THE SAME PROPRIETY IN ALL THE GODLY (chap. viii. 16; xx. 17). VII. THE SAME POWER FOR THE PRESERVATION OF CHRISTIANS (chap. x. 28–30). (*D. Burgess.*) **I am glorified in them.**—*Christ glorified in His disciples*:—I. BY THEIR DELIVERANCE FROM CONDEMNATION AND THEIR ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD THROUGH HIS MERIT. II. BY THE CHANGE WHICH HE HAS EFFECTED IN THEIR CHARACTER. III. BY THEIR CONFIDENCE WHICH HE HAS GAINED. IV. BY THEIR CONTENTMENT AND RESIGNATION TO HIS WILL. V. BY THEIR OBEDIENCE TO HIS LAWS AND THEIR GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT IN PRACTICAL PIETY. VI. BY THEIR PUBLIC PROFESSION OF HIS GOSPEL AND THEIR ZEAL IN DIFFUSING IT. (*Congregational Remembrancer.*) *Christ glorified in His people*:—I. BY THE DERIVATION OF ALL THEIR EXCELLENCIES FROM HIM. II. IN THEIR HOLY WALK. III. BY THE CHEERFULNESS OF THEIR LIVES. IV. BY THEIR READINESS TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE. V. IN THEIR PROFESSION OF HIS NAME. VI. BY THEIR EXERTIONS TO PROMOTE HIS CAUSE. (*W. Jay.*) *Christ glorified in His saints*:—I. AS THE PURCHASE OF HIS BLOOD. As the fruit of His soul-travail they indicate the success of His redeeming work. II. AS THE TROPHIES OF HIS POWER. Having been rescued from the thraldom of sin and brought into His kingdom, they attest the all-conquering might of His love. III. AS THE CREATIONS OF HIS GRACE. Being renewed in the spirit of their minds and re-created after His image, they reveal in their moral likeness to Him the beauty of holiness that is in Him. IV. AS THE SUBJECTS OF HIS EMPIRE. In their willing subjection to His throne they proclaim the gentle character of His rule. V. AS THE PREACHERS OF HIS GOSPEL. In the testimonies they afford by their lips and lives that Christ is exalted they show forth His glory before men. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Christ glorified in His disciples*:—I. We glorify Christ BY FAITH. Now, faith hath a double office, which—1. Accepts Christ. When men slight the offers of Christ which God makes to them, they dishonour Him exceedingly (Acts iv. 11; Matt. xxii. 5; 1 Pet. ii. 7). 2. Presents Christ. In all our endeavours to God we must build our acceptance on the merits of Christ (chap. xiv. 1). II. BY HOLINESS. Every Christian should walk so as remembering that Christ's honour lieth at stake. 1. For the manner; your practice should be elevated according to the height of your privileges in Christ. A Christian should do more than a man (1 Cor. iii. 3). We expect that he should go faster that rides on horseback than he that goes on foot. There should be a singularity of holy life. 2. For the principle; Christ must be honoured. You must make Him the principle of your obedience to God (Phil. iv. 13; Gal. ii. 20.) 3. For the end; you must make His interest the great end of your lives (Phil. i. 21; Rom. xiv. 7, 8). 4. For the motive; gratitude to Christ (2 Cor. v. 14). III. IN OUR ENJOYMENTS. When we think of our title to anything, think, This I have by gift, be it justification, sanctification, glorification, comfort of the creatures. Whatever privilege we look upon as ours, we must see Christ in it (1 Cor. 22, 23). IV. BY DOING AND SUFFERING FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF HIS INTEREST AND KINGDOM (2 Cor. v. 13). Let glory to Christ be written, though it be with our blood; only with these cautions: 1. We must think ourselves to be honoured by this service, how grievous, disgraceful, and troublesome soever it be (2 Cor. v. 9). 2. There must be a sense of your unworthiness (Luke xvii. 10). 3. You must ascribe all to Christ's glory; as Joab, when he had conquered Rabbah, sent for David to take the honour: so must we do for Christ (1 Cor. xv. 10; 1 Chron. xxix. 14). V. BY BEING ZEALOUS FOR HIS INSTITUTIONS; then you honour Christ, by giving the wisdom and power of a lawgiver to Him (Matt. xv. 6). VI. BY TAKING SOME SOLEMN TIME TO MEDITATE ON AND ADMIRE THE EXCELLENCY OF HIS PERSON AND THE FULNESS OF HIS REDEMPTION. In heaven this will be our great work (Rev. iv. 10, 11). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Christ glorified in the disciples*:—It is not difficult to see how the Son was glorified in them. They had been His faithful and devoted followers in all His wanderings; they had forsaken all that they might be His disciples; they had seen His miracles, heard and received His words, and believed that He came forth from the Father. They had suffered the loss of all earthly things for His name's sake; they were the depositaries of His truth; they had stood forth alone with Him against nearly all the world; after His ascension they were to manifest forth His glory to all the world, and under Him to go forth

to subjugate that world which He, in His death, had actually conquered. And what they did and how they glorified Him after His departure we know well from the inspired record of their labours. (*T. Alexander, M.A.*) *The apologetic Christ* :—1. "He was glorified in them"; made known by them, by their words and lives, as Jesus the Saviour, as the anointed King, and in the beauty of His character and in the grandeur of His Person. 2. Wonderful praise coming from such a source. Yet it was not uncommon for Christ to speak words of commendation. He praised the centurion, the woman of Canaan, the woman who anointed Him in Bethany. And here He praises all His apostles. 3. But who were the men of whom Christ said this? Men of influence, of wealth, of learning? If not these, surely they were great saints. On the contrary, Christ rebuked them again and again for their little faith, for their ambition, for their mistakes and wrong purposes. Wonderful words of praise to say of men who in a few hours would forsake Christ, and deny Him. 4. Yet the Christ who praised these men was Truth itself, and could not flatter nor be deceived. It is manifest, therefore—(1) That Christ sees in His people more than others see in them. The most unpopular man in Jericho was Zaccheus, but Christ associated with him, and declared, "Salvation has come to this house," and that he was a "son of Abraham." The Christ, so pitiful and kind, sees more in His people than do others. They see their faults; Christ sees their virtues. (2) And He sees far more in them than they see in themselves. Abraham, standing before God, said of Himself, "I am but dust and ashes." But God said, He is My friend. "I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof," said the centurion; but Christ said of him, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." These apostles had their faults. One of them, so oppressed with feelings of unworthiness, bade Christ "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man"; but Christ said to him, "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas." Christ is not only the pitiful and tender and loving Christ; He makes every allowance for His people; He remembers they are dust, and speaks *to* them and *of* them apologetically. (*D. F. Sprigg, D.D.*)

Ver. 11. **And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world.**—*Christ and His disciples* :—I. CHRIST IS NO MORE IN THE WORLD. All the purposes for which He came are accomplished. There is no further employment, therefore, for Him here. 1. His humiliation is past and His glory begun. 2. His work is finished, and now His reward is received. 3. His warfare is accomplished and now He enjoys the spoils of victory. 4. His sacrifice is offered and He departs to plead its merits before the throne. II. CHRISTIANS ARE IN THE WORLD. Like their Lord's, their's is —1. A state of humiliation. 2. A life of work. 3. A course of conflict. III. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO. The glorified Christ—1. Waits to receive them into His glory. 2. Imparts to them the benefits of His atonement and intercession. 3. Is their Master and co-worker. 4. Is their Leader to victory. *Christians in the world* :—1. Full of imperfections and infirmities. 2. Surrounded by temptations and snares. 3. Burdened with cares and afflictions. 4. Witnesses of Christ's glory. 5. Labourers for its moral regeneration. (*J. O. Keen, D.D.*) **Holy Father, keep through Thine own name.**—*The character of the Father.* What formula could more thoroughly express the intensity and purity of Divine love. There is more spiritual philosophy and force in the two words, "Holy Father," than in the cream of all literature. Jesus alone knew how holy that love is that comes down to save man. In this name there is—I. A GLIMPSE OF A GREAT CHARACTER. We ask, "What's in a name?" The man on 'Change answers, "Five per cent.;" the expectant might say there is a passport in it; another that there is in it a prophecy of failure, of doom. A name *is* something, but in what name is there so much that is transcendently glorious as in "Holy Father." The disturbed condition of humanity has made us so familiar with unholy paternity, that it is an immense elevation of spirit to have the idea of an absolutely Holy Father. Parentage in man ought thus to be a holy thing. II. FULNESS OF HELPING POWER. We know what it is for sons to be respected and befriended for their father's sake. The social position open to many a young man, the manner in which he is treated on the public platform, the safe, yet prosperous circles to which he is admitted is owing to his father's name. But all this is increased in an infinite degree when we think of the name of the Holy Father. His name is good for any amount of helping power our souls require. III. A GROUND OF GREATEST CONFIDENCE—that the affairs of the vast family, the interests of the vast home, will have that management which will secure the highest interests of every child. How often are families divided by paternal partialities, fortunes

squandered by paternal weaknesses and sins; and children beggared through lack of that in the father that could bind the home in one. But the strong band that binds the childlike hearts together is this father-name. IV. A GREAT ARGUMENT FOR CHILDLIKE CONDUCT. Blessed is the child who, when he looks at a human father, feels that he knows no more upright man than he. Such a father has a right to expect that his child should be good. Well, the "Holy Father," who is conscious of doing everything before His children that is fitted to command their love, has a right to expect that like Himself they shall be holy. We know what it is for the young man going to business, college, public life, to resolve on good behaviour and success if it were only for his father's sake. Such is the aspiration which the Holy Father expects of His children. (*R. Mitchell.*) *The Holy Father:*—The appellation "Holy Father" is in relation with the petition presented. With man holiness is the consecration of his whole being to the task assigned him by the Divine will. In God holiness is the free, deliberate, calm, and immutable affirmation of Himself, who is goodness, or of goodness, which is Himself. The holiness of God, then, so soon as we are associated therewith, draws a deep line of demarcation between us and those who live under the dominion of their natural instincts, and whom Scripture calls the world. The term "Holy Father" here characterizes God as Him who has traced this line of separation between the disciples and the world. "Keep them" has in view the maintenance of this separation. "In Thy name" makes the revelation of the Divine character the enclosing wall in which the disciples are to be kept. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *The preciousness of the Divine name:*—I. THE CONTEMPLATED CONDITION OF THE DISCIPLES, the peculiar ground of their need. "I am no more in the world," &c. The fact of His going to the Father could not but be to Him a satisfaction and joy. But He could not forget His friends. His thoughts went forth to their condition without His bodily presence, on which they had been so much accustomed to lean. His words suggest the thought of—1. Their bereavement (Matt. ix. 15). It is impossible for us to form an adequate conception of their loss. 2. Their exposure: "These are in the ungodly, careless, unbelieving world." Jesus knew well what it was to be in the world; hence His concern (chap. xvi. 33). Christ Jesus, in His bodily and visible presence, is absent from the world still, but His disciples are in it. It is well to know that His prayer and intercession for them are better than His human presence. II. THE BLESSING REQUESTED FOR THEM—"Keep through Thine own name," &c. Here, for the only time recorded, Jesus addresses God as Holy Father. He appealed to the holiness of God; and surely no appeal could be more appropriate and beautiful, when preservation from the world and from evil was asked for. Holiness is the halo of unutterable splendour which surrounds the nature and character of the Almighty. This very designation suggests at once the power and the disposition of the Father to keep these disciples. It was the pledge of the preservation, and the guarantee of the safe keeping of all God's children now (Psa. xxx. 4; xcvii. 12). Two remarks are here necessary. The Authorised Version says "through," but the preposition in the original is "in." According to the most ancient manuscripts, the petition reads, "Keep them in Thy name, that name which Thou hast given Me." Jesus alone had fully manifested the name of God. And the point is that His disciples might be kept in the name of God, not in a vague indefinite sense, but in that name as personally embodied in Christ. The Saviour prays for His disciples, that they might be kept—1. In the knowledge of this name. Many temptations would assail them from Jewish prejudice and Gentile philosophy, from various forms of worldly wisdom and human speculation. They could only be kept right in their views of God, as they were kept by Him. It is human to err; and on no theme have men, when left to themselves, wandered more widely and disastrously than in their views of God. 2. In the experience of that name. This knowledge was not a barren truth, but mighty, formative, and fertilizing (chap. i. 12). As Jews, they had a knowledge of God as the God of Israel before; but the Divine name never had such power over them as when they came to realize its glory in Christ. It arrested, subdued, melted, purified them; it was in them a power for spiritual renewal and moral transformation. These disciples left in the world would be exposed to manifold malign influences; and only so long as they were kept in the consciousness of the power of God's name, could they continue true to their mission. 3. In the consolation of that name. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe"—safe from the accusations of conscience and the thunder of law, the perils of life and the fears of death. Just as a child in darkness, trembling for fear, is cheered by the sound of his mother's voice or the

certainty of his father's presence, even though unseen, so does the name of God, as revealed in Christ, sustain and encourage the souls of His people in the dreary and often trying pilgrimage to heaven. III. THE OBJECT DESIRED. "That they may be one, as we are." How much depended on their union, strength, safety, and success. Discord and disunion could not fail to bring disaster and failure at the very beginning of the Christian history. 1. The model of this union: "as we are one." Jesus does not ask that He may be one with the Father, but asserts this oneness as a fact. There was a oneness with the Father existing from eternity. But He here prays as the "Man Christ Jesus," whose purposes and plans, desires and hopes, were the same as the Father's. 2. What then would be the manifestation of this oneness? Unity of mind, will, and affection in relation to their Master and His work, a unity resulting from participation in His life and devotion to His glory? Only suppose that these disciples were to go forth with differing views and discordant purposes in their commission. Or, suppose that they were to go forth with clashing opinions about the claims of Christ Himself; one holding His supreme Godhead, another viewing Him as the highest of created beings, and a third regarding Him merely as a man, and so on; the issue in such a case could only be spiritual disaster and failure. There might be, and there were, differences between them in many things, but touching the character and claims of the Christ of God they were as one. And this oneness of view and feeling binding them to the Saviour, and pervading all their work for Him, was to be maintained by their being kept in the Father's name as revealed in Jesus. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Saints Divinely kept:*—Our text is all about keeping. Three or four times over we have some tense of the word "keep." Greatly do we need keeping. You have been redeemed and regenerated; you are pure in heart and hands; you have aspirations after the holiest things; you are near the gates of glory; but you must be kept. Here is—I. A CHOICE PROTECTORATE. "I kept them." This care—1. Was continuous. He made this the chief employment of His life. In this chapter you have "the ruling passion strong in death." He has kept them in life, and now He says, "I am no more in the world," &c.; and the one thought of His heart is, "What is to become of them?" He closes His life by commending them to the keeping of His heavenly Father. 2. Is ever needed. Sheep never outgrow this necessity. If the disciples always required keeping, you and I do. 3. Was ever personal. The Good Shepherd kept the sheep, not by proxy, but by His own hands. What must have been the effect of the personality of Christ upon those eleven? There are some men whose influence upon others has, for want of a better word, been called "magical." History tells us of warriors who have inspired their soldiers with boundless loyalty, grappling them to themselves with hooks of steel. The influence of the Christ upon those who actually lived with Him must have been superlative. 4. Was most successful. Of the eleven not one was lost. They were very fickle at first, extremely ignorant, and strongly tempted. Influences which made some go back would naturally have had the same power over them if Jesus had not kept them: yet of those whom the Father gave Him not one of them was lost. 5. Was attended with an awful sorrow. "None of them is lost, but the son of perdition." He knew that often people would say, "Can this Christianity be true which has such false-hearted traitors in its midst?" He allowed that objection to come up at the very first. But the Watcher over the sons of men could not lose even Judas without deep regrets. II. A TEMPORARY PRIVILEGE. The eleven were not to have Christ with them always. They were to fall back on another mode of living common to all saints. 1. Now, why was Christ with them at all? It was because they were very weak. They wanted fostering and nurturing. You had great joys in your early days. You have not had them lately, it may be; for you have travelled to heaven at a steadier pace. Certain spiritual joys are the privilege and the necessity of our religious babyhood, and we outgrow them. The Lord went away that the disciples might grow to spiritual manhood. 2. Choice as the privilege was of having Jesus Himself to be their Pastor, apart from the grace of God, this special boon had no power in it. The Lord Jesus Christ might preach, but He could not touch the heart of the son of perdition. No ministry of itself can turn a heart of stone into flesh. "You must be born from above." Let this be a warning to such as are not profited under the Word when faithfully preached. Beware lest ye perish under the gospel. III. A BLESSED PRAYER. "Holy Father, keep," &c. 1. "Father." It is the Father who keeps us! The Lord Jesus was tender to us when He selected that title, and did not say "Jehovah" or "Elohim." 2. "Holy Father." The keeping means keep us holy; and who can make us and keep us holy but He who is Himself holy? 3. "Keep them." We need keeping—

(1) From discord. "Keep them that they may be one." (2) From error. (3) From sin. 4. Through God's own name. It requires the very name of God to keep a Christian. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Kept of God*:—I. WE REQUIRE KEEPING. 1. You have seen a beautiful garden planted and filled with rarest flowers, and all in such beautiful order. The explanation is to be found in the keeper, who moves among the flowers, pulling up a stray weed here, clipping off a branch there, training up a fallen vine, tying up a drooping plant, digging about the roots of that rose-bush that seems a little weak, and bestowing a little extra care upon it with such tenderness as though he loved it. And from admiring the flowers, you turn to admire and love the faithful keeper, and ascribe the praise to him. 2. On the other hand, you have seen other gardens just as large, filled with the same precious variety of flowers. But how sad to look at the paths that are filled with grass! The vines have fallen down, and many beautiful plants have succumbed to the rude crowding of the rank weeds and are both dying and dead. How is this sad condition of things to be accounted for? The gardener was called in to plant it, but the owner of the garden dismissed him, thinking he could do it himself. For a while he did very well; but the pressure of business, &c., &c., and a general ignorance of flower culture, all interfered, and so the garden was allowed to run to waste. Occasionally he would rally and go vigorously to work, and things would look better for a while; but, alas! all too soon the same neglect would fall upon it. 3. These two gardens are two lives, one of which is kept and the other unkept. And I am sure there are more than a few Christians who see in the latter garden a picture of their own spiritual life. What is the matter? You need a keeper and to place in his hands your life. II. WHO IS TO KEEP US? Our Holy Father. 1. The holiness of God, instead of being opposed to the salvation of the sinful, is the very ground of that salvation, and is put forth as the reason above all others why sinners should hope in God. (1) In general, we find it stated that God saves for His holy name's sake (Deut. vi. 8; Psa. cvi. 1–6). Holiness and love are one. This may be inferred also from God's coming in holiness to Moses to send him on the mission of mercy and salvation. "The ground whereon thou standeth is holy" (see also Luke i. 47–55). Who was it that remembered mercy? The Holy One (ver. 49), who has been the author of salvation in all ages, and the object of His people's trust (Psa. xxii. 3, 4). (2) The holy name stands for forgiveness (Psa. ciii. 1–3; cxxx. 7, 8; xcix. 8, 9). (3) For pity—restoration (Ezek. xxxvi. 20–22). (4) Compassion and wrath-restraining love (Isa. lvii. 14, 15; Heb. xi. 8, 9). (5) Sustaining and delivering (Isa. xli. 10–14). 2. We find this holiness of God active against sin, hating and consuming it, and often afflicting His people for it. But that side of His holiness is only another side of His love (Psa. xcix. 8). He hates sin because it is the destroyer of the people whom He loves. III. WHAT IS INVOLVED IN BEING KEPT? 1. He will keep us unto the end—unto the salvation ready to be revealed at the last day. Many are deterred from confessing Christ lest they should not hold out. But against all these fears God has left exceeding great and precious promises (1 Pet. i. 3–5; 2 Tim. i. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 18; Jude ver. 24). 2. With others it is not so much the fear of being finally lost as the dread of being left alone on the way, of "falling into sin and trouble," &c. Listen to the promises (Gen. xxviii. 15; Isa. xliii. 2). 3. It is not that I am afraid of being deserted in affliction, but that in the ordinary course of life I shall wander from the right way. God said to those of old, "Behold I send an angel before thee," &c. (Exod. xxiii. 20). "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will lead," &c. So in this God makes ample promise. 4. So God is pledged to provide for all our wants, and keep us in the world. "The Lord God is a sword and a shield," &c. "The Lord is my Shepherd." "My God shall supply all your need." 5. But the temporal keeping is not what I want so much as to have my own life kept—to be delivered and kept from doubt, and fears, and anxiety, and vexation, and care (read Phil. iv. 7; Isa. xxvi. 3). 6. But will He keep from sin? I know He will pardon sin, but will He keep me from it? Yes. (1) There is a promise to keep from evil, which is a generic term, and covers all sin and harm. The Lord's prayer—the prayer in this connection. (2) To keep from presumptuous sin (Psa. xix. 13) and secret faults (Psa. xix. 12). (3) From temptation. I will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world. The Lord's prayer. (4) From sins of speech (Psa. cxli. 3). IV. THIS KEEPING INVOLVES MANY TRIALS, AND, IT MAY BE, MUCH SUFFERING. To be freed from sin is a painful process. It is crucifixion, it is purging, it is refining. It is having your wills subdued, but it means holiness and godliness, with peace as our portion for ever. V. HOW ARE WE KEPT? In the holy name of God.

1. As in a tower (Prov. xviii. 20; Psa. xviii. 2). 2. As in a bank (2 Tim. i. 12). 3. As in a sheep fold (Psa. xxiii. 1; lxxx. 1). 4. As behind a shield (Psa. lxxxiv. 11). VI. TO BE KEPT WE MUST PUT OURSELVES IN GOD'S HANDS, nor must we draw back. He is a Tower, we must keep ourselves in it. A Shepherd, we must be near Him. A Bank, we must commit ourselves to it as a treasure deposited therein. A Shield, we must keep ourselves behind it. (*G. F. Pentecost, D.D.*) **That they may be one, as we are.**—*The pathway to unity* :—The final state of the Church of God is to be a state of perfect unity; and that being so, their present state should be one of growing unity. Alas! how lamentably far from this are we, who profess the name of Christ at this time and in this country! In the text you have four points respecting it. I. THE AUTHOR AND MAINTAINER OF UNITY. "Holy Father, keep." 1. Unity, wherever it exists, flows from God. If you have union in your families, with your relatives and friends, this is from Him. How much more, then, must the unity of His Church derive itself from Him, as its only head and centre (1 Cor. xi. 3). God the Father is the source whence the sacred oil of unity, shed in copious showers on the head of our Aaron, diffuses itself in fragrant streams over His whole body mystical—the Church—and goes down to the skirts of His garments (Psa. cxxxiii. 2, 3). 2. He is also the exclusive maintainer of unity. He not only giveth His people the blessing of peace, but also keeps their hearts and minds in peace through Christ Jesus (Psa. xxix. 11; Phil. iv. 7). Did He for one instant abandon His children, or cease to fold them to His bosom, every soul of them would become an Ishmael; strife and contention would split the holy camp into a thousand factions, and deliver them an easy prey into the hand of the powers of darkness. And it is to His guardianship of the world that we owe the shadows of Divine unity which we find in it. Peace and unity in families, among nations, between contending parties, whether in the State or in the Church. II. THE METHOD BY WHICH GOD MAINTAINS THIS UNITY. 1. What is meant by the name of God? In olden times the names of persons were very different from what they are now. Most of our modern names have no meaning at all; but, anciently, the name of a person almost always expressed some property or character attaching to the person who bore it. Thus the name of Jacob signifies "supplanter," and has reference to his having supplanted his brother. Israel means "Prince of God," because as a prince he had power with God in wrestling, and prevailed. So then "Name of God" stands for the nature, property, and character of the Most High. 2. What is this name and character? From Exod. xxxiii. 19, 20, *cf.* xxxiv. 58, we gather that the moral attributes of God are of two kinds—mercy and justice. Let us illustrate. Light (as seen in a rainbow, resolved into two different classes of colours, four of a bright and three of a grave tint) affords some faint idea of these two classes of perfections. Mercy, love, goodness, forbearance, and so forth, on the one hand—holiness, justice, truth, on the other. The latter are as essential as the former to the surpassing beauty and loveliness of the Divine character. God would be no God if He were not perfectly just and holy, as well as perfectly loving—even as the sunlight would not be that beautiful and delicate thing it is if it were not chastened and subdued by its three graver tints. On the one hand, sin will be visited by Him; on the other, He yearns over all His creatures with the tenderest mercy. And He will be known to each individual soul, and acknowledged by each individual heart, in both these characters. For He has signally glorified both His justice and His love in Jesus Christ, so as to keep the believer wakefully alive to both of them. For what shall keep him more wakefully alive both to the love and justice of God than the reflection that His justice could not consent to our acquittal before it had fastened upon a Divine victim, and that this boundless sacrifice which justice demanded, love was not slow to make? In the Cross of Jesus, behold the name of Jehovah—the goodness and severity of God—portrayed at once. And it is this unfeigned acknowledgment of Divine love on one hand, and Divine justice on the other, in which our Saviour here prays that God would keep His chosen. The effect is obvious. The little bickerings and animosities and party feelings—unclean creatures that hovered about in the darkness—will vanish as we sun ourselves in the light. Truly acknowledging the true God, we shall truly acknowledge our brethren also. III. THE PERSONS BETWEEN WHOM THIS UNITY MAY BE EXPECTED TO SUBSIST. It is not represented as subsisting in the visible Church, but in the invisible, among God's elect—"those whom Thou hast given Me." How can unity, being a spirit and not a form, subsist in the visible Church, within whose pale there are (and must be) many hypocrites? If, indeed, it were a form, it might then be imposed from without upon a visible body. But it is a

living spirit, which might indeed develop itself in a certain similarity of outward worship, if all the persons animated by it were gathered together, as one day they shall be, and not separated from one another by time and space, as now they are. Let us not look for it, then, or expect it where it is not and where it cannot be. Union, real vital union, cannot exist among or with those who are ignorant of God. It is idle for men who walk on still in darkness to talk of, to meddle with, unity. Their ceaseless petition must be, "Lord, that I may receive my sight!" For those who do thus know Him, they, by growing in that knowledge, will grow in unity. They will have fellowship with one another in exact proportion as they walk more strictly in His fear, more lovingly and enjoyably in His comfort. IV. How CLOSE WILL BE THE BOND OF THAT FELLOWSHIP! "That they may be one, as we are." The whole body will be fitly joined together and compacted in an unity, like that subsisting between the Father and the Son. And what mortal shall comprehend the exceeding closeness of that unity—perfect unity of counsels, of will, of ends, of nature. And even such a bond shall clasp the elect together, nay, is now clasping them, and being gradually drawn more closely around them. To this state they will verge continually while they walk more and more in the light, as God is in the light. (*Dean Goulburn.*) *Kept for Jesus Christ* (Jude i.):—I. WHO? The saints; those given by the Father to Christ. II. WHAT? Keep them. As it were, Christ, having obtained them from the Father for safe keeping for Him, replaces them in the Father's hands for safe keeping for Himself. III. How? In Thy name, *i.e.*, by graciously revealing in them Thy name, which I have outwardly manifested to them. IV. WHY? Because Christ was returning to the Father (1 Pet. i. 5). V. WHEREFORE? That they might be one. Unless the Father keeps the saints they never will be one. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The preservation of Christians*:—There is an aged Christian in Dublin with whom I have often spoken who passed through the following eventful experience:—"Some years since," he said, "I was travelling on horseback in one of the country districts, when the sudden report of a pistol-shot reached me. I was satisfied that I had been aimed at, but nevertheless thankfully conscious that I had escaped. Hastening onwards, I reached my home in safety, and went into the house. It had been my custom for years to carry a small Bible in the breast pocket of my coat. Taking it out on this occasion, judge my surprise at finding a leaden bullet imbedded in the leaves. It had penetrated as far as the Gospel of John. Removing the bullet, and opening the book at the spot where it rested, my eye fell upon the words, 'Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me.'" (*Henry Varley.*) *Christian union*:—I wish all names among the saints of God were swallowed up in that one of Christian. I long for professors to leave off placing religion in saying, "I am a Churchman," "I am a Dissenter." My language to such is, "Are you of Christ? If so, I love you with all my heart." (*G. Whitefield.*) *Union and Christian life*:—Christians are like the several flowers in a garden, that have upon each of them the dew of heaven, while, being shaken with the wind, they let fall their dews at each other's roots, whereby they are jointly nourished and become nourishers of each other. (*John Bunyan.*) *Christian union attainable only in Christ*:—The union of Christians to Christ their common head, and, by means of the influence which they derive from Him, one to another, may be illustrated by the loadstone: it not only attracts the particles of iron to itself by the magnetic virtue, but, by this virtue, it unites them one among another. (*R. Cecil, M.A.*) *Work aids Christian unity*:—When I was in the army before Port Hudson I remember that night after night, when our campfires were built, we boys used to sit around them and discuss various matters; and sometimes our discussions became very heated, and sometimes we lost our tempers, and sometimes we said angry words. But one night, right in the midst of a discussion, there broke upon us that awful, startling sound which, once heard, is never forgotten. Away off, on the right of the line, it began; but it rolled in a thundering, awful echo, until it chilled our hearts. It was the long roll, and every man was on his feet, and every man shook hands with his comrade and said, "Forgive me. When we were idle we could afford to discuss; but now there is work to do, it finds us brothers." (*G. Hepworth.*) *Union in the face of foes*:—On the day before the battle of Trafalgar, Nelson took Collingwood and Rotherham, who were at variance, to a spot where they could see the fleet opposed to them. "Yonder," said the Admiral, "are your enemies; shake hands and be good friends, like good Englishmen." *Influence of union*:—Separate the atoms which make the hammer, and each would fall on the stone as a snowflake; but welded into one, and

wielded by the firm arm of the quarryman, it will break the massive rocks asunder. Divide the waters of Niagara into distinct and individual drops, and they would be no more than the falling rain; but, in their united body, they would quench the fires of Vesuvius and have some to spare for other volcanoes. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Power of union* :—Union is power. The most attenuated thread, when sufficiently multiplied, will form the strongest cable. A single drop of water is a weak and powerless thing; but an infinite number of drops united by the force of attraction will form a stream, and many streams combined will form a river; till rivers pour their water into the mighty oceans, whose proud waves, defying the power of man, none can stay but He who formed them. And thus forces, which, acting singly, are utterly impotent, are, when acting in combination, resistless in their energies, mighty in power. (*H. G. Salter.*) *Union is strength* :—When it was once demanded of Agesilaus why Lacedæmon had no walls, he replied, "The concord of the citizens is its strength." (*J. Harris.*) **While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name.**—*Christ's care for His disciples* :—Our Saviour had just passed through the agony when Judas came upon Him "with a band of men and officers" (chap. xviii. 1-9). Whatever might be the reason for mustering so large an array, in order to seize one who seemed so little likely to offer resistance, our Lord quickly showed how unavailing would have been the assault, had He not chosen to surrender Himself to the will of His enemies. By merely acknowledging Himself to be the party of whom they were in quest, Christ prostrated the whole host. But, as our Lord had no intention of delivering Himself from His adversaries, why did He give this signal evidence of having them completely in His power? For the sake of His disciples. "Let these go their way." The Evangelist still further limits the design of the miracle, that the very saying of the text might be fulfilled. These words must have had respect to more than a mere temporal deliverance. Christ had been praying, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name," &c., and "the son of perdition," was not lost in any mere temporal respect. But what was the amount of the keeping which our Lord secured for His disciples on the occasion? Simply that they should not be made prisoners with Himself, and perhaps be condemned with Himself to an ignominious death. Here then is a promise which would contemplate nothing short of everlasting salvation, declared to be fulfilled by a deliverance from present danger and calamity. Had His followers been required at that moment to suffer with Him, we can hardly doubt, knowing what their conduct was on a far less amount of trial, that they would have apostatized in such a way as to have jeopardized their final salvation. Sooner or later these disciples were to die. Christ would not, then, have lost them by their dying at that moment, "except" St. Augustine says, "because they had not then the faith in Himself which was needful to secure them from everlasting death." So that we may believe that our Lord interfered miraculously on behalf of His disciples, because He foresaw that if He now required them to bear the Cross with Him, the trial would be too great for their strength. Let us see what special truths are suggested by this fact. I. WHAT A COMFORTING THING IT IS TO KNOW THAT CHRIST WOULD SOONER WORK A MIRACLE TO RESTRAIN THE ENEMIES OF HIS SERVANTS, THAN LEAVE THOSE SERVANTS TO AN ENCOUNTER TOO GREAT FOR THEIR STRENGTH. There is often a fear, on the part of the disciple, that such or such a trial would be more than he could bear. And the fear may be altogether just, so far as it arises from comparing the strength then possessed with the danger then supposed. But the fear is altogether unjust, so far as it assumes the possibility of God's exposing His people to a trial, for which He does not communicate adequate grace. We might not be able always to die for Christ; but we are not always called to die for Christ. If we were called to die for Him, then we may be confident that we should be strengthened to die, even as martyrs died, with a smile upon the cheek, with a song upon the lip. We may not always feel as if we could in a moment resign without a murmur this or that object of devoted affection; but wait till we are actually called upon to resign it, and then, if we be truly of those who acknowledge God in all their ways, we shall find ourselves enabled to exclaim, "The Lord gave," &c. Trials are not accidents; they may be often unexpected by us, they are never unprovided for by God. God holds the balances in His hand. In one scale He puts the trials, in the other the strength; but the trial does not come to our share till outweighed by the strength which He sees fit to communicate. And, if anything can, this should encourage us to "patient continuance in well doing." So then, whilst there is everything to encourage the meek, there is nothing to warrant the presumptuous. God keeps His people by enabling them to keep themselves. When you read in

Jeremiah, "I will not turn away from them, to do them good," it might seem to you as though good were secured, be your conduct what it may; but when you read on, "I will put My fear in their hearts, that they should not depart from Me," you should learn that God's not turning from us is through the withholding us from turning from Him, and that, therefore, he who strives not against sin has no promise of salvation. And when we have thus warned you against expecting to be kept, though you are not diligent to keep yourselves—for whilst it is most true "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain," think ye not that it is also true, that the Lord will not keep the city where the watchman sleeps? —having done this, we may yet by the miracle wrought on behalf of the disciples, encourage you to the building confidently on that most blessed truth, "God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." II. BUT in place of procuring for His followers an opportunity for escape, MIGHT NOT CHRIST HAVE IMPARTED AN ABILITY TO ENDURE? The saying would thus have been only the more evidently fulfilled. Of course, He might had it accorded with His dealings and purposes. But He could not consistently with the laws which prescribe His dealings with accountable creatures. It would have taken more grace than could be bestowed without destroying all freedom of will. Remember that grace is that in which you are bidden to grow; and in spiritual stature no more than in bodily is the infant made the giant with no stage between. You must pass from point to point, improving what you have as the condition of your receiving more. Ye are to present yourselves "a living sacrifice," otherwise it will be a compulsory, and not a "reasonable service." Thus also with apostles. They have not yet grown into fitness for the honours of martyrdom; they might have been presented in sacrifice —they would not, in the true sense, have presented themselves. They had yet a long discipline to pass through, of "taking up the cross daily." So that, though there are some dangers which at one time God turns away from His people, because too great for such a measure of grace as would consist with present spiritual stature, He would have them faced at another time, because the spiritual stature is such as accords with the requisite strength. And the great practical truth to be derived from this is, that you are not to expect to become Christians by any sudden leap, but step by step. The spiritual temple rises stone by stone, as beneath the hands of a builder; it does not soar at once—wall, dome, pinnacle, complete—as beneath the wand of an enchanter. III. IN COVENANTING TO KEEP US TO ETERNAL LIFE, CHRIST HATH ALSO COVENANTED THAT WE MAY BE KEPT FROM ALL THE POWER OF THE ENEMY. And it is delightful to think of the one covenant as including the other; so that we have the same reason for believing that nothing really hurtful shall be suffered to happen to us of a temporal kind, as that nothing shall finally separate the believer from the "love of God which is in Christ Jesus." IV. The saving of the disciples from bodily danger might be taken as AN ASSURANCE THAT CHRIST WOULD NOT FAIL TO CONDUCT THEM SAFELY TO HEAVEN; and therefore was it a sort of primary accomplishment of the gracious purpose that none of them should be lost. And what a brightness would it shed over present deliverances, what a sweetness would it give to present mercies, were all in the habit of regarding them as so many earnests of a rich inheritance above! Then might every day of life be to us a sort of herald of eternity. We should not receive blessings as merely to be enjoyed and then forgotten; for they would serve to us for even more than the Ebenezer of old, a stone on which to inscribe, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us," but on which also to engrave afresh the most comforting declaration, "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost." Truly a most comforting declaration, forasmuch as it shows that our safety is in better keeping than our own. The Christian will be disquieted and harassed, a prey to frequent doubts and fears, till he come to regard the Redeemer as having taken upon Himself the work of his salvation, and bound up His own glory with the carrying him through. "I know whom I have believed," &c. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The nature of the Divine keeping:*—"Have guarded," not the same word as that rendered "kept" in the first clause. This is an intensified expression of His vigilant care. "Kept as with a military guard." The first "kept" points to their preservation in the truth revealed to them; the second to the watchfulness by means of which the result was obtained. The former may be compared to the feeding of a flock, the latter to the care which protects from the wild beasts around. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The Divine guardianship:*—I. THE SAVIOUR'S GRACIOUS CARE FOR HIS DISCIPLES. While He was with them, He had done all that was needful to keep them in the name of God. The second word, translated "kept," is not the same as the first,

and expresses more fully the idea of guardianship, the result of which was successful preservation. Thus we have suggested to us that the disciples were in danger even while their Master was with them, from their weakness, Jewish prejudices, and spiritual pride. 1. He kept them by—(1) His teaching. The whole bearing of His instructions was that they might discern the perfection of the Father's character, and apprehend the saving power of His love. (2) His example. They saw Him ever true to the name and character of God. They often beheld Him wearied and faint, yet ever finding His meat and drink in doing His Father's will. (3) His influence. The influence of a parent over a child, of a teacher over a pupil, of a friend over his fellow, is often powerful. How great and sacred must the influence of Jesus have been over His disciples! (4) He graciously kept them. Their dulness, waywardness, and forgetfulness were often provoking; but He was ever patient and gentle with them. (5) He tenderly kept them, with a heart ever overflowing with kindness and love. (6) His keeping of them, moreover, involved some anxiety. In the relation which they sustained to Him, and in the work which was before them as the heralds of His truth and the champions of His cause, His thoughts were much with them. (7) Earnestly did He care for them, that they might be faithful to their position, and fitted for His service. 2. But was there not a painful, an awful exception to the success of His guardianship? We must regard the giving here as applicable to Judas as well as to the others. They were all given to Jesus as disciples, and He taught and guarded them all; but Judas did not respond to His teaching and care. But Jesus did not lose him; he lost or rather destroyed himself, and in his perdition the Scripture was fulfilled. The quotation cannot imply that he perished for the sake of fulfilling the word of God, but to show that all things are foreknown to the omniscient God. 3. Does Christ not with equal zeal and care preserve His followers now? Are not His instruction, example, and influence available for us? True, we do not hear His voice, nor see His face, but His advocacy, with the promised presence of the Comforter, is mightier and better for our preservation than if we could actually gaze upon Him. II. A PROOF OF THE SAVIOUR'S LOVING THOUGHTFULNESS FOR HIS DISCIPLES (ver. 13). 1. The object which He sought was that "His joy might be fulfilled in themselves;" not that His joy in them, as His disciples, might be fulfilled; but that they might realize something of His own personal and perfect joy. How great and blessed and pure must have been His joy, as the incarnate Son of God! It was the joy—(1) Of the complete consciousness in Him of God. (2) Of perfect duty. (3) Of the assurance of victory. (4) Of the consciousness of pure benevolence. This joy, then, Christ wishes His disciples to realize in themselves, that it might be their strength and protection. The world gives sorrow, anxiety, disappointment, bitterness, and trouble; but to share in Christ's own joy must ever be sunshine in the soul: for the human heart it is a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Participation in this joy, then, comes down to us, and we must rejoice in the Lord, not only as a privilege, but as a duty. 2. The means adopted to produce this joy. "These things I speak in the world." Jesus might have presented His petitions for them silently. How was this audible prayer calculated to minister to their joy? We feel how important it is in daily life to have feeling made known. Sometimes you may have gone in doubt, in heaviness of spirit and sadness of heart, when a word spoken in love would have relieved your gloom, lifted your load, and cheered your path. The Saviour was more lovingly thoughtful for His disciples. It would have made no real difference to their safety if His prayer had been unheard by them; but it would have made a great difference to the cheerfulness of their hearts. Christian thoughtfulness therefore should ever prompt us to let those whom we love hear or know of our interest in them and our affection for them. This audible prayer would minister to their joy—(1) By strengthening their faith. Although He was about to leave them, they would see that He cared for them as much as ever. (2) By promoting their love. They could not but love a Master who in such manifold ways proved His deep affection for them. (3) By inspiring their hope. Christ had told them that in the world they would have tribulation, but when they heard their gracious Master thus praying they knew that, whatsoever might await them, they would be safe. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The Divine keeping*:—Concerning all saints it is implied—I. THAT THEY ARE WEAK AND CANNOT KEEP THEMSELVES. II. THAT THEY ARE IN GOD'S SIGHT VALUABLE AND WORTH KEEPING. III. THAT THEIR SALVATION IS DESIGNED, for it is that to which they are kept (1 Pet. i. 5). IV. THAT THEY ARE IN THE CHARGE OF THE LORD JESUS. V. THAT THEY ARE KEPT IN HARMONY WITH THEIR MORAL FREEDOM, "kept by the power of God through faith."

(*M. Henry.*) **None of them is lost but the son of perdition.**—A son of perdition implies the quality expressed by perdition—"None of them perished but him whose nature it was to perish." The term is a well-known Hebrew idiom by which the lack of qualitative adjectives is supplied by abstract substantives which express that quality. Thus a disobedient child is "a son of disobedience," and so "children of light" and "of darkness." Judas lost himself. Even after the betrayal he might have been saved had he fled to the cross. There is no "keeping in God's name" independently of "keeping God's word." This Judas did not do. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*)

Ver. 13. **These things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.**—*Christ's prayer for His disciples' joy*:—I. CHRIST IS THE AUTHOR AND ORIGINAL OF THE JOY OF HIS PEOPLE. 1. As He is their Prophet to instruct them. The state of ignorance is a state of darkness. And that is an uncomfortable state, full of fear, and sorrow. But when Christ comes with light He gives joy (Psa. xcvii. 11). 2. As He is their King to rule them (Psa. cxlix. 2). (1) As He subdues their enemies, and gives them peace (Luke i. 75). (2) As He gives them His Spirit. The Spirit is the Comforter (Acts xiii. 52; Gal. v. 22). (3) As He dispenses rewards (Luke vi. 23; Matt. xxv. 21). 3. As He is their Priest. (1) To sacrifice. For by this means He satisfies the justice of His Father for them, He frees them from the guilt of all their sins and reconcileth them to God (Luke ii. 10). (2) To intercede. Therefore in the text, He gives them as it were a taste of His future intercession, that thereby they might guess what He would do when He was come to heaven. 4. Uses. Is Christ the Author and the Fountain of the joy of His people—(1) Then they that are out of Christ can have no true and solid joy, because they are divided from the fountain of it (James v. 1). There is no peace, and consequently no joy to wicked men. (2) Then fetch your joy and comfort thence. Drink you out of the Fountain, and not out of broken cisterns. II. CHRIST WOULD HAVE HIS PEOPLE TO BE FULL OF HOLY JOY. 1. This He has made sufficiently to appear—(1) By publishing the gospel, which as it is a gospel of salvation, so of consolation (Luke ii. 10; Isa. lxi. 1; Luke iv. 17). (2) By giving precious promises, and sealing them with His own blood (Heb. ix. 16; vi. 18). (3) By giving glorious ordinances. For ordinances are not for our profit only, but are for our comfort too (Psa. xxvii. 4; Isa. lvi. 7; Jer. xv. 16; Isa. xii. 3). (4) By giving clear discoveries of Himself (Acts ii. 28). (5) By sending the Comforter. (6) By giving deliverance (Isa. lxvi. 5). (7) By purchasing heaven. 2. But wherefore will He have it to be so? (1) Out of self-respect, because by reason of the nearness of His union His joy is theirs, and theirs His (2 Thess. i. 12; Zeph. iii. 17). (2) To recompense them for sorrow (Matt. v. 4; 2 Cor. i. 5; Psa. cxxvi. 6; John xvi. 20; Isa. lxi. 3; xxxv.). (3) That they may be large in duty. Sorrow is a kind of straightening the heart (2 Cor. ii. 4). But holy joy dilates the heart, and consequently doth not only make it fit for duty, but it makes it to exceed in every service that is suitable to joy. 3. Use. Is it so that Jesus Christ would have His people full of holy joy? (1) Then it serves to censure those who seek to hinder the joy of Christ's people, and to embitter all their comfort with spiteful molestations. (2) Then it taxes those who waste away themselves in heaviness and discontent. Consider what the will of Christ is, and let Him have His will in this business; use all means possible to have your hearts brimfull of holy joy. (*a*) Be studious in the Word of Christ (Psa. xix. 8; Rom. xv. 4). (*b*) Employ your serious thoughts upon that delicious place where there is fulness of all joy and pleasures for evermore (Rom. iv. 4). (3) Take heed that neither sin nor Satan steal away this jewel from you, which is the legacy that Christ bequeathed you when He was even about to leave this world. But first be sure the joy you have be Christ's joy, the joy which He works by His Spirit (Gal. v. 22); so there is another kind that is a fruit and effect of the flesh (James iv. 16). III. THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF HIS INTERCESSION FOR THEM IS ONE ESPECIAL MEANS TO FILL THEM FULL OF THIS JOY. It is a means to comfort them exceedingly. In reference—1. To all the oppositions of their enemies, whether without them or within them. 2. To all the accusations that are laid against us at the bar of God's justice (1 John ii. 2). 3. To the many weaknesses and imperfections of our own prayers. 4. To the defects of all our graces. 5. It assures us of His dear love to us, and His tender care of us. (*G. Newton.*) *Christ's desire for His disciples' joy*:—I. WHAT THIS JOY IS THAT CHRIST WOULD ESTABLISH. 1. For the kind of it—"My joy;" not a worldly joy, but heavenly; not corporal, but spiritual. It ill beseemeth Christians to set their hearts on earthly things, or suffer the world to intercept their joy (Phil. iv. 4). 2.

In what manner He would have it received—"fulfilled in them." The joy is full because the object is infinite; we can desire nothing beyond Him (Acts xiii. 52). 3. It is inward for the quality of it; it is wrought in the midst of afflictions; like the wood that was thrown in at Marah, it maketh bitter water sweet (Exod. xv. 25; 1 Peter i. 6). II. REASONS WHY CHRIST WAS SO SOLICITOUS ABOUT THIS MATTER. 1. Because of the great use of it in the spiritual life, to make us to do and to suffer (Neh. viii. 10). This is as oil to the wheels. Sorrow maketh us serious, joy active. This is sweet, when a man, out of the refreshings of the Spirit, can go about the business which God hath given him to do with delight (Acts xx. 24; viii. 39). Not like slow asses that go by compulsion, but like generous horses, that delight in their strength and swiftness. 2. To mar the taste of carnal pleasures. The soul cannot remain without some oblectation; it delighteth either in earthly or in heavenly things. Now God will give us a taste of pleasantness in wisdom's paths, that we might disdain carnal pleasures. It is not a wonder for a clown, that hath not been acquainted with dainties, to love garlic and onions; but for a prince, that hath been acquainted with better diet, to leave the dainties of his father's table for those things, that were strange. 3. It is for His honour. Nothing bringeth reproach upon the ways of God so much as the sadness of those that profess them. You darken the ways of God by your melancholy conversation. Religion should be cheerful, though not wanton and dissolute. We are to invite others (Psa. xxxiv. 2). Otherwise thou art as one of the spies that discouraged the children of Israel, by bringing up an evil report upon the land of Canaan. 4. Because He delighteth to see us cheerful (chap. xv. 11). III. SOME OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING JOY. 1. God's providence to all the creatures doth aim at their joy and welfare. 2. Spiritual joy ariseth more from hope than possession (Rom. xii. 12; Heb. iii. 6; Rom. v. 2). Some birds sing in winter. Though we have not an actual possession of glory, yet there is a certainty of possession. 3. This joy is more felt in adversity than prosperity (1 Pet. i. 6; Rom. v. 3). (1) Partly from God Himself; He proportioneth His comforts to our sorrows, and then sheddeth abroad His love most plentifully (2 Cor. i. 5). (2) Partly from the saints; they rejoice most in afflictions, because they taste in them what evil they are freed from in Christ. (3) Partly because of sweet experiences. 4. Those have the highest feeling of joy that have tasted the bitterness of sorrow (Isa. lvii. 18; Jer. xxxi. 18, 20). Unutterable groans make way for ineffable joys. 5. The feelings of this joy are up and down, yet when the joy is gone, the right remaineth, and this joy will be fulfilled (chap. xvi. 22). IV. USES. 1. To show us the goodness of God, who hath made our wages a great part of our work, and our reward our service. 2. To take off the slander brought on the ways of God, as if they were dark and uncomfortable, as if we should abandon and renounce all delight. Oh! that wicked men would but make experience! 3. Let us despise the dreggy delights of the world. We are empty by nature, and worldly joy filleth not but with wind. 4. Reproof of two sorts—(1) To those that are always sad. Christians do not live up to that care and provision which Christ hath made for them (1 Thess. v. 16). They live as if God had said, Weep evermore. It is verily a fault, however disguised; in some it deserveth pity; in others chiding and rebuke. (2) The other sort are those that would rejoice, but do not provide matter of joy. "My joy." 5. To raise your minds to the exercise of this joy, I shall show—(1) What reason a Christian hath to rejoice. (*a*) The remembrance of his past estate (1 Pet. ii. 9). No man looketh on the sea with more comfort than he that hath escaped the dangers of a shipwreck. (*b*) His present interest, sense, and feeling (Rom. viii. 37). (*c*) His future hopes (Heb. iii. 6). We are heirs-apparent to the crown of heaven. (2) By what means it is maintained. God hath appointed for this end. (*a*) Graces; faith, hope, and obedience. (*b*) Ordinances: The Word, prayer, sacraments, meditation. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The joy of Christ:*—I. THE STRANGE THING NAMED "MY JOY." It is about the most unlikely thing in connection with the career and testimony of the Saviour. It would excite no one's surprise to hear Him say, "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross;" "In the world ye shall have tribulation." But when He speaks of His joy, is it not strange? What, then, is His joy? 1. It is the ripening harvest of suffering—suffering grown into joy, fully realized by Him in the completeness of His work. How true the prophetic description of Him—"A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief!" Wherever He turned His face men saw the sign. One ceaseless grief He had—loneliness of soul. Spotless purity in the midst of foul pollution, transparent truth in the midst of elaborate falsehood, earnest spirituality in the midst of consummate hypocrisy, self-sacrificing goodness in the midst of grasping selfishness. Go into His own family: they are

hostile and scornful. Mix with His disciples: they are dull, grovelling, strifeful. By the grave of a friend He groans and weeps. But the soul of the Redeemer's sufferings was the sufferings of His soul. In Gethsemane—what is this? On Calvary—oh, what is this? His heart breaks, and on this account, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" "He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." The harvest of ripened suffering—suffering turned into joy. Only He knew that in all its fulness. 2. It sprang from ministering to the sad and comfortless. He spent His life with the sufferers. His loving care lavished all its resources upon them. He was the Christ, anointed to comfort all that mourn. And such gathered to Him without hesitation. "He bare their griefs and carried their sorrows." He alone could; the rest would sink under the burden. He alone would; all the rest would have gone away in despair. But He did, and in a weeping world He had a word of mighty power. That word was "Weep not." So He speaks to the widow, to Jairus, and to the woman that was a sinner. And so He found solace in making the unhappy happy—a grand position, divinely high. 3. It consisted in sympathy with the heavenly Father's will, and sprang from doing that will. 4. It was the joy of doing the highest possible good—saving men's souls. II. OUR LORD'S DESIRE IN RELATION TO THIS. 1. That His joy in His disciples might be perfect in kind; that is, that it should spring from the same sources and have the same attributes in the seme proportion, as in His life and heart. 2. That it might be abundant in degree. I invite you all who have faith in Jesus, and a good hope in Him through grace, to cherish the fulness of the Saviour's joy. (1) There is good ground for it. The Saviour and the saved will rejoice together. The saved man was guilty, but he is forgiven, and against him there is no condemnation. (2) There is no danger in it. It will awaken no bad passion, it will create neither envy nor strife. The more the heart is filled with it the more the affections will be sanctified. (3) There is no alloy in it. Not like the joy of the world, it will never be dashed with bitterness, or overshadowed by dread, or startled by horror, or stung by remorse. (4) It will not die and disappoint you. It will live on and grow, not like the lamp of the wicked that goes out, but like the path of the just, shining more and more to the perfect day. (5) It will bless your whole nature. The understanding will say, "It is wise." The conscience will say, "It is right." The heart will say, "It is good." Long as you live your confidence will grow; and when death looks you in the face your confidence will not be shaken, but it will be dearer when everything else is dying, and brighter when everything else is darker. (*J. Aldis.*) *Christ's own joy our joy:*—I. THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S JOY. The joy of Jesus was not that then that every eye could see. It certainly was not the mirthfulness that plays over the countenance. To have looked into His face would not have been to see joy mirrored. It was more marred than that of the sons of men, and deep were the furrows care had ploughed. If it was a joy not strongly expressed in the countenance, it was also a joy not easily detected by His conversation. In His recorded discourses we have no sparkling coruscations of mirthfulness, investing them with brilliancy, but rather a spirit of calm sadness. Observe also that the joy of Jesus was not one extracted from surrounding circumstances. With too many of us our joy is distilled from our circumstances, and consequently if those circumstances be adverse we are destitute of happiness. Our joy, like honey, is gathered "from every opening flower." Many of you know what poverty means—can you coin joy out of it? You may know what reproach is—do you find it a fount of sweetness or bitterness? You have been betrayed—do you like it? With us death is in a great measure an unknown thing, and the time of it is uncertain, but remember that with Jesus every pain was foreknown, and all the agony and shame forefelt, and yet He had so deep a joy that He prayed that His joy might fill His disciples. Assuredly then, it was not the joy gleaned from surroundings. What was it? It was a joy that had its fount deep within the soul. It was not a joy that flowed into the soul through the channel of the senses. The tide flowed the other way. It flowed out from the soul. Here is one of the great differences between the joy of the Christian and the joy of the worldling. The latter drinks in nearly all his joy through the senses. The child, lovely and beloved, sends joy into the heart through the channel of the sight. Music comes stealing through the corridors of the ear—joy comes with it. The scent of the rose awakens pleasure, and taste and touch alike become the instruments of happiness. The Christian, like his Master, has all these, but the joy of his heart is the joy that rises there independently of all outside things; the joy which like himself is born from above. This joy is not confined to any one place.

Being an inward joy it may be had under any and every circumstance, yea, it is a joy that will thrive where any other joy would perish. It is the chamois of the Alps, that leaps like the hind of the morning where others cannot walk, and finds its food where most would starve. The only difficulty would be to say where it cannot and where it has not grown. It has sprung up between the stone slabs of the dungeon floor, and made the prison a conservatory. It has flourished in poverty until the inhabitant of the palace has envied. It has lived in the flames of martyrdom, and made the tongue sing when almost all beside was charred and blackened. It is a joy that lives in the fountains of the great deep of the soul. So much for the joy of Christ being an inward one. Let us now go more into particulars, and see what was the nature of this inward joy, or the different channels in which it flowed. 1. I observe that it was the joy of communion. Our Saviour ever had an abiding sense of His Father's nearness, and deep beyond all description, must have been the fellowship between them. 2. Christ's joy was also the joy of realized and returned love, Communion is more a positive act, this an experience. Christ felt His Father's love. This He declares—"The Father loveth the Son." Christ loved the Father. This also He declared—"I love the Father." Now a realized and returned love can only result in joy. I was standing on a tongue of land, or rather rocks, with a river on either side of me. Both rivers could be traced for some way back. They came from almost opposite directions. Both of them came leaping and roaring along channels filled with great boulder stones. Both of them were beautiful to a degree. For many a mile they had each run their lovely course, gradually nearing, until at last their streams met at the foot of the rock on which I stood. The place was called "the meeting of the waters," and marvellous was the "water's music." The two streams embraced, and seemed for a moment or two to dance for very glee, and then blending, ran off no longer separate but one. So I thought I have in this division of my subject the meeting of the waters. The one stream is called "the Father loveth Me." The other stream is called "I love the Father." Both are exquisitely lovely. Both are born from above. One flows from the mountain of the Father's house on high; the other from the Rock of Ages. They meet in our subject, and the music of the meeting of the waters is joy. A heart beloved and a heart loving must be a heart of joy. This joy was Christ's This joy may be, should be, must be ours. The same stream of love that flowed from the Father to the Son, flows from the Father to us. 3. It was also the joy of complete surrender. What would have been a source of sorrow to most, casts a bright gleam of sunshine into the heart of the Man of Sorrows. How is it so? By what process does He extract matter for joy from seeming want of success—a bitter cup to the lips of most? The answer you have in His own words, "Even so Father." Yes, this was enough for the soul perfectly surrendered. It was the Father's will that so it should be, and therefore it being so, was the Son's joy. Would to God we knew more of this joy of perfect and complete surrender. It is our will clashing with our Father's will that gives disquiet. Were our will but one with His, it would be utterly impossible for us ever to be anything else than serene, calm, and happy. 4. It was the joy of one who could look back upon a life work finished. In the fourth verse of this chapter our Saviour says, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Yet once more. 5. It was the joy of approaching glory. How clearly does this shine out in the first few words of our text, "and now come I to Thee." "I to Thee!" Ah, here is joy indeed. Christ's own joy is indeed ours in this respect. His heaven is our heaven—His home our home. II. THE MEASURE IN WHICH CHRIST DESIRES HIS SAINTS TO POSSESS THIS JOY. "Fulfilled." What an expressive word have we here! Full to the overflow—filled to the utmost capacity. This is the measure of joy Christ wishes for His disciples. They already possessed it in some degree, but He wished them to have it in a far larger; like a sacred flood until it overflows all banks, and eddies into every nook and cranny of the soul. How are we to obtain this inward bliss? Our text tells us. "These things I speak that they might have My joy." It is the word of Jesus that gives this joy. No looking into our own hearts or inspection of our own feelings will avail. That will but empty us. And oh how necessary it is that we should be filled. A very simple illustration will show the necessity. Take a bottle but half full of water, and placing your hand over its mouth, shake it. See how the water rushes from end to end as you move it. There is a turmoil within at the slightest motion. Why? Because it is only half full. Now fill it until you cannot add another drop. Shake it—all is still within. Turn it upside down—all is quiet. Why is this?

Because it is quite full, and therefore no outside motion affects it. (*A. G. Brown.*)

Ver. 14. **I hath given them Thy Word, and the world hath hated them.**—*The believer's position in the world*:—It was one distinguished by—I. SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGE. "I hath given them Thy Word." 1. These terms are comprehensive of the revelation of Divine grace and truth as a whole, which Christ Jesus taught as they were able to bear it. Who at this time, in the whole world, knew the Word of God as did these Galilean fishermen? 2. To receive the Word of God—(1) As a personal possession; (2) as a sacred deposit in trust for the whole world; and—(3) from Him who was the Revealer of God and the Redeemer of men was the highest privilege. 3. And since with every privilege responsibility is involved, these disciples were invested with a trust which required them to be kept with Divine power. All disciples now, in a sense, share in this privilege and responsibility. II. MORAL SEPARATION. 1. They were not of the world—(1) In their character, for the world is ever presented as having a character opposed to God. Self, not God, is its foundation; it seeks the present rather than the future, walks by sight rather than by faith, glories in the human rather than in the Divine, holds by the carnal rather than the spiritual. In this respect the disciples were no longer of the world. (2) In their condition. The world, as such, was lying in wickedness and under condemnation. The children of disobedience are declared to be the children of wrath, and the friendship of the world is enmity with God. 2. This separation exposed them to social persecution—"The world hath hated them," &c. The only world of which they knew anything by experience as yet was their own country, and it hated them. And if this was their experience up to now how signally in a wider sphere did it come to be so afterwards (1 Cor. iv. 13). The Saviour's spotless purity rebuked the looseness of the age, His benevolence its selfishness, His piety its worldliness. Therefore it hated Him, and the disciples shared in the hostility which was heaped upon the Master. 3. Christ was the model of this separation. "Even as I am not of the world." Jesus had not come out of the world as His diciples had done, for He was never of it, as they were. He was not of the world, although He came to the world, lived in the world, mixed with the men of the world, and in the scenes of the world, He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and His disciples accepted His principles, and gradually became assimilated to His character. To be like Christ, and to be "unspotted from the world" is the only true and abiding glory of human character. What does the world care for saints? It has not a good opinion of them, nor a good word for them; its spirit is entirely opposed to them, and it is not slow to call them fools. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Christians not of the world*:—Let us—I. EXPLAIN AND ESTABLISH THE TRUTH OF THE ASSERTION. Christians are not of the world—1. Because they are not attached to its party. (1) In many cases it is lawful to associate with the people of the world. Such are cases of necessity—when we are compelled by our situations to live among them; cases of business, charity, and piety, civility, and affinity. (2) But further than this a Christian will not go. He cannot choose the people of the world as his companions and friends. (*a*) The authority of God forbids it. "Come out from among them and be ye separate," &c. (*b*) The peace of his fellow Christians. Such bold intimacies with the world would grieve the strong, and throw a stumbling-block in the way of the weak. (*c*) The welfare of his own soul. "Can a man take fire in his bosom and not be burned?" My young friends, beware of wicked company! Cultivate no friendships that will end in everlasting ruin. 2. They are not actuated by the spirit of the world. Everything else is vain without this. Your forsaking the world in profession, your leaving it in appearance, by your apparel, your discourse, your manner of life, is nothing unless it be animated by internal principle. And when the heart is detached from the world, these two advantages flow from it: (1) Even in the midst of all your secular concerns you will maintain your distinction. Though in the world, you will not be of it, because the heart is elsewhere, and God looketh to the heart. (2) When the heart is withdrawn from the world, everything else will follow of course. (*a*) Then you will not be governed by the maxims and opinions of the world. You will not ask what are the sentiments of the multitude, but what says the Scripture? (*b*) You will not be attached to its amusements and dissipations. The sun arising conceals the stars—not by spreading gloom, but by diffusing lustre. It is a poor thing to be dragged out of the dissipations of the world, against inclination, while we still look back with Lot's wife. But it is a

glorious thing to leave these diversions from the discovery and possession of superior entertainment and sublimer joys. (c) You will not be led by the conversation of the world; for speech is governed by affection; "and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." 3. They are not natives of the world. Our Lord said to the Jews, "Ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world." Now the believer may adopt the same language. He is here only as "a stranger, and a foreigner," not a native; he derives his being from heaven. And as he is born from above, no wonder that he "seeks those things which are above." 4. They do not choose their portion here. Hence the Christian learns in whatsoever state he is, therewith to be content. This never can be the case with the man who makes the world his portion. A Christian feels worldly trials, but he is not miserable. He is thankful for temporal indulgencies, but he is not exalted above measure. II. WHAT DOES THIS TRUTH TEACH US? 1. It enables us easily to account for the world's persecution of real Christians. They are not willing indeed to acknowledge what our Lord alleges as the cause of their hatred. "It is not for your holiness we condemn you, but for your pride, your censoriousness, your hypocrisy." But how is it that the most holy and zealous Christians have been the most obnoxious to the men of the world? And a much stronger case: how was it that the Lord was more abhorred than His followers? Was He proud, censorious, false? And what our Saviour said to the Jews will apply to many Christians—falsely so called now—"The world cannot hate you"—you are so much like it—"but Me"—Me "it hateth because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil." Bear the same decisive testimony by your words and actions, and be assured a portion of the same rancour will follow. The case is plain. Resemblance is a ground of affection; but unsuitableness, of dislike. "Hence," say the Apostle, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" of one kind or another. It began early. Cain slew his brother Abel; "and wherefore slew he him"? It prevailed also in the family of Abraham; "and as it was then, so it is now; he that was born after the flesh persecuted Him that was born after the Spirit." "Marvel not therefore," says our Saviour, "if the world hate you." Do not murmur; you suffer in the noblest company, and your enemies can neither hinder your present peace, nor destroy your future happiness. 2. If the distinguishing badge of a Christian is this—that he is "not of the world"—then are there few real Christians to be found. Judge yourselves by this test. Ask yourselves wherein you differ from the men of the world. 3. See how little we should be affected with the charge of preciseness and singularity. You would not be afraid of being peculiarly wise, or beautiful, or wealthy. Why then wish to escape the praise of being singular in religion? What wisdom, what beauty, what riches can be compared to this? 4. If Christians are not of the world, no wonder they are more than reconciled to a withdrawment from it. No wonder they love solitude and enter their closets. There they exchange the world for God. No wonder they prize the Sabbath—it is a day of retreat, it is an emblem of heavenly rest. No wonder if death be no longer formidable—it is leaving a vain, vexing, defiling world. (*W. Jay.*)

Ver. 15. **I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.**—*The parting prayer:*—I. THE MOTIVES WHICH PROMPTED THIS PRAYER. 1. To evince the tenderness of His heart toward His people. Usually, when any master-grief takes possession of the mind, we seldom have much disposition or power, to sympathise with the sorrows of others. Had our Lord been the subject of this infirmity, this was not the time for Him to have been concerned about the future trials of His people. Yet at this moment, when we might suppose His every thought and feeling to have been absorbed in the sword that was about to pierce His soul, we find Jesus turning to consider the comparatively little griefs of His dear disciples, His prayer seems to be—"Holy Father, think not of My coming sufferings, but think of these whom I am about to leave full of sorrows, and keep them." 2. That He might instruct His disciples to the end of time in that mighty interest with which He is always engaged for their spiritual preservation. As you go through the successive clauses of this chapter, you will find in almost every verse something to show that God has a direct interest in the consummation of that scheme which Jesus came both to reveal and to accomplish; that "His own great name" was to be furthered thereby, and that it formed part of the covenant which He made with Jesus, that these His people should be saved through His blood. II. THE TRUTHS THAT ARE TO BE LEARNED FROM THIS PRAYER. 1.

That the world is full of dangers. The world is, and must ever be the Christian's adversary. It is a sinful place. The prince of evil is its god; the fascinations of evil are its snares; the works of evil are its employments; and the triumphs of evil are its boast and its pride. 2. That there are ends to be accomplished by our remaining in the world which make it expedient that we should for a time be kept in it. And this expediency consisted in this: these His disciples had a work to do. They had His honour to promote and His gospel to spread. This is true of us. We have all our stated duties to fulfil; we have all a nook in His providence to fill up; we have all our own little wheel to turn in that vast machine, which governs and controls the universe. It is not therefore the language of true obedience to say, "My soul is weary of life; would that God would take me to Himself!" It is nothing more than the suicide's thought, clothed in Gospel language. It is impatience of the yoke Christ has laid on the shoulder. It is not the saint's desire to "rest from his labour;" it is the worldling's desire to rest without labour. It is the wish to use that part of our Lord's prayer, "Father, glorify Thy Son," without remembering that other part of it, "I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." 3. That the power of this evil of the world is so great, that we can only be delivered from it by the almighty power of God. (1) Who can contemplate the legion of spiritual foes which encompass the believer's path, and remember at the same time the powerful ally and abettor of Satan that we carry in our own hearts; and not feel, that unless the power of the grace of God interfered on our behalf, none of us would be saved? (2) And then, how mercifully mysterious and varied are the methods of the Divine protection? Before the temptation comes; while the encounter lasts: yea, and even afterwards, when mourning in humiliating bitterness of soul over some recent defeat, how often have we found the restoring power of God's grace overruling for the benefit of His people's souls every incident of their lives! (3) Observe the means by which we are thus kept (ver 11). "The name of the Lord is a strong tower," &c. Here is the argument with which we are permitted to come to the mercy-seat—that God's name is engaged and pledged to keep us from evil. 3. That the only lawful measure of solicitude we are to entertain about the things of this world is, that we may be "kept from the evil" which belongs to it. Life is full of disappointed projects and griefs. Then how important is it, that we should be able to ascertain what solicitude we are permitted to entertain. The passage tells us that our only solicitude is to be guided by this; not by the evils themselves, but their spiritual results. I am not to pray against poverty; but I am to pray against its evils. I am not to pray against riches; but I am to pray against their temptations. I am not to pray against the disappointments, and vexations, and crosses, and cares of life; but I am to pray, that however multiplied and grievous are the forms of trial that await me, I may never have a murmuring, unsubmissive, discontented spirit. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Every-day holiness:*—The saintly painter Fra Angelico flung out his thoughts upon the cells of San Marco, and those who visit Florence are arrested and subdued by the purity of his dreams. My friends, that other powerful artist who adorned the ceiling of the Sistine, has traced our figures copied more directly from the study of the human form, but warmed into life by the fire of Divine genius; and of such men we cannot but say that they penetrated the hidden chambers of another world before they could leave before the eyes of five astonished centuries such visions, more lovely or more appalling than the mysteries and marvels of our dreams. But I tell you that in the streets of London, in the streets of Manchester, it is possible for us in our ordinary life to see pictures more pure than the dreams of Angelico, more powerful than the masterpieces of Angelo. Here we are face to face with living men, some in youth, in the early days of passion and struggle, some in age, when the fire is failing and the eye growing dim, who, in the midst of a world that forgets God, or defies Him, are enabled to do mighty things though hidden to sustain an inner life of loyalty to supernatural principle amidst the fretting care of daily toil. (*Knox Little.*) *Christ's prayer for His disciples:*—I. WHAT OUR LORD ASKS FOR US. His petition has two sides—a negative and a positive. To be kept from evil in the world means—1. To be engaged in the world's business, and have it rightly directed. Some have thought that we would be more Christian if we were to withdraw into solitude. But this is impossible for the mass of men, and it is in direct opposition to the example of Christ, and to the spirit of His gospel. Paul did not think his office suffered when he wrought as a tent-maker, and was not labour consecrated by the Son of God Himself? Whatever is open to men, that is just and right in business, is open to Christians, and whatever their hands find to

do, they are to do it with their might. The gospel asks of its friends that all their business should be—(1) Directed to a true end. Other men may turn their work to the ends that are merely personal. The Christian's toil should not have self for its end, but God and Christ, and in them, the good of humanity. Men may call this ideal and impracticable, but it is the only thing that can redeem human business from being dreary, degrading toil, and man himself from feeling that he is a mere beast of burden, (2) Done in a right manner. The law of truth and justice should regulate every part of it. Some think they can separate their religion from their business; but it is the vain old endeavour to serve God and Mammon. Christianity must touch everything in life if it touches it at all. If the gospel is not to make Christians truthful and upright, I do not see any great purpose it can serve on this side time or beyond it. If the world and its business are ever to be put right, and cleared of the robberies that threaten society, where is the stand to be made if not by those who have lifted up their hands to God and said, "We are His witnesses"? 2. To suffer under its trials, and to be preserved from impatience. If a man would escape trial, he must needs go out of the world, and when Christ prayed that His disciples should be kept in it, He knew that they were to suffer affliction. Moral distinctions are not observed in the providential allotment of calamity. This stumbles many. But if God were to exempt His friends from trial, He would take away from Christians one of the most effective means of their training, and one of the most striking ways in which they can prove their likeness to Christ. The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, but it is not seen in his being saved from suffering; it is in the way in which he meets it. Few things do more to raise the tone of our own Christian life, and to prove to men that there is a hidden property in religion which can turn the bitterest thing in this world into sweetness. 3. To be exposed to its temptations, and preserved from falling into sin. God has not seen fit to deprive sinful things of their attractiveness, nor to disarm the great enemy of his fiery darts, nor to quench at once and altogether the inflammable material in our heart. This would be fighting the battle and gaining the victory without us, and there could then be no perfected purity, no established character, no conqueror's crown. This should mark a Christian in the world, that he should have a deeper view of what is to be aimed at in character—of what is meant by being kept from evil. It is not to be preserved from misfortune, or sickness, or reproach, or bereavement, but from sin. II. WHY HE ASKS IT. 1. For the benefit of the world. If Christ were to remove men so soon as they become His followers, He would be taking away from the world its greatest blessings. True Christians are the salt of the earth and its light. 2. For the honour of His own name. There is glory that accrues to the name of Christ when a sinner drops the weapons of rebellion, and when His redeemed are brought home. But it is for His honour also that there should be an interval between—a pathway of struggle, where the power of His grace may be seen preserving His friends in every extremity. It was a glorious thing for the Head Himself to enter the lists of battle, and to depart a victor, triumphing through endurance to the death. But it multiplies His triumph, or brings out all that was hidden in it, when we see it repeated in the victory of the weakest of His followers. It is like the sun reflecting His image from every dew-drop, folding out His treasures in the green leaves and colours of all the flowers, and flashing His light along the beaded moisture of gossamer threads—for we believe that not a blessing or a comfort, not a grace or virtue rises out of the night of our sin and suffering—not the slightest filament of feeling sparkles into hope—but it will be found that it owes its source to the fountain of light and life which God has opened for His world in Jesus Christ. 3. For the good of Christians themselves. "Master, it is good for us to be here," Peter said on the Holy Mount, "Let us build here three tabernacles. Why go down again into the dark world of opposition and trial, when we can enjoy at once the heavenly vision"? But "he wist not what he said," and he was compelled to descend and travel many a weary footstep, before he reached that higher mount where he now stands with his Lord in glory. We, too, may sometimes feel that it would be better for us to be carried past these temptations and struggles, and to enter at once into rest. But He who undertakes for us knows what is best, and as it was expedient for us that He should depart, so must it also be that we should for a season remain behind. Not that this is indispensable for our sanctification, for the Saviour who could carry the dying thief at once to paradise, could do the same for all of us. The reason seems rather to be that there are lessons which we have to learn on this earth which can be taught us in no other part of our history. (1) The evil of sin. And, therefore, we are detained in a

world where its effects are so terrible, where we have to struggle with it. (2) That we should enjoy more fully the blessedness of heaven. Our bitter bereavements will intensify the joy of its meetings; its rest will be sweeter for the hard toil; and its perfect light and purity fill the soul with a far more exceeding glory for the doubts and temptations which oppress us here. Conclusion: Let this petition point out—1. Our duty. What He asked for us we must aim at. Let us fear nothing so much as sin; and feel that our life can aim at a true and noble end, only when it breathes the air of this prayer of Christ. 2. Our security. The life of a Christian man is in no common keeping. It is suspended on the intercession of Christ (ver. 24). (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *Christ's prayer for the disciples*:—I. THAT FOR WHICH CHRIST DID NOT PRAY. The reasons for this negative prayer are twofold. 1. Those which were personal to the disciples. (1) Christ's knowledge of the moral uses and value of temptation. It is not the physical frame of the sluggard that attains the highest muscular development. So there is a necessity of spiritual assault from without, and spiritual resistance from within, in order to the perfection of our spiritual nature. (2) Christ's knowledge of the moral uses of suffering. These also are directly instrumental in soul development by the invigoration of its energies. 2. That which related to the world. It was for the world's sake that our Lord would not have His disciples removed. They were to be its "light." II. THAT FOR WHICH CHRIST DID PRAY. The man who has turned to Christ is not freed from the possibility of falling. There is not given him such a measure of grace as to render his relapse impossible, nor does Satan give up hope of recovery. What an encouragement to endurance and effort that Christ prayed then and prays still! Learn—1. The necessity of constant watchfulness and endeavour. Christ prays for us, but we by our own acts must render the prayer effectual. 2. A lesson of confidence. By ourselves we must fall, but we are not by ourselves. (*W. Rudder, D.D.*) *The Christian in the world*:—Christ is "come into the world," and therefore thou needest not "go out of the world" to meet Him. He doth not call thee from thy calling, but in thy calling. The dove went up and down from the ark and to the ark, and yet was not disappointed of her olive-leaf. Thou mayest come to the house of God at due times, and thou mayest do the business of the world in other places too; and still keep thy olive, thy peace of conscience (Gen. xxiv. 27; 1 Cor. v. 10). (*J. Donne, D.D.*) *The disciples in the world*:—I. THE WORLD. The world is a globe some eight thousand miles through and three times eight thousand miles round. It is one of the lesser members of a family of worlds. The whole universe, within the telescopic horizon, is composed of gigantic continents of suns, the dim lines of which shimmer in the ethereal depths. Yet our planet, relatively so small, is a vast world. What moral interests centre in it! It was not the first theatre of intelligence and responsibility. When the progenitors of our race received their being, there were mighty tides of good and evil, bliss and misery, sweeping from an unknown past into the unfathomable gulfs of the endless future. When but one pair of human beings was alone amidst the otherwise unpeopled solitude, they were caught and borne along by the evil current. Murder broke out in the first family; and sin has been in every household since. What a world is ours at the present moment! Call before you its heathenisms and its inadequate reception of the gospel in what are called Christian lands. Portray to your imagination its wars, vices, diseases, sufferings. Barbarism conceals none of its iniquities; civilization is often as guilty behind its decorous exterior. Poverty brings temptation, and riches are full of snares. Ignorance surrounds our path with danger; and learning is commonly only a variation of peril. Deformity makes life sordid; and beauty as frequently ministers to luxury. Idleness breeds mischief, and occupation tends to nurture ambition and greed. Disappointment chills and sours not a few; and success destroys many more. The seeming goodness of one droops in hours of ease; another falls in the time of conflict. And oh! of what delusions and perils the best men are conscious! The godly feel their evil and see their dangers as no others can. II. OUR SAVIOUR'S DESIRE THAT HIS DISCIPLES MIGHT REMAIN IN THE WORLD. 1. How differently our Lord regarded human life from many whose history inspired men have handed down to us! Jesus never desired for Himself or His followers an unhonoured escape from the tests of this mortal career. When the patient Job was overwhelmed with affliction, he longed for the hour of death. So did the Psalmist (Psa. lv. 5); Elijah (1 Kings xix. 4); Jeremiah (Jer. ix. 2); and Jonah (Jonah iv. 3). Oh! how transcendently unlike all this is the bearing of Jesus! "Thy will be done" is His lifelong prayer. 2. Jesus surpassed all others in His lofty estimate of the possibilities of a human life

in this world of mystery, sin, and death. (1) He would not have become incarnate in this world of temptation and suffering, if it had been utterly unfit for the trial and development of a Godlike life. His assumption of our humanity not only illustrates the greatness of our nature and destination; but it also guarantees the wisdom and endorses the goodness of the Providence which rules the earth. (2) He knew all the worst of Satanic and human evil. He saw it as we never can. No man ever beheld the actual sinfulness of his own spirit. If you could have before you the evil of every soul in a large city, your reason would reel. Jesus looked on the unveiled reality, but yet said, "I pray not," &c. (3) Christ loves His disciples, yet His affection did not prompt, but forbade, the supplication, "Father, take them out of the world." (4) Jesus knew human life by experience. He trod the depths of its temptations, and drank the cup of its sorrows to the dregs. His hands were hard with labour, His frame was wearied by fatigue. Yet, while He passed through all, and more than all, our trials and griefs, though without sin, He said, "I pray not," &c. (5) Our Saviour was now penetrating the deepest shadows of His incarnate life. To-morrow all the harrowing scenes are enacted that end in the cross. Yet, when the Lord's experience of a human probation was awful beyond conception, and while He was aware that His disciples were to share His Cross in many lands, He did not pray, "Father, take them away from a world so terrible, where their faith will be tried by flame and their foes will shed their blood." (6) Christ could have taken His disciples out of the world in an instant if it had been the best for them. He could have commanded ministering spirits to bear His followers along the starry pathway to the mansions of the blest (Matt. xxvi. 53). But He did not even pray that they might be taken out of the world. (7) Jesus must have set a high value on a soul tempered in the fires of trial and suffering in this fallen planet. A soul that bears the test of life, and comes out of the process confirmed in loyalty and love to God and righteousness, must be destined for some sublime vocation in coming worlds. "Kings and priests unto God" are not empty titles. Contemplating the unfading crown to which His faithful disciples were advancing, Jesus said, "I pray not," &c. (8) Jesus wished His disciples to be like Himself. He desired them to yearn over this sinning and suffering world with a compassion like His own. To share His joy, they must be equally willing to live, and toil, and suffer. To ask that believers might be taken out of the world, without nobly living and working in it, would be to beseech that His kingdom might fail. III. OUR SAVIOUR'S PRAYER THAT HIS DISCIPLES MIGHT BE KEPT FROM THE EVIL OF THE WORLD. 1. Our Lord knew that the end of a life like ours cannot be attained except through a probation like ours. He did not cry, therefore, "Father, stay the direful ordeal, and rearrange the lot of man." But He prayed, "Father, keep these from evil." 2. He knew that the life of God in the soul was endowed with all the properties necessary to its triumph. The one thing that represses, hinders, and overthrows, is sin. Keep this deadly influence away, and there will be progress and victory. Hence Jesus stretched the bright shield of His intercession over the heads of His disciples, saying, "I pray," &c. Conclusion: 1. A Christian has every reason to cultivate a temper contented, jubilant, as he surveys this mysterious scene. The adamant of a Saviour's intercession is stretched over every soul that confides in His redeeming grace. 2. The great end of life is not ease and comfort. The great concern is, to be preserved from evil. The terrible tests of life are not to be lowered. We are to bear them (James i. 12). 3. How sad is the contrast of multitudes, to whom the gospel is preached, and who seek no deliverance and preservation from evil! (*H. Batchelor.*)

Better to stay than go:—We have here—I. A NEGATIVE PRAYER. II. THE MEANINGS OF THIS PRAYER. 1. That they should not, by retirement and solitude, be kept entirely separate from the world. Hermits and others have fancied that if we were to shut ourselves from the world we should then be more devoted to God and serve Him better. But monasticism has demonstrated its fallacy. It was found that some sinned more grossly than men who were in the world. There are not many who can depart from the customs of social life and maintain their spirit unsullied. Common sense tells us that living alone is not the way to serve God. It may be the way to serve self. If it be possible by this means to fulfil one part of the great law of God, we cannot possibly carry out the other portion—to love our neighbour as ourselves. I have heard of a man who thought he could live without sin if he were to dwell alone, so he took a pitcher of water and store of bread, and provided some wood, and locked himself up in a solitary cell, saying, "Now I shall live in peace." But in a moment or two he chanced to kick the pitcher over, and he thereupon used an angry expression. Then he said, "I see it is possible to lose one's temper

even when alone," and at once returned to live among men. 2. That they should not be taken out of the world by death. That is a blessed mode of taking us out of the world, which will happen to us all by and by. How frequently does the wearied pilgrim put up the prayer, "Oh that I had wings like a dove!" &c. But Christ does not pray like that; He leaves it to His Father, until, like shocks of corn fully ripe, we shall be gathered into our Master's garner. III. THE REASONS. 1. It would not be for our own good. We conceive that the greatest blessing we shall ever receive of God is to die; but it is better for us to tarry, because—(1) A little stay on earth will make heaven all the sweeter. Nothing makes rest so sweet as toil; nothing can render security so pleasant as a long exposure to alarms. The more trials the more bliss, the more sufferings the more ecstasies, the more depression the higher the exaltation. Why! we should not know how to converse in heaven if we had not trials to tell of. An old sailor likes to have passed through shipwrecks and storms, for if he anchors in Greenwich Hospital he will there tell, with great pleasure, to his companions of his hair-breadth escapes. (2) We should not have fellowship with Christ if we did not stop here. Fellowship with Christ is so honourable a thing that it is worth while to suffer, that we may thereby enjoy it. Moreover, we might be taken for cowards if we had no scars to prove the sufferings we had passed through and the wounds we had received for His name. I should never have known the Saviour's love half so much if I had not been in the storms of affliction. 2. It is for the good of other people. Why may not saints die as soon as they are converted? Because God meant that they should be the means of the salvation of their brethren. You would not, surely, wish to go out of the world if there were a soul to be saved by you. Mayhap, poor widow, thou art spared in this world because there is a wayward son of thine not yet saved, and God hath designed to make thee the favoured instrument of bringing him to glory. 3. It is for God's glory. A tried saint brings more glory to God than an untried one. Nothing reflects so much honour on a workman as a trial of his work and its endurance of it. So with God. IV. THE DOCTRINAL INFERENCES. 1. Death is God taking His people out of the world; and when we die we are removed by God. 2. Dying is not of one-half so much importance as living to Christ. It may be an important question, How does a man die? but the most important one is, How does a man live? Do not put any confidence in death-beds as evidences of Christianity. The great evidence is not how a man dies, but how he lives. V. THE PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. That we never have any encouragement to ask God to let us die. 2. Do not be afraid to go out into the world to do good. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The world's need of Christians*:—A young lawyer, going to the West to settle for life, made it his boast that he "would locate in some place where there were no churches, Sunday schools, or Bibles." He found a place which substantially met his conditions. But before the year was out he wrote to a former classmate, a young minister, begging him to come out and bring plenty of Bibles, and begin preaching, and start a Sunday school; for, he said, he had "become convinced that a place without Christians, and Sabbaths, and churches, and Bibles was too much like hell for any living man to stay in." *Unworldliness in the world*:—Though Sir Thomas More lived so much in the world and at Court, yet his heart was kept unworldly by the singular virtue of his private life. If he entertained his equals freely, he also frequently invited the poor to dine and sup with him; the more he was in the king's palace, the more he resorted to the cottages of the poor; when he added to his house a library, he provided also a house near his own for the comfort of his aged neighbours; and when most involved in worldly business he built himself a chapel. He never entered on any fresh public employment without an act of devotion and a participation in the Lord's Supper—trusting, as he said, more to the grace of God thus derived than to his own wit; and so long as his father lived he never sat on the judgment-seat—that seat was the Lord Chancellor's—without asking his blessing on his knees. (*F. Myers, M.A.*) *Mutual necessity; or, why saints are left to sojourn in a sinful world*:—I. BECAUSE THE WORLD NEEDS THEM. It needs—1. Their example. They are the lights of the world. In their character, duties, and sufferings they show the blessed influence of religion. A good example has a wonderful attraction. Godly men are living epistles. 2. Their testimony. They are God's witnesses. They go into the world and bring the truth in contact with men's minds. The world needs them as it needed the glorious mission of their Lord and Master. Think of the results of their labours. Be faithful, and testify fearlessly for God and truth. 3. Their prayers. The prayers of the Church are like Moses' rod. Israel needed Elijah's prayers. Jerusalem sinners

needed the prayers which preceded the pentecostal visitation. May the Lord increase the number of praying ministers, teachers, and parents! 4. Their sympathies. See the glorious institutions of our Lord, the ministrations to the sick and dying, &c., &c. What is the source of such benevolence? The life of religion in the souls of men. II. BECAUSE THEY NEED THE WORLD. 1. For the trial of their faith (Heb. xi.). The Christian's trials are necessary as a heavenly discipline. They come forth as gold. Reliance on Jesus is faith's first exercise; confidence in God as a Father is established as we pass through this world of care and temptation. 2. To prove the sincerity of their love. We are in a state of probation. Our profession of love must be tested. Thus it was with Peter: "Loveat thou Me?"—then go and give tangible proof thereof. Saints are sent into the gospel vineyard, and in the next world the Great Proprietor will say to the faithful, "Well done," &c. 3. For their progressive sanctification. High situations are attained by degrees; health promoted by exercise. Strength and skill are obtained by conflict. Storms clear the atmosphere. Thus with the book of "truth" as our guide and help, we struggle onward and upward, gathering strength as we go, and rejoicing in anticipation of that world where sin has never found an abode. Let the saint and the sinner, respectively, inquire, Am I improving the period of my earthly existence? (*Congregational Pulpit.*) *Kept from the evil:*—I. FROM WHAT BELIEVERS SHALL BE KEPT. 1. Negatively; not—(1) An absolute freedom from all afflictions, which are either the consequences of sin or corrections of God (Psa. lxxxix. 28; Heb. xii. 6–10; 1 Cor. xi. 32). (2) All suffering for righteousness sake (chap. xv. 19; xvi. 33). (3) A full discharge from Satan's temptation (Eph. vi. 12; 2 Cor. xii. 7). 2. Positively. They shall be kept—(1) From all damning error and delusion (Psa. xvi. 11; xvii. 4; 1 John ii. 20; John xvi. 13). (2) From the tyranny of Satan (chap. viii. 36). (3) From all temptations superior to their strength, or have more strength given them, answerable to their trials (1 Cor. x. 13). (4) From sinking under the burden of affliction (Isa. xliii. 1, 2). (5) From the power and reign of sin (Dan. vii. 12). (6) From the curse and condemnation of the law (Rom. viii. 1). (7) From the slavish fear of death (1 Cor. xv. 55, &c.). II. WHAT ASSURANCE THERE IS THAT BELIEVERS SHALL THUS BE KEPT FROM THE EVIL, THOUGH NOT TAKEN OUT OF THE WORLD. Note the following considerations:—1. That of the Person praying; the beloved, in whom the Father is always well pleased, and who He always hears. 2. That of what He asks for, and on what ground. His request is for the preservation of His people, in order to their eternal happiness, which is most agreeable to the will of God, and the end for which He was sent by Him into the world (chap. vi. 39). 3. That of Him to whom His request is directed, viz., the God who "spared not His own Son," &c. 4. That of the persons for whom He intercedes—His children and chosen, such as He has a special interest in and bears a peculiar love unto. Application: 1. Hence learn the greatness and constancy of Christ's love to His people, and of His desire of their eternal blessedness with Him. 2. What a powerful argument should it be with all to come to Him unfeignedly. Who would live a day in the world without an interest in this prayer of His, of being kept from the evil? 3. It may greatly strengthen the faith of true Christians in their daily prayers for deliverance from evil. 4. How much is the world mistaken as to Christ's servants, as if they were the most miserable persons in it, when their Lord hath provided so fully for their safety and happiness. 5. How inexcusable must it be to forsake Christ and His service for fear of suffering. He that would save his life by running from the Lord of life takes the direct way to lose it. 6. Let this encourage us cheerfully to follow the Captain of our salvation whilst we live, and to commit our souls unto Him when we die. (*D. Wilcox.*) *The Christian in society* (Text in connection with Rom. xii. 2):—I. THERE IS NOTHING IN THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD, WHICH REQUIRES ITS DISCIPLES TO ABJURE SOCIETY. 1. This might be inferred from the consideration of human nature. Man is a social being. He was never intended to spend his life in solitude. The heaviest punishment is that of prolonged solitary confinement. Our villages and cities all proclaim that man was intended for society. 2. Almost the first appearance of the Saviour in His public ministry was at a social entertainment, and oftener than once He accepted an invitation to a feast, and availed Himself of the opportunity which it afforded to illustrate and enforce the great things of His kingdom. The grand distinction between Him and the Baptist was that the latter sought the wilderness, but Jesus mingled with the people. Thereby He taught that His design was not to turn men into anchorites. 3. In perfect harmony with this view of the case is the petition in the prayer. It would not be good for the Christian to withdraw from

social intercourse, for though solitude is occasionally beneficial, yet it would be extremely injurious to a man to have for a series of months no other companion than himself. The supreme happiness of life is in going out of self for the benefit of others. It is, therefore, quite a false idea, that there is more of holiness and happiness in seclusion than in society. I do not say that no true spiritually-minded ones have preserved their holiness in such a place: the story of Port Royal proves the opposite. But I do affirm that those are most truly walking in the footsteps of our Divine Master who are seeking in daily life to serve their God. There is a manliness and an energy about the piety of such men which we look for in vain even among the most saintly of secluded ones. The hothouse may be indispensable for tropical shrubs, but it would render delicate the Alpine tree. Even so the Christian religion was designed by its Founder to stand the winter of the world; and to nurse it within the artificial protection of the monastery will weaken its vitality. 4. But neither would it be good for the world if the Christian should abjure his intercourse with society, for how then would the prophecy of its conversion be fulfilled? Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye are the light of the world," but how shall they dissipate its darkness unless they penetrate its atmosphere? He said, "Ye are the salt of the earth," but if the salt come not into contact with that which is to be preserved, how shall its antiseptic qualities begin to work upon it? II. THOUGH MOVING AMONG OTHER MEN, THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE DIFFERENT FROM THEM. Here we come to the second text. 1. The root of the Christian's nonconformity is his regeneration. The peculiarity about him is that he works from an inward principle that is different from that of other men. By the renewing of his mind he has come to see things in a new light, and so when he acts differently from other men, it is not because he is under the iron law of a superior, but because he chooses so to act, and finds his happiness in taking such a course. 2. What, then, is this inward principle? It is a regard to the will of God. Thus Peter and John said, "Whether it be right in the sight of God," &c.; and Paul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" So every genuine child of God takes the will of his Father to be the rule of his life. Other men ask, "Will it pay?" Others consult their ease or custom; but the Christian regulates himself by the Word of God. 3. In what way will this inward principle develop itself in the outward conduct? (1) It will keep him from everything that is positively sinful. No man can be a Christian and deliberately do what God has declared to be wrong. "He that is begotten of God sinneth not." So far all is plain; but I may see the form of evil where others may see none, and others where I see none; hence, differing in our application of the principle to individual cases, we shall differ from each other in our conduct regarding them. Thus one asks, should a Christian play cards? another, should he go to the theatre? another, should he go to public balls? Now, if these were personal questions, and I were asked what I ought to do regarding them, I should say at once that considering the evil repute in which these things are held, the evil surroundings from which they have been inseparable, and the pain that would be given to tender consciences, the course for me is clear. But then I am not the director of another man's conscience. The great difference between the New Testament and the Old lies just there. The Old gave minute directions for all possible contingencies; the New gives principles, and lets each man follow these for himself. (2) Furthermore, in settling such questions we should have regard, not to the fashion of our circle or the gratification of our own curiosity, but to the glory of God: "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink," &c. Raise the question above all temporary considerations. Look at it in the light of God. III. ON ALL PURELY INDIFFERENT MATTERS, AND WHERE HIS CONFORMITY WILL NOT BE MISUNDERSTOOD, BUT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE SPIRITUAL BENEFIT OF OTHER MEN, THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE AS THEY ARE: "I am made all things to all men," &c. Paul did not become like other men in their sinful pursuits, but he cultivated that spirit by which he was enabled to suit himself to the people among whom he moved. He did not needlessly offend prejudice. 1. In order to benefit men, the believer should be courteous, gentlemanly, polite, in his intercourse with men. Some think that their Christianity gives them a right to set all social distinctions at defiance, and by way of asserting their equality to all they treat all with contempt. Under pretence of being faithful, and of asserting their brotherhood, they are only impertinent; while, again, there are those in the wealthier circles who cannot endure the poorer, and treat them with disdain. Now, all that conduct is utterly inconsistent with Christian principle. 2. But in taking thought of the courtesy, do not forget the great end which as Christians you ought to have in view. You are in society to benefit it. But even in seeking that, you must be upon your guard

against repelling where you desire to attract. Do not drag religion into your talk so as to make it distasteful. Cultivate the art of incidental allusion, and if you make a transition in the conversation, make it naturally, so that your companions may not be jolted into silence. Find out what your friends are interested in, and, descending to their level, you will be able to lift them. A friend went one evening into the room where his son was taking lessons in singing, and found his tutor urging him to sound a certain note. Each time the lad made the attempt, however, he fell short, and the teacher kept on saying, "Higher! higher!" But it was all to no purpose, until, descending to the tone which the boy was sounding, the musician accompanied him with his own voice, and led him gradually up to that which he wanted him to sing, and then he sounded it with ease. So let us do in conversation with those whom we meet in society, and we may become very skilful in winning souls to Christ. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Christians one with the world and yet distinct from it:*—Nature never builds fences. The mountain slopes down to meet the valley, the day fades and darkens into night, the shore shelves off into the sea, but the exact point at which the one merges in the other is undetermined. Is there, then, no distinction between them? Is the daytime as the night because no eye can fix the instant when the gates unclose to let the morning through? Is the separation between land and sea unreal because between them lies a narrow strip over which they alternately hold sway? The Christian life must slope downward to meet the world and mingle with it. In business partnerships, in political interests, in social matters, in hundreds of affairs, the Christian and unchristian man must meet on neutral ground. Is the distinction between them therefore lost, even for an instant? Because they have great interests in common, because in many things they act alike, is the one in all essentials like the other? No more than the day is as the night. Narrow is the border-land on which the two men meet. As regards all the great realities the one is in the shadowy valley and the other on the sunlit heights; both touch the twilight's border-land, but one never passes over it into the day, nor the other beyond it into the night.

Ver. 16. **They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.**—*The unworldliness of Christ:*—This does not mean—1. That He cared nothing for the world. There are men so utterly selfish, and absorbed with their own concerns that in a sense they may be said to be "not of the world." They care nothing for it. But Christ was intensely interested in the men about Him. "He went about doing good." 2. That He did not appreciate the natural blessings of the world. There are austere souls who are "not of the world" in this sense: its innocent amusements they regard with a pietistic horror; they have a superstitious fear of eating and drinking lest they should give their body an advantage over their soul. But Christ came "eating and drinking." What is the world? It is—I. PRACTICALLY ATHEISTIC. It is "without God." Not theoretically, for the laws of the mind render Atheism as a conviction an impossibility. But practically men have been "without God" ever since the Fall. His presence is not acknowledged, nor His will consulted, practically, and were it assured to-day that no God existed, its life would remain unaltered. Christ was intensely theistic. The Father filled His own horizon, and was never out of His mind. The moment the soul feels God to be in the world, the world assumes a new form. II. PRACTICALLY MATERIALISTIC. Men ever since the Fall "judge," "walk," "live" after the flesh. Christ was intensely spiritual. Men are carnally minded. 1. Their pleasures are material. "What shall we eat, what shall we drink?" Christ's pleasures were spiritual, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." 2. Their honours are material. The highest honour is an earthly crown; the highest victories those of the sword. Christ's kingdom was not of this world. He did not war after the flesh; His empire was Spirit; His weapons truth; His legions saints and angels. III. PRACTICALLY SELFISH. Every man seeks His own. There are as many interests in the world as men; hence the collisions, domestic, social, ecclesiastical, natural. Christ was love, and pleased not Himself. Conclusion: The subject furnishes—1. A test of genuine Christianity. A true Christian is like Christ. 2. A guide to man's grand interest—which is to get out of the moral spirit of the world, which is the Babylon of the soul. "Arise ye, and depart," &c. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The unworldliness of a Christian life:*—This text teaches us—I. THAT CHRIST IS NOT OF THE WORLD. 1. Christ came down from a higher world into this. He was not the product of the age in which He lived. Some say that He was. (1) Now it is no doubt true that every age has men who are very much like their contemporaries, but endowed with a larger nature and a

better gift of utterance, so that they can express better than anybody what everybody thinks and feels. When they speak, you say "How clever! That's just what I've thought all my life long, but never could express it." The representative men of an age are always popular. People are charmed to hear that which chimes in so well with their own sentiments. Representative men make a great noise in their own time, but the echoes wax feebler and feebler, and at length die out. (2) Was Christ simply the representative man of His age? What was that age? A period of decay. In Judæa there was no political and very little religious life. The Jews paid tribute to the Romans. The Pharisees had long since degenerated. The Sadducees had sunk into practical scepticism. In place of the "open vision" of prophecy there were tradition and the authority of doctors. The Messianic ideas were not what we might have expected from such a generation. What the nation really needed was the transfusion of new blood, the breathing of fresh life, what it looked for was a Messiah-king, who would transform it into a great and victorious nation. Was Christ the representative man of that age? There is no theory further from the truth. (*a*) Christ was full of fresh life, whilst the age was dead. (*b*) Christ was spiritual, whilst the age was formal. (*c*) In a time in which "the oracles were dumb," Christ spoke forth that which men felt to be the word of God. (*d*) In an age of artificiality, He was real. If Christ had been the creation of His age, He would have perished with it. Christ was crucified by the Jews, because He did not answer their expectation of a political Messiah. 2. If all this is true, we might naturally expect that Christ would be unworldly. Anything which puts a man before his time tends to make him so, because it withdraws him from the influences which are at work around him into a higher sphere. I understand by a worldly man, one who does not seek to raise the standard of his generation, but who conforms to it. The worldly standard differs in different ages. In the last century it was favourable to dnelling and drinking. In the present day, it is against all outward breaches of decorum, but it is strongly in favour of the worship of wealth and outward success. The worldly spirit is the utter antipodes of the spirit of Christ. All Christ's teaching was unworldly. He praised the very virtues which worldly men do not praise. He did not look upon either things, or men, or women, or cities as the worldly man looks upon them. He did not regard the distinctions of society, but looked below them all. II. THAT CHRIST'S DISCIPLES ARE NOT OF THE WORLD. 1. It has not been always expected that disciples should have the same disposition or lead the same life as their Teacher. It has been enough if they received His system. But no adherence to a system will make us disciples of Christ. "If we have not the spirit of Christ, we are none of His." Not that a disciple is perfectly like Christ: he may be very imperfect, as were the first disciples. A disciple is a learner, and you do not expect a learner to be perfect. But in the very act of entering Christ's school His disciples turn their backs upon the world and deny themselves its vanities. Hence Christ said, "If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Me." 2. If you will be Christ's disciples—(1) You must have a high standard; you must not be content with that of people around you. (2) You will love not the artificialities of the world, but that which is simple and natural. (3) You will not be carried away by the bustle of business or the flutter of gaiety, you will have your thoughts raised to the city of God. (4) You will not be mere cyphers in the world's great sum; you will feel always the worth of your own individual soul. 3. The history of the struggle between the Christian life and the spirit of the world may be divided into two periods. (1) During the first three centuries Christianity had to struggle with the brute force of the world, as embodied in the Roman Empire. Imperialism was not merely a political thing, it was also a religion. The Emperor was worshipped. The Christians never objected to fulfil any duty binding on them as citizens; but they would not worship brute force. And he who admires force more than goodness, who sticks to legal right in preference to moral right, is no true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. (2) The main struggle since then has been with the corruptions of the world. The history of those corruptions may be divided into three periods. (*a*) The world corrupted the Church with heathenism. All the true Christian life in the Middle Ages had to struggle up towards the light shining through any loop-holes which there might be in that dense system of superstition. (*b*) The world corrupted the Church with her vices. Superstition, in the long run, leads to vice. All the institutions of the Church gradually degenerated till indulgences became a regular source of income to the Pope. It was these indulgences which roused the spirit of Luther, and led to his crusade against the Papacy. (*c*) The world has in our day

corrupted the Church with her indifference. There never was an age in which there was more organization for doing good, but the life to animate it is wanting. III. THAT THOUGH THE CHRISTIAN IS TO BE UNWORLDLY, HE IS NOT TO SEPARATE HIMSELF (ver. 16). We are not to desire to be taken out of—1. The world of nature. It is a beautiful world. It is full of emblems of that which is spiritual and Divine. Talk about it being a "waste howling wilderness," it is our souls which are wildernesses. 2. The world of humanity. Our Lord did not estrange Himself from this world. He ate and drank with publicans and sinners. Is He not our example? While saying this, I do not forget that there is such a virtue as Christian prudence. Some are spiritually strong, others weak. But the Church cannot influence humanity, if she estranges herself from it. We ought not to frown on any pure human joys. We need not pull long faces, or wear a peculiar garb. The true Christian, like his Lord, loves to see the fully developed man in his prime of manhood; the woman with her womanly beauty; the child with its fresh grace and innocent ways. 3. The little world in which we are cast in the order of God's Providence. It is better for us not to desire to go out of that but rather to shape it after "the patterns in the heavens." IV. THAT WE ARE TO PRAY GOD TO KEEP US FROM THE EVIL IN THE WORLD (vers. 16). I have been speaking about the bright side of things, but these words remind us that there is a dark side. There is a dark side both to nature and humanity. There are volcanoes, earthquakes, inundations. There has been perpetual struggle and competition. There are disease and death. Sin has been the great curse of the world—the curse of all our lives. But there is One who came down from a higher world, in order to redeem us from captivity to evil. Through His grace many millions have walked through this world's miry ways, and have kept their souls unstained. There were great differences of race, age, temperament, belief among them; but there was one thing in which they were all alike—they all had unwordly, simple, childlike hearts. (*R. Abercrombie, M.A.*) *Worldliness described*:—Worldliness is the spirit of childhood carried into manhood. The child lives in the present hour: to-day to him is everything. The holiday promised at a distant interval is no holiday at all: it must be either now or never. Natural in the child, and therefore pardonable, this spirit, when carried on into manhood, of course is worldliness. The most distinct illustration given us of this is the case of Esau. Esau came from the hunting-field worn and hungry: the only means of procuring the tempting mess of his brother's pottage was the sacrifice of his father's blessing, which, in those ages, carried with it a substantial advantage. But that birthright could be enjoyed only after years; the pottage was present, near and certain: therefore he sacrificed a future and higher blessing for a present and lower pleasure. For this reason, Esau is the Bible type of worldliness: he is called in Scripture a profane, that is, not distinctly a vicious, but a secular or worldly person—an overgrown child, impetuous, inconsistent; not without gleams of generosity and kindliness, but over-accustomed to immediate gratification. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Attractions of worldliness*:—Nearly all can recall that favourite fiction of their childhood, the voyage of Sindbad the sailor into the Indian Sea. They will remember that magnetic rock that rose from the surface of the placid waters. Silently Sindbad's vessel was attracted towards it; silently the bolts were drawn out of the ship's side, one by one, through the subtle attraction of that magnetic rock. And when the fated vessel drew so near that every bolt and clamp was unloosed, the whole structure of bulwark, mast, and spars tumbled into ruin on the sea, and the sleeping sailors awoke to their drowning agonies. So stands the magnetic rock of worldliness athwart the Christian's path. Its attraction is subtle, silent, slow, but fearfully powerful on every soul that floats within its range. Under its enchanting spell bolt after bolt of good resolution, clamp after clamp of Christian obligation, are stealthily drawn out. What matters it how long or how fair has been the man's profession of religion, or how flauntingly the flag of his orthodoxy floats from the masthead? Let sudden temptation smite the unbolted professor, and in an hour he is a wreck. He cannot hold together in a tempest of trial, he cannot go out on any cruise of Christian service, because he is no longer held together by a Divine principle within. It has been drawn out of him by that mighty loadstone of attraction, a sinful, godless, self-pampering, Christ-rejecting world. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *The danger of worldliness*:—In this verse Christ repeats the argument used in ver. 14. This repetition is not idle. The reason may be conceived either with respect to the disciples, for whom He prayed, and so it is to inculcate their duty; or with respect to God, the Person to whom He prayed, and so He urgeth their danger.

I. REPETITIONS OF THE SAME POINT ARE SOMETIMES NECESSARY (Phil. iii. 1). 1. They may be tedious to nature—(1) Out of an itch of novelty. Most men love truth while it is new and fresh; there is a satiety that groweth by acquaintedness; the Israelites grew weary of manna, though angels' food. (2) Out of the impatience of guilt; frequency of reproof and admonition is like the rubbing of a sore, grievous to a galled conscience (chap. xxi. 17). 2. But it is profitable to grace. (1) To cure weakness. (*a*) Our knowledge is little. Narrow-mouthed vessels take in liquor by drops, so do we Divine truths, and therefore you have need to hear the same things often, that your understandings may grow familiar with them (Isa. xxviii. 10). (*b*) Our attention is small. We do consider it when we understand it. Study findeth out a truth, meditation improveth it. (*c*) Our memories are weak. A man needeth no remembrancer to put him in mind of worldly gain, and to revenge injuries; but as to good things, our memories are as a bag with holes, or as a grate that retaineth the mud, and lets the running water go (Heb. ii. 1). (*d*) Our wills are slow and averse (2 Pet. i. 12, 13; 1 John ii. 21). (2) To help duties. (*a*) Meditation. The mind works freely upon such objects to which it is accustomed; in things rare and seldom heard of there is more need of study than meditation, to search them out. (*b*) Application. We hear to do and practise, not only to know. We do not hear to store the head with notions, but that the life and heart might be bettered. II. THE REASONS OF THIS REPETITION. 1. As regards their constitution and temper of mind. Christ repeats it again; and so learn that we need to be cautioned often and often against the world. (1) Because of our proneness to it. The love of the world is natural to us. (*a*) It is a part of original sin. It is hard for any to say they are not tempted to covetousness; it is their nature. (*b*) We are daily conversant about the things of the world; our affections receive taint from the objects with which we usually converse. (*c*) It is of a present enjoyment; we have the world in hand and heaven in hope, and think heaven a fancy and the world substance. (*d*) It is a sin applauded by men (Psa. x. 3). (*e*) It is a cloaked sin. It is hard to discover it and find it out, there are so many evasions of necessity and provision. It is a great part of religion to "keep ourselves unspotted from the world" (James i. 27). (2) Because of the heinousness and danger of it. It is called—(*a*) Adultery (James iv. 4). (*b*) Idolatry (Col. iii. 5; Eph. v. 5). (*c*) Enmity with God (James iv. 4). (3) Because of the unsuitableness of it to the Divine nature. (*a*) To the new nature (1 John v. 4). (*b*) To our hopes. God has provided heaven to draw us off from the world. (*c*) To the aim of Christ (Heb. xi. 16). (4) Let us then beware the more of worldliness. (*a*) Consider our condition—"strangers and pilgrims." (*b*) We are called to better things (1 Thess. ii. 11, 12). It is not for princes to embrace the dunghill. (*c*) Take the Apostle's argument (1 Tim. vi. 7). A man's wealth does not follow him, but his works do. In our birth we are contented with a little cradle, at death with a little grave. (*d*) Consider how hard it is to have Christ and heaven and the world (Matt. xvi. 26). (*e*) Thou art as thy love is. If thou lovest this world thou art worldly; if thou lovest God thou art godly. Take a glass, put it towards heaven, there you shall see the figure of heaven; put it towards the earth, and you see the figure of the earth, trees, meadows, fruits: thou receivest a figure from the objects to which thou appliest thy heart, earthly things or heavenly. (5) But you will say, Is it a fault to enjoy the world? No; but to have a worldly spirit. Be not of a worldly spirit—(*a*) When thou wantest the world. Be not over-careful; use the means God hath ordained, trust God with the issue and event of all (Luke xii. 22). (*b*) When thou hast the world. A godly man may be a rich man; but do not trust in riches, &c., for they are vain; nor delight in them, for they are snares; nor be proud of them, they do not make us better; we do not value a horse by the trappings, but by his spirit and courage. (*c*) Be not over-sorrowful when thou losest them. 2. As regards the outward condition of the disciples: "They are not of the world, *i.e.*, not respected by it, left out of the world's tale and count. (1) It is a hard thing to digest the world's neglect and disrespect. We had need be urged again and again; because every one would be somebody in the world. (*a*) Let them alone; look after better things (Psa. xvii. 14). (*b*) Remember by whose providence it falleth out. Many times God raises bad men to high places, not because they deserve it, but because the age deserves no better. (*c*) If you are favoured by God, why should you trouble yourselves about the world's respects? Thou hast the testimony of God's Spirit, and many now in hell have had much of the world's respects. Their disrespect cannot hurt thee; it may profit thee. (2) An excellent means to digest the world's neglect is to consider the example of Christ. (*a*) It is our duty. In His example we have a taste of His Spirit: "I am not of the

world," saith Christ; and we should "imitate Christ as dear children" (Eph. v. 1). 3. It will be your comfort. It is a sweet comfort in all conditions to remember the similitude of condition between Christ and us (Col. i. 24). 4. It will be for our profit. First suffer, then enter into glory; winter is before the spring (Rom. viii. 17). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Danger of absorption in worldly things*:—I once saw a picture of an artist sitting on a rock in the ocean, which had been left bare by the retreating tide. There he sat, sketching on his canvas the beautiful scenery around him, sky and wave and sea, all unconscious that the tide had turned, had cut him off from the shore, and was rapidly covering the rock on which he sat. The tempest, the waves, the rising sea were forgotten, so absorbed was he in his picture; nor did he hear his friends calling to him from the shore. (*W. Baxendale.*) *Distinguishing character of Christians*:—I. NEGATIVELY. The text does not imply—1. That they have no connection with the men of the world. Grace does not dissolve the union between man and man. (1) The righteous and the wicked may be nearly allied, as Abel and Cain, and the young Abijah to the wicked Jeroboam. (2) Much business may also be lawfully and even necessarily transacted between men of widely different characters (1 Cor. v. 10). 2. That they are to be wholly disengaged from the things of the world. They have their farms and their merchandise as well as others, and it is not requisite that under a pretence of religion they should sequester themselves from all secular concerns. They may be as much in their duty while in their worldly callings as in the closet. An idle Christian is no good character: for if we do not find ourselves some employment, Satan will. "Not slothful in business" (1 Cor. vii. 24; Acts xx. 34). 3. That even the best of men are entirely divested of a worldly spirit, though they are not of the world. Those whose affections are set on things above, and whose conversation is in heaven, have frequent occasion to say, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken Thou me accordingly to Thy word." After the fullest conviction of the emptiness and vanity of creatures, we shall still find our hearts strongly attracted by them. II. POSITIVELY. 1. They are in a considerable degree mortified to the things of this life, so as not to have "the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God." They are in the world, but not of it: it is their residence, but not their portion. Real Christians are neither terrified by the frowns nor allured by the smiles of the world. The possession of the good things of this life does not excite immoderate joy, nor the want of them occasion inordinate grief. The world, notwithstanding all his endeavours to drive it out, may occupy some corner of the Christian's heart, but the uppermost room and principal seat are reserved for his Lord and Master. His motto is, "In one Jesus I have all." 2. They possess different tempers and dispositions from the men of the world. "Old things are passed away, and all things become new." The bias of the soul receives another direction: it has a new taste, new appetites, and new enjoyments. Their treasure being in heaven, their hearts are there also. They "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The spirit of the world is hateful, sensual, discontented, overwhelming men with ignorance, guilt and misery; but the spirit which is of God is humble, teachable, contrite, benevolent and submissive, active in doing good, and patient in suffering. 3. They speak a different language from the rest of the world. It may be said to the Christian as it was said to Peter, "Thy speech betrayeth thee." And so it may be said of the opposite character: "He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth." The world is placed in their heart, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. But God's promise to His people is, that He will turn to them a pure language, so that they shall speak the truth without hypocrisy, address Him without formality, and talk of Divine things with holy freedom. Flattery will be as much avoided by them as detraction, and equivocation as a known lie. Their common discourse will be seasoned with salt, ministering grace unto the hearers; and they will be ready to give to every one a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear. The talk of a carnal man will be about the world through which he is passing: that of a good man about the world to which he is going. 4. They are neither influenced by the maxims of the world, nor do they imitate its customs. The real Christian is the world's nonconformist; not in an affected singularity of speech or dress, in the shape of his coat or form of his hat, but in the whole tenor of his life and conversation. 5. They do not take up their rest in this world. They are born from heaven, and are bound to heaven. Their language is, "Arise, let us depart hence: this is not our rest, because it is polluted." III. TO ILLUSTRATE THIS CHARACTER, CHRIST HAS GIVEN US HIS OWN (1 John iv. 17). Conclusion: From this

view of the subject we may learn—1. What judgment we are to form of those about us. 2. What is duty with respect to ourselves. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *The character of Christ's people* :—We shall take our text and look at it. I. DOCTRINALLY. It is not so much that they are not of the world, as that they are "not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world." This is an important distinction, for there are people who are not of the world, and yet they are not Christians. Amongst these I would mention sentimentalists. Their spirits are so refined, that they cannot attend to ordinary business. They live in the air of romance; would like continually to live in a cottage near a wood, or to inhabit some quiet cave, where they could read "Zimmerman on Solitude" for ever. I heard of one young lady, who thought herself so spiritually-minded that she could not work. A wise minister said to her, "That is quite amusing! very well, you are so spiritually-minded that you shall not eat unless you do." These people are "not of the world," truly; but the world does not want them, and the world would not miss them much, if they were gone. There are others, too, so like monks, who are not of the world. They are so awfully good, that they cannot live with us sinful creatures; or if they condescend to do so, they must be distinguished from us in many ways. They could not be expected to wear worldly coats and waistcoats. They must wear nondescript dresses, that none may confound them with ordinary men. We have also in our Protestant Churches certain men who think themselves so eminently sanctified that it would be wrong to indulge in anything like sensible pronunciation. Such persons are, however, reminded, that it is not being "not of the world," so much as being "not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world." 1. Christ was not of the world in nature. (1) In one point of view His nature was Divine; and as Divine, it was perfect and spotless, and therefore He could not descend to things of earthliness. In another sense He was human; and His human nature was begotten of the Holy Ghost, and therefore was so pure that in it rested nothing that was worldly. We are are all born with worldliness in our hearts. But Christ was not so. His nature was essentially different from that of every one else, although He sat down and talked with men. He stood side by side with a Pharisee; but every one could see He was not of his world. He sat by a Samaritan woman, but who fails to see that He was not of her world? He ate with Publicans and sinners; but you could see that He was not of their world. Nay, not even John, though he partook very much of his Lord's spirit, was exactly of Christ's world: for even he said, "Let us call down fire from heaven," &c. (2) In some sense, the Christian is not of the world in nature. Many persons think that the difference between a Christian and a worldling is, that one goes to chapel another does not; one of them takes the sacrament, the other does not, &c. But, that does not make a Christian. The distinction is internal. A Christian is a twice-born man; in his veins runs the blood of the royal family of the universe. 2. In office—(1) Christ's office had nothing to do with worldly things. To Him it might be said, "Art Thou a king, then?" Yes, but My kingdom is not of this world. "Art Thou a priest?" Yes; but My priesthood is not one which shall be discontinued, as that of others has been. "Art Thou a teacher?" Yes; but My doctrine cometh down from heaven. He had no aim which was in the least carnal. He did not seek applause, His own fame, His own honour. (2) Believer! what is thy office? Thou art a king and priest unto God, &c. Whether yours be the office of minister, or deacon, or church member, ye are not of this world. 3. In character. Look at Jesus' character; how different from every other man's—pure, perfect, spotless, even such should be the life of the believer. II. EXPERIMENTALLY. Every Christian will feel that he is not of the world. 1. When he gets into very deep trouble. You have had at times deep sorrows. Did you break under them? If you did, methinks you are no Christian; but if there was a rising up, it was a testing moment, and it proved that you were "not of the world," because you could master affliction. 2. When he is prosperous. Some of God's people have been more tried by prosperity than by adversity. Do you feel that these comforts are nothing but the leaves of the tree, and not the fruit, and that you can not live upon mere leaves? Or do you say, "Now, soul, take thine ease," &c. 3. When he is in solitude and in company. III. PRACTICALLY. 1. Thou who art of the world, whose maxims, habits, feelings, are worldly, listen to this. It is God's solemn truth. Thou art none of His. With all your profession thou art "in the gall of bitterness." 2. You who are children of God. Have we not often been too much like the world? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Unworldliness* :—In the 14th verse this separation of the disciples from the world is assigned

as the reason of the world's hatred to them; and here it is made the reason for special intercession on their behalf. There can be no difficulty in understanding what is meant by "the world," though the phrase is used with considerable latitude of signification in the Scriptures. But here the meaning is unquestionably moral and spiritual, and the expression marks off all other than godly people. Now, it is of considerable importance that we should know how we are to understand this statement—what precisely is its significance. I. NEGATIVELY. 1. Well-meaning, though certainly not over-wise, people there are, who seem to think their godliness calls for harsh views and depreciating language concerning the earth on which God has placed us. It is the proper thing with them, and evidences their other-worldliness, to regard this world as a place which by its wretchedness serves chiefly as a foil to the better land above. It is a sort of dark background, bringing the other world into relief. It is to them a "desert," a "vale of tears," a "waste, howling wilderness." Such a state of mind, where it is not the result of ignorance, tells at once of unhealthiness and perversion. Such people appear to forget that it is God's world of which they thus speak, made by Him to be the fitting abode of men. 2. Nor must we look for this unworldliness in a lack of interest in the world's affairs—in its government, for instance. If politics have reproach attached to them, no little of the blame lies at the door of those who could have done better, but have culpably stood aloof and allowed so vast a power and so solemn a trust to fall into unscrupulous hands. No man can deal thus with divinely-entrusted responsibilities and be blameless. The proper government of our country, the just settlement of national and international questions, profoundly concerns us all, and each has a responsibility here of which he cannot divest himself. 3. Neither, again, must we look for this unworldliness along the line of abstention from all the social pleasures and amenities of life. For that means a strained and unnatural kind of piety, and there was nothing forced about the life of Jesus, who is our Exemplar here as elsewhere. He was no ascetic. We must seek elsewhere than in such particulars for the lines of demarcation. Where are those lines, then? II. POSITIVELY. 1. Christians form, and were by our Lord intended to form, a community distinct and separate from the world. All through the Scriptures this idea of separatedness runs. The Jews were in the most literal and extreme sense a people set apart. By geographical limits, by mode of government, by peculiarity of laws and customs, as well as by religion, they were marked off from all other nations. Christians are in the truest and highest sense a separated people. Jesus set up His Church in the world with the intention that all who avowed themselves His disciples should form part of an organized community. This is the body of which He is the Head; the household of which He is the Master. 2. But especially are we to look for this unworldliness of Christians in their spirit and in their principles of action. This is the great dividing line. The spirit of the world is distinctly and essentially irreligious; there is no right apprehension or estimate of spiritual things; godless maxims, and fashions, and laws rule—that is the nature of a worldly spirit. The Spirit of Christ is just the opposite. And it is along the line of spirituality of character and conduct that our unworldliness as disciples of Jesus is to be manifested. But now, lest the practical significance of this should be overlooked, note a few details in which this spirit will show itself. (1) In our associations and friendships. Like is drawn to like. The voluntary companionship follows the personal preference. "This people shall be My people" follows upon "their God shall be my God." Let young disciples beware how they affect worldly society, and ever seek their friendships among those who love God. This for two reasons: (*a*) For their own safety; (*b*) as a visible declaration of the side on which they are. (2) Our recreations. There are amusements which, by association, by inevitable tendency, and by common consent, are worldly. They lie, by general admission, within territory forbidden to Christians; and in such cases, all the special pleading in the world about their being innocent in themselves can have no weight with those who would act worthily and wisely. Remember, we cannot afford, as disciples of Jesus, to see how near the line we can go without overstepping it. 3. Our Home and Business-Life. In the former, in such matters as (1) the education of our children; the character of the schools and teachers we select for them; (2) the choice of their calling in life; (3) their marriage; many parents have sown the wind here and reaped the whirlwind. In the business-life our unworldliness will be seen in the high principles that govern us. Gain will not be our only or chief consideration. We shall show that we can afford to be poor, but cannot afford to have a stained conscience. CONCLUSION. 1. If such be our character, let us not be surprised if we are

misunderstood by the world. It was so with Jesus. 2. Expect to be hindered by the world in your religious life. It has no sympathy with your views, and oft deems your piety fanaticism, and your religious scruples a nuisance. 3. Do not be afraid of a needful singularity. Avoid needless difference, but have the courage of your convictions. 4. Guard against the subtle encroachments of a worldly spirit. The friendship of the world is enmity with God. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 5. Walk prudently to them that are without. Take care less by a worldly conduct you give the lie to an unworlldy profession. 6. Do not forget we have a mission to the world. "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." 7. Keep your final home in view. Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour. (*R. M. Spoor.*)

Ver. 17. **Sanctify them through Thy truth.** *The sanctification of the saint's:*—I. AN OBJECT DEAR TO CHRIST. 1. He prayed for this on earth. Prayer is always the sign of earnest desire for another's good: how earnest, then, must have been that desire which could bid back the onrush of sorrow from Gethsemane, &c. 2. He died for this upon the cross (ver. 19). Christ died for something more than the erasure of the penalty due to man from heaven's statute book. Christ had His eye on men's recovery to purity and truth, and their entire consecration to God (Gal. i. 4; Eph. v. 26; Tit. ii. 14). 3. He pleads for it in heaven (Heb. vii. 25). II. A GIFT SOUGHT FROM THE FATHER. 1. The reason of this—(1) Every good and perfect gift is from Him (James i. 17). (2) The work of making holy belongs essentially to the realm of the supernatural (Exod. xxxi. 13; Levit. xxi. 23; Ezek. xxxvii. 28; Zech. iv. 6; Acts xx. 32; Jude 1). (3) The grace of purity God distinctly desires to see reproduced in man (1 Thess. iv. 3). (4) The gift of holiness He has expressly included in the promise (Isa. i. 25; Jer. xxxi. 33; Hos. xiv. 5; Zech. x. 12). 2. The comfort of this. If God be the Author and Giver of sanctification, then it must be—(1) Freely given (James i. 5). (2) Faithfully pursued (1 Thess. v. 24). (3) Successfully accomplished (Phil. i. 6). III. A WORK EFFECTED IN THE TRUTH. 1. The knowledge of it. Hence growth in grace keeps pace with growth in the knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. iii. 18), and that knowledge identified with eternal life (ver. 2). 2. The belief of it. Sanctification and belief of the truth are at least co ordinate if the former does not spring from the latter (2 Thess. ii. 13), since the word of God effectually works in them who believe (1 Thess. ii. 13). 3. The love of it. Before truth can exercise its rightful sway over the life, it must be enshrined in the affections. Hence love of truth is essential to salvation (Psa. cxix. 47), and the absence of it the cause of judgment in them that perish (2 Thess. ii. 10). 4. The obedience of it (1 Pet. i. 22; Rom. vi. 17). The new life of grace ever moves in the sphere of truth. IV. A QUALIFICATION REQUISITE FOR CHRISTIAN WORK (vers. 18, 19). As Christ had a mission, so have His saints. 1. Resting on a similar authority, as the Father sent Christ, so Christ sent His apostles (chap. xx. 21; Matt. x. 16), and His followers now (Matt. v. 16, xxviii. 18; Phil. ii. 15). 2. Possessing a similar object. As Christ's mission aimed at the world's salvation, so does theirs. As Christ revealed the Father's name, so under Him they are to bear Christ's name (and in that the Father's) unto the world (Acts ix. 15; 2 Cor. iii. 3). 3. Demanding a similar consecration. As Christ was sanctified by the Father and sent into the world (Psa. xl. 6–8; Heb. x. 5–7), so can Christ's servants only discharge their mission in proportion as they are consecrated to the will of their Leader. Lessons: 1. Is sanctification a matter of interest to us? 2. Are we asking God to begin, carry on, and complete it? 3. Are we bringing our souls into close and frequent contact with the truth? 4. Are we remembering the mission for which we are sanctified? (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The sanctification of the disciples:*—I. THE FORCE OF THIS PRAYER. Sanctification in its simplest meaning is the setting apart of a person or a thing from a common to a holy use. In relation to men it is the weaning from self, sense, and sin, and the devotion of head, heart, and hands to the service and glory of God. The blessing asked for involved—1. Moral transformation. There were elements of evil in their nature to be rooted up, principles of pride to be overthrown, prejudices to be subdued, and selfishness to be destroyed. The economy in which they had been trained dealt with sanctification in an outward sense; but Christ turned their thoughts from such symbolic consecration to the sanctification of their thoughts, desires, and affections. This work was already begun in them—the expressions used by our Lord regarding them inform us of this fact—but they were not completely sanctified. 2. Official consecration. They were to be chosen vessels, meet for the Master's use. The official consecration rests upon the moral, and this is

secured through the truth of God. Mere ecclesiastical ordination is valueless, where it is not based on personal holiness, and where it is not preceded and accompanied by a spiritual consecration to the service of Christ in the gospel. II. THE MEANS OF THIS BLESSING. "Through Thy truth." We are not to understand that God's dealings in providence have not a sanctifying influence (Heb. xii. 6). David, and many after him, could say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." Yet it is only as the strokes of affliction make the truth more impressive, that they exercise a sanctifying power. Mere trouble has no natural tendency to purify. It simply puts men into a position suitable for thought and reflection, so that the living word of God is brought more fully to bear on the soul. The truth of God sanctifies—1. By the discoveries which it makes. Light is ever pure and purifying. Where there is ignorance of God and Divine things, there can be no true purity of heart. God's Word. It reveals God's grace (2 Cor. iv. 6), our fallen and ruined condition, and brings life and immortality to light. Converse with these truths must tend to weaken the power of sin, and withdraw the heart from the dominion of the world. 2. By the motives which it conveys. There is not a motive which can touch the human heart, whether of love, gratitude, or holy desire, that is not conveyed in the truth of God, and brought to bear on men through the doctrine of the Cross. 3. By the authority it exercises. To the Christian all duty may be summed up in the one grand duty of imitating Christ and walking in Him. The gospel comes to us with the tender gentleness and majestic persuasiveness of infinite love, and says, "Be ye followers of God as dear children." 4. By the prospects it unfolds (1 John iii. 3). (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Our Lords prayer for His people's sanctification*:—I. WHAT HE ASKED. "Sanctify them." By this He means—1. Dedicate them to Thy service. Such must be the meaning of the word when we read, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself." In the Lord's case it cannot mean purification from sin, but consecration to the fulfilment of the Divine purpose. "Lo, I come to do Thy will." Under Jewish law the tribe of Levi was ordained to the service of the Lord, instead of the firstborn (Numb. viii. 17). Out of the tribe of Levi one family, Aaron and his sons, were sanctified to the priesthood (Lev. viii. 30). A certain tent was sanctified to the service of God, and hence it became a sanctuary; and the vessels that were therein, the fire, bread, oil, animals, were all sanctified (Numb. vii. 1). None of these things could be used for any other purpose than the service of Jehovah. We are not the world's, else might we be ambitious; we are not Satan's, else might we be covetous; we are not our own, else might we be selfish. We are bought with a price, and hence we are His by whom the price is paid. 2. Those who belonged to God were separated from others. There was a special service for the setting-apart of priests, dedicated places and vessels. The Sabbath-day, which the Lord hath sanctified, is set apart from the rest of time. The Lord would have those who are dedicated to Him to be separated from the rest of mankind. For this purpose He brought Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, and Israel out of Egypt. The Lord saith of His chosen, "This people have I formed for Myself." Before long this secret purpose is followed by the open call, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," &c. The Church of Christ is to be a chaste virgin, wholly set apart for the Lord Christ: His own words concerning His people are these, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Those who are sanctified in this sense have ceased to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers; they have ceased to run with the multitude to do evil; they are not conformed to this present evil world. There are some, in these apostate days, who think that the Church cannot do better than to come down to the world to acquire her "culture," and conquer the world by conformity to it. This is contrary to Scripture. The more distinct the line between him that feareth God and him that feareth Him not, the better all round. It will be a black day when the sun itself is turned into darkness. When the salt has lost its savour the world will rot with a vengeance. 3. This word means also the making of the people of God holy. Holiness is more than purity. It is not sufficient to be negatively clean; we need to be adorned with all the virtues. If ye be merely moral, how does your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees? We ought to reach unto a life and a kingdom of which the mass of mankind know nothing, and care less. This prayer of our Lord is most necessary, for "Without holiness"—(1) No man shall see the Lord. (2) We shall be unfit for service. (3) We cannot enjoy the innermost sweets of our holy faith. II. FOR WHOM HE ASKS IT. Not for the world outside. This would not be a suitable prayer for those who are dead in sin. Our Lord referred to the company who were already saved. 1. These chosen ones were

sanctified, but only to a degree. Justification is perfect the moment it is received; but sanctification is a matter of growth. 2. They were to be the preachers and teachers of their own and succeeding generations. How shall a holy God send out unholy messengers? An unsanctified minister is an unsent minister. Only in proportion as you are sanctified can you hope for the power of the Holy Spirit to work with you, so as to bring others to the Saviour's feet. A whole host may be defeated because of one Achan in the camp; and this is our constant fear. 3. Furthermore, our Lord was about to pray "that they all might be one;" and for this holiness is needed. Why are we not one? Sin is the great dividing element. 4. Moreover, our Lord finished His prayer by a petition that we might all be with Him, that we may behold His glory. Full sanctification is essential to this. Shall the unsanctified dwell with Christ in heaven? Shall unholy eyes behold His glory? III. OF WHOM HE ASKS IT. 1. Our Saviour calls God "Holy Father," and it is the part of the holy God to create holiness; while a holy Father can only be the Father of holy children, for like begets like. This santification is a work of God from its earliest stage. 2. The truth alone will not sanctify a man. We may maintain an orthodox creed, and it is highly important that we should, but if it does not touch our heart and influence our character, what is the value of our orthodoxy? 3. Every work of the Spirit of God upon the new nature aims at our sanctification. Yea, all the events of Providence around us work towards that one end; for this our joys and our sorrows are sacred medicines by which we are cured of the disease of nature, and prepared for the enjoyment of perfect spiritual health. All that befalls us on our road to heaven is meant to fit us for our journey's end. IV. HOW SANCTIFICATION IS TO BE WROUGHT IN BELIEVERS. Observe how God has joined holiness and truth together. There has been a tendency of late to divide truth of doctrine from truth of precept. Men say that Christianity is a life and not a creed: this is only a part truth. Christianity is a life which grows out of truth. No holy life will be produced in us by the belief of falsehood. Good works are the fruit of true faith, and true faith is a sincere belief of the truth. But what is the truth? Is the truth that which I imagine to be revealed to me by some private communication —by voices, dreams, and impressions? No; God's word to us is in Holy Scripture. All the truth that sanctifies men is in God's Word. This being so, the truth which it is needful for us to receive is evidently fixed. You cannot change Holy Scripture. Learn, then—1. How earnestly you ought to search the Scriptures. 2. The one point of failure to be most deeply regretted would be a failure in the holiness of our Church members. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christian sanctification*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. The original meaning of the word is to set apart to God; and this is its ordinary meaning in the Old Testament. We mean by it to make holy, its frequent meaning in the New. So, then, sanctification may describe either the purpose or the process of the Christian life. 2. It is easy to see how the first meaning passes naturally and necessarily into the other. Perfect consecration would be absolute holiness. (1) There is no native holiness in man or angel apart from conformity to God and obedience to His will. God alone is holy in and of Himself; the source of our sanctity, like the spring of our life, is in Him. (2) On the other hand, consecration is the sinner's way to holiness. God claims our devotion, and our transgressions, do not relax our obligation to be His. Nor must a sense of our unworthiness hinder our response. His purpose is by acceptance of the unworthy to make them worthy. Thus under the Old Testament things having no moral character become holy when given up to Him. The purpose of a man's life determines the character of that life. The temple sanctifieth the gold, and the altar the gift. God's service hallows the man who gives himself up to it. 3. It was to impress on His disciples the connection between consecration and sanctification that Christ spoke of sanctifying Himself. (1) In an important sense our sanctification can only be contrasted with His. At no part of His life was He holier than at another. He grew in wisdom, &c., but not in holiness. The child Jesus was as pure in spirit as the man; and His devotion as perfect in the Temple as on Calvary. (2) But in an equally important sense Christ's sanctification is the example and motive of ours. We may not be able to do as He did the Father's work, but in the measure in which we are devoted to God we may have His joy fulfilled in us. We may not be able to consecrate ourselves to God with an intelligence as clear and a purpose as single as was His; but we can be His with a loyalty and love like that with which the disciples followed Christ. And in the measure in which we do this will the energy and sanctity of Christ's life be reproduced in us. II. ITS MEANS. The truth of God. 1. The perfect devotion of Christ to the truth is our warrant for expecting sancti-

fication by it. It was His inspiration and joy, His safeguard against temptation, and His support in the agony of the Cross. What results may we not expect from that which called out such a passion and loyalty in the Saviour? If we could feel the truth as He felt it our lives would be like His. The sanctifying power of the truth explains His satisfaction that He has brought His disciples into some acquaintance with it. 2. It is far too narrow an interpretation to say that by "truth" He meant to contrast inward spiritual sanctification with the formal ceremonial sanctifications of the Jewish law. Ceremonialism is not the only unreality of which Christians are in danger. We need to be guarded against identifying sanctity with an exalted state of feeling, or supposing that its energy lies in our own resolves. There was no lack of elevated devotion and firm resolve in those who here were "ready to go with Him to prison and death," and we know the result. But the truth which Christ had imparted to them abode, the seed of a higher life, and the power of their recovery. Not self-contemplation nor self-culture is the way to holiness, but the contemplation of the living word of the gospel. 3. Holiness is conformity to the will of God, and that will is sure to become supreme over the character of Him who accepts it. Think of the educating power of truth. The man who studies historic truth becomes a historian, his mind being moulded into the historic type. The student of science becomes quick to apprehend natural causes and to trace the operation of natural law; so he who surrenders himself to the gospel will become a Christian man, his life being stamped with a Christian character, and owning the inspiration of God. It is not we who hold the truth, but the truth that holds us. 4. Consider, too, the confirmation of faith which every true believer is continually receiving in the practical experience of life. The scientist verifies his theories by experiment; if his theory is right, the experiment turns out as he expected. So with the statesman. We, too, who make the great venture of faith, find that Christ's promises are fulfilled. He tells us that by believing in Him we shall have remission; we believe and are saved. He says, "In the world ye sball have tribulation," &c. We believe, and the maxims of the world loose their hold upon us, its satisfactions lose their charm, and its fear dies away. The experience of the whole Church has endeared and confirmed the doctrine of Christian sanctification. III. ITS SPHERE —the world (ver. 18). 1. As antagonistic (vers. 11–14). 2. As the object of a mission. We are not here by sad mischance or inevitable accident. "As Thou hast sent Me," &c. The lessons of Christ's consecration have to be repeated in ours. The Church is His body, the direct channel through which the saving power of the gospel is to flow in upon the world. This mission helps to explain the largeness of Christ's promises and of the Church's privileges. We can never apprehend the meaning of the Christian calling when we contemplate simply the perfection of individual believers; we must ponder also the Divine influence we are to diffuse as "salt," "light," "cities on a hill." 3. As thus helpful in developing Christian character. (1) Antagonism is needed to build up a manly piety. Truths easily acquiesce in lose all the power of truth. We do not feel the energy of our faith save as we have to defend it. Where would be the room for the exercise of meekness, patience, self-sacrifice in a society when all was favourable to us? (2) Large acquaintance with the activities of life provide us with the means of spiritual advancement. Christian experience is but human experience interpreted and controlled by Christian faith. We must look the world in the face, as Christ did, aware of the struggle before us, but with an open heart of sympathy ready to catch the spirit and learn the lessons of the times. It is only as we do His work in the world that we shall be kept from the evil. Christian usefulness goes hand in hand with spiritual advancement. Growth in sanctification, like all growth, is not alone the development of force from within, but the appropriation of element from without. To this end "all things are ours." (*A. Mackennal, D.D.*) *Consecration* (Text and ver. 19):—I. THE SAVIOUR'S PURPOSE OF REDEMPTION. "For their sakes," &c. 1. Here you have the motive of Calvary and of all that Christ does—the production of spiritual character. Other motives there are and other results. In the Cross Christ shares and so ends the curse; destroys estrangement, and brings us nigh; gives the consolation of life and death; reveals God. But the main thing is here. We are not delivered from sin till we are enfranchised from its power. Forgiveness sets us at liberty for salvation. It is not where we are in this world or the next, but what we are, that is the main thing. 2. The style of character that Christ aims at reaching—consecration. Now hardly any one thinks of it. (1) The whole object of many is to become faultless, and they may pursue this end as

selfishly as any other, in order to reach complacency. But you gain but little if you merely destroy your faults. Many who plume themselves upon reaching the sinless state have but little to boast of, for their virtues are simply vices, tied like Samson's foxes, by the tail. (2) Not mere self-culture, to which others direct their energies, the development of the easier and pleasanter virtues, but self-surrender is what Christ wants, every faculty laid on the altar, the heart alert to serve its God. And what is this but the service of man? What you do to the least of mankind you do to the greatest God. Live for another and your life expands. The greatest of all achievements is when we give ourselves to God, not saying that anything we have is our own. 3. That they may be consecrate as He is consecrate. The word never had its full meaning till Christ used it here. It means all the stooping to Bethlehem; the spirit that accepted Calvary is what Christ calls consecration. There is no believer in man like Jesus. He expects us to have the same mind that was in Him. God's life is self-sacrifice; and in the degree in which we are lifted up into that life, that character marks our lives, and Christ's aim is fulfilled. But in the degree in which we are void of that, we are void of the essential element of the Christian life. II. THE INSTRUMENT THROUGH WHICH CHRIST EXPECTS THIS CHARACTER TO BE DEVELOPED—the truth. 1. None of you find fault with the word being put here, but you would not have put it here. We would have put "grace" or "Holy Spirit," some word indicating a dynamic energy changing the soul. But truth seems to so work through the mere intellect that it hardly occurs to us to look at it as the secret of consecration. The fact is we are indifferent to truth. Our more orthodox brethren think that we have got enough of it, and need not go on investigating; are rather afraid what the truth of science may bring out, and Biblical criticism constrain us to believe; shrink from its investigation lest something may turn out to be true that would not be helpful. And our broader brethren are equally satisfied with the mist on the face of things, not pursuing to definite conclusions the light with which God visits them. 2. Now Christ believes in truth very wonderfully. He utters the paradox that the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, because He guides into all truth. None but Christ would have said that. We think the Comforter is He who gives sweet illusions and hides naked realities. Nay, naked reality is consolation of the deepest kind. Here Christ is on the same line. Truth is the great sanctifier. There is no ray of truth that ever came from the Father of lights that does not hallow the heart on which it falls. It is not make believe that will give you sanctity. (1) The truth about God. Every attribute you behold engages your love, quickens your trust, makes you wish to serve Him. (2) The truth about Christ, His work, love, humanity, Godhead, intercession, &c., is all quickening. (3) The truth about man. Oh, if we could have it, and see man in God's light—something lovable in the worst, something saveable in the lowest—how it would take away our despair, engage our service, quicken our love. Every error of life springs from an error of thought. A lie is the root of all evil. III. THE POWER THAT IMPARTS THE SANCTIFYING IS GOD. Has not this been lost sight of? What we want is God in us. It might have been thought that Christ should have said, "That they may consecrate themselves." No, we can only get the hallowing truth from God. Who else can teach it? Not Biblical dictionaries or revival hymns. He who inspired the truth must Himself interpret it. (*R. Glover.*) *Sanctification through the truth*:—I. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SANCTIFICATION AND TRUTH. 1. In the Old Testament sanctification is usually, although not always, external; in the New it is pre-eminently internal. The supreme self-consecration of the will of Jesus on the cross fixes the idea of Christian sanctity. Of this sanctification the instrument is truth. By "truth" Christ means a body of facts having reference to God and the highest interests of men. The truth differs from opinion in that it does not admit of contradiction, and it also differs from large districts of knowledge in that it refers to a particular subject matter. In one sense all fact is God's truth. Facts of physiology, history, mathematics, are parts of that body of facts which are in harmony with and issue from the Master of this universe; and the conquest of any one truth on any matter has a moral value. But no man is sanctified by the study of the differential calculus, or the spots on the surface of the sun as such; and unless he brings to those studies a disposition to study the Author of the universe through the works of His hands the result will be purely intellectual. But this disposition will make all research sanctifying. 2. It is important to insist on this connection between truth and high moral improvement in view of the idea that morality is independent of religious doctrine, and that, consequently, what a man believes is of little

importance. But can morality be in the long run obeyed, unless some doctrine be revealed as to the origin and authority of the law? No doubt the truth of the moral teaching of the decalogue is attested by the necessities of social life; but this is because the author of revelation is the author of society. But if morality had to make its own way, would it hold its own by virtue of those necessities? Here and there you might, no doubt, have real excellence divorced, if not from any creed, at least from the true creed—as in a Seneca, an Antoninus, an Epictetus, but how would it fare with the people? Is it not, taking the average, the rule that a man's morality tallies with his creed? For what is moral excellence but good living, the proper government of the conduct, affections, and will? What is at the bottom of this? The sense of obligation? But obligation to what and to whom? This question cannot be answered in the same way by a man who does, and by a man who does not, accept the faith of Christ. A man who believes in a philosophy which makes man his own centre will have a different idea of morality from the man whose centre is God. The two, *e.g.*, will conceive quite differently of such a virtue as humility. In short, human beings are so constituted that their moral improvement is bound up with the convictions they entertain respecting God and their origin and destiny. II. How THE TRUTH SANCTIFIES. 1. By putting before us an ideal of sanctity. The man of action, like the artist, needs an ideal. Outside of revelation there have been such ideals, but they have been vague and varying, and have failed to supply the demands of even the natural conscience. But in Christ we possess a perfect ideal of sanctity; and by giving the record of one life spotless and consecrated the truth affects thousands for good in degrees which fall short of sanctification; and it sanctifies those who, with their eyes fixed on this typical form of excellence, ask earnestly for the Holy Spirit, whose work it is to take of the things of Jesus, and to show or give them to His own. 2. By stimulating hope. It gives every man a future. Where there is no such hope sanctity is impossible. A certain amount of high moral culture is possible, from a perception of the importance of certain virtues. But sanctity implies concentration of purpose, and this is impossible without a distinct goal and a reasonable prospect of attaining it. It may be argued that it is a nobler thing to cultivate virtue for its own sake; but the reward of goodness is not something distinct from goodness. In obeying moral truth in the form of duty we are obeying moral truth; in the personal form we name God. "I will be thy exceeding great reward." Spiritual work is its own pay, and the eternal reward is but the anticipation of the satisfaction which arises in doing it. But granting all this, He who made us knows that in our weaker moments we need that leverage of hope which His revelation supplies. The horizon of time is too narrow to supply any adequate object. "If in this life only we have Christ," &c. But let a man be "begotten unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus," and he has with him a motive power which will make him at least desire to be holy. "Every man that has this hope in him," &c. 3. As being a revelation of the love of God. Love has a power of making men holy. Hence the power loving men and women have over the depraved. Now revelation is the unfolding of Divine love, and the measure of that love is the death of Christ. A revelation of justice may produce despair, but a revelation of love which respects justice takes the heart captive. "Sanctify" is the response which the heart makes to unmerited mercy. Conclusion: 1. This connection between the truth and sanctification is not a theory, but the experience of every Christian in some degree. 2. If we know anything of the sanctifying power of truth we should desire that others may know it too. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Sanctification through the truth*:—Here is—I. A COMMENDATION OF THE WORD OF GOD. If we could suppose a man saying, "It is not God's word! It is not the truth!" we have an answer in the words of Christ: He declares it to be the truth of God; and we may safely suppose that "if it were not so, He would have told us." But the Scriptures are—1. Professedly the truth. We might here direct our attention to the whole of the Scriptures; and remark on the unity of design kept up by so many men writing in different ages, and without the possibility of concerting their plans. We might appeal to the predictions, and their fulfilment—to the promises, and their accomplishment—to the various miracles wrought, by which nature was called in to attest its truth. People may say that there are difficulties in the way of the Christian faith; but there are a thousand times more difficulties in the way of not believing. From all this we might say, without looking at its internal evidence, its moral effects, "Thy Word is truth." 2. Perfectly the truth. (1) Its doctrines are perfectly adapted to man, and to the whole of man—to all his circumstances, to all his obligations. They en-

lighten his understanding, form his judgment, and enrich his heart. Here is pardon for his guilt—righteousness for his unworthiness—purity for his depravity—strength for his weakness. (2) It has in it a perfect adaptation to the whole state of man: it attends him through life; it visits him in death; it accompanies him to the grave; it furnishes him with glorious anticipations; it goes with him to the bar of God, and into the eternal world. 3. The most important truth. Other things are true; a person who reads of the heavenly bodies or studies natural philosophy and what is made known may be all true. But all these are truths of an inferior description. The Scriptures place us in immediate contact with God and all that relates to time and to eternity. 4. Independent, majestic, all commanding truth: that is, truth connected with a kingdom which is "not of this world," which reduces men to a level with each other, with which man has no interference. It comes from God; it contains not the sentiments of Moses, of the prophets, &c.—it is the Word of God. 5. The only truth. Men may question its truth and excellency, but none have ever attempted to bring the Koran or the Shasters and place by its side! No; it is like Aaron's rod, and will swallow up all their enchantments. No; they who would deprive us of this truth would leave us without any communication from God! II. THE IMPLICATION WHICH THE TEXT CONTAINS. An agency is implied here—without which the means would be vain. This agency is spoken of in the preceding chapter as "the Spirit of truth." He is so—1. On account of His inspiration of the truth. "Prophecy came not in old time," &c. 2. As He carries on His general operations by revelation. We have been acquainted with man in all the various stages of civilization, but we have never seen anything like sanctification where there is no revelation. Some persons, when they speak of missions, are very apt to say, "Oh, when the Lord's time to evangelize the nations is come, He can do it!" Yes; and He will do it by His own means—by His Word of truth. 3. On account of the Holy Scriptures being the standard by which He works. He does not lead into fancies and conjectures; but brings us to this standard, that we may judge whether what we have received is the truth or not. Many suppose that to depend on the Spirit's influence leads to wild and enthusiastic imaginations; but it is to the truth that He leads. III. THE END DESIGNED TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE MINISTRY OF THIS DIVINE WORD. Three ideas are conveyed. 1. Separation. It calls a man from his former purposes and pursuits. Man, by nature, is a violator of God's law; this is taught him with the greatest effect by the Word of God. "The Word of God is quick and powerful," &c. It leads him to exclaim, "What shall I do? Where shall I flee?" And then the Word says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." He comes out, asks for a place of safety, seeks provision for his soul, and through the Word finds repentance and remission of his sins. 2. Purity. Infidels in general have bowed respectfully to the purity of the Bible. It would be easy to prove that every part of this book—its doctrines, its promises, its precepts, have "Holiness to the Lord" written upon them. But I would rather show how the Word of God sanctifies. (1) By its realization. Whoever believes the Word of God, and participates of the truth as it is in Jesus, is brought into a new state. (2) By its associations. It brings the mind into contact with its God, and this cannot but purify. (3) By its teaching about sin and salvation. (4) By the end it sets before us—God's glory in this life, and heaven in the life to come. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself." 3. Designation. Christians are set apart—(1) To dignified and important characters. When God says to sinners, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate;" He says also, "I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters." (2) To most interesting services. To support the cause of truth; to live for the truth. (3) To particular trials. (4) To special and wonderful deliverances. (5) To immortality and eternal life. (*Isaiah Birt.*)

Sanctification through the truth:—I. THE NECESSITY OF SANCTIFICATION—inasmuch as—1. It forms part of salvation which is not merely deliverance from sin and its punishment, but deliverance from its power and dominion, to a resemblance of the Divine nature. 2. It is corresponding to the Divine character. There is no view of God more evident than that He is a God of holiness; that sin is that abominable thing which He hates. 3. God commands it. This is to be found in every part of the Divine record. 4. It evidences our faith and union to Christ. Faith without purity is vain. 5. It is for the advancement of God's glory and the interests of Christ's kingdom. It is not to be expected that anything but a holy Christian can be beneficial. 6. It is necessary for the peace of our minds. Without purity there can be no peace. 7. It qualifies us for the heavenly kingdom. We must be like

God if we would enjoy a hereafter. II. SANCTIFICATION TO BE REAL MUST BE—1. Universal. It must extend to the whole man, to the thoughts, words, and actions, to the affections and desires of the heart, and to the outward conduct. It is not for us to say, I am partly sanctified. The work of the Spirit of God is not confined to this part or that, but the whole man is brought into subjection to Christ. 2. Progressive. It procceds from small beginnings to a great increase. It is just like a grain of mustard seed, scarcely perceptible at first, but it goes on till it becomes a great tree. It is thus that it operates on the heart and mind; upon the whole outward, as well as upon the whole inward man. III. SANCTIFICATION IS GOD'S WORK. We cannot bring a clean thing out of an unclean. It is His work, not merely at the commencement: the Great Artificer must be at the laying of the foundation stone; and not only so, but superintending and assisting to the close, from the first to the last, through all the intermediate steps, till we arrive at the fulness of the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus—till we be translated into the world of purity, where no sin is to be found. This is shown by God's Word, and the experience of the people of God. They know that their own efforts are fruitless and unavailing unless God be with them. IV. GOD SANCTIFIES BY THE TRUTH. The truth has a tendency to sanctify—1. By the discoveries it makes to us. Where there is ignorance of Divine things there cannot be much purity. It reveals—(1) God's character in a way fitted to solemnize the mind. (2) The whole truth of our fallen and lost condition, and responsibility, and weakness, and guilt, and condemnation. (3) The all-sufficiency of Christ, and His finished salvation. (4) The Spirit—His sanctifying influences, and of the means of our being brought under their power. (5) That the pure in heart alone shall see God, and that without holiness no man shall enter the kingdom of heaven. Now no thinking being can ponder all this without feeling something of the influence that these truths are fitted to produce. 2. By the motives it presents to us. It appeals—(1) To our sense of right. (2) To our ambition for dignity. (3) To our fears. (4) To our hopes. (5) To our gratitude. (6) To our love. 3. By the examples it exhibits to us. It was customary with the ancient philosophers to have the walls of their schools adorned with the images of the illustrious in former times, that in contemplating them their disciples might be led to admire their originals, and be stimulated by their exertions and attainments, and led to transcribe the graces by which they were adorned into their own characters. And we have recorded in the pages of inspiration the lives of several of God's people for the same reason. Conclusion: 1. Are we using this word for the purpose of sanctification? 2. What degree of sanctification do you possess? (*T. Brown, D.D.*) *Sanctification by means of the truth*:—I. THE BLESSING FOR WHICH CHRIST INTERCEDED—sanctification. This work is—1. Divine. The Holy Spirit implants the first principle of holiness in the soul, and by His continued influences it is maintained and strengthened. "Not by works of righteousness," &c. 2. Internal. The chief seat of man's moral disease is the heart. It is necessary that these springs of action should be purified before true holiness can be exhibited in the life. 3. Practical. The heart being changed, corresponding effects will be seen in the conduct. Holy principles will lead to holy practices. 4. Progressive. It is compared to the progress of light. "The path of the just," &c. At one period the Christian may resemble the tender blade; at another, the ear; till, under Divine influence, he appears as the full corn in the ear, ripened for glory. But though the work of sanctification is progressive it is not always uniform. There are seasons when the path of the Christian is like the sun in a dark and cloudy day, and others when it appears bright and cheerful. Sometimes he may resemble the corn checked by the frost of winter, and at others the same corn revived by the gentle showers and warmer influences of the returning spring. 5. Will eventually be complete in the happy abode of "the spirits of just men made perfect." II. THE MEANS BY WHICH SANCTIFICATION IS PROMOTED. 1. It is by the Word of truth that the work of sanctification is commenced. By this the mind is first enlightened and the heart renewed. The entrance of it giveth light, and while it enlightens it animates and purifies. 2. The Word of God is the perfect standard of holiness. It presents a right rule of action, adapted to every period and circumstance in human life. (1) All its doctrines are calculated to promote holiness. Are the people of God "from the beginning chosen to salvation"? It is "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Are they "called"? It is "with a holy calling." Are they "reconciled to God by the death of His Son"? It is "that they may be presented holy and unblamable and unreprovable in His sight." Will they eventually be glorified? They will

"receive an inheritance among them that are sanctified." (2) The precepts of the Word of God are in harmony with its doctrines. "As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy." (3) To encourage us in the pursuit of holiness the promises of God's Word are given. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you," &c. "Having therefore these promises," &c. 3. The Word of truth presents most powerful motives to the pursuit of holiness. It appeals to the best feelings of the renewed heart. The love of Christ shed abroad in the heart renders sacrifice easy and duty delightful. Conclusion: We may learn from the subject—1. The absolute necessity of holiness. 2. The importance of acquiring correct and enlarged views of Divine truth, and of earnestly seeking the influences of the Holy Spirit to enlighten the mind and to sanctify the heart. The Word of truth and the Spirit of truth are inseparably connected. 3. The importance of self-examination, and the awful condition of the unsanctified professor. (*Congregational Remembrancer.*)

Thy Word is truth.—By truth is meant that which sustains, answers expectation, and never disappoints; which is ever found to be consistent with reality. Falsehood or error, on the other hand, is that which is empty, vain. It does not sustain; it disappoints, and does not correspond with the real. 1. The truth concerning the external world, its phenomena and laws, is that which represents what really is, what may be relied upon. 2. So with the truth concerning the internal world of mind. 3. The truth concerning God. 4. The truth concerning our relation to God. By the word of God is meant—I. ANY REVELATION OF GOD. A word is a revelation, an outward manifestation of thought. In this sense creation is a word of God. And all that it makes known of Him—His ways, character, will—is truth. It accords exactly with what God is, and what it teaches may therefore be relied on. The world is not a phantasm, but what it reveals itself to be, and never disappoints those who rely upon its teachings. The foundation of this reality is that it is God's word, and must be studied as such. II. THE REVELATION OF GOD IN THE SCRIPTURES. In that sense the text means that the Scriptures are true. All they teach concerning God, man, the Person and work of Christ, the future life, &c., is true. Everything conforms to what is real, and may be relied on. Those who assume the Scriptures to be true, and act upon them, will attain the end they promise. Those who assume that what they teach is false, and act accordingly, will find out their mistake. Conclusion: It is an unspeakable blessing—1. To know what is truth and where it may be found. 2. To have the truth made accessible to us. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *God's Word Truth:*—1. This is one of Christ's many testimonies to the integrity of the Scriptures. What is the value of that testimony. (1) Does He speak as man? If so He was in a better position for knowing the truth of the Old Testament than "modern critics"; and if He knew, as they profess to know, that the ancient record is partly fictitious, then this wholesale authentication is an impeachment of His own integrity. If He did not know, and accepted the truth of the Scriptures on trust, then He was credulous and forfeits our confidence in Him as the supreme Teacher and Guide. But His fearless championship of truth, by lip and life and death, forbids us to suppose that He said, "Thy Word is truth" without good grounds, and what He believed we may safely hold. (2) But He spoke as Divine; and if the Word of God were not truth, as of so many other matters, He "would have told" us. How believers in Christ's divinity can reject this testimony is marvellous. 2. The Bible is not simply true, but the truth, and embraces under the promise of the Spirit of Truth, New and Old Testament alike. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved" by Him; He guided the apostles "into all truth." God's Word—I. HAS ITS ORIGIN IN TRUTH. God is its author. He knows everything, has no interests to serve in perverting the truth, and by the laws of His own Being "cannot lie." What He reveals, therefore, must be as it really is, and what He has revealed is in the Bible. And as a pure fountain will send forth a pure stream so the Bible, being God's Word, must be true. A good man will tell the truth as far as he knows it; and shall we doubt the same power in God? II. ITS SUBSTANCE IS TRUTH. It contains—1. True doctrine. As far as nature goes it coincides with the teachings of nature, contradicting them nowhere: which is a presumption that when it goes beyond nature it is still on the same line of truth. 2. True morals. The ten commandments command man's universal assent, and the Sermon on the Mount forms the only true basis of society, and true society will be one day constructed on that basis. 3. True history, and corroborative evidence is being discovered year after year. 4. True poetry. No better interpretation of nature and man's higher moods is to be found than in the Psalms. 5. True promises. How many millions have verified them. 6. True

threatenings—the Flood, Sodom, the Jews, &c. III. IT REVEALS HIM WHO IS THE TRUTH. 1. All the Old Testament points to Christ. (1) He is the Truth of its symbols. (2) "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." 2. The Gospels are the story of His life, and show how He was the Truth in—(1) His character; (2) His influence; (3) His teaching; (4) His death. "To this end was I born," &c. 3. The Epistles expound various aspects of His truth, making Him the centre and inspiration. IV. ITS OBJECT IS TO MAKE TRUE MEN. 1. Men true to God, to self, to man; in the home, business, society, state, Church. 2. Lovers of the truth. 3. Disseminators of the truth. (*J. W. Burn.*)

Vers. 18, 19. **As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world.**—*Christian missions and missionaries: their ideals*:—It is our privilege to enter at once, by the open door of this utterance, into the interior of our Lord's ideas. He speaks of missions and missionaries. Addressing His Father, He says, "Thou didst *send* into the world." It was a Divine mission, with reference to a most necessitous field of missionary operation. He says, "Thou didst *send Me* into the world." Other missionaries were and are required to carry on the great transformation movement inaugurated by the ideal Missionary. They were required to "fill up that which was behind" of His "labours of love," and His afflictions for the gospel's sake. Hence the institution of a new mission by the ideal Missionary, a mission modelled after that of His Father: "As Thou didst send Me into the world, even so sent I them into the world." The Saviour speaks as if He had already moved in person out of the present time into the future, and were looking back to the past. But these apostolic missionaries were not to be the last who would spread themselves out on the field of the world. The work that required to be done would not be finished when their labours were drawing to a close. The generation to which they belonged, having replaced a generation that went before, would itself pass on, and another would come in its room. On the heroes of that generation it would devolve to "fill up that which was behind" of the apostles' labours and sorrows. Hence the Lord Jesus said to His Father, "But not for these alone do I ask, but for them also who shall believe on Me through their word." His mind was looking forward to the living results of the labours of the apostles, and, in these living results, to the first of many successive relays of missionary workers. He prayed, giving earnest expression to an agony of desire, that nothing might impede the progressive subjugation to Himself of the whole world. "I ask, that they all may be one," &c. Our Lord saw from afar the danger of rivalry and dissension among His disciples. He saw that such dissensions would involve disunion in missionary operations at home and abroad; that such disunion meant reduced efficiency all along the straggling lines of the sacramental host; and that such reduced efficiency meant the reduction of the numbers of those who would believe in His mission, and come under the purifying influence of His own and His Father's love. It is but another aspect of this intense longing of our Lord, that, He says, "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself," or, "I consecrate Myself," *i.e.*, "I am, all along the line of My mediatorial career, consecutively consecrating Myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth." It is a grand system of mutual co-operation that is needed; and when all Christian missionaries, in all mission-fields, at home and abroad, become thus co-operative, and hence consecrated after the model of our Lord's consecration, then the bells of heaven may at once be set ringing, in jubilant peals, over the triumph of Christianity. I. THE AIM WITH WHICH THE MODEL MISSION WAS INWARDLY FORMED AND INSPIRED. It originated in the *mind*, or, to go further into the interior of things, in the *heart* of the Divine Father. God felt compassion for men. Hence, His determination to send a Missionary into our human world. It was a determination of pure benevolence. Therein was its goodness, grandeur, glory. Dwelling in His own immensity, as the infinitely happy God, afar from the children of men, and yet near, He beheld them in their misery. The world was full of woes, in consequence of the wickedness of men. Unless the Lord Himself should interpose, what can be expected from roots of bitterness found everywhere—what but the fruits of pessimism and despair? But God *has interposed*, finding His opportunity in man's extremity. "Thou," says Jesus, "hast *sent* into the world," that is, Thou hast instituted a mission in reference to this world, and it has resulted in the purest "labour of love." It is nothing less than to bring God's own holy happiness within the reach of His human creatures. II. THE WAYS AND MEANS EMPLOYED BY THE GREAT IDEAL MISSIONARY TO CARRY OUT THE AIMS OF HIS FATHER. 1. He entered intimately and entirely into the spirit of these aims (Psa.

xl. 7, 8). 2. By and by the grand ideal Missionary "came." His presence on the scene was indispensable. He came without loss of time—"in the fulness of the time." He "emptied Himself of all but love," and came. 3. After He came into our world, He did not take up His abode in some waste howling wilderness, and spend His days as a hermit, remote from the haunts of men. Nor did He take up His position on some conspicuous pillar like that of Simon Stylites, or on some "coign of 'vantage" in the architecture of society, and wave off the crowds that were surging around and jostling one another downwards. Far other was His plan. He mingled freely with the objects of His Father's solicitude. He was found ever radiating pure spiritual effluence, and radiant with pure spiritual influence, wherever men "did congregate." 4. It is noteworthy, besides, that while He did not avoid the society of the opulent and the cultured, yet He made His appearance among the humblest of those who were within the diocese of His missionary enterprise. In His sympathy with the poor, we have a pledge that the time is on the wing, though it may yet be remote, when all honest labour shall be equitably and generously rewarded, and when, in consequence, all the difficulties that beset the perplexing problem of right and righteous remuneration for work, shall, by the logic of love, be satisfactorily solved. 5. He ever went about "doing good," now preaching on the frequented shore, now praying on the solitary mountain slope, now teaching, or reasoning, or comforting, or feeding the hungry, or healing the sick, or enlightening the ignorant, or delivering those who, in their spirits or their bodies, were the unhappy victims of influences inhuman and malign. 6. Then He was "full," not merely of "grace," but of "truth"; and of "truth" not merely as the ethical excellency of absolutely veracious witnessing, not merely, in addition, as the sum of true ideas concerning both God and man, but likewise as the actual antitypical impersonation of the most significant shadows of former ages. He was the true Prophet; the true King; the only One whose authority may be unreservedly trusted even when absolute; the true Priest; the true Sacrifice for sins; the true Propitiator and Propitiation; the true Light that lighteneth the way upward for every man that entereth into the world; likewise the true illuminated Way to the house that is the Father's home. 7. He was, from the commencement of His missionary enterprise to its consummation, engaged in coming under the sins of all mankind without distinction or exception, so as to suffer *by* them and *for* them. Our sins became *His sorrows and His sufferings*, till His heart broke, and His self-sacrifice was complete. III. For the very reason that the model mission culminated in the glorious propitiatory death of the ideal Missionary, its function as a mission became fulfilled, and room was made for the second great enterprise, with its peculiar complement of apostolic missionaries. They had, as far as was practicable, to take the Master's place on the mission-field, and to carry on the work He had inaugurated. We are thus launched into the third part of our missionary theme—the part that concerns THE RELATION OF THE APOSTOLIC AND ALL SUBSEQUENT MISSIONS AND RELAYS OF MISSIONARIES TO THE DIVINE IDEALS. 1. As it was our Lord Jesus who Himself was the Founder of the second great missionary enterprise, the aims inspiring that enterprise must have been in exactest accord with the aims inspiring the original project of His Father—to save sinners from their sins, their inhumanities, their woes. 2. It has been within the reach of every Christian mission that has ever flourished, and it is within the reach of every Christian mission that now exists, to cultivate and cherish an exact accord with the aim which animated and informed the mission of our Lord. It was in the bosom of *our* humanity as well as of *His own* divinity that He framed and modelled His grand disinterested aim, so that we *can* get near Him in the ethical peculiarity of His project. 3. The "ways and means" of the great ideal Missionary may in part be imitated by all Christian missionaries. Like Him, they may be—(1) sympathetic; (2) ministrant; (3) meek and lowly; (4) habitually going about doing good; (5) abounding in prayer. 4. Even when it is utterly impossible to do as Jesus did, as when in "solemn loneliness" He bore the sin of the world and made propitiation for it, still it is permitted to all Christian missionaries, from age to age, to take their stand by the side of the cross, and pointing aloft to the crucified One, to exclaim, "Look! the sight is glorious! Lo, the Lamb of God bearing, and bearing out of the way, the sin of the world! Look! and live." 5. It is a grand privilege to be linked on, as workers, to some disinterested missionary enterprise! (*James Morison, D.D.*) *The Model Missionary*:—These words speak of a two-fold mission; Christ's mission from heaven to earth, and the Church's mission from Christ to the world. The former is at once the origin, model, and motive of the latter. The text suggests a corres-

pondence between these two missions. They correspond—I. IN THEIR AUTHORITY. Both are of Divine authority. God sent Christ into the world, and Christ sends the Church. Christians have a right to go into every part of the world to unfurl their banner on every shore, and fight the battles of the Lord. We want no licence from potentates to authorize us to preach the gospel, &c. II. IN THEIR PRINCIPLE. What induced Christ to come into the world and inspired Him in working out His mission? All-embracing, disinterested, unconquerable love. The same must influence the Church, and no other feeling. III. IN THEIR OBJECT. Why did He come? "To seek and to save the lost." "This is a faithful saying," &c. This is our work. We have to save from ignorance, carnality, worldliness, sin, the devil. IV. IN THEIR MODE. Both are—1. Spontaneous. 2. Self-denying. 3. Persevering. 4. Diligent. 5. Devout. V. IN THEIR ENCOURAGEMENTS. Christ had—1. The Divine presence; so has the Church. 2. The highest sympathy. 3. The assurance of success. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The Christian mission identical with that of Christ:*—Here are two impressive facts. One is that Jesus is holding converse with the Father about the conversion of the world, and the Christians whom He was to leave in it. The other is that Christ regards the mission of those Christians in the world as practically identical with His own. The two missions are identical. I. IN THEIR PURPOSE AND MOTIVE-POWER. Christ's mission originated in the bosom of God, in view of an infinite calamity which had fallen on man. The race was hastening to a wrecked immortality. There was but one power that could arrest its fatal progress—Love. God was Love. Christ came to establish an empire of love, and to change the moral drift of the perishing race. The apostles caught this sublime thought. "If God so loved us, we ought to love one another." The scope of the Divine mission was universal, and hence, "All the world" became the watchword of the Christian ages. Hence, when Christ gathered a little band of followers, He pushed them out into the great world of want and woe and hate, along the line of His own career—"As Thou hast sent Me, so have I sent them." II. IN THEIR METHODS. 1. He ignored "superior races" and civilizations, and pushed His truth out to the weakest and the lowest. With a "sublime radicalism" He goes after the most needy. 2. He recognized the essential slowness of the cause, and hence, taught and wrought with Divine patience, believing in the immortality of truth, and looking down through a long vista of years for results. 3. He ignored the principle of demand and supply, as utterly defective for the lifting of humanity. That principle aims to merely meet existing desires. Christ ignored desires and acted in view of needs. His method was to come where there was no demand for Him, but where there was an immeasurable need; and for love's sake, man's sake, God's sake, to thrust Himself upon the attention of men, when they wanted something else; thus creating a demand for spiritual life where none existed. Our mission is to proceed on the same principle. The apostles so acted. They went where there was no demand for them. The Macedonian cry which came to Paul was not the cry of the men of Macedonia, but the cry of the Spirit of God for Macedonia. These three principles should characterize our Christian methods. III. IN THEIR REQUIREMENT OF THE SAME QUALIFICATIONS. The most impressive aspect of Christ's mission is its divine heroism—the total abandonment of Himself to the cause of the lost. This, too, must be true of the Christian disciple. To the man who really enters upon the Christian mission, every land is his fatherland, because man identified with Christ is greater than the world on which he works, and his final home is above. IV. IN THEIR SOURCES OF HOPE, THEIR ASSURANCE OF SUCCESS. We are not to carry to the sin-sick world a doubtful remedy. We go to lost men as messengers of hope. The Christian's message is not simply a new law—that men have now; not a new philosophy—that has failed already; not merely a sense of guilt—there is no hope in that. What the world needs is a gospel of Hope. The story of the cross is such a gospel. The supreme theory of the Christian, then, is to grasp the Divine conception of his mission—to get Christ's view of the ideal man. The Greek ideal man was an elegant thinker; the Roman, a great ruler; the modern, a king of commerce. Christ's ideal man is he who, identified with God, heroically commits his consecrated powers to the service of God's suffering poor. (*J. Brand.*) *The union between Christ and His Church:*—Christ expects that His Church will be in the world as He was in these senses—I. THAT THE MIND THAT WAS IN HIM SHALL BE IN HER. He has not overlooked the force of evil, so He expects—1. Penitence to have its perfect work not ceasing until it grows in humility, and cleanses the spirit from vile tastes and sordid vices. 2. Faith that will perpetually fill the

nature and lay claim to the gift of the Holy Spirit, using it in the development of grandest virtue. 3. That love will thrive in the heart, turning the tyranny of passion into a glow of piety. 4. That His Cross will charm the eye, and protect from destructive allurements. 5. That however lofty her effort she will not fail in it. 6. That she will look on men with the eye of pity, and spare not herself in the work of their redemption. II. THAT THE CHURCH WILL ENGAGE IN THE SAME WORK AS OCCUPIED HIM. This naturally follows. There cannot be identity of spirit without identity of purpose and employment. It is not that the Church sets before herself some outward action as exactly reproducing that of Christ, but, looking with eyes like His through the agate windows of charity upon the needs of men, she sees wants which others overlook, and feels within herself some power to meet them; and using the power she has it grows until it flows out into the variety of usefulness which is the image of Him who went about doing good. 1. Are there children about her? She will feed the lambs and carry them in her bosom. 2. Do others neglect the old? She ministers to the solitude and decay of age. 3. Does the false world tread down the fallen? She lifts them to self-respect by the love and energy with which she reclaims them. 4. She checks Pharisaism by the glow of her real charity. 5. She cries to the multitudes, "Behold your God." 6. She engages in the absorbing effort to save the one sinner at the well. Her path may be obscure, but consecrating what she has she makes many rich. I do not ask has the Church realized all this; but is she aiming at it? Had she done so long ago, nations now lying in darkness would have been basking in the light of love. III. THAT THE CHURCH WILL ENDURE THE SAME SACRIFICES AS HE ACCEPTED. Of course there is one part of the sacrifice which we cannot aspire to. But it is evident that no one can have the mind of Christ or do His work without being involved in sacrifices identical to the spirit in which they are accepted and the pain they involve with His. St. Paul speaks of the conflicts of Christ in his body, of being crucified with Christ, of being conformed to His death, &c. Sanctity will never be without its sorrows. You will be misunderstood and misrepresented. IV. THAT THE CHURCH WILL BE SUFFICIENTLY EQUIPPED IN ALL SHE HAS TO DO AND BEAR. "My grace is sufficient for thee." Let that grow and it will conquer. (*R. Glover.*) *Christ's consecration for His people:*—I. THE MISSION OF THE DISCIPLES. "As Thou hast sent Me," &c. They were sent forth—1. By the same authority as their Master. This language could not be used by any mere man, and is in harmony with "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." When a man knows what he can do, and has to do, he is in the fittest condition for doing it. Jesus knew that He was sent into the world, and for what; and He was equal to it. Whatever authority belonged to the Father in sending the Son into the world, belonged to the Son in sending forth His disciples. 2. For a kindred purpose. Christ was the Light of the world, but His radiance was to shine through them, so that they too were lights of the world. The mission of the Son of God was personal and peculiar, and could neither have extension nor repetition (Heb. ix. 26). To proclaim the power and purpose of His death was the mission of the disciples (connect John xviii. 37 with 2 Cor. iv. 2). The mission of the Master and that of the disciples coincide in that both were for the glory of God and the salvation of men. 3. To a similar experience. As the world treated the Master, so it treated the servants (John xv. 29; Matt. xvi. 24). And as in the case of the Master, so in the case of His disciples now, "No cross, no crown." II. THE CONSECRATION OF THE MASTER—"For their sakes," &c. 1. By Christ's sanctifying Himself we are to understand His devotement to the will of the Father, the surrender of Himself as a sacrifice for sin, the climax of which was at hand in the Cross. "I sanctify Myself" is the language of One who had perfect control over His own course and action; who was under no obligation to place Himself in the position of having to utter them. "He came not to be ministered unto," &c. Accordingly, His consecration was sacrificial (2 Cor. v. 21). In the profoundest sense He consecrated Himself for man; our cause He undertook, our interests He had in view. 2. But how could this consecration be for the sanctification of His disciples? It had what may be called a legal power, making their consecration possible. The sacrifice which the Son of God presented was the ransom price of redemption. If Christ had not become a curse for us, the curse could not have passed from us, and man could not have been sanctified for God. What mere authority could not do, God effected through His only begotten Son. Truth in all its purifying and transforming power reached them through the consecration of their Lord; for thus they saw the things of God as they had never been unfolded before. Truth is—(1) The

element of sanctification, the sphere in which it is realized and enjoyed. It is only when we are in the truth, when we know it, and are in Him that is true, that we can be sanctified. (2) The instrument. Through its influence within, wielded by the Divine Spirit, the soul becomes weaned from the world, separated from sin, and conformed to the image of God. It is not an outward service, an imposing ritual, an exciting ceremony, which can sanctify, but the truth of God, received into the heart, and applied by the Holy Spirit. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." The entrance of the Divine Word gives light, and light is always for holiness. (3) The end, so that holiness shall become triumphant in the heart and the history. What is sanctification in every case but the reign of "truth in the inward parts"? To be true men, true to God, true to ourselves, and true to our fellow-creatures—so true in thought and feeling, in word and action, as to clearly reflect the image of our Father, is the highest ambition which as moral creatures we can cherish. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *Spiritual work*:—Here are remarkable parallels, comparisons, connections:—"As—so," "Thou—Me," "I—them." "I sanctify Myself that they might be sanctified." The main thought of the text will come out under three words—I. COMMISSION—"As Thou hast sent Me," &c. This is a style of speech which we find often in the lips of Christ; it indicates His unique personality. He says, for instance, in John v., "As the Father raiseth up the dead," &c. He assumes and asserts prerogatives which belong to God. He does so here. This is the grandest act of God. All that we know of God seems to be consecrated in this act: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." God, the Holy, saw with intense repugnance the pollution of men; God, the Creator, saw with grief the obliteration of His image in man. But the God of salvation had the thought of salvation. "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn," &c. What a wonderful parallel—"Thou didst send Me, and I send Thee!" 1. Take all the missionaries, preachers, teachers, devoted servants of God, all together, they do not equal the one Jesus. No; the parallel cannot be traced strictly in regard to the person sent, nor in regard to the special purpose of the sending. The specific purpose for which Christ came was to redeem men by His own precious blood. He trod the wine-press alone. Our blood, the blood of our martyrs, does not mingle with His atoning blood. But when we have said that we may say that there is a very close parallel between the Father's sending of Christ and of Christ sending of His apostles; for just as the great Father sees the world Christ sees it. And He has the Father's love; for does not He give Himself? Furthermore, He is with men, just as the great Father was always with His Son. And so Christ says: "I am with you always. Go, teach all nations." 2. Then, although we have a distinction between the persons, they are living men whom Christ sends, not books, messages, letters. We may print the gospel in all the languages of the world, and send them to all the world; but it will not save the world. Christ said: "I will send you." You must go out, living men and women, sinners saved, hearts through whom the great love has passed—you must be able to say: "This is a faithful saying," &c. 3. The sphere is the same. It is very interesting that though Christ confines His movements to a very small spot, yet He says, "I am come into the world." If the Prince of Wales had landed in Ireland, just visited Dublin, and then come home again, he might truly have been said to visit Ireland; and Christ comes to Palestine and says, "I have come into the world." He annexed the world by that act—linked it on to Himself. But it is needful that in a more literal sense the great Christ should visit the world; and so He chooses these men and says: "I send you into the world. Go into *all* the world," &c. 4. And He sends them with the same purpose, "Go to save." This is a very ennobling parallel. It is not a mere political or military mission, or a scientific undertaking; it is like that great act of God in sending down His Son—it is, indeed, an expansion of that act. II. CONSECRATION. 1. Whenever an honest man accepts an office his next thought will be, "How can I best prepare for it?" The high priest must be born of the tribe of Levi—he must be without blemish personally; and after that there must be special ceremonies; and then he is consecrated, and may go within the veil. But is there anything so sublime as this the Son of God saying: "I sanctify Myself"? And do you notice He used the present tense—"I am sanctifying Myself"? Although the life of our Lord on earth was brief, He retained His connection with the human race. So we regard that thirty years, especially the last three, as a period of consecration on the part of the great Saviour. He was sanctified by His daily obedience, prayerfulness, self-denial; by His fierce, but always resisted, temptations; by His Gethsemane agony; by the Cross. 2. It is

a solemn thought that we are to consecrate ourselves after the manner of Christ. We do not know much about it. We sing hymns of consecration, and there are some few consecrated people among us; but the average Christian is not a consecrated person. No; his religion is rather a matter of convenience—it is not allowed to interfere with his ordinary human life; but we are to make it, by the grace of God, like Christ's—a consecrated life. Now, that means we must set apart a life that gathers about one idea; it means, not the waters which are spread vaguely over a level surface, but the waters that are confined within deep banks and flow straight on; it means, not lines that are drawn in all directions, but radical lines that converge towards a centre. It means, therefore, that just as Christ fixed His thought upon the saving of the world, we should have our thoughts fixed on the saving of the world. As He regarded Himself as being here for no other purpose, we should regard ourselves as being here for no other purpose. III. CONNECTION. 1. Christ consecrated Himself; He could do that. Can you or I have that strength to take this heavy, dull, carnalized humanity of ours and consecrate it? No; it mocks our endeavour, and we seem to lie a heavy carnal mass still. But see what Christ says: "I do this for their sakes." So we share in His own consecration. Thus He was a typical man, in whom, in a certain sense, humanity is contained; and His consecration is potentially the consecration of men. 2. His consecration is our complete atonement, the removal of all our guilt. Oh, what a blessed step that is towards consecration to know that your sins are forgiven! 3. And this consecration of Christ brings all heavenly blessing down; it wins the Spirit for us, and is the substance of Divine truth; so that through the truth, getting these thoughts of God's into our minds, and these great facts, and these holy influences, we become sanctified through the truth. (*S. Hebditch.*)

For their sakes I sanctify Myself.—*The sanctification of Christ:*—I. CHRIST'S SANCTIFICATION OF HIMSELF. 1. He devoted Himself by inward resolve. God His Father had devoted Him before. It only remained that this devotion should be completed by His own will. In that consisted His sanctification of Himself. This self-sanctification applies to the whole tone and history of His mind. He was for ever devoting Himself to work: but it applies peculiarly to certain special moments when some crisis came which called for an act of will. (1) The first of these moments came when He was twelve years of age, "Wist ye not," &c. The Boy was sanctifying Himself for life and manhood's work. (2) The next was in that preparation of the wilderness, the true meaning of which lies in this, that the Saviour was steeling His soul against the three-fold form in which temptation presented itself to Him in after life, to mar or neutralise His ministry. (*a*) To convert the hard life of Duty into the comfort of this life: to use Divine powers only to procure bread of earth. (*b*) To distrust God, and try impatiently some wild, sudden plan, instead of His meek and slow-appointed ways—to cast Himself from the Temple, as we dash ourselves against our destiny. (*c*) To do homage to the majesty of wrong: to worship evil for the sake of success: to make the world His own by force or by crooked policy, instead of by suffering. These were the temptations of His life, as they are of ours. Life thenceforward was only the meeting of that in fact which had been in resolve met already—a vanquished foe. (3) He had sanctified Himself against every trial except the last—death: He had yet to nerve Himself to that. And hence the lofty sadness which characterizes His later ministry. The words as of a soul struggling to pierce through thick glooms of mystery, and doubt, and death, come more often from His lips: for instance, "Now is My soul troubled," &c.; "My soul is exceeding sorrowful"; and here in the text. 2. The sanctification of Christ was self-devotion to the truth. "Also" implies that what His consecration was, their's was. His death was not merely the world's atonement; it, with His life, was martyrdom to truth. He fell in fidelity to a cause—love to the human race. Let us see how His death was a martyrdom of witness to truth. (1) He proclaimed the identity between religion and goodness. He distinguished religion from correct views, accurate religious observances, and even from devout feelings. He said that to be religious is to be good. "Blessed are the pure in heart, the merciful, the meek." Justice, mercy, truth—these He proclaimed as the real righteousness of God. (2) He taught spiritual religion. God's temple was man's soul. (3) He struck a death-blow at Jewish exclusiveness. For God loved the world, not a private few. Because of all this the Jewish nation were offended. By degrees—priests, Pharisees, rulers, rich and poor—He had roused them all against Him: and the Divine Martyr of the truth stood alone at last beside the cross, when the world's life was to be won, without a friend. 3. The self-sanctification of Christ was for the sake of others.

"For their sakes." He sanctified Himself that He might become a living, inspiring example, firing men's hearts by love to imitation. In Christ there is not given to us a faultless essay on the loveliness of self-consecration, to convince our reason how beautiful it is; but there is given to us a self-consecrated One—a life that was beautiful, a death that was divine—and all this in order that the spirit of that consecrated life and death, through love, and wonder and deep enthusiasm, may pass into us, and sanctify us also to the truth in life and death. II. CHRIST'S SANCTIFICATION OF HIS PEOPLE. Those whom Christ sanctifies are separated from two things. 1. From the world's evil (ver. 15). The only evil—sin: revolt from God, disloyalty to conscience, tyranny of the passions, strife of our self-will in conflict with the loving will of God. This is our foe—our only foe that we have a right to hate with perfect hatred, meet it where we will, and under whatever form, in church or state, in false social maxims, or in our own hearts. By the blood of His anguish—by the strength of His unconquerable resolve—we are sworn against it—bound to be, in a world of evil, consecrated spirits, or else greatly sinning. 2. From the world's spirit. He is sanctified by the self-devotion of His Master from the world, who has a life in himself independent of the maxims and customs which sweep along with them other men. His true life is hid with Christ in God. His citizenship is in heaven. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The nature of sanctification:*—It is religion shining; the candle lighted, not hid under a bushel, but illuminating the house. It is the religious principle put into motion. It is the love of God sent forth into circulation, on the feet and with the hands of love to man. It is faith gone to work. It is charity coined into actions, and devotion breathing benedictions on human suffering, while it goes up in intercessions to the Father of all piety. (*Bp. Huntington.*) *Progressive sanctification:*—This devotion to God is in a sense imperfect, At the end of every day we acknowledge that we have failed to work out fully into all the details of the day the one purpose which has, by the grace of God, been the mainspring of our action; and that we have often chosen unsuitable means. But each day we learn better what will, and what will not, advance the purposes of God; and each day our one great purpose permeates more fully our entire thoughts, and more fully directs our entire activity. Moreover, each day brings to us fresh proofs of the faithfulness, power, and love of God, and thus increases the strength of the faith with which we lay hold of all the benefits promised in His Word. This daily submission to the guidance of the Spirit brings us more completely under His holy influence, and, since our entire Christian life takes the form of devotion to God; all spiritual progress may be spoken of as growth in holiness. (*Prof. Beet.*) *Sanctification a process:*—As the external man perishes, so the inward is renewed day by day. As in the process of petrification, for every particle of wood washed away by the dropping well, another particle of stone is deposited in its place; so our sanctification goes on by a minute molecular change of the heart from stone to flesh, a process of depetrification. Little by little the flesh gives way to the Spirit, and more and more the spirit becomes accustomed to claim and enforce obedience. (*J. B. Heard, M.A.*) *Process of sanctification:*—It is wonderful to see how the little events of our daily life tend to our sanctification, though we know it not at the time. Every week seems so like the other! But you know when the sculptor begins his work, he strikes great pieces off the block. Every stroke tells visibly. But, when the statue is nearly finished, he takes the fine chisel, and strikes off but a little dust at a time. You scarcely see the effects of the blow; yet then it is directed with most art and skill,—then the work is nearly done. (*Doing and Suffering.*) *The difficulty of ascertaining our advance in sanctification:*—To gauge our process we must employ a measure of sufficient capacity. If we confine our attention to a few days or weeks, it is likely we shall be disappointed, being unable to perceive any advance. You must rather take in months and years. You shall stand by the seashore and be unable first to discover whether the tide ebbs or flows. It is only after diligent watching for an appreciable period that you decide that the sea is slowly but certainly advancing. *The evidence of sanctification:*—Look upon a holy man in his calling, and you shall find him holy: look upon him in the use of the creatures, and you shall find him holy: look upon him in his recreations and you shall find him holy. The habitual frame and bent of his heart is to be holy in every earthly thing that he puts his hand unto. (*T. Brooks.*) *Sanctification seen in little things:*—A holy life is made up of a number of small things. Little words, not eloquent speeches or sermons; little deeds, not miracles, nor battles, nor one great heroic act or mighty martyrdom made up the true Christian life. The little constant sunbeam, not the lightning, the waters of Siloam "that go softly" in the meek

mission of refreshment, not the "waters of the river, great and many," rushing down in torrents, noise and force, are the true symbols of a holy life. The avoidance of little evils, little sins, inconsistencies, weaknesses, follies, indiscretions, imprudences, foibles, indulgencies of self and of the flesh; the avoidance of such little things as these goes far to make up, at least, the negative beauty of a holy life. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*)

Vers. 20, 21. **Neither pray I for these alone, but for those also which shall believe on Me through their word.**—*Saving faith through the Word:*—I. THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST'S MEDIATION ARE LIMITED TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE ON HIM. 1. In the very passage of this prayer, in which He designs expressly to set forth the wide exercise of His mediation, He yet, in most positive terms, confines it within this limitation. Nor was this the first or the only occasion in which He stated and maintained the same truth. To Nicodemus, to Martha, to the Jews, and in the commission which He gave to His apostles He strongly asserted this fundamental principle. In fact this is the universal language of Scripture on this subject. 2. And the same language, which is thus used in respect to salvation in general, is equally used in respect to every blessing of the gospel. Is it pardon? "Through His name whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." Is it justification? "By Him, all that believe are justified from all things." Is it adoption? "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Is it sanctification? Saints are "sanctified in Christ Jesus." Is it spiritual support and strength? "He that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." Is it spiritual light and knowledge? "I am come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me, should not abide in darkness." Is it spiritual peace and joy? "Now the God of hope fill you with all peace and joy in believing." II. THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH THIS BELIEF IS PRODUCED (Rom. x. 17; John xx. 31). 1. They are the foundation on which it is built. "Faith the substance of things hoped for," &c. But it is evident that such a belief supposes a certain degree of previous information. To believe then in Jesus Christ, and in the efficacy of His mediation, implies that we have a certain degree of previous knowledge on these subjects. And where is this knowledge to be obtained but from the Scriptures? Here only are we taught the way of salvation. 2. They are the instrument by which it is wrought in the heart. Faith is itself the gift and operation of God. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. But the great instrument by which He works and operates is the written Word, which is, therefore, emphatically styled "the Sword of the Spirit." Conclusion: 1. Has Christ limited the benefits of His mediation to those who believe on Him? How strikingly does this truth show the importance of faith! How clearly does it point out the wide distinction between believers and unbelievers! 2. Do those who believe on Jesus Christ believe through the Word? Then how invaluable are the Scriptures! (1) Are they the foundation of faith? Then how thankful should we be to God for this inestimable gift, how diligent should we be in the perusal of it, how widely should we disseminate it! (2) Are they the instrument by which it is wrought? How powerfully should this consideration operate on our minds and conduct! Let us remember, when we read or hear the Word of God, that though we thus attain to a knowledge of the truths to be believed, yet the actual believing of them must be the effect of a Divine operation on our hearts. (*E. Cooper.*) *Christ in relation to His disciples in all future times:*—Observe—I. HIS REALIZATION OF THEIR ACTUAL EXISTENCE. The only disciples then living were the eleven, but He prays for them who should hereafter believe, &c. And how many have believed through their word, and will yet—a great multitude which no man can number. And yet all these seem present to Christ. His great soul realized each in His distinctive personality, and for them He prays. To a soul in vital fellowship with God, and inspired with the spirit of omniscience, time and space are of little account. The prophets threw their glance into the distant centuries, but none of them saw the future as the Incarnate Word. A Being who thus knows the future can never be disappointed. II. HIS METHOD OF CALLING THEM INTO HIS SCHOOL. 1. They must believe on Him, not on what men say about Him and not on priesthoods, but on Him. This is the only way of becoming a disciple. 2. They must believe on Him "through their word," *i.e.*, their testimony of Him. It is a witnessing word. "How can they believe on Him of whom they have not heard," &c. That is the method. Do not expect any other. III. HIS SUPREME DESIRE FOR THEM. 1. That they should be united on earth. Observe—(1) The nature of this unity. (*a*) It is very vital. One living in another.

"I in them," &c. There is nothing uncommon in this idea. The object we love most lives in us as a living force. Friend lives in friend; the parent in the loving child. Love brings the distant object near, and enshrines it in the heart. Thus those who love Christ have Christ in them; and those whom Christ loves are in Him; and as Christ and His disciples both love the infinite Father, He is in them, and He loves them that are in Him. (*b*) It is a unity of the Infinite with the finite, of the Creator and the creature. An attraction links the smallest atom to the highest orb of immensity, love links the humblest disciples to the great heart of the Infinite, and He to them. (2) A reason for this unity—"That the world," &c. No argument could be formulated so mighty as the thorough soul union of Christ's disciples. 2. That they should dwell with Him in heaven (ver. 24). (1) With Him in person as well as in sympathy. (2) We behold His glory. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **That they all may be one.**—*Unity in Christ:*—I. THE UNITY DESIRED. These words of the Saviour have been mischievously perverted. Ecclesiastics have dreamed of a great confederation, presided over by a number of ministers, these again governed by superior officers, and these again by others, and these topped at last by a supreme visible head, who must be either a person or a council: and what is worse, they turned the dream into a reality, and the time was when, from the centre at the Vatican, one united body covered all Europe. And what was the result? Did the world believe that God had sent Christ? The world believed the very opposite, that God had nothing to do with that great crushing, superstitious thing; and thinking men became infidels. Yet people dream that dream still. 1. What were the elements of this unity which Christ so anxiously desired? The unity was to be composed of the people who are here called "they." Who are they? (1) Persons specially given to Jesus by the Father (ver. 2). Not then of all men who happen to dwell in any particular district, or city, but a unity of persons who have received, not common life, as all have, but life eternal. (2) Persons to whom God's name has been manifested (ver. 6)—chosen men, not the mass, not kingdoms. (3) Persons who have been schooled, and have learned unusual lessons (ver. 7), and they have learned their lesson well. "They have kept Thy word." (4) Persons prayed for by Christ, in a sense in which He never prays for the world (ver. 9). (5) People in whom God is glorified (ver. 10). The one Church of God, is it composed of the Church of England, the Congregational Union, the Wesleyan Conference, and the Baptist body? No. Is not then the Church of England a part of the Church of Christ, and the Baptist denomination a part? No; but there are believers in all denominations of Christians, aye! and many in no visible Church at all, who are in Christ Jesus, and consequently in the great unity. 2. What is the bond which keeps these united ones together? (1) They have the same origin. Every person who is a partaker of the life of God, has sprung from the same Divine Father. (2) They are supported by the same strength. The life which makes vital the prayer of a believer to-day is the same life which quickened the cry of a believer two thousand years ago. (3) They have the same aim and object. The inward spirit is forcing its way to the same perfection of holiness, and is meanwhile seeking to glorify God. (4) Above all, the Holy Spirit, who dwells in every believer, is the true fount of oneness. I meet an Englishman anywhere the wide world over, and I recognize in him some likeness to myself; and so I meet a Christian five hundred years back in the midst of Romanism and darkness, but his speech bewrayeth him; if my soul shall traverse space in one hundred years to come, although Christianity may have assumed another outward garb and fashion, I shall still recognize the Christian. This is a very different bond from that which men try to impose upon each other. They put straps round the outside, they tie us together with many knots, and we feel uneasy; but God puts a Divine life inside of us, and then we wear the sacred bonds of love with ease. 3. There are tokens which evidence this union, and prove that the people of God are one. We hear much moaning over our divisions. There may be some that are to be deplored among ecclesiastical confederacies, but in the spiritual church I am at a loss to discover the divisions which are so loudly proclaimed. There is a union—(1) In judgment upon all vital matters. I converse with a spiritual man, and no matter what he calls himself, when we talk of sin, pardon, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and such like themes, we are agreed. (2) In experimental points. (3) In heart. Where the Spirit of God is there must be love. How is it that I cannot help loving George Herbert and George Fox, who are in some things complete opposites? Because they both loved the Master. (4) In prayer. Well-taught believers address the throne of grace in the same style, whatever may be the particular form which their Church organization may have assumed. (5) In

praise. Our music goes up with sweet accord to the throne of grace. (6) In action. True Christians anywhere are all doing the same work. 4. You say, "But I cannot see this unity." Why? Perhaps—(1) Because of your want of information. I saw a large building the other day being erected, and puzzled myself to make out how that would make a complete structure; it seemed to me that the gables would come in so very awkwardly. But I dare say if I had seen a plan there might have been some central tower or some combination by which the wings, one of which appeared to be longer than the other, might have been brought into harmony, for the architect doubtless had a unity in his mind which I had not in mine. So you and I have not the necessary information as to what the Church is to be. The plan is not worked out yet. Shall the Master show you His plan? Not so; wait a while and you will find that all these diversities among spiritually-minded men, when the master-plan comes to be wrought out, are different parts of the grand whole. I go into a great factory: there is a wheel spinning away in that way perfectly careless of every other wheel; there is another going in an opposite direction, and I say, "What an extraordinary muddle this all seems!" I do not understand the machinery. So when I go into the great visible Church of God, if I look with the eyes of my spirit I can see the inner harmony, but if with these eyes I look upon the great outward Church I cannot see it. (2) Because of the present roughness of the material? See yonder a number of stones—here, a number of trees; I cannot see the unity. Of course not. When these trees are all cut into planks, when these stones are all squared, then you may begin to see them as a whole. (3) Because you cannot see anything. Do not suppose that the unity of the Church is a thing that is to be seen by these eyes of ours. Never! Everything spiritual is spiritually discerned. You must get spiritual eyes before you can see it. II. THE WORK THAT IS TO BE DONE BEFORE THIS UNITY CAN BE COMPLETE. There are many chosen ones who have not yet believed in Christ, and the Church cannot be one till these are saved. These chosen ones are to believe—that is a work of grace, but they are to believe through our word. If you would promote the unity of Christ's Church, look after His lost sheep. If you ask what is to be your word, the answer is in the text—it is to be concerning Christ. They are to believe in Him. Every soul that believes in Christ is built into the great gospel unity in its measure. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *True and false unity*:—There be two false peaces or unities: the one when the peace is grounded but upon an implicit ignorance; for all colours will agree in the dark; the other when it is pieced up upon a direct admission of contraries in fundamental points. For truth and falsehood in such things are like the iron and clay in the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image: they may cleave, but they will not incorporate. (*Lord Bacon.*) *Church unity*:—I. WHAT IS THE ONENESS? There is a widespread tendency to confound it with uniformity. But there may be unity without uniformity, and there may be uniformity without unity. In the planks of a timber yard, sawn of equal length, breadth, and thickness, there is uniformity, but it is the uniformity of death without unity. In the trees of the wood or forest there is unity of life and general structure, with great diversity of form, fibre, and foliage. The very absence of uniformity adds to the impressiveness of the unity which responds in every trunk and branch and leaf to the quickening influences of the spring and the calm decay of autumn. The uniformity of a Church or society may be like the uniformity of a graveyard in which all the tombs, monuments, and headstones are of one pattern: but unity can be found only amongst the living. The oneness which the Saviour sought was Divine—1. In its model: "As Thou, Father," &c. These words remind us of "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." This is a unity—(1) Of life (chap. v. 26). Believers are begotten through the same word of truth, born by the grace of the same Spirit, pervaded by the same principle of spiritual life, partakers of the same Divine nature, and adopted into the same family. How diversified soever they may be in age, or station, or attainment, they possess a life in common. (2) Of character. Jesus is "the image of the invisible God." The oneness of all Christian disciples is after this model. In so far as they are after the pattern of Christ, they see alike, feel alike, act alike on all moral questions. They must all have the Spirit of Christ, hate sin, live by faith. (3) Of enjoyment. The joy of the Father was the delight of the incarnate Son; in blessedness they are one. So with the happiness of all His disciples. All drink of the water of that river which makes glad the city of God, and their purest joy is centred in things heavenly and Divine. 2. In its sphere—"in us." It is obvious that Christ Jesus here claims for Himself equality with God. No mere man, without blasphemy, could use such language as this. The only sphere in which Christian

unity can be realized, is in the reconciling Father and the redeeming Son. Very different are the thoughts of men on this great matter. (1) The world says, "Let nations be one in the reciprocities of commerce; let free trade bind human tribes together with the bonds of its golden girdle; let brotherhood be realized in the mysteries of freemasonry; let unity become a fact for mankind through the sceptre and shield of a universal monarchy." But the disruption and discord made by sin defy all such efforts at unification. (2) Even the Church has said, "Let us make oneness by the bonds of the same ecclesiastical polity and by the use of the same liturgical service; let us compel men to oneness of creed and worship by the force of law, or allure them at least to the appearance of it by the power of state patronage and worldly pomp." Christ says to the Father, "Let them be one in us." Nowhere else, and in no other way, can this oneness become a spiritual fact. II. THE GRAND PURPOSE CONTEMPLATED IN THE REALIZATION OF THIS ONENESS: "That the world may believe," &c. One of the greatest obstacles to the triumphs of the gospel is in the contentions and separations which have prevailed in the Church of Christ. But when the world sees the Church, in all its sections, drawn and knit together, not to profess the same polity, and in spite of intellectual differences to show its oneness in Christ the living Head, then will the world believe that Jesus Christ has come as the sent of God for the cure of its ills and the relief of all its woes. It is not difficult to see how this spirit would operate in convincing the world. Would it not be a triumph of Christian love? "God is love," but where is the evidence of this amidst the jealousy, sectarianism, and contentions of the disciples of Christ? In the first age of the Church the evidence was often impressive, and the heathen around them were led to exclaim, "See how these Christians love each other." So it should be still. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The unity of the Church:*—I. THE INTIMATIONS TO BE FOUND IN THE WORDS OF OUR LORD. Observe—1. That there is a oneness between believers in Christ. The very essence of unity is that it proceeds from within, and is not impressed from without, that there is a common living spirit pervading and inter-penetrating all that mass, which but for it would be a multitude of separate parts. To fulfil, then, the words of our Lord's prayer, His people must be all dwelt in by one and the same living Spirit, which so pervades every one of them that it gathers them up into a living body, communicating to them hereby a hidden principle of common life, which makes them one together, how many soever they be, and which, by the deep real separation of a distinct life, separates them from all others, how near soever such may seem to draw to them in outward things. 2. That this one life of the saints is the consequence of their union with Him (1 Cor. xii. 13; Col. iii. 3; Rom. viii. 9). 3. That this unity is a thing hidden, as are all the principles of life, but yet outwardly developed, as are all the forms of derived life in a visible body (Rom. xii. 5; Eph. i. 23; 1 Cor. xii. 13, 20; Col. i 18). From this it follows that the growth and development of this body, its form and shape, its acting and character, are all the putting forth of the powers of this indwelling Spirit of life. (1) For this is the very first principle of organization as connected with life, even down to the lowest acting. That this will act according to its own laws; shaping to itself its own external development, casting itself forth now in massive branches, or in robust limbs, and then weaving for itself the most delicate tracery of the finest leaf or fibre; or gushing out, as in animal life, into the infinite subdivision of hair and plumage, even to the fine down upon the wing of the insect. And yet being truly in all of these the life from within, in its outward acting, and not any impress from without. So that unity may exist where the eye of man cannot trace even connection. For not apparent outward coherence but community of inner spirit is the formal and constituting essence of unity; and where this exists not, the impress of outward things cannot produce unity. For it is another part of the very law of life that external impressions can but interfere with, and mar the perfectness which it shapes for itself. That external impressions produce what we term monstrous or imperfect shapes. And still further, the interference of these external impressions may cause that life to withdraw itself from the immediate outward part, which is subjected to them, so that it dies and falls off, as some decaying branch or diseased limb, thereby cutting off at the same time its principle of unity, so that in a little while it is evidently severed from the body of which it once, but now no longer, forms a part. And further, we see that such separations from its frame cannot be effected without some injury to the very body itself; the health and soundness of which, even in its centre of being and action, depend in a marvellous way upon the just and equal development of these its remotest extremities. (2) All which laws apply also to this body,

of which Christ is the head. (*a*) It is weaving forth for itself its own external increase (Eph. ii. 22; iv. 16; 1 Cor. xii. 6). And this it is doing in ten thousand ways; in the great limbs of Church polity and succession; in the hands wherewith at any moment the Church is ready to do her Master's work; in the societies she puts forth; the new combinations she forms; the new phases under which she shows herself; and so also in the details of every Christian man's character and conduct, for there is nothing so great that this life does not take it up into itself, and as it were reproduce it, nothing so small into which it cannot transfuse its own living energy, until it can fill and glorify all the minutest details of daily conduct, social intercourse, and natural affection. (*b*) Then again, while outward things cannot perfect the working of this life, they may interfere with it, mar, and even extinguish it. The branch in this vine may wither, the inner life may draw itself back, until that outward part in which it once acted may be "cut off" from the life and unity of the stock. The spirit may be quenched. The individual Christian may be broken off from the living body of which he was a part. A whole branch of the Church may be withered and die. Nor can this be without grievous injury to all the body; for if "one member suffer, all the members suffer with it;" so that a time of much disunion cannot be a healthful and flourishing time of the Church any more than in a tree loaded with dead boughs there can be a healthful, vigorous vegetation. II. THE PRACTICAL DUTIES WHICH THIS GREAT TRUTH ENFORCES UPON US. 1. We must strive really to believe it. (1) Because it is of such importance; for without a real faith in this—(*a*) We strip the Church of Christ of all its glory. It is in this mystery of the hidden life that the very blessedness of our redeemed state consists. It is this which binds in one the broken links of humanity. In refusing to believe it, we rob of all its lustre the marvellous dispensation in which God's mercy has placed us. We bring it down again to a mere Jewish level. (*b*) And the evil follows us into the furthest details of our own spiritual life. There are blessed secrets of strength which come out daily for Him who, with a purged eye, sees ever round Him this communion of the saints, which must be lost by him who lowers it into an empty form of speech. (2) Because it is one which we do not readily receive or keep. It is a great mystery; it needs a strong faith to hold it firmly. (*a*) To hold that the declaration of the oneness of Christians with each other is but a strong way of saying that we ought to be kind to each other when we can, is far easier than to believe that, from Christ our Head, there has gone forth a true life, holding in its wonderful unity all of His together, which we are to cherish and guard in ten thousand secret instances of self-denial, and faith, and purity, and hard service, borne for each other cheerfully, because we are in very deed members one of another. (*b*) Nor is this all. It is difficult to read this mysterious unity under the coarse features of common life; to believe in it, in spite of the world's mockery, and the unfaithfulness of the better sort, and the multitude of divisions, and the weakness of our own hearts. (*c*) But it is not impossible; and therefore we must strive after its attainment. And God does graciously give many aids to those who do so strive. Is it not, for instance, an assistance to us, if we will use it, whenever God withdraws behind the veil those whom in the Lord we have fondly loved here, do we not then feel that there is an inner life binding us to them, which common death cannot part? 2. But specially may our faith in this mystery be increased by diligence in performing the second duty, *i.e.*, beginning to act upon it. God has gifted action with a wonderful power over us; and if we will begin to act sincerely in little things, as if this were true, He will work in us a power of trusting to its truth. And here is, indeed, a wide field before us. We may begin by striving with our own selfish and indolent tempers in our intercourse with those around us. (*Bp. S. Wilberforce.*) *The unity of the Church*:—I. FOR WHOM IT IS DESIRED. 1. Not for men as men, citizens, subjects, persons allied in trade, politics, &c. 2. But for men as believers (ver. 20). Christ takes in the grand total, a temple in which each of these shall find a place and bear a part. *Cf.* Paul's vision of a unified Church (Eph. i. 10; ii. 21), and Peter's picture of a spiritual house (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5). II. IN WHAT IT CONSISTS. Generally in a oneness resembling that between the Father and the Son (vers. 21, 22), and particularly in a oneness—1. Of life or community of nature (chap. v. 26; x. 30; *cf.* 1 Cor. xii. 13; Eph. iv. 4-6). 2. Of love, or community of affection (chap. iii. 35; v. 20; xiv. 31; *cf.* xiii. 34; xv. 12, 17). 3. Of faith or community of sentiment. As the words of the Son were the Father's, so the union of the saints should reveal itself in steadfast adherence to the Father's word given by Christ. 4. Of action or community of labour. As

the Son can do nothing but what He seeth the Father do (chap. v. 19), and the Father in Him doeth the works (chap. xiv. 10), so should Christians harmoniously co-operate (Phil. i. 27; 2 Cor. i. 24; 3 John 8; Heb. x. 24). III. BY WHAT MEANS IT MAY BE REALIZED? By believers doing three things. 1. Remaining in union with the Father and the Son (ver. 21). 2. Participating in the glory Christ has received from the Father (ver. 22). 3. Pressing forward towards moral perfection (ver. 23). IV. TO WHAT RESULT IT SHOULD LEAD. It should awaken in the world —1. Faith in the Divine mission of Jesus (ver. 21). 2. Knowledge that the Divine mission of Jesus was a fact (ver. 23). Lessons: (1) The mission assigned to the Church—that of gathering a people out of the world and unto Christ by the preaching of the Word. (2) The aim Christ has in thus collecting a people from the world, that they all may be perfected in one body in Him. (3) The certainty that this aim will be realized, since Christ has both empowered His Church to do the work, and prayed for its successful execution. (4) The obstruction offered to the realization of this aim by the disunited condition and imperfect character of the Church. (5) The means of hastening the world's conversion to Christ, the Church striving to attain the complete sanctification and unity. (6) The destiny awaiting the world when the Church shall have reached its proper manhood, that of being brought to a saving knowledge of the truth. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The unity of the Church*:—The Church is one, not in the monarchial sense, as Romanists believe; not in the sense of historical descent of an external organization as Prelatists teach, but in the sense of a mystical body united to Christ, their common head. The consequences of the union with Christ are—I. OUR JUSTIFICATION. We become partakers of Christ's righteousness, because it was wrought out in the name and on the behalf of His people. II. OUR SANCTIFICATION. We become partakers of the Divine life, and this life is sustained and developed. 1. By the nourishment derived from the Word and ordinances. 2. By fellowship with Christ. 3. By the inter-communion of the saints. As one member of the body is sustained and grows in virtue of the ministration of all the other members, so it is with the mystical body of Christ. 4. This supposes organic unity and diversity of gifts; some apostles, some teachers; some have one gift, some another. With regard to these Paul teaches—(1) That unity is essential. (2) That the position of each member is assigned by God, and not by himself or by the body. Hence we infer—(*a*) That each should be content. (*b*) That all should sympathize, the one with the others. (*c*) That all should cordially co-operate. It is thus that the work of sanctification is carried on, not in the isolated individual, but in the soul as partaker of a common life and a member of an organic whole. So in regard to the State: What would individual gifts and attainment be to a man isolated in an uninhabited land. III. OUR SECURITY. No man can pluck them out of the hand of Christ. The gates of hell shall not prevail. IV. OUR GLORIFICATION. Conclusion: Duties flowing from this union—love, assistance, joy in success, abstaining from envy. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The unity of the Church*:—I. WHAT IT IS NOT. Our Lord did not mean—1. A system of perfect equality with no official distinctions—anything like universal identity of endowment and function. This cannot be drawn from "*As* Thou, Father," &c., inasmuch as God the Father and God the Son in the economy of redemption sustain distinct offices. Absolute equality is absurd and impossible and inconsistent with Rom. x i.; 1 Cor. xii., and Eph. iv., which show that the unity of the Church may consist with the greatest diversity of gifts and offices. 2. The opposite of this—a vast and visible society, its base diffused throughout all nations, its officers innumerable, distinguished by all gradations of authority, and terminating in an infallible head. That our Lord did not mean a unity like this we gather from the fact that His apostles never attempted to realize it. Wherever they went they formed separate churches, not parts of one connected community. They did not join the Church of one country with that of another; they did not make their churches churches of nations and provinces, but of villages and towns. There might be more than one in each place. Each Church—however in faith and feeling connected with others—was a distinct society. 3. Uniformity in constitution and ceremonies. This is obvious from the facts—(1) That so little is enjoined on these subjects. Here is the distinction between Moses and Christ. With the first, everything is minutely particularized and strictly commanded; with the second, everything is general, and to be learned from facts rather than precepts: for the one dispensation was intended to separate a nation from the rest of the world; the other was meant to unite all nations in a common faith and family, and therefore avoided multiplied ordinances. (2) That

although in every apostolic Church there was a recognition of great common principles, yet there were local peculiarities. There were diffused the two great bodies of the circumcision and the uncircumcision, and a Church consisting exclusively of converted Jews and another of Gentiles would be sure to differ in particulars. St. James advised Paul in Jerusalem to condescend to the ceremonial predilections of the brethren there; but he advised very differently in the case of the Gentile Church at Antioch. 4. Perfect coincidence of opinion. This is evident from what has been said, as a Church may differ from others without forfeiting its character, so a Christian. To aver the reverse would contradict the constitution of nature and the arrangements of providence. In Rom. xiv. Paul distinctly refers to two classes there who held opposite opinions, but instead of interposing his own opinion, he approves the conscientiousness with which the two parties were actuated, and only denounces their want of charity. Phil. iii., too, is demonstrative of the prevalence of diversity of sentiment. II. WHAT IT IS. 1. Its foundation must be laid in an agreement in fundamental truth. We cannot do better than take our stand where Paul stood. For the sake of usefulness and peace he could become all things unto all men. He could shave his head, circumcise Timothy, &c., and yet write against "beggarly elements." Paul, who in fellowship and affection was the yielding universalist when prejudice was in question, was firm as a rock when principle was assailed. If ever he referred to what was fundamental he did so in Gal. i. 9. Whatever that gospel was, it is obvious that no man or Church that rejects it can properly be a Christian; and the whole tenor of the Epistle shows it to be the doctrine of justification on the exclusive ground of faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. If a society denies this doctrine, whatever it may have or have not, it has abandoned the faith for another gospel. This grand fundamental involves Christ's Divinity, and the necessity of renewal and sanctification by the Spirit; but it does not involve either Calvinism or Arminianism, or Church polity, and may be held in connection with great variety of opinion on subordinate points. 2. It ought to be manifested by the recognition of each other, by Christians and Churches thus harmonizing. Every individual who "holds the Head" ought to be cheerfully recognized as a Christian by every other who does the same, and ought to share in that family affection which is peculiar to the spirit of the gospel. This feeling will produce a readiness to co-operate in all benevolent confederacies. But the text is to be realized not merely by the recognition of Christian by Christian, but of Church by Church. Every Church ought to possess the power of accepting the services of the ministers of every other. Differences of disciples ought not to be a barrier. All who expect to unite in the services of heaven, ought to endeavour to unite in the services of earth. Nothing should be a term of union but a term of salvation. 3. If this union were practised little would be wanting to the fulfilment of the prayer or the accomplishment of the result connected. Separate denominations would soon lose their hold of whatever partakes of the nature of sectarian attachments, would imbibe an enlarged and accommodating spirit; would mutually cease to contend for trifles, and would come perhaps in the end, fused and melted by the fire of love, to take some new form, as one great consolidated community. In relation to the world, the annihilation of party distinctions, the drying up of the wells of jealousy, &c., and the taking into the garden of the Lord of every enclosure would be such a palpable demonstration of the presence and power of truth and love that the world would gaze, admire, and believe. III. CONCLUSION. 1. This prayer is fulfilled to a greater extent than would at first sight be supposed. The existence of separate churches, and the want of uniformity between them, do not militate against actual agreement in fundamentals, or fraternal feeling. The great saving truths are urged with equal zeal by ministers of various denominations, and members of different churches work side by side in philanthropic enterprises. 2. The prayer will never be fully accomplished but by the removal of all that interferes with the communion of churches. If Christians wait until every Church is modelled according to any supposed apostolic pattern, till some community has drawn and absorbed all others into itself, they will have to wait far longer than any of them calculate. This consummation is much more likely to follow the practice of universal communion than to precede it; but whether it ever come or not, the obligation remains the some. The one is an unquestionable duty, the other a dream. 3. We learn how to possess our souls in peace amid the alarm and agitation of the present times. It becomes us to keep our eye and heart steadily on the prayer of Christ; to engage

in every religious movement which the present position of the Church may demand to promote its accomplishment. This will at once sanctify uncongenial duties, and sustain under the injustice of calumny and insult. (*T. Binney.*) *Church unity*:—I. THE LORD IS TO BE RECOGNIZED AS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH. His name is the only true bond of union. II. THE COMMON FELLOWSHIP OF ALL BELIEVERS IN CHRIST. III. THE HONEST RECOGNITION OF ONE ANOTHER AS BRETHREN IN CHRIST, whether within or without the various churches. IV. THE DETERMINATION TO BE FORBEARING one toward another, and to maintain the body of Christ, provided the faith be maintained by the members in heart and life. (*H. Varley.*) *The fact and the means of Church unity*:—According to the present scientific theory, all of the planets came out of the sun. That central orb sent off ring after ring, and these consolidated into planets, and then, moving within the influence of their common origin, they swing without collision round the grand common centre of the sun itself. So should not the denominational planets also swing without collision around their common origin and centre, Jesus Christ? Plutarch tells us of a golden tripod that was fished from the bottom of the sea. There was a great contention about the possession of it; and, when the conflict waxed quite ferocious, it was settled that neither of the contending parties should have it, but that it should be given to the wisest man. They sent it first of all to Thales. He said, "I am not the wisest man; take it to Bias." Bias, on being approached, said, "Don't bring it here. I am not the wisest man in Greece. I won't have it." And so they sent it from one to another through a circle of the seven wisest men, with a like reception, until at last it was settled that the fair tripod should be given to Apollo. Now, they all had the modesty of true wisdom; and if all the denominations had only that modesty or real wisdom displayed by these sages never to make any claim of exclusiveness or superiority, there would be unbroken peace among them all. (*H. M. Scudder.*) *The essential unity of the Church*:—During a visit of the King of Italy to Naples, the nine Protestant ministers of that city begged the favour of an interview. The young monarch granted their request, and received them with marked courtesy. He was surprised, however, when one was presented to him as a Methodist, and another as a Baptist, the third as a Presbyterian, the fourth as a Waldensian, &c. "I do not understand," said the king, "how you can all be ministers of the same gospel, and yet have so many distinctions. Perhaps one of you will be good enough to explain this to me." The Waldensian minister promptly replied, "In your majesty's army there are many regiments wearing different uniforms and called by different names; nevertheless they are under one commander-in-chief, and follow one flag. In like manner we Protestants are divided into various denominations, but we know only one Chief—Jesus Christ; and we follow but one banner, viz., that of the gospel of our crucified and risen Lord." The king listened attentively, and then said, "I thank you for this clear explanation. You wish me to understand that while there are differences among you on minor matters, there is unity in essentials." (*W. Baxendale.*) *Christian unity*:—I was walking, some weeks since, in a beautiful grove. The trees were some distance apart, and the trunks were straight and rugged. But as they ascended higher the branches came closer together, and still higher the twigs and branches interlaced and formed a beautiful canopy. I said to myself, our Churches resemble these trees. The trunks near the earth stand stiffly and widely apart. The more nearly towards heaven they ascend, the closer and closer they come together, until they form one beautiful canopy, under which the sons of men enjoy both shelter and happiness. Then I thought of that beautiful prayer of the Saviour, "That they all may be one," &c. (*Bp. M. Simpson.*) *Christian unity*:—I was once permitted to unite in celebrating the Lord's Supper in an upper room in Jerusalem. There were fourteen present, the most of whom, I had good reason to believe, knew and loved the Lord Jesus Christ. Several were godly Episcopalians; two were converted Jews—one a Christian from Nazareth, converted under American missionaries. The bread and wine were dispensed in the Episcopal manner, and most were kneeling as they received them. We felt it to be sweet fellowship with Christ, and with the brethren; and, as we left the upper room and looked out upon the Mount of Olives, we remembered with calm joy the prayer from our Lord that ascended from one of the shady ravines after the first Lord's Supper—"That they all may be one." (*R. M. M'Cheyne.*) *Friends mistaken for foes*:—I recollect, on one occasion, conversing with a marine, who gave me a good deal of his history. He told me that the most terrible engagement he had ever been in was one between the ship to which he belonged and another English vessel, when, on meeting in the

night they mistook each other for enemies. Several persons were wounded, and both vessels were much damaged by the firing. When the day broke, great and painful was the surprise to find the English flag hoisted from both ships. They saluted each other, and wept bitterly together over their mistake. Christians, sometimes, commit the same error. One denomination mistakes another for an enemy; it is night, and they do not recognize one another. What will be their surprise when they see each other in heaven's light! How will they salute each other when better known and understood! (*W. Williams.*)

Vers. 22, 23. **The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them.**—*The Church's unity and its influence*:—I. THE GIFT WHICH CHRIST BESTOWS ON HIS disciples. 1. What was the glory which Christ received? A glory belonged to the Son of God in His own Divine right (ver. 5). But the glory GIVEN to Him must refer to His mission in becoming incarnate. It was the glory of being—(1) The Divine Messenger. He was a Teacher sent from God to unfold all the truth which we required to know for our spiritual renewal and everlasting welfare, so that He proclaimed Himself as the "Light of the World." (2) The Divine Agent. He came to act for God, as well as to declare His truth. How much of true glory was there in such godlike action and enterprise as this! (3) The Divine Representative. He came to show us the Father, to manifest the Divine name and character (Heb. i. 3). 2. The glory communicated by Christ. Clearly it has no reference to any perishable wealth or worldly honour; for "the Son of man had not where to lay His head." It is the glory of being—(1) The messengers of God (chap. xx. 21). Christ came as the Light of the world, so in and through Him they are the light of the world. (2) The agents of God. As the glory of Christ consisted in doing the Father's will, and in being about His business, so in the same should the glory of all Christians be found. (3) The representatives of God. In Jesus there shone forth the glory of the only begotten of the Father, and His true disciples receive of His glory, even grace for grace. Men seek glory for themselves in the material resources, social attractions, and artistic splendours of the world. But all such glory can be no lasting portion for the soul. The glory which Christ bestows will be remembered, and made to shine forth at the manifestation of the sons of God at the end of all things. II. THE DESIGN OF THIS GIFT. "That they may be one," &c. Wherever the glory makes itself appear, you see the truest evidence of Christian discipleship, and the highest proof of Christian unity. This unity is—1. Glorious in its source: "I in them, and Thou in Me." In this way only are Christians truly and vitally one. In the absence of the living Saviour from individual souls, no forced process of uniformity, no subscription merely of the same creed, can effect their union in one body. Christ is in all His true disciples; in their understandings, as the object of the highest knowledge; in their hearts, as the King of Love; in their consciences, as the Prince of Peace; in their whole inner being, as the Lord of Life, the Captain of Salvation, and the Hope of Glory. Thus He becomes the true principle and bond of all unity. 2. Gradual in its realization: "That they may be perfected into one." Many things hinder the complete enthronement of Christ in the soul, and so many hindrances prevent the perfecting of the Church's oneness. Christians, instead of showing their essential unity, have appeared to be the fiercest and most uncompromising foes. But all hindrances will yet be overcome. 3. This triumph of unity is the very highest design which can be realised in relation to the Church. Sin is the element of discord, and the principle of dissocialism and separation in the world; and God's great purpose for the destruction of this discord, and the restoration of true harmony, is the establishment of a holy brotherhood in Christ, the living Centre and personal Head of men. By Him God is to reconcile all things unto Himself. III. THE GLORIOUS END TO BE ACCOMPLISHED. "That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me," &c. 1. In ver. 21, Jesus said, "that the world may believe;" here He says that the world may know. Knowledge is belief, or faith in its highest attainment. The growing oneness of the disciples would be to the world an evidence of Christian truth, and the triumph of Christian love, mighty and irresistible. But Christ gives an additional thought—"that Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." Through this conviction alone, of God's infinite love, do the children of the world become the children of God. What an exhibition of the exceeding riches of Divine grace in the gift of God's only begotten Son would this oneness supply! 2. This oneness, moreover, would show the exceeding blessedness of consecration to God. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The glory, unity, and triumph of the Church*:—

I. THE GREAT MEANS OF THE UNITY which Christ proposes here. "The glory which Thou gavest Me," &c. The glory which the Father gave the Son was—1. That He endowed Him with the Holy Spirit (chap. iii. 34, 35). The Holy Ghost descended upon our Lord in His baptism and abode upon Him. In Him was fulfilled Isaiah xi. 1-3. In this Spirit there is glory, for the prophet further says, "His rest shall be glorious." Now upon each true disciple this glory of God rests according to his measure. Owing to this endowment, there rested upon Jesus Christ a wondrous glory in many respects. (1) As man He knew the name and character of God. "The pure in heart shall see God," and those pure eyes of His had seen God to the full. Has He not given us that same vision of the Father? Yes, for He tells us, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Our eyes have been opened by the blessed Spirit of God to see the invisible. (2) In His receiving, keeping, and giving forth the Word of God. The depository of the Divine word was Christ, and this was greatly to His glory. Is not THE WORD, one of the brightest of His titles? But now He hath given unto us the Word, and henceforth we are to hold forth the Word of Life. 2. In the sanctification of His blessed person. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself." How consecrated to God He was from His childhood till He said, "It is finished!" This is the glory which He gives to us. His prayer is, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." His disciples live unto holiness, and are known as a people zealous of good works. 3. In His mission. "As thou hast sent Me into the world, even so," &c. 4. In His model humanity. You, too, are not to be common men, but model men. Jesus especially was a model in—(1) His perfect self-abnegation. For God's glory, and Christ's purpose in the convincement of the world, we are to live, and if we do so the Spirit of glory will be resting upon us. (2) His oneness with God. His life ran parallel with the path of the Most High. 5. Wherever this glory is seen true unity is developed. Suppose I were to find a man, living in the likeness of Christ, with this spiritual glory conspicuous upon him. Suppose he is a coalheaver, the glory of his character will be none the less conspicuous amid the dust; or suppose that he is an earl, the glory will be none the more dim because of the good man's honours. The holy consecration in each case is the same, and the degrees of rank do not affect the essential beauty of either. If you bring a company of common Christians together and they begin discussing, I daresay they will jangle; but if you could select a number upon whom this glory rests, within a short time they will be all on their knees together, or singing together, or engaged in some form of loving fellowship. Spiritual men are so essentially one that like two drops which lie close together they have an increasing tendency to unite. II. THE UNITY ITSELF. It is not uniformity. This our Lord says nothing of. Though we are one body in Him, yet all the members have not the same office. 1. "I in them." Christ lives in His people, and we are so to act, in the power of the Holy Ghost, that onlookers shall say, "Surely Christ lives again in that man, for he acts out the precepts of Jesus." 2. "Thou in Me." That is, God is in Christ. This is manifestly true, for you cannot read the life of Christ without seeing God in Him. 3. This brings about the union of believers with the Father: being one with Christ, and Christ being one with the Father, the point is reached for which our Lord prayed, "that they also may be one in us." 4. Couple this with believers being one with each other, and you get the being "made perfect in one." Moved by the same love of holiness, inspired by the same spirit of love, the eternal Father's will is the will of the Son, and the Spirit worketh in us also to will and to do according to the good pleasure of the Lord. III. THE EFFECT WHICH THIS PRODUCES. 1. It will convince the world of the truth of Christ's mission. When they see men who are no longer selfish, hard, ungenerous; men no longer governed by their passions; men who desire that which is holy, just, and good; men living to God—then the world will say, "Their Master must have been sent of God." And then, not only will their characters convince, but their unity, because the ungodly world will say, "We see the glory of Christianity in the poor man, and we see the same in the rich man." 2. But the world is also to be convinced of the Father's love to us. When the world sees bodies of truly consecrated men and women living together in holy love, then they will also see much joy, peace, mutual consolation, and they will perceive that the providence of God makes all things work together for their good, and that the Lord has a special care over them as a shepherd hath over his flock. Then will they say, "These are the people that God has blessed." See how He loves them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *True glory*:—I. IS THE SAME IN ALL MORAL INTELLIGENCES. This prayer speaks of several grand unities. 1. One life. The life of

God and Christ are here spoken of as one. 2. One truth; "Thy truth." Truth has many sides, but it is one essential whole. Truths are but phases of His. 3. One Church. The Christly in all sects and countries are but one family of which Christ is the Head. 4. One love. Benevolence has many modifications, but in essence it is the same in all. 5. One glory. The glory that Christ had was the glory of God, and this He imparts to us—the glory of moral goodness. In the eye of conscience, in the light of the Bible, and in the estimate of God, the good only are glorious. II. IS COMMUNICABLE FROM ONE BEING TO ANOTHER. Three things are necessary to its communication—1. The manifestation of it. Were the Eternal to conceal His glory, no creature intelligence could participate in its rays. A good being to make others good must show his goodness. 2. The contemplation of it. What boots it, if no eye observes the manifested glory. The man who at noonday shuts his eyes is as much in the dark as though it were midnight. 3. The imitation of it. There must be an effort on the part of the observer to imbibe, cherish, and develop the Divine goodness. III. COMES TO MAN THROUGH CHRIST. Christ is the only perfect Revealer, "We beheld His glory," &c. It is by studying and imitating Him that men become glorious. "For we with open face," &c. IV. IS CONSISTENT WITH CIRCUMSTANTIAL SUFFERING. As seen in the case of these disciples—1. How glorious their endurance! 2. How glorious their achievements! To their victories we owe our liberty, Bibles, schools, asylums, Christendom. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Saints glorified on earth*:—I. THE CHARACTER OF THIS CHRIST-GIVEN GLORY. 1. Negatively. (1) Not in appearance. Painters have delighted to pourtray Christ with a shining halo on His brow. But this is imaginary. "His visage was marred more than any man's," &c. (2) Not in regal state and trappings. These He despised. He refused to be made a king, and had not where to lay His head. (3) Not in immediate triumph over existing conditions in any department of thought or action. Judged by all accepted standards of glory hardly was ever teacher less glorious. 2. Positively. His glory lay in the purpose and aim of His life, as appointed by the Father and accepted by Himself. It was early made known that God's glory was His goodness. At the Incarnation the angel song showed this, and so did Christ at the first manifestation of His glory at Cana. And now with the Cross in prospect He prays (vers. 1, 2). 3. It is clear then that Christ gives glory to His people in calling them to carry forward His work and in granting them necessary equipment (vers. 8, 18). Christians are given to know the glory of being fellow-labourers with their Master. Perhaps to some the Lord's call to service has been unattractive and irksome. It is the glory He hath given us. Is not the soldier honoured when appointed a part in the thick of the fight? II. THE DESIGN OF CHRIST IN GIVING GLORY TO HIS PEOPLE. 1. To glorify God by making Him known (vers. 1, 6). The fruitful cause of the world's woe is ignorance of God. 2. To lead to blessed union with God and one another, "that they may be one" &c. 3. Here is discovered the responsibility of all disciples. By unfaithfulness we may turn our glory into shame. III. THIS CHRIST-GIVEN GLORY THROWS LIGHT ON THE FUTURE GLORY OF THE SAINTS, which will consist of—1. A call to higher service. "Inasmuch as thou hast been faithful over a few things," &c. 2. The realization of perfect and harmonious relationship with God and one another. 3. The possession of true rest and joy—the joy of accomplished and prospective service. (*J. Stevens.*) *The mutual glory of Christ and His people*:—I. THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S GLORY. There is—1. The essential glory of Christ. 2. His mediatorial glory. 3. His remunerative glory. II. SOME INSTANCES IN WHICH THIS GLORY IS COMMUNICATED TO THE SAINTS. 1. They have glorious titles. 2. Glorious privileges. 3. They are brought into glorious relations. 4. Glorious acts and exploits are ascribed to them. 5. Glorious prospects are before them. III. INFERENCES. 1. The vanity of earthly things. 2. The dignity of real Christians. 3. Press forward to possession. 4. Let Him who put this glory on us receive all glory from US. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *Christ's glory given to His people*:—I. CHRIST'S GLORY. 1. Sonship. 2. Union with God. 3. Perfection of attributes. II. HIS PEOPLE'S GLORY. 1. They are sons of God. 2. They are one with Christ. 3. They reflect His nature. 4. They are kings and priests. (*W. W. Wythe.*) *The glory Christ gives to His disciples*:—As the essence of the glory of Jesus consists in His dignity as the Son, and the well-beloved Son, so the glory He has bestowed on believers is the filial dignity, the state of adoption (chap. i. 12). Whereby they have *become* what He eternally *is*—children of God and objects of His perfect love. This glory Jesus bestowed on His own, by bringing matters to such a state that God could justly reflect upon them all the love which He has for Jesus Himself (vers. 26; chap. xv. 9, 10). Thus

the proposition which follows, "that they may be one," &c., is easily understood. Once objects of the same Father's love, and bearing in common the image of their Elder Brother, they form among themselves a closely united family (*cf.* Rom. viii. 29; Eph. i. 10). (*F. Godet, D.D.*)

Ver. 23. **I in them and Thou in Me.**—*The three unions:*—There are three most admirable unions proposed to our faith in the Christian religion. The Unity of Essence, in the Trinity; the Unity of Person, in Jesus Christ; and the union between Christ and His Church. The first of these is an ensample and prefiguration, as it were to the second; and the second to the third. For we cannot better represent the union with His Church, than by the hypostatic Union, or by the union of the Word with human nature (1 John iv. 8). (*W. Norris.*) *Unity in nature and grace:*—There is one remarkable difference between nature and grace; for nature of one makes many; for we are all but one in Adam, but grace of many makes one; for the Holy Ghost, who as a fire melts all the faithful into one mass, and makes of many one body, in the unity of God. (*W. Dell.*) *The union of believers with Christ:*—The Scriptures have borrowed from nature four metaphors, to describe this mystical union; but neither of these singly, or all of them jointly, can give us a full account of this mystery. 1. Not that of two pieces united by glue (1 Cor. vi. 17), for though this union be intimate, yet it is not vital. 2. Nor that of the graft and stock (Rom. vi. 5), for though this union be vital, yet the graft is of a more excellent kind and nature than the stock, and the tree receives its denomination from it; but Christ, into whom believers are ingrafted, is infinitely more excellent than they, and they are denominated from Him. 3. Nor conjugal union, for though this be exceeding dear and intimate, and they two become one flesh; yet it is not indissolvable, but must be broken by death; but this betwixt Christ and the soul abides to eternity. 4. Nor that of the Head and members united by one spirit, and so making one physical body (Eph. iv. 15, 16), for though one soul actuates every member, yet it doth not knit every member alike near to the head, but here every member is alike nearly united with Christ the Head, the weak are as near to Him as the strong. Note—I. THE REALITY OF THIS UNION, which appears —1. From the communion which is betwixt Christ and believers (1 John i. 3). It signifies such fellowship or co-partnership, as persons have by a joint interest in one and the same enjoyment (Heb. iii. 14; Psa. xlv. 7). Now this communion is entirely dependent upon Union (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23). 2. From the imputation of Christ's righteousness for justification (Rom. iii. 24; iv. 23, 24; 1 Cor. i. 30). 3. From the sympathy that is betwixt Christ and believers; Christ and the saints smile and sigh together (Col. i. 24; Acts ix. 5). 4. From the way in which the saints shall be raised at the last day (Rom. viii. 11). II. THE QUALITY AND NATURE OF THIS UNION. More generally, it is an intimate conjunction of believers to Christ, by the imparting of His Spirit to them, whereby they are enabled to believe and live in Him. All Divine spiritual life is originally in the Father, and cometh not to us, but by and through the Son (chap. v. 26; Rom. viii. 2). The Spirit must therefore first take hold of us, before we can live in Christ, and when He doth so, then we are enabled to exert that vital act of faith whereby we receive Christ (chap. vi. 57). So that the Spirit's work in uniting a soul into Christ is like the cutting off the graft from its native stock (which He doth by His illuminations and convictions) and closing it with the Living Vine, and so enabling it (by the infusion of faith) to draw the vital sap, and thus it becomes one with Him. Or as the many members in the natural body, being all quickened and animated by the same vital spirit, become one body with the Head (Eph. iv. 4). 1. Negatively it is—(1) Not a mere mental union (chap. xiv. 20). This doctrine is not fantastical, but scientifical. (2) Not a physical union, such as is betwixt the members of a natural body and the head; this is only mystical. (3) Not an essential union, or union with the Divine nature, so as our beings are thereby swallowed up and lost in the divine Being. (4) Not a federal union, or an union by covenant only; such an union indeed, there is betwixt Christ and believers, but that is consequential to, and wholly dependent upon this. (5) Not a mere moral union by love and affection; thus we say, one soul is in two bodies, a friend is another self; the lover is in the person beloved; such an union there is also betwixt Christ and the saints, but this is of another nature; that only knits our affections, but this our persons to Christ. 2. Positively. (1) Though this union neither makes us one person or essence with Christ, yet it knits our persons most intimately and nearly to the person of Christ (Col. i. 24). (2) It is wholly supernatural, wrought by the alone power of God (1 Cor. i. 30). We can

no more unite ourselves to Christ than a branch can incorporate itself into another stock (Eph. i. 19, 20). (3) It is an immediate union; not as excluding instruments, but as excluding degrees of nearness (1 Cor. i. 2). (4) It is a fundamental union. (*a*) By way of sustentation: all our fruits of obedience depend upon it (chap. xv. 4). (*b*) To all our privileges and comfortable claims (1 Cor. iii. *ult.*). (*c*) To all our hopes and expectations of glory (Col. i. 27). So then destroy this union, and with it you destroy all our fruits, privileges, and eternal hopes, at one stroke. (5) It is a most efficacious union, for through this union the Divine power flows into our souls, both to quicken us with the life of Christ, and to conserve and secure that life in us, after it is so infused (Eph. iv. 16; John xiv. 19). (6) It is an indissoluble union; there is an everlasting tie betwixt Christ and the believer (Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39). (7) It is an honourable union. The greatest honour that was ever done to our common nature was by its assumption into union with the Second Person hypostatically, and the highest honour that was ever done to our single persons was their union with Christ mystically. To be a servant of Christ is a dignity transcendent to the highest advancement among men; but to be a member of Christ, how matchless is the glory thereof! (8) It is a most comfortable union (Eph. i. 22, 23). (9) It is a fruitful union (Rom. vii. 4; chap. xv. 8). (10) It is an enriching union (1 Cor. i. 30; iii. 22). All that Christ hath becomes ours: His Father (chap. xx. 17); His promises (2 Cor. i. 20); His providences (Rom. viii. 28); His glory (chap. xvii. 24). III. INFERENCES. If there be such an union betwixt Christ—1. Then what transcendent diguity hath God put on believers! Well might Constantine prefer the honour of being a member of the Church before that of being a head of the empire. Some imperious grandees would frown should some of these persons but presume to approach their presence; but God sets them before His face with delight, and angels delight to serve them. 2. Then the graces of believers can never totally fail (Col iii. 3). 3. How great and powerful a motive then is this, to make us liberal in relieving the necessities and wants of every gracious person! For in relieving them we relieve Christ Himself (Matt. xxv. 35, 40). 4. How unnatural then are all those acts of unkindness whereby believers wound and grieve Jesus Christ! This is as if the hand should wound his own head, from which it receives life, sense, motion, and strength. 5. Then surely they can never want what is good for their souls or bodies. Every one naturally cares and provides for his own, especially for his own body. (*J. Flavel.*) *Christ in man*:—You may sometimes have seen a wife, wedded in true love and heart, surrender to a man who is good and strong. At first his goodness and strength are merely the object of her reverence, but gradually they seem to pass into her. New elements of character are developed in her, a firmness, a decisiveness, a breadth of view, a depth of sympathy which were wanting before. You would not say that her individuality had been lost; on the contrary, it seems informed, inspired, filled out and completed. You would not say that she was a reflection of him; no, you would rather say that she lives in him, or from another point of view, that he lives in her. Her relation to him is not imitative but receptive. He passes into her. If he is removed by death, it is observed not so much that she has lost something, as that part of her, the best and greater part, has gone; she is no longer what she was; she reminds you of a home that once had a tenant, but now though furniture and decorations remain the same, the tenant is there no more. In such an illustration we may get some idea of this august doctrine. It is something more than that hopeless task of copying the human life of Jesus, it is the actual communication of His Divine life, as the Lord Himself puts it "I in them." He—shall we say?—the beautiful and perfect spouse enters the soul, not ideally, but really; and entering in He moulds the ugly and repulsive outlines of our being into conformity with His own. (*R. F. Horton, M.A.*) *The indwelling of Christ*:—On a bright but chilly day in early spring you see your friend walking on the shady side of the street, as some foolish people will do. You call over to him: "Come and walk in the sun with me." The sun is many millions of miles away, yet you speak of being in it, and walking in it, when you are bathed in the light and warmth continually proceeding from it. In the same way are we in Christ when we are surrounded by the gracious loving presence of His Holy Spirit. So, "Ye in Me." But 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, and 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. (*J. L. Nye.*)

Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved Me.—*The Father's love to the believer:*—I. THE GROUNDS ON WHICH WE MAY UNDERSTAND THIS TO BE POSSIBLE. 1. God cannot love but with all the love He has. He can never be less than God—that is, perfect. He can do nothing which even He could improve upon. Then, when He loves, it is in the fullest measure in which even God can love. "Now Jesus loved Martha," &c., that sounds as if He loved them more than others, so does "the disciple whom Jesus loved," but not necessarily so, because they were more responsive to that love. The difference is not in God, but in us—in our reception of His love. 2. Those who believe in Christ, are loved in Him. In connection with the rest of the prayer it is not so hard to believe the text. If there be this oneness between Him and them, how can it be otherwise. 3. The sacrifice of Christ manifests such a love. For how must the Father feel to those for whom He gave His Son? II. THE CHARACTER OF THE DIVINE LOVE WHICH THIS IMPLIES. 1. It is love checked by no barrier. Once it was checked, it could not utter itself because of sin. You have seen a swollen stream heave, impatient of restraint, against the flood-gates which keep it back. It was so once with God's love to men. But the barrier is removed, "Christ hath put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," and now that love leaps forth free to all. But it finds another check, hearts are closed to its reception, it surges round them seeking to enter, but for the most part in vain; it cannot have its way with men because they will not let it. But not so all. Some have "known and believed the love that God has to them," they have opened their hearts to it and it can do for them what it would; these are they who believe on Christ, see their sin put away in Him, and in Him their acceptance by the Father; to them that love goes forth as to Him. 2. It is a love of closest intimacy. There is a love which is little more than kindly feeling, there is that which is mainly a delight in what perhaps we cannot approach, there is the love of friendship with its exchange of confidence and mutual happiness, but there is also the love of some one who comes so near to us that he is our second self. That most nearly represents the Father's love to the Son, "the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father." We are apt to be content with much less, cherishing but a reverence to God which keeps us at a distance, and not blending with it a confidence as great which compels us to "draw near." God forbid that we lose the reverence, but that we lose the confidence God forbid too! Yet that is our portion, since Christ says the Father has loved us as He loved Him. 3. It is an everlasting love. For the Father's love to the Son will never cease, and through earth's sins and sorrows and conflicts, through all the changes we dread, through the mystery of death, in the glory of heaven and throughout its endless future, unweariedly the Father will love us still. III. THE EFFECT OF THIS LOVE OF GOD ON HIS PEOPLE, or rather, the effect of knowing it. 1. It satisfies when every other love fails. And that is always. 2. It is the quickening power of holiness. For the way into holiness is to be loved into it by God. (*C. New.*)

Ver. 24. **Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me.**—*Christ's last will:*—Jesus no longer says, "I pray" but "I will." This expression, found nowhere else, in the mouth of Jesus, is generally explained by saying that the Son thus expressed Himself, because He felt Himself on this point so fully in accordance with the Father. But this He felt in every prayer, and this unique expression must be taken in its relation to the unique character of the situation. It is the saying of a dying man: "Father, My last will is . . ." It is truly His testament which Christ thus deposits in His Father's hands. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Christ's wish for man:*—The truth that men are judged by their desires finds its highest illustration in Jesus. The perfection of His nature is shown in the perfectness of His wishes. When His desires shall be all fulfilled, then there will be nothing more in the universe to be desired. The wish of the text is a prayer; but a prayer is merely a wish turned Godward. It was the instinct of Christ's nature that He looked for the fulfilment of His wishes, not to Himself, and not to the things about Him, but to His Father. He was desiring in His heart—I. THAT HIS PEOPLE SHOULD BE WITH HIM. 1. The obvious meaning of this is the Saviour's affection for His disciples. When friend is going away from friend, how naturally the wish springs up into words: "Oh, if I could

only take you with me!" Now, the sublimity and the charm of the earthly life of Jesus consist in large part in the broad and healthy action of the simplest human powers which it exhibits. The simplest natures are the grandest natures always. And so it is a part of the greatness of Jesus that He so simply feels and utters this cordial human affection, and says, "I shall miss you. I wish you could go with Me." We want not merely to admire this in Jesus; not merely to feel its charm. We want to catch it from Him. Elaborate civilization is always making elaborate, artificial standards. 2. But these primary emotions are deeper and richer in Him than in ordinary men, in proportion to the depth and richness of His nature. (1) The same emotion exists in different men, but it becomes more full and perfect as the man becomes greater. Nowhere is all this more true than about companionship. For two beings to be with one another always means the same simple thing, and yet its meaning runs up through all the ascending scale of human character. A herd of brutes are satisfied if they can feed in the same field; and there is an animal companionship even amongst men, which makes them like to be with one another, to sit in the same room, to walk in crowded streets. Next higher than that, companionship means identity of work and occupation. This is the companionship of business men. Next higher still is the companionship of opinion. Beyond all these lies the highest companionship of character. We have a fine illustration of the desire for this last and highest sort of companionship in the famous words which St. Paul said to Agrippa, "I would, that thou and all who hear me," &c. Those words seem to be the echo of his Master's. Paul wanted Agrippa. From the dignity of his prisoner's stand, he yearned over that poor dissolute who was seated upon the throne. And this must always be the first joy of any really good life—the desire that others should enter into it. Indeed, here is the test of a man's life. Can you say, "I wish you were like me?" If you are trying to serve Christ, however imperfect be your service, still you can say this to your child, your friend. But I am afraid that there are people whose lives could not begin to stand that test. With awkward hands you bring out virtues which you will not practice yourself, and put them before your children and say, "These are good. I advise you to practice these." What a condemnation of a man's life is that! It is not good for a man to be living any life which he would not desire to see made perfect and universal through the world. The dying Christian tells those beside him of the blessedness of serving Christ. The dying murderer with his last breath warns men from the scaffold not to be what he has been. Test your lives thus! (2) Thus, then, we understand Christ's longing for the companionship of His disciples. He wanted them to be with Him. I do not think that we can tell how much it signifies, this wish of Jesus, in its lower meaning of physical companionship. I am sure it does mean something. The "seeing His face," the "walking with Him in white," in heaven, are not wholly figures. But yet God's guidance has drawn the minds of Christians to think of heaven less as a place than as a character. Never, never are we with Christ till we are like Him. Not till He is formed in us do we enter truly into Him. II. THAT THEY MIGHT BEHOLD HIS GLORY. Perhaps this sounds to us a little strange at first. The schoolboy wants his schoolfellow to come home with him that he may see the state in which his father lives. The American says to the foreigner, "Come, see our land, its vastness, its resources, its progress." The Christian says, "Come to my church. You shall hear our music," &c. Before the words can be cut entirely free from low associations, we must remember what Christ's glory is. The heart and soul of it must be His goodness. What outward splendour may clothe Christ eternally we cannot know, but this we are sure of, that in at its very centre the glory of God must issue from and consist in the goodness of God, not in His power. Think for a moment of what prospects that wish of our Lord opens. Nowadays men are telling one another how tired they are of seeing sin on every side. We cheat ourselves if we think that it is peculiar to our times, for it has always been so. We cheat ourselves if we think that it is universal, for there is bright and glorious goodness around us, mixed with the sin on every side. But how imperfectly we see it! How much goodness there must be in Him which we do not see! For here this truth comes in, that only the like can see its like; only the good can really discern, appreciate, and understand goodness. Men live alongside of the best saints, and never know that they are good. The higher we climb, the more the peaks open around us. Now apply all this to the Saviour's prayer. Only by growth in goodness can His goodness open itself to us. What is He praying for, then? Is it not that which we traced before, that we might be like Him? So only can we

see Him. It is His glory that He wants us to see, but, back of that, He wants us to be such men and women that we can see His glory. I think of Jesus as He walked through Jerusalem. Men passed Him by; others just looked at Him, and sneered, and went their way. Do you think that did not give Him pain? Surely it did. They could not see His glory. But was not His pain that He saw them incapable of apprehending Him? Was not this what He was really mourning for when He sat on the Mount of Olives? Not, "Woe is me!" but "O Jerusalem?" Sometimes, in very far-off way, it is given to a man to echo this experience of Jesus. Sometimes a man is living for the good of other people, and other people will not see it, and he is left to sit upon the mountain and look down in sorrow upon the city which he longs to save. At such a time a man wants, and often enough he fails to get, the spirit of Christ's prayer. He wants men to "see His glory," and they will not. Is it for himself or for them that he is disappointed? The man whom you helped yesterday and who ungratefully slanders you to-day, are you indignant about yourself or pitiful over him? It is hard to keep out pride and jealousy, but let us remember how He wanted men to see Him because it was so wretched for them, not for Him, that they should be blind to Him. I think, then, that we have reached the meaning of this prayer of Jesus; and we are struck immediately by seeing how it really is identical with all His prayers for men. It is always that men might be saved from sin, that His goodness might come to us and we might be good. (*Phillips Brooks, D.D.*) *Christ's prayer for His people:*—I. THE TONE OF THE PRAYER. 1. Wonderful majesty. "Father, I will!" How awful this sounds! Such a petition was never heard before. Compare it with the prayers of the most eminent of God's people—Abraham, David, and Solomon. 2. Authority as well. Here is no condition, qualification, or contingency expressed or implied. It is the language of Him whose will is absolute law through all the universe. And this is the foundation on which the ultimate salvation of the redeemed is made to rest. II. THE SCOPE OF THE PRAYER. 1. The persons prayed for are—"those whom Thou hast given Me"—believers of every age. It takes in all the redeemed. 2. What is asked is "that they be with Me where I am." This is a comprehensive petition. It embraces all that Christ could ask for His people, all that they can desire, or that God can give. There has been much curious discussion of the question whether heaven is a state or a place. It is clear from the teachings of the chapter, that heaven is a state (vers. 21, 23). The unity prayed for in the former and the perfection in the latter of these verses prove this conclusively. No locality can be heaven to us, unless we attain unto the state there described. At the same time this verse proves that heaven is a distinct locality (chap. xiv. 2). If He were speaking here as the Creator alone, the language used would not necessarily imply locality. But He is speaking as "the Man Christ Jesus." "True, 'where I am' is a wide, wide phrase. Where He is, heaven is; where He is not, there is hell. A throne without Him is but the devil's dungeon of darkness, wherever it be placed; a dungeon with Christ in it, a fiery furnace with Christ in the midst, is a palace of glory. If we be where He is, what is there that can be worth seeing, or knowing, or having besides? 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee?'" III. THE DESIGN OF THE PRAYER. "That they may behold My glory," &c. This refers to the glory which pertains to Him by virtue of His mediatorial office. It is the glory of revealing God's will; of bringing to an end the great rebellion which sin had introduced into God's dominions; of lifting off the curse from this groaning creation; of making all things new; of gathering His elect out of all nations, of raising them from the dead, and carrying them with approval through the solemn scenes of the last judgment, and assigning them the place of dignity they will occupy in His everlasting kingdom; and of conducting the affairs of that kingdom through all eternity. IV. THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH THE PRAYER RESTS. "For Thou lovedst Me," &c. There is something very striking and sublime in this argument. It is not our love for one another or of God, nor Christ's or the Father's love for us, but God's love of His own blessed Son. In conclusion, this subject suggests—1. How unspeakable is the glory on which the redeemed will gaze! 2. The true philosophy of salvation, or the secret of the Christian's security. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *The Lord's last prayer for His people:*—We mark—I. HIS LAST AND DEEPEST DESIRE CONCERNING US. 1. There is something unspeakably affecting in the designation "those whom Thou hast given Me." Many titles He had already given His people—disciples, friends, brethren, &c.; names advancing in depth of tenderness as the end drew nigh; but here at the last He recalls one that He had used among the first. He does not point to the larger gift of the human race (Psa. ii.); nor does

He indicate any fragment predestined to be His; the sentiment is that all whom the Father teaches He draws by His Spirit, that He may consign them to His Son for salvation. The fact that they are the Father's gift makes them unspeakably precious to Jesus, who therefore wishes the eternal society of His own. 2. But it is for our sake that He makes the request. His people are not with Him in the full meaning of the word. When departing He said He would be with them, not that they should be with Him. Save in a few swift glimpses His Church has never seen Him since, save by the eye of faith. (1) The disembodied are with Him where He is; and that is all we know or need to know about Him. (2) When every one of the Father's gifts has been gathered to Him, the whole great gift shall be restored to perfection: His people in body and soul shall be with Him eternally. 3. Whilst we might be musing as to the glory of the place, our Lord attracts back our thoughts to Himself "that they may behold My glory." This is twofold—(1) The glory of His holiness, by beholding which "we are now changed into the same image." (2) It is however in the great hereafter that the Lord's glory will be seen—the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. "They shall see God" was His promise to the pure; and now He makes that the vision of Himself. For ever He will say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "We shall see Him as He is," and share and reflect the glory that we contemplate. II. THE STRENGTH OF THE PECULIAR EXPRESSION, "I WILL." 1. Whence has He that strong confidence on our account, sinners as we are? (1) From the eternal love that existed between the Father and the Son. (2) But the entire tenor of the prayer also implies that the Son makes His demands on the ground of a sealed and ratified covenant. The Son appeals to His righteous Father as Head of the redeeming scheme, speaks as having sanctified Himself, and demands all the blessings for which He shed His blood. Hence the intercession of the Son for His own is almighty. 2. What is the object of His intercession? (1) The prayer demands that the infinite attributes of the all-holy Name should be pledged for His disciples' defence. "Keep through Thine own name." (2) "Sanctify them through Thy truth" stipulates that all needful grace shall be imparted in order to the consecration of His saints for Himself. 3. The prayer is granted. Whatsoever is necessary for our perfect deliverance from sin is here pledged, and hereafter there will be a most glorious answer when the saints, body and soul, are presented faultless by the Son to the Father. III. THIS DEEP DESIRE AND STRONG INTERCESSION IS UTTERED IN OUR HEARING for our instruction and encouragement. 1. We are taught, by the connection of our text with the fact that Christ prays not for the world, how important it is to our peace that we should know that we are given of the Father to the Son. There is a terrible distinction. Our Lord says nothing further about those that are not His. They will not be with Him where He is. With whom then, and where? 2. With what transcendent honour are we here invested. To be the elect of God, the peculiar heritage of Christ—"Where I am there shall My servant be," &c. With what ardour should we be inflamed to make ourselves worthy of this honour. 3. The prayer is our strong assurance while we watch and labour and pray. 4. Our Lord permitted us to hear this prayer for our strong consolation in surrendering our friends to Him in death. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *Christ's unveiled glory*:—I. OF WHAT STATE OF MIND THIS IS THE EXPRESSION ON THE PART OF CHRIST. 1. It expresses the depth and intensity of His love to the Church He has redeemed. Montaigne says, "We hate those we injure"—certainly we love those whom we have blessed. Christ having redeemed us in this life is intent on blessing us in the next. 2. It turns on the principle that sympathy is most precious to the noblest natures. Christ could not think of the splendours of His throne without connecting them with His people. 3. It contains the idea of personal interest in them as precious property by special donation from the Father. What more valued than a father's gift, especially when given as an expression of love and for a sublime purpose. II. WHAT VIEWS IT FURNISHES OF THE FUTURE LIFE. 1. The happiness of heaven will be realized in the immediate presence and unveiled glory of Christ. The king makes the court, not the court the king. 2. Whatever displays are made in that life of the majesty of the Godhead, will be made in the Person of Christ. To all eternity He will be "Emanuel—God with us." How transporting it will be to find His glory that of "the Lamb that was slain!" III. WHAT REFLECTIONS THE SUBJECT SHOULD AWAKEN. 1. Earnest desire to be one with Christ. 2. Adoring gratitude that He has invested us with this hope which cannot die. 3. A deep concern for the religious welfare of others. (*S. T. Day.*) *The glorification of the Church*:—I. ITS SIGNIFICANCE EXPLAINED. 1. Co-existence with Christ.

Now He co-exists with the Church (Matt. xviii. 20; xxviii. 20); then the Church will co-exist with Him (Matt. xii. 26; 1 Thess. iv. 17). Now He comes down, then He will take us up. Now the place where they are together is the scene of the Church's trials, conflicts, labours, discipline: then the place will be the house of many mansions, the scene of Christ's exaltation and glory. 2. Communion with Christ. Christ and His Church have that here (1 John i. 3). Here we see Him, but not with open vision (1 Cor. xiii. 12). There the vision will be unveiled and full (1 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 John iii. 2; Rev. xxii. 4). They shall behold His glory, not only its outward symbol—the throne, sceptre, angels, trumpets, &c.—but the eternal, perfect love of the Father to Him, and the glory which, moved by that love, the Father put upon Him when He constituted Him the Crown of redeemed humanity (Eph. i. 22; Phil. ii. 9, 10; 1 Peter iii. 22). 3. Conformity to Christ. This is realized here in part (2 Cor. iv. 18), there it will be complete (Rom. viii. 29; 1 John iii. 2). 4. Co-partnership with Christ. Christ is here co-partner of the Church's sufferings (Heb. iv. 15); by and by we shall participate in His glory (ver. 22; Rev. iii. 21; 2 Tim ii. 12). II. ITS CERTAINTY GUARANTEED. 1. By the "I will" of the Divine Servant. Having accomplished the work (ver. 4) Christ was entitled to claim the stipulated reward—not merely to "ask" or "wish," though that would have been enough. And as failure is impossible with reference either to God's promise (Heb. v. 18), or Christ's reward (Isa. liii. 2), so certainly Christ's believing people will eventually be glorified with Him in heaven. 2. By the "I will" of the Divine Son. As such Christ had power to bestow eternal life (ver. 2), and so the ultimate glorification of the Church is seen. III. ITS JUSTICE VINDICATED (ver. 25, 26). 1. If the world is not glorified it is because it cannot be. Eternal righteousness forbids the glorification of such as know not the Father. 2. If the Church is glorified, it is because glory is the necessary outcome of grace. Lessons: 1. The blessedness of heaven. 2. The certainty of salvation. 3. The necessity of growing in knowledge. 4. The righteousness of the unbelieving world's doom. 5. Grace the song of the glorified. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Why they leave us:*—1. The prayer of the Saviour rises as it proceeds. He asked for His people that they might be preserved from the world, then that they might be sanctified, and then that they might be made manifestly one; and now He reaches His crowning point—that they may be with Him where He is, and behold His glory. That prayer is most after the Divine pattern which, like a ladder, rises round by round, until it loses itself in heaven. 2. This last step of our Lord's prayer is not only above all the rest, but it is a longer step than any of the others. He here ascends, not from one blessing which may be enjoyed on earth, to higher, but mounts right away from all that is to that which is reserved for the eternal future. 3. Not only does it rise as to its subject, but it even ascends as to the place which the Intercessor appears to occupy. Has it not been so with yourselves in prayer, that you might have cried with Paul, "Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell." 4. Still the prayer rises, not only as to its matter and place, but in a higher style. Before, our Lord had asked and pleaded; but now He says, "Father, I will." It is well not only to groan out of the dust as suppliant sinners, but to seek unto our Father in the spirit of adoption with the confidence of children, and then, with the promise of God in our hand, lay hold upon the covenant angel, and cry, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Importunity is a humble approach to this Divine "I will." I. Let us begin as our text begins with THE HOME-WORD—"Father." Is it not the centre of living unity? If there is to be a family gathering and reunion, where should it be but in the father's house? 1. What can be more right than that children should go home to their Father? From Him they came, to Him they owe their life, and should not this be the goal of their being, that they should at last dwell in His presence? 2. "Father!" why, it is a bell that rings us home. He who hath the Spirit of adoption feels that the Father draws him home, and he would fain run after Him. How intensely did Jesus turn to the Father! 3. This is the consummation which the First-born looks for, and to which all of us who are like Him are aspiring also, namely, that God may be all in all. Our Brother is gone; but we ask, "Where is He gone?" and when the answer comes, "He is gone to the Father," all notion of complaint is over. To whom else should He go? A child may be happy at school, but he longs for the holidays. Is it merely to escape his lessons? Ask him, and he will tell you, "I want to go home to see my father." II. THE HOME IMPETUS. How shall the chosen get home to the Father. "I will," said Jesus, "that they be with Me"; and with Him they must be. Examine the

energy of this "I will," and you will see that it hath the force of—1. An intercessory prayer. I cannot imagine our Lord's interceding in vain. If He asks that we may be with Him where He is, He must assuredly have His request. You cannot hold your dying babe, &c.; for Jesus asks for it to be with Him. Will you come into competition with your Lord? 2. A testamentary bequest and appointment. No man who makes his will likes to have it frustrated. Our Saviour's testament will assuredly be carried out in every jot and tittle. 3. Desire, resolve, and purpose. If Jesus saith, "I will," then it is yours to say, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." III. THE HOME CHARACTER. "They also, whom Thou hast given Me." The Greek is somewhat difficult to translate. There is here a something in the singular as well as persons in the plural. "Father, I will concerning that which thou hast given Me, that they may be with Me where I am." 1. Our Lord looked upon those whom the Father gave Him as one—one body, one Church, one bride: He willed that as a whole the Church should be with Him where He is. 2. Then He looked again and saw each of the many individuals of whom the one Church is composed, and He prayed that each, that all of these, might be with Him and behold His glory. Jesus never so prays for the whole Church as to forget a single member; neither does He so pray for the members individually as to overlook the corporate capacity of the whole. 3. I feel glad that there is no sort of personal character mentioned here, but only—"Those whom Thou hast given Me." It seems as if the Lord in His last moments was not so much looking at the fruit of grace as at grace itself; He did not so much note either the perfections or the imperfections of His people, but only the fact that they were His by the eternal gift of the Father. The Father gave them as a love-token and a means of His Son's glorification. If I possess a love-token that some dear one has given me I may rightly desire to have it with me. Nobody can have such a right to your wedding-ring, good sister, as you have yourself, and are not Christ's saints, as it were, a signet upon His finger, a token which His Father gave Him of His good pleasure in Him? Should they not be with Jesus where He is, since they are His crown-jewels and His glory? IV. THE HOME COMPANIONSHIP. 1. The nearness of the saints to Christ in glory—"that they may be with Me." In heaven the saints will be nearer to Christ than the apostles were when they sat at the table with Him, or heard Him pray. "For ever with the Lord"—this is heaven. 2. They must occupy a place: that place will be where Jesus is. We are to be, not metaphorically and fancifully, but really, truly, literally with Jesus. 3. Notice the occupation of those who are with Jesus: "That they may behold My glory." Love always pines for a partner in its joys. When I have been specially charmed with glorious scenery, I have felt myself saying, "How I wish that my dear wife could be here!" How unselfish it is on our Lord's part to think Himself not fully glorified till we behold His glory! How unselfish He will make us also, since it will be our glory to see His glory! Who would keep a brother out of it an hour? 4. Observe the fellowship which exists in the glory land. "That they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me." So when the Lord brings His people home, we shall be one with Him, and He one with the Father, and we also in Him one with the Father, so that we shall then find boundless glory in beholding the glory of our Lord and God. V. THE HOME ATMOSPHERE. Love: "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." Can you follow me in a great flight? There was a day before all days, when there was no day but the Ancient of Days. Oh the intensity of the Divine love of the Father to the Son! There was no universe, but God alone; and the whole of God's omnipotence flowed forth in a stream of love to the Son, while the Son's whole being remained eternally one with the Father by a mysterious essential union. Love is both the source and the channel, and the end of the Divine acting. Because the Father loved the Son He gave us to Him, and ordained that we should be with Him. Let our saintly ones go home if that is the design of their going. Since all comes of Divine love, and all sets forth Divine love, let them go to Him who loves them. Hold your friends lovingly, but be ready to yield them to Jesus. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Eternal glory:—I. THE OBJECTS OF THIS PRAYER. "That which Thou hast given to Me" and "they also." But in what respects were this people given by the Father to the Son? 1. In the first instance, He gave them to Him in the everlasting covenant. 2. But, in the second instance, the Father gives them to His Son in the day of their espousals—in the day of their effectual calling. "All that the Father giveth Me," saith Jesus, "shall come to Me" (chap. vi. 37), —not all that the Father gave Me,—as if He were speaking merely of some trans-

action in the past,—but all that the Father giveth Me—referring to the day of their espousals to Christ. "Wherefore, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. i. 10). It is for souls, that are effectually called and justified, that Jesus prays that they may be with Him in glory. II. THE MANNER AND SPIRIT OF THIS PRAYER. Jesus no longer says, "I pray" (vers. 9, 15, 20), but "I will." Oh, what a wonderful prayer is this! We never read of any prayer like this, offered up by any saint on earth. Some of them, indeed, attained to great nearness to the Lord—such as Abraham, and Jacob, and Moses and David—and yet they never did, or ought to, use such language to God. And what shall we make of this prayer? 1. I think we may say, in the first instance, there is in it a beaming forth of His Divine glory, as the Eternal Son of God. 2. And surely this expression sets forth the reality and intensity of the Saviour's love. It was in the exercise of infinite love that He laid down His life for them. 3. Further, we may well believe, that this is an expression of will, founded on acknowledged right. Jesus had the price of our redemption now in His hand, ready to lay it down. 4. And, as has often been remarked, this I will on the part of Christ is in perfect accord with the known will of His Father. "Father, I will," says Christ; "and I will too," re-echoes the voice of the Father. Oh, blessed harmony this between the will of Christ and the will of His Father! 5. But I apprehend, that this unique expression is to be explained by the unique character of the situation. Jesus is just about to lay down His life for them, and He now expresses His last will and testimony: "Father, My last will is." It is truly His testimony which Jesus deposits in His Father's hands. III. WHAT THE BLESSINGS REALLY ARE, which Jesus thus asks for those that the Father gave Him: "That where I am, there they also may be with Me, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me," &c. 1. He asks that where He is, there they also may be with Him. Ah! yes, such is His love to them, that as He came from heaven to earth to save them, so He will never be at rest until He has them with Him where He is. And is not this heaven—its chiefest, choicest ingredient—to be where Christ is? (Phil. i. 23). 2. But why does He pray that they may be with Him where He is? How are they to be employed? "That they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me." 3. Notice here the object to be beheld—"My glory which Thou hast given to Me"—"My glory peculiarly and emphatically,—and yet My glory which Thou hast given to Me,"—not His essential glory as the Son of God viewed abstractly, and by itself; but the glory given to Him as Immanuel, God-man, Mediator. Oh, who can tell what glory now encircles Him, as the Son of Man exalted to the right hand of God? But did they not behold this glory already? Assuredly they did by faith. And it is indeed a solemn truth, that none shall behold His glory by sight in heaven that do not first behold it by faith on earth. Some beheld this glory before He came in the flesh (chap. viii. 56; xii. 40). Some beheld it by faith while He tabernacled upon earth (chap. i. 14). And some behold it now, though He is in heaven, and they upon the earth (2 Cor. iii. 18). But the beholding mentioned in the text is something higher, nearer than all this. This is the beatific vision, to which they shall attain when He has gathered them home to be for ever with Himself. It is impossible to behold this glory and to remain a mere spectator of it. To behold it is to partake of it—to become a sharer with Him in His glory. Then shall be fulfilled the words: "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." This is the height to which Jesus elevates His Church. 4. And one of the most interesting and delightful things connected with this glory, which they are to behold, will be to trace the source of it in the Father's everlasting love: "The glory which Thou hast given Me, in that Thou lovedst Me." The Father loved the Son with an everlasting love as His Son—His Only-Begotten Son. But He also loved Him with an everlasting love as Mediator. "Then I was by Him as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight" (Prov. viii. 30). Oh, surely it will be an eternal feast to the hearts of the redeemed in heaven to see the glorious unfoldings of the Father's love towards their Covenant Head. Such, then, the two great blessings which Jesus here asks for the collective body of believers, viz., spiritual unity and eternal glory. (*C. Ross, M.A.*) **Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.**—The Unitarian conception of the Divine Unity being arithmetical, not dynamical, its advocates deny plurality of persons or hypostases in the Godhead. And yet they loudly proclaim the truth that God is love, a truth which most strongly urges on our acceptance the doctrine of plurality. Love always demands two at least—a subject and an object, one to love and another to be loved. If God is love, as we most emphatically believe,

then He must have had some one from eternity to love. Who then is that one? Himself? But self-love is no love, it is the denial of love. Who then? The Church answers—His Son, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person. Plurality of persons must not, however, be confounded with plurality of Gods. When men are invited to Christ they are not enticed away from God, for Christ is with God; when they are called to worship Christ, they are not bidden to serve an idol, for Christ is God. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*)

Vers. 25, 26. **O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee.**—*The "amen" to the sublimest of all prayers:*—I. GOD AND THE WORLD. 1. God. (1) His relationship—"Father." No relationship is more intelligible, attractive, morally assimilating. It means causation, affection, resemblance. Christ's God was not a cold King upon the throne, but a loving Father whose heart yearns for His prodigal children. (2) His character—"righteous." (*a*) His existence is the foundation of all right. (*b*) His will is the standard of all right. (*c*) His works and Word the revelation of all right. (3) His character is not opposed to His relationship. Righteousness is love resisting all that will injure the moral universe: love uprooting weeds out of the paradise of virtue. 2. The world—unregenerate humanity. This ignorance is—(1) Most universal. (*a*) The barbarian world hath not known Thee. It is sunk in idolatry, superstition, and sensuality. (*b*) The civilized world. When this was said, Egypt, Greece and Rome had done their best; but even in Athens God was "unknown." (*c*) The conventionally Christian world. Its science denies; its literature, politics and commerce ignore; its creeds and Churches misrepresent God. (2) Most inexcusable. Men may have just excuses for not being scholars, &c., but no excuse for this. Nature is made to reveal God and the soul. The blindness of the man who shuts his eyes to the sun is not more inexcusable than this. (3) Most ruinous. The man ignorant of God is in moral midnight—the blackness of darkness. II. CHRIST AND HIS SCHOOL. 1. Christ, "I have known Thee." From any lips but His how presumptuous would this sound! Who among the world's geniuses or sages could say it? (1) No one had the opportunity of knowing God that Christ had. He was in the "bosom of the Father." He knew the motive that prompted the creative act, and the plan on which the whole was organized. (2) None the capacity. What is the greatest intellect to His. (3) None the heart—the true organ of knowledge. Christ and His Father are one in heart, spirit and purpose. 2. Christ's School "they have known"—(1) By the mighty works which Christ wrought. (2) By the sublime doctrines He propounded. (3) By the matchless purity of His character. III. THE PREACHER AND HIS MISSION (ver. 26). What Christ did is the genuine work of every true preacher. What was it? 1. A persistent declaration of the Divine character. To declare self, or theories and speculations about God is what some do: but to declare His "Name," His moral character, the essence of which is love, is Christ's work. 2. A persistent declaration of the Divine character in order to transfuse Divine love into human souls. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *God's Fatherhood:*—Our Lord first addresses God as "Father," then as "Holy Father," and lastly as "Righteous Father." Note that holiness and righteousness flow from the Fatherhood of God. Note also that the manifestation of the Divine fatherhood is consummated in the manifestation of the Divine righteousness. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The righteous Father known and loved:*—The text speaks of—I. A KNOWLEDGE OF INFINITE VALUE AND ITS TEACHER. 1. What is that knowledge? (1) "Thy name." God has made man, and naturally man ought to know his Maker: the subject should know the name of his king; but men say, "we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Yet it is evident that a man can never be in a proper state till he knows his God. He cannot be happy, holy, or safe. Christ therefore, in coming to save us, makes it a part of His office to reveal the Father to us. (2) A testing name is given to God, "O righteous Father." If you know Him aright you know what is comprehended under those two words, so remarkable in combination. How can the Judge and the Father be found in one? There is but one answer, and that is found in the sacrifice of Jesus, which has joined the two in one. (3) This knowledge is—(*a*) Peculiar—"The world hath not known Thee." The heathen world knew nothing of a righteous Father. Their gods were generally monsters of iniquity. The Christian world does not know God as a "righteous Father." Sceptics labelled as "thinkers" reject the evangelical idea of God, and the atonement which that idea involves. It knows an effeminate, indiscriminate fatherhood, but not "the righteous Father."

It will not bow before the majesty of His justice. (2) Distinctive, for it reveals the condition of the mind which receives it. When we see in a man an unconditional submission to the justice of God, and yet a trustful hopefulness in His boundless love, we may be sure that he is a renewed man. (3) Consolatory. For a man to know that God is his Father is delightful beyond measure, to feel that God forgives him as the father forgave the prodigal; but when we further learn that all this is done without the violation of justice, then are we full of wondering love. (4) Causes its possessor to enjoy much fellowship with Jesus. "I have known Thee." This grand character of God as "righteous Father" was so dear to our Lord, that He died to maintain it. Herein we have fellowship with Christ, for we know the "righteous Father" too in Christ, and love and bless Him, and wonder at Him every day more and more. 2. This knowledge comes to us by a Teacher. Christ declared the "righteous Father"—(1) In His life, for in His life He incarnated truth and grace. (2) In His death, however, most gloriously illustrated this beyond everything else. (3) By the work of His Holy Spirit. II. THE OBJECT OF THE KNOWLEDGE IS THE INFUSION OF A LOVE UNRIVALLED IN VALUE. 1. This discovery of love is inward, "may be in them," *i.e.*, that they may know it, be persuaded of it, believe it and enjoy it; that they, through knowing the righteous name, may come to perceive the love of God towards them. When the Divine Father gives up His best Beloved for guilty man we may well say, "Behold how He loved Him!" 2. This love was of a most extraordinary kind. He loves you as He loves His best Beloved. It must be altogether boundless and unspeakable. Now, if you fully know the righteous fatherhood of God, as Christ would have you know it, you will learn that God loved you as He loved His Son. If He had not loved you as He loved the Son, He would have spared His Son. 3. It was a love of complacency and delight. Remember those words at Christ's baptism and at two other occasions. Always draw a distinction between the love of benevolence with which God loves all His creatures and the love of complacency, which is reserved for His own. The Eternal Father views us in Christ, and in Him He takes delight in us as a father does in his children. 4. God the Father loves His Son infinitely. How could He do less? Without beginning has He loved Him, and without an end will He love Him, and also without change, without limit, and without degree: in the same way doth He love His people, whose hope is fixed in Him as the "righteous Father." 5. This love wherever it reigns in the heart creates a return love to God. 6. This love comes through an indweller, "and I in them." (1) Through His Spirit. (2) By faith. (3) In a real, vital sense. (4) Producing likeness to Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 26. **And I have declared unto them Thy name.**—*The Divine name*:—The name of God is His moral character. This is the stability and glory of the universe. These words present it—I. AS THE HIGHEST OBJECT FOR REVELATION. "I have declared." Paul said at Athens, "Him declare I unto you." Not only is this the highest function of—1. The material universe. 2. Angels. 3. But of Christ the greatest Being. II. AS THE GRAND ORGAN OF REFORMATION. "That the love," &c. God's character is the reformatory force. 1. Moral reformation consists in the transfusion of Divine love into souls. 2. This transfusion of love can only be accomplished through a manifestation of the Divine character. God's character alone generates love. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) "*Love and I*"—*a mystery*:—I. THE FOOD OF LOVE TO GOD. 1. Knowledge. "I have made known." We cannot love a God whom we do not know. Only when the eyes are opened to behold the loveliness of God will the heart go out towards God, who is so desirable an object for the affections. 2. A knowledge given by Christ. It is not knowledge that we pick up as a matter of book learning that will ever bring out our love to the Father. Not knowledge communicated by the preacher alone. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." He that knows not Christ knows not the Father. 3. Knowledge coming gradually. "And will declare it." As if, though they knew the Father, there was far more to know. 4. Knowledge distinguishing us from the world. It is the mark by which the elect are made manifest (ver. 6). 5. Knowledge of the name of God. (1) Righteous, and yet a Father. Our joy begins when we see the two united. (2) The word "name" is used as a sort of summary of all the attributes of God. All these attributes are well adapted to win the love of all regenerate spirits. God is—(*a*) Holy. To a holy mind there is nothing in the world, there is nothing in heaven more beautiful than holiness. (*b*) Good; (*c*) Merciful; "Who is a God like unto Thee." (*d*) Love, and there is a something about love which always wins

love. II. THE LOVE ITSELF. 1. What it is not. The prayer is not that the Father's love may be set upon them, or move towards them, but be "in" them. Christ did not die to make His Father loving, but because His Father is loving. 2. This love is of a very peculiar sort. "The love wherewith Thou hast loved Me." (1) Our Lord desires us to have a distinct recognition of the Father's love to Him. God never loved anything as He loves Christ, except His people, and they have had to be lifted up to that position by the love which the Father has to His Son. (2) You are to have in your heart a sense of the Father's love to you, and to recollect that it is precisely the same love wherewith He loves His Son. When there was a choice between Christ and His people which should die of the two, the Father freely delivered up His own Son that we might live through Him. (3) We are to give back a reflection of this love, and to love Jesus as the Father loves Him. The Father is the Sun and we are the moon, but the moonlight is the same light as the sunlight. The moon has not a ray of light but what came from the sun, and we have not a live coal of love to Christ but what came from the Father. We are as the moon, shining by reflected light, but Jesus loves the moonlight of our love and rejoices in it. (4) This love of the Father in us is to go beaming forth from us to all around. 3. This indwelling of the Father's love in us has the most blessed results. (1) Has an expulsive result. As soon as ever it gets into the heart it says to all love of sin, "Get thee hence: there remains no room for thee here." (2) A repulsive power by which it repels the assaults of sin. (3) An impulsive power. It is as when an engine receives fire and steam, and so obtains the force which drives it. Then have you motive power, then are you urged on to this and that heroic deed which, apart from this sublime love, you never would have thought of. (4) How elevating it is. How it lifts a man up above self and sin; how it makes him seek the things that are above! (5) How purifying it is! (6) How happy it makes the subject of its influence! If you are unhappy you want more of the love of God. III. THE COMPANION OF LOVE. "I in them." Catch those two words. Here is "love" and "I"—love and Christ come together. Oh, blessed guests! 1. We are sure that He is where love is; for, where there is love there is—(1) Life, and where there is life there is Christ, for He Himself says, "I am the Life." (2) The Holy Spirit; but wherever the Holy Spirit is, there is Christ, for the Holy Spirit is Christ's representative. (3) Faith, for faith worketh by love, and there never was true love to Christ apart from faith. (4) God, for God is love. 2. You need not go abroad to find the Lord Jesus Christ. He lives within you. (1) What a blessed sense of power this gives to us. "I in them." Then it is no more "I" in weakness, but, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." (2) Hence we gather the security of the believer. (3) We should give Christ good entertainment. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Spiritual illumination and Divine love*:—I. THE GREAT SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL ILLUMINATION. "I have declared to them Thy name." The name was the Jewish formulary for God; His perfections, glory, grace. 1. That the saving knowledge of God comes to us by direct communication from Christ. Not by wisdom, virtue, strength of our own; "for the world by wisdom knew not God," but from the discovery which Christ makes by His word and Spirit: "I have declared." See it in the woman of Samaria—in His patience with the disciples. It is Christ's prerogative to convey the saving knowledge of God to the mind; it is our privilege to seek that knowledge from Him. 2. That we need spiritual illumination from above, not only at our first conversion, but through the whole progress of our spiritual life. "I have declared—and will declare it." Paul prays for the Ephesians that God would give them the spirit of wisdom in the knowledge of Him—and yet they knew Him already. Paul, who was taught not of men, but of Christ Himself, and was even caught up to the third heaven, puts himself among the number of them who know only in part; and this will be true of the most learned and holy men to the last hour of life. 3. It becomes us to acknowledge our ignorance, and to implore Divine teaching. This is a promise to be pleaded in prayer. We are like babes, unskilful in the word of righteousness. The best persons and the best churches still need more light. It is not enough that Christ has declared to them, but He must still declare—not indeed new truths, new essentials of salvation, but He conveys new impressions of truth to the mind; new aptitudes to receive, to appropriate, to exemplify and apply truth. II. THE GREAT LOVE WHICH GOD BEARS TO HIS CHILDREN. It is here compared to the love which God bears to Christ. This love is said to be in them, just as Christ is said to be in them. By God's love to Christ, learn His love to you. 1. This love is ancient in its date. "Thou hast loved Me from the foundation of the world" (Prov. viii. 22,

31). 2. Unlimited in its degree. As you can place no limit to God's love to the Mediator, so you can place no limit to His love to the people He has redeemed. Many would discourage the hopes of God's children. Satan himself would rob them of consolation. False systems of religion do this. 3. Enlightened in its exercise. God's love to Christ was enlightened, and His conduct towards Him was regulated with a view to the office He was to sustain, and He allowed Him to pass through scenes of pain, poverty, temptation. So He does us: much tribulation. 4. Constant in its duration. It is an everlasting love. (*The Evangelist.*)

CHAPTER XVIII.

Vers. 1–14. **Jesus . . . went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron.**—*Christ betrayed*:—I. HEIGHTS OF PRIVILEGE MAY BE THE DIRECT COURSE TO THE LOWEST FALL. Any light may be resisted. Sun-blindness is the most incurable. Privileges misused foster pride of power and personal conceit. Promotion may inspire self-respect and unselfish devotion, but there is no certainty that human nature will so respond. In rich soil and under favouring skies weeds will thrive quicker and stronger than good seed. A loving Providence may appoint us lowly station because only there should we be safe from fatal temptation. II. THE POWERLESSNESS OF BRUTE FORCE OR ANGRY PASSIONS TO STAY THE MARCH OF REDEMPTION. The beaten brand flames the more. Ocean steamers turn the fury of headwinds upon their furnace fires and speed their way with accelerated motion. Heaven's resources are always equal to any emergency of earth's weakness or perfidy. There are no surprises in its one campaign. III. GOSPEL METHODS HAVE PRIMARILY TO DO WITH PERSUASION AND NOT WITH FORCE. They that take the sword shall perish by the sword if weapons of force are used when the situation calls only for the power of example and the urgency of self-sacrifice. IV. THE TRAITOR'S KISS DID NOT CEASE ON THIS NIGHT OF BETRAYAL. In all the years malice and hostile schemes use the same device of friendly approach as a cover and blind. V. THE INFINITE POSSIBILITIES OF HARM WITHIN THE POWER OF AN INFERIOR PERSON. VI. THE MOTIVES OF HEAVEN'S REDEMPTION FOR EARTH MUST BE SELF-ORIGINATING: THEY CAN FIND NO OCCASION IN EARTH SAVE IN ITS TOTAL WRETCHEDNESS AND LACK OF WORTH. VII. NO AMOUNT OF SIN OR DEPRAVITY CAN PERMANENTLY BLIND THE SOUL TO ITS GUILT AND PROPER SELF-CONDEMNATION. Our lesson were incomplete did we not forecast the ending of the betrayer's earthly career. He, like every man, carried within his bosom all the materials and instruments of righteous judgment. The lost sinner is an eternal suicide: and he needs no other accuser than himself. (*S. Lewis B. Speare.*) *Over Cedron*:—Jesus went "over the brook Cedron." I. IN THE MIDNIGHT AND ALONE. The disciples were with Him; but He was none the less alone for that. They did not share His purpose, or understand it; He always trod the wine-press alone. Sooner or later, every one who helps this race of ours must cross a Cedron with a Gethsemane beyond it; and this he will probably have to do in the midnight and unattended, in the soberness of a secret unshared. II. UNDER PRESSURE OF A PROFOUND AND INTELLIGENT CONVICTION. He once told His disciples: "I know whence I came, and whither I go." His life was fashioned on a purpose. This is always essential to great achievement. An aged captain once said: "Where I could not be honest, I was never valiant." No man can ever do a worthy deed, who has not a conviction bestowed by his God. III. DIRECTLY AFTER IMPORTUNATE PRAYER. No supplication ever left human lips so intense as that final intercession. He was going to His Father. Through the garden, the judgment-hall, Calvary, the grave, the mountain, the sky, He kept going to His Father. And it was the prayer that lifted Him; and He kept praying, and He is praying now at the Father's right hand. IV. IN AN UNWAVERING COURAGE AND AN UNFALTERING TRUST. Why should He fear after a self-surrender so complete? It was His Father's responsibility for an anxious hour of peril and pain; no longer His own any more. Not long after this midnight priests were frightened, Judas dead, Roman guards prostrate, Satan baffled, the grave rended, the earth trembling, the skies parted, heaven ringing with triumph because of the Prince returned to His Father's love, and shining with glory. Oh ye who pause frightened and irresolute upon the brink of your Cedron,

think of this Lord of ours in His dauntless decision then! *Via crucis, via lucis!* The call of duty is unyielding; but the reward of duty is reached when He, who went "over the brook Cedron" that night, says to you and me, "Well done." (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Crossing Cedron* (Text and 2 Sam. xv. 23):—1. On the eastern side of Italy there is a pretty stream called the Rubicon, falling into the Adriatic. This insignificant river has acquired a name in history and a place among the proverbs of mankind. When Cæsar came with his army to its bank, he hesitated and said to his officers, "We can even yet draw back; but if we cross that stream, all must be decided by the sword." The night was passed in anxious deliberation, and at daybreak the legend says, a majestic form appeared to him playing on a flute. As the soldiers drew near, the angel snatched from one of them a trumpet, blew the signal for advance, and then plunged into the river. "The die is cast!" With that exclamation, Cæsar boldly passed over the stream followed by his army. That was the decisive act which led to victory and the dictatorship of the Republic. 2. But long ages before we read of an older Rubicon, the crossing of which led to results more momentous. On the morning of the fatal day when Absalom seized the kingdom David passed over Cedron. "Cedron" means blackness or sadness. Some human tragedy must have left its impress upon it. When David passed over it he became a different man. It marked the crisis of his life. He bade adieu for ever to light-heartedness. A broken-hearted, sorrow-stricken man, he went down to the grave. But his inner life became tenderer and more beautiful. 3. And what happened to David happened to David's Son more than one thousand years after. The decisive moment came to Jesus when He passed over Cedron. He was no longer the great Teacher, but the great Sacrifice. 4. In every human life there is a Rubicon to cross, a critical moment in which we have to pass from the old life to the new. It will come in the shape of temptation, sorrow or change, and the way in which this crowning trial will be met will be determined by the training previously received. The best preparation is wrestling with God in prayer like our Lord. (*H. Macmillan, D.D.*) *Christ crossing Cedron:*—The interest of our Saviour's life increases as we advance. With most men the reverse is the case. Interest is usually centred on the earlier period of a man's career when the greatest exploits are achieved and the highest fame reached. Afterwards they live on the reputation acquired. But as the sun looks greatest at its setting, so Christ is most majestic as He approaches death. Consider the spirit in which our Lord entered on His last sufferings. I. IN A SPIRIT OF PRAYER. "When Jesus had spoken these words." If the words of a dying man are impressive how much more those of a dying Saviour. But as His agony was preceded by prayer, so He would encounter it in a place set apart for it (ver. 2). It becomes a soldier to die fighting, and a Christian to die praying. The garden of humiliation was at the foot of the Olivet of Ascension. II. IN A SPIRIT OF VOLUNTARY SELF-DEVOTION TO THE INTERESTS OF THE CHURCH. "He went forth." It was reckoned an ill-omen when the victim struggled at the Altar, and a good omen when it came without reluctance. "Lo, I come," &c. To give the fullest proof that His sacrifice was voluntary, He put forth the energy of His power. This might have reminded them of the destruction of the captains of Abaziah. But a greater than Elisha was here. Here we may learn that the word of Christ, however weak it may seem, is full of terror to His adversaries. If it could do such things then, what will it accomplish at the Day of Judgment? III. IN A SPIRIT OF TENDER LOVE TO HIS TERROR-STRICKEN DISCIPLES (ver. 8). He makes no stipulation for Himself, but only for them. This was not a request but a command. He submits as a Conquerer, dictating His own terms, and obtaining them. It was like Him to think of others even while enduring the most intense mental agony. Let us imitate Him. Conclusion: We must all cross Cedron: it will be well then for us to remember Him, and to imbibe His Spirit. (*Homiletic Magazine.*) **Where was a garden.**—*The scene in Gethsemane:*—I. SORROW EXPERIENCED. The agony and bloody sweat (Matt. xxvi. 36; Luke xxii. 44). II. INDIGNITY SUFFERED. 1. The traitor's kiss (Matt. xxvi. 49), and—2. The soldiers' assault (vers. 3, 12). III. MAJESTY DISPLAYED. Christ advances towards the bank (ver. 4), and announced Himself (ver. 5, 6). IV. POWER EXERTED. The hurling of the band to the ground (ver. 6), and the restraining of them while the disciples escaped (ver. 8). V. LOVE MANIFESTED. Christ's care for His own. Let these go their way (ver. 8). VI. MERCY EXTENDED. The healing of the servant's ear (Luke xxii. 51). VII. SUBMISSION RENDERED. The drinking of the Father's cup (ver. 11). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *A most remarkable meeting:*—John records some most suggestive circumstances not recorded by the Synoptists, and

omits some that they record. Fabricators of history would never have acted thus. Absolute uniformity would have implied collusion, and thus thrown a doubt upon the veracity of the evangelists. Many of the events of Christ's life occurred in connection with turbulent multitudes and immense excitement. Observers could not have detailed them in the same order. From the nature of the case each would have a standpoint peculiar to himself, would be struck with a circumstance which the other would not have an opportunity of observing, and be in a position to receive a deeper impression from some incident which the other, perhaps, would scarcely deem worthy of note. Note I.—THE SCENE OF THE GATHERING. As it is in the reflective gospel only that the circumstance of Christ's crossing Cedron is mentioned, we can hardly doubt that to the Evangelist's own mind 2 Sam. xv. 23 and 2 King xxiii. 12 were present. Thus surrounded by such memorials and typical allusions, the Lord descends into the dust of humiliation and anguish. To this garden Jesus went forth with His disciples. 1. Whence (chap. xiv. 31)? From the room of feasting, discourse, prayer; from the city and the haunts of men. 2. Whither? Into the solemn grandeur and deep hush of nature. Some have supposed that this spot belonged to a friend, and was thus a favourite resort of Jesus and His disciples. Great souls often sigh for solitude, and all souls morally require it. 3. Wherefore? To commune with His Father; to realize His mission; to confront His doom. His going forth to this scene reveals—(1) His sublime courage. Conscious virtue is always fearless. (2) His social sympathy. As man He yearned for, and valued, the presence of His sympathetic friends in His great trials. II. THE PERSONS IN THE GATHERING. In imagination enter this secluded spot. Though night it was not dark, the moon was at its full. The group is not large, but wondrously diverse in character, passion, purpose. 1. Christ and His disciples are there. He is the central figure, poor and sad in aspect, but divinely grand. Peter, James, and John are there. On them, in all probability, rests a heart-sinking impression, that something terrible is to happen to the one they love best. 2. Judas is there. In his case we find greed ("What will ye give me?") running into—(1) Base ingratitude. (2) Heartless cruelty. (3) Atrocious treachery (Matt. xxvi. 49). 3. Unprincipled hirelings are there (ver. 3)—a detachment of the Roman cohort on duty at the festival, for the purpose of maintaining order, and the officials of the ecclesiastical authorities, the captain of the Temple and armed Levites. These men, perhaps, had no hostile feeling, but were there to do their duty, *i.e.*, the orders of their masters. In the sacred name of duty what crimes have been enacted! Soldiers rifle innocent homes, burn cities, shed oceans of blood, create millions of widows and orphans in the name of duty. III. THE TRANSACTIONS AT THE GATHERING. Four classes of deeds were here enacted. 1. Those against a conviction of duty. Judas must have so acted. Well he knew that he was perpetrating an atrocious crime (Matt. xxvii. 3, 4). To sin against conscience is to sin with aggravated heinousness. 2. Those without conviction of duty—"the band and the officers of the chief priests." These were like "dumb, driven cattle"—mere tools; men ready for anything at the bidding of their masters; with no will of their own, and no convictions concerning the right or wrong of their actions. How numerous are such in every age: wretched serfs on whom despots built their thrones. 3. Those by a right conviction of duty. Such were the deeds of Christ. Mark—(1) His intrepidity (ver. 4). He does not wait for their approach, nor does He ask for His own information. He questions them that they may confess their object, and to impress them with the fact that they could only attain their object by His voluntary submission. (2) His dauntless confession (ver. 5). "Here I am, not as victim but as Victor. Do your worst, My time has come." (3) The moral force of His expression (ver 6). They came with deadly weapons to seize His body; He by the moral majesty of His looks seized their souls, and they fell as Saul on his way to Damascus, and as the sentinels at the Tomb (Matt. xxviii. 4). (4) His tender consideration (vers. 7, 8). They seem to have recovered from the shock, and were ready to lay hold of the disciples. Thus the "Shepherd seeth the wolf coming, and fleeth not because," &c. In all this our Lord acted by the conviction of right, *i.e.*, that He was doing the will of His Father. 4. Those by a wrong conviction of duty (ver. 10). To which of these classes do our actions belong? Crucial question this! (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The arrest of Jesus*:—I. THE APPROACH OF JUDAS (vers. 1–3). 1. To what place? Gethsemane, whither Christ had retired after leaving the city with His disciples. 2. At what time? Towards or after mid-night. The traitor had occupied the interval in mustering his regiment. 3. By whom attended? By a company of guardsmen with their chiliarch from the castle of Antonia, and a

body of policemen from the Temple, the former with their swords, the latter with their batons, and both with lanterns and torches. 4. For what purpose? To apprehend Jesus. This "half army" to take a solitary prisoner from eleven men! II. THE SURRENDER OF JESUS (vers. 4–11). That Christ was not forcibly taken, but self-delivered four things attest. 1. The impotence of His assailants. As if smitten by an invisible hand they recoiled. "Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all." 2. The submission of Himself (Matt. xxvi. 53). 3. The command to Peter, which was meant to discourage all attempts at rescue. 4. The recognition of the Father's will. III. THE SAFETY OF THE DISCIPLES (vers. 8, 9). 1. A command issued. "Let these go their way." Not a wish but an order. (1) Merciful with regard for the situation of His followers. (2) Powerful, with an authority that Cæsar's legions could not resist. (3) Successful. 2. A prophecy fulfilled (ver. 12). Lessons: 1. The wickedness of the fallen heart exemplified in Judas. 2. The love of the Divine heart—pictured in Jesus. 3. The imperfection of the renewed heart—illustrated in Peter. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, whom seek ye?**—*Christ's question to the heart*:—I. CHRIST'S CHALLENGE. An expression of outraged dignity, and wounded love. It must have filled the band with confusion and shame. 1. To save needless trouble. 2. To prove His willing surrender to God. 3. To provoke reflection. Christ's mission to men's thoughts—to test and put right. His anxiety not simply to be sought, but sought aright. To come *thus!* Was He not daily with them? His invitations are for all. The Czar Nicholas's desire for foreigners to visit St. Petersburg is remarked upon in Lord Bloomfield's Memoirs. He wished men to see the resources of His empire, and its advances in civilization. So with the King of Truth. The Christ in us challenges the world and our lower nature. And all professed Christians and would-be patrons of Christ are challenged as to their motives, spirit and manner of service. II. ANSWERS IT MIGHT CALL FORTH. They reply by a name, but without realization. This scene is enacted daily by Christ and the world. 1. "Him whom I hate." 2. "Him who disturbs My peace." 3. "Him who hinders and resists Me." III. SPIRITUAL RESULTS IT SHOULD PRODUCE. 1. Inquiry as to our chief good. 2. Comparison of it with Christ. 3. Turning our whole nature and life toward Him. 4. This to become our one aim. A child had been lost in a crowd, and separated from her mother. Seeing her distress a man lifted her on his shoulder. What tearful, nervous, anxious eagerness in her eyes as she looked round on the sea of strange faces! What joy when at last her mother was descried and she was restored to her arms. So let us look *for* Christ until we find Him, and *at* Him until we know Him. (*St. J. A. Frere, M.A.*) *Jesus coming forth from Gethsemane*:—I. CHRIST'S DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE. Knowing all that should come He yet went forth. What deep aggravation and bitterness this would give to the whole course of His suffering life! Our trials are mostly unforeseen, hence there is room for the play of hope. This concealment of the future is merciful. The certainty of trouble would unnerve us, and the certainty of happiness intoxicate us. But Jesus knew all. What pathos in the phrase, "acquainted with grief." II. HIS WILLING SELF-SURRENDER. This gave value to His sacrifice. He did not hide himself like Adam, flee like Jonah, shrink like the disciples, but openly avowed Himself ready to do or to bear what was necessary for the world's ransom. It was an evil omen when the victim struggled at the altar and a good one when he came willingly. Jesus was straitened until His baptism was accomplished. III. HIS OVERPOWERING MAJESTY. 1. There have been similar occurrences. Caius Marius, when reduced to the utmost misery was shut up in a private house in Minturnæ, and an executioner was sent to kill him, but though old and unarmed, the man was so awed by his appearance, that "as if struck with blindness, he ran away astonished and trembling," on which the inhabitants released the great Roman and favoured his escape. But this is no parallel to the case of Christ. Remember it was trained Roman warriors and the trusted followers of the Sanhedrim who "went backward," &c. We cannot doubt that on this, as on other occasions, the glory of Christ's Divine nature shone out for great purposes, and was sufficient to effect them without the use of the secular sword which Peter drew. 2. Our Lord is at no loss for means to humble sinners at His footstool. Sometimes a clear view of the majesty and holiness of God will do it, as in Isaiah vi.; sometimes a vision of the glorified Christ, as in Rev. i.; sometimes the still small voice of His pardoning mercy, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus; sometimes strange and stirring events in Providence. IV. DIVINE UNPARALLED LOVE (ver. 8). Christ stipulated nothing for Himself,

though His adversaries were at His mercy, only for His disciples' safety: so much dearer were their lives to Him than His own. It is remarkable that this injunction was complied with, especially as Peter must have given great provocation. (*Homiletic Magazine.*) *Christ and His captors*:—This incident is narrated by John only, and well fits in with his purpose, viz., to supplement the other gospels with facts which set forth Christ's glory. Consider—I. THE MOMENTARY MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST'S GLORY. "I am He." When they were doubly assured by the traitor's kiss and His own confession, why did they not arrest Him? Instead of that they fell in a huddled heap before Him. 1. Things of the same sort, though much less in degree, have been often enough seen when some innocent victim has paralyzed for a moment the hands of his captors, and made them feel "how awful goodness is." There must have been many who had heard Him, and others who had heard of Him, and suspected that they were laying hands on a prophet, and those whose conscience only needed a touch to be roused to action. And His calmness, dignity, and fearlessness would tend to deepen the strange thoughts which began to stir in their hearts. 2. But there was evidently something more here, viz., an emission of some flash of the brightness that always tabernacled within, and which shone so fully at the Transfiguration; and the incident is one of many in which Christ's glory is most conspicuously seen in moments of deepest humiliation. 3. We may well look on the incident as a prophecy of what shall be. What will He do coming to reign, when He did this going to die? What will be His manifestation as Judge when this was the effect of His manifestation going to be judged? II. A MANIFESTATION OF THE VOLUNTARINESS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERING. When that terrified mob recoiled from Him, why did He stand there so patiently? The time was propitious for flight. It was not their power but His own pity which drew Him to the judgment hall. 1. The whole gospel story is conducted on the principle that our Lord's life and death was a voluntary surrender of Himself for man's sin. He willed to be born, and now He dies not because He must, but because He would. "I have power to lay down My life," &c. At that last moment, He was Lord and Master of death when He bowed His head to death. 2. If this be true, why was it that Christ would die? There are but two answers—(1) "I must do the will of My Father." (2) "I must save the world." III. A SYMBOL, OR AN INSTANCE ON A SMALL SCALE OF CHRIST'S SELF-SACRIFICING CARE FOR US. "If ye seek Me," &c., sounds more like the command of a prince than the intercession of a prisoner. 1. It was a small matter that He secured. These men would have to die for Him some day, but they were not ready for it yet. So He casts the shield of His protection round them for a moment, in order that their weakness may have a little more time to grow strong. And though it was wrong and cowardly for them to forsake Him, yet the text more than half gave them permission. 2. John did not think that this small deliverance was all that Christ meant by ver. 9. He saw that this trifling case was ruled by the same principles which are at work in that higher region to which the words properly refer. Of course the words will not be fulfilled in the highest sense till all who have loved Christ are presented faultless before the Father. But the little incident is the result of the same cause as the final deliverance. A dew drop is shaped by the same laws which mould the mightiest of the planets. 3. Let us learn from such a use of such an event to look upon all common and transcient circumstances as ruled by the same loving hands, and working to the same ends, as the most purely spiritual. The redeeming love of Jesus is proclaimed by every mercy which perishes in the using, and all things should tell us of His self-sacrificing care. 4. Thus, then, we may here see an emblem of what He does for us in regard to our foes. He stands between us and them, receives their arrows into His own bosom, and says, "Let these go their way." God's law comes with its terrors and its penalties; the consciousness of sin threatens us; the weariness of the world, the "ills that flesh is heir to," and the last grim enemy, Death, ring you round. What are you going to do in order to escape them? I preach a Saviour who has endured all for us. As a mother might fling herself out of the sledge that her child might escape the wolves, here is One that comes and fronts all your foes, and says to them, "Let these go their way—take Me." "On Him was laid the iniquity of us all." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The apprehension of Christ*:—I. THE MANNER IN WHICH HE WAS EMPLOYED WHEN THIS MULTITUDE CAME UPON HIM. St. John does not mention this. But all the other evangelists do. 1. Prayer was His last employment before His final sufferings began. Have we sufferings beginning? Our praying Master tells us here how to prepare for them. "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray." 2. But our Lord was praying for that which was not granted Him.

"If it be possible," &c. And what was His Father's answer? In that very moment He mingled that dreaded cup and sent it Him. We hear much of the omnipotence of prayer, but we are plainly taught here that there is a limit to its power; that we may pray and pray fervently, as Christ did, and yet have our request denied. Generally God causes our prayers to fall in with His plans, and then He puts honour on prayer by sending us the blessings He designs for us as answers to it; but when our petitions would thwart His plans, He will not grant them. "I besought the Lord thrice," says the suffering Paul, "that it might depart from me"; but it did not. His Master would take him up unasked into the third heaven, would do any thing that was good for His faithful servant, but He would not remove from Him the affliction He had prepared for Him. II. THE FRAME OF MIND IN WHICH OUR LORD RECEIVED THESE MEN WHEN THEY CAME TO TAKE HIM. But a few minutes before He was in a state of great mental agitation. But look at Him now. The thing He dreaded is come on Him, and what a change! Not a trace is left of fear, or agitation, or weakness. He comes forth to meet this armed multitude as unappalled and calm as though they were there to do Him honour. How like ourselves! Through God's abounding goodness, some of us have borne, and borne with calmness, the very troubles that in the distance we trembled to look at. The strength within us has astonished us. And we may trace this generally to the power of prayer. Had we seen this multitude, we should have said, perhaps, "Those earnest supplications have been all in vain." "Not so," says God. "Earnest prayer from one I love is never lost. I could not keep from Him the cup He dreaded; but I have done something better for Him—I have given Him strength to drink it." So with us. We go to God imploring Him to save us from the coming sorrow, and because He does not save us and the sorrow comes, we wonder. But He gives us a better thing than that we ask for; not deliverance from trouble, but power to bear it, and grace to profit by it, and a heart to thank Him for it. And this shows us the chief value and use of prayer. It is not so much to alter God's purposes, as to reconcile us to those purposes. We expect it to regulate God's providence; but, instead of this, it unlocks the treasures of God's grace. III. THE MARVELLOUS EFFECT PRODUCED BY OUR LORD ON THESE MEN. Officers of justice, and brave Roman soldiers, a simple sentence uttered by the man they came to apprehend, strikes them all to the ground. Now why this display of power? It is clear that there was nothing vindictive in it—the men were not injured. Neither was it intended for our Lord's rescue—there He stands waiting for them to rise. 1. It vindicated Christ's greatness. He had just feared and trembled as a man; but He was more than man: there was the infinite Godhead within Him, and for an instant He discovers it; He lets the majesty of it beam forth. It is a miracle of the same kind as that He wrought on the cross. There He brought a hardened malefactor to repentance, working on His mind none could see how; here He touches the minds of a whole multitude together, producing in them, not repentance indeed, but confusion and terror; thus plainly showing us in both instances, that He can do with the mind of man whatsoever He will. And nothing manifests His greatness more forcibly than this. 2. It provided for the safety of His disciples. The hour of His sufferings was come, but not of theirs. At present, therefore, He will not have one of them touched; and when Peter wounded one of them they did not retaliate. And just as weak before Him are all the enemies of His people. 3. It manifests the voluntariness of our Redeemer's sufferings. And whence did this willingness proceed? From the love and pity of His heart; His own free, abounding, wonderful love to a world of sinners. IV. THE CONDUCT OF THIS BAND OF MEN TOWARDS OUR LORD AFTER THEY HAD FELT HIS POWER. In the seventh chapter these officers return without their prisoner. "We heard Him talk, and we could not take Him." They preferred braving the anger of their rulers, rather than commit so great an outrage. Here they are again sent on the same errand. Endeavouring to seize our Lord, they are struck down to the earth at His feet. Surely they will rather die than touch Him. But look—they bind with cords the very Man before whom a few minutes ago they shrunk away in terror. See here, then, the hardness, the amazing stupidity of the human heart. We talk of miracles. We think that were they wrought around us, unbelief would every where give way, all men must believe and be saved. But Christ was not only born among miracles and lived amongst them, He was despised and rejected amongst them, He was apprehended amongst them, He was crucified amongst them. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The majesty and force of right*:—I. THE MORAL MAJESTY OF RIGHT. This is seen in two particulars. 1. In the heroic manner in which Christ, single handed, met

His enemies. Jesus, instead of fleeing, or manifesting the slightest perturbation, goes forth magnanimously to meet them. 2. In His tender consideration for His friends. "Touch not Mine anointed." The question comes up, What was it that made Jesus so calm and powerful in this terrible hour? (1) It was not ignorance of His perilous position. (2) It was not stoical insensibility. (3) It was the consciousness of rectitude. II. THE MORAL FORCE OF RIGHT. The incident is not necessarily miraculous, because—1. Christ's miracles were, with one exception, miracles of mercy. 2. We never find Him elsewhere putting forth His hand to resist. 3. It is not necessary to account for this phenomenon, for—(1) Violent and sudden emotions always tend to check the current of life. (2) These men must have known that they were doing wrong, and this ever makes men timid. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." (3) They expected resistance, and so were taken aback. It was the force of right that struck them down. Learn then—(*a*) The supreme importance of being right. This gives value to everything else. Apart from this, wealth, social influence, life itself, are worthless. Our great want is a "right spirit within us." (*b*) The Divine method of promoting right. How are men to feel its power? Not by force, but by a calm display of itself. (*c*) The ultimate triumph of right. The incident prefigures this. Right is Divine might, and the wrong in science, literature, government, religion, must fall before it. (*d*) The folly of opposing the right. Priests' opinions may rise up against it, intrigue and violence may be employed to put it down; but the triumphal Car of Right must roll over the dust of the Herods, Neroes, &c., of the world. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The manliness of Christ*:—If "the Christian is the highest style of man," it is because he copies a perfect model. 1. Christ knew how to bear prosperity. He who quails not before the angry mob may be led astray by the huzzas of the cheering crowd. How did Jesus endure this supreme test? In the palmy days of His public ministry, when multitudes came to hear Him, He never swerved from uprightness. To great and small He declared the same message. 2. But under circumstances of an opposite character does the text present the Man Christ Jesus. The manliness of Christ. I. NEGATIVELY. Does not consist—1. In physical strength, nor arise from the consciousness thereof. When Peter used his sword Jesus disclaimed all responsibility for the act, and refused to call the legions of angels that stood ready to do His bidding. In His own strength as a man He certainly was not stronger than others: and in the devoted, but defenceless, eleven He had but a poor dependence. Nor did He expect the Divine power to be put forth in His behalf, nor to escape through a panic of His foes. It was in the utter abandonment of all these things as a ground of fearlessness that His true nobility as a man appeared. It may seem needless to assert this; but when such stress is laid on physical culture, and some popular helps to this are glorified as "manly sports," it may not be amiss to estimate physical strength at its true value as related to manhood. A man may be the Samson of his neighbourhood, and be nothing but a bully and a coward after all. Let health and strength be sought, not to be deified, but to serve a manly spirit that resides within the sound body. 2. In mere hardihood. Fearlessness does enter into true manliness; but, if it stands alone, it comes far short of it. Emerson's sentiment, "Always do what you are afraid to do," must be taken with some allowance. To accustom one's self to face danger, when circumstances demand it, is an advantage; but to court it is scarcely justifiable. The same false principle underlies what is called the "code of honour." It applauds recklessness of danger at the expense of all moral considerations. We condemn the man who trifles with his own life and that of others by sporting on the edge of a precipice. Wherein does it differ from this, except in greater wrongdoing and guilt, when two men deliberately place each other's lives in peril firing at one another? To no such useless sacrifice did Jesus lend the sanction of His example. How careful He was to secure the safety of His disciples! II. POSITIVELY. The manliness of Christ appeared—1. In fearless action for what was worth the risk. We might see a reason sufficient for His conduct in His desire to spare His disciples. Like the mother-bird drawing attention to herself in order to protect her brood, He took the brunt of the attack upon Himself and averted it from them. But there was a reason of greater weight: He had a work to do that was not yet finished. He had undertaken to redeem the world, and He could not do this but by paying the price of His own blood. And now His hour was come, and "for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame." It is this, having an adequate reason for the risk we run, that raises freedom from fear into the region of true manliness. If, for the sake of truth, liberty or duty, we

surrender life itself, we do well and nobly. "I dare do all that may become a man. Who dares do more is none." To do what conscience bids us do is always manly. And, though we may not be called to posts of peculiar danger, where gallantry may be conspicuous, we may each of us act bravely in our own sphere of labour and influence. "The every-day courage of doing your duty is the grandest courage of all." It is this that prepares one for the test of the day of special trial. Men do not spring suddenly into magnanimity. The act of Jesus, in this scene at the garden, was consistent with all that went before. It was life-long fearlessness, in behalf of the truth, that gained for John Knox, when he died, this encomium from his antagonist: "There lies one who never feared the face of man." 2. In His patient, single-handed endurance. He willingly trod the winepress alone. There was no sustaining excitement. Often the soldier gets credit for what is done in a spasm of enthusiasm that is out of all proportion to the actual courage exercised. The pilot at the helm of the burning ship, and falling headlong at the last; the French physician, recording the facts concerning the plague for the benefit of mankind, and then dying himself as its victim—as he expected to do—teach us the nobility of self-sacrifice. What we admire in them shines most conspicuous in the life and death of the Son of man. (*R. C. Ferguson.*) **I am He** (Gr. "I am"). —*The "I ams" of Christ*:—A great and significant expression, never without the most powerful effects. Spoken to His astonished disciples as He walked on the waves; and as at the sound, the raging storm instantly subsided, so a flood of peace and joy poured itself into their hearts (chap. vi. 20; Mark vi. 50). Spoken to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well; and immediately she left her waterpot and became the first evangelist to the Samaritans (chap. iv. 26-30). Spoken at the bar of the Sanhedrim; and the conviction that He was the Messiah smote His judges so powerfully that it was only by means of the stage trick of rending His clothes that the High Priest was able to save Himself from the most painful embarrassment (Mark iv. 62). Spoken here, and the soldiers fall to the ground. Spoken to His terrified disciples after His resurrection, and the most blessed results followed (Luke xxiv. 39). A word of unutterable comfort and joy to His friends, and alarm to His foes. (*W. H. Van Doren.*) **As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward.**—*Life pictures*:—Great events develop man's true nature: this incident did Judas's in one direction, and Christ's in another. In this melancholy scene I behold five prominent pictures—some of them tinted with the hues of heaven, and others shaded with the blackness of hell. I. A picture of THE SUBLIMEST SELF-POSSESSION. Christ did not retire into some deeper shade when the sanguinary band entered the garden. Guilt would have done so, but Innocence walked forth in conscious purity and power. Christ was the first to speak—He actually revealed Himself to the very men who were hired to shed His blood! What produced this holy calm? 1. Not ignorance of His true position. 2. Not weariness of life's scenes and labours. 3. But conscious innocence. Rectitude smiles at the storm, but there is no peace to the wicked. Guilt expects to confront a foe wherever it confronts a human being. Innocence is unsuspecting. II. A picture of THE DIRECTEST SELF-CRIMINATION. "They went backward." Why? 1. Not because destitute of physical resources. 2. Not because they had seen a Being they did not seek. No apparition startled their nerves. 3. But because of conscious guilt. The ruffians saw themselves in contrast; they were embodied wrong, and Christ was embodied right. They felt the power of holiness as they had never felt it before, and realized the essential cowardice of guilt. III. A picture of THE NOBLEST SELF-SACRIFICE. He, from whom these ruffians shrank, could have kept them prostrate. 1. Self-sacrifice is not retaliative. To Christ vengeance belongs—He had the power to avenge Himself, but forbore. Littleness demands measure for measure, but magnanimity promotes the right by patiently enduring the wrong. 2. Self-sacrifice is socially beneficent. Christ kindly said, "if therefore ye seek Me," &c. He sought no companionship in His suffering. He would tread the winepress alone! Fellowship might mitigate agony, but Christ would have no mitigation that occasioned pain in others. IV. A picture of UNINTENTIONAL SELF-DEGRADATION. "Then Simon Peter," &c. Looking at this in the light of mere feeling we must pronounce it natural. Peter felt his obligations to the Being who was exposed to the most studied insult, and his soul burned with indignation against the degraded hirelings. Christ, however, gently rebuked him by healing the smitten foe. This may teach us—1. That innocence has a sublimer defence than a sword. Innocence can do without the advocacy of steel. God is with the right, and to battle with Omnipotence is to be crushed into ruin. 2. That

truth is not to be defended by physical weapons. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal." The throne of Truth is established on the immovable basis of eternal Right and infinite Love. 3. That innocence desires not the punishment of individuals. Christ was not gratified in seeing Malchus smitten. His kingdom was not extended because a foe was punished. Christ would destroy the errorist by curing the error, consume the sinner by taking away the sin of the world. V. A picture of INTELLIGENT LOYALTY TO DIVINE PURPOSES. "The cup which My heavenly Father," &c. Learn—1. That the Divine Being mingles bitter cups. We are not to accept prosperity alone as a proof of God's paternity; even adversity may be the best expression of His Fatherly care and wisdom. God leads into Gethsemane as well as into Eden. 2. That men must sometimes drink bitter cups for the good of society. Christ's drinking was substitutionary. He drank the cup of death that we might drink the water of life. In our little degree we, too, must drain bitter cups, that those around us may have opportunities of improvement. 3. Happy the man who can connect the cup he drinks with His Divine Parent. Christ did so. He did not regard Judas and his confederates as givers of this cup. Behind the ruffian God may stand. Our business, therefore, is to ascertain who is the giver of the cup, and whether it is the reward of our folly, or an element in the outworking of the Divine purposes. 4. There is one point most noteworthy, viz., that Judas had no power to capture Christ till He had explained His real position. "Shall I not drink it?" *Then* Judas, &c. (vers. 11, 12). Then Christ was taken—but up to that moment they had no power against Him. VI. PRACTICAL INFERENCES. 1. That the holiest men may be placed in the most painful position. 2. That Innocence is the best defensive weapon. 3. That society escapes through the sacrifice of Jesus. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Christ in Gethsemane—a picture of Judgment*:—I. WHO WAS HE FROM WHOM THESE MEN FELL BACK IN TERROR? Jesus. 1. Going as a Lamb to the slaughter. 2. Hereafter to come as the Judge of the men for whom He was about to die. How marvellous the contrast. II. WHY DID THESE MEN FALL BACK FROM HIM? Was there not a feeling of—1. His personal holiness. How greatly will this be interrupted when He comes in His glory—the glory of His holiness. 2. His personal dignity. There was always, we may be sure, something in His look and mien of more than ordinary majesty. The great painter in His picture of Christ leaving the Pretorium has thrown a look of thrilling and unearthly dignity into the countenance of the sorrowful Redeemer. This is a great artist's conception. What was the reality? 3. His Divine Majesty. So great shall be the splendour of the Saviour that, "the heavens and the earth shall flee away," and even hide themselves from Him. 4. Terror of conscience. How shall we meet Him if loaded with guilt. III. WHO WERE THOSE WHO FELL BACK FROM HIM? 1. Judas. So shall all who have proved recreant to their faith when He says, "I am He," the long looked-for Comer to judgment. 2. Tools of others' wickedness (ver. 3). 3. But mark a difference, "Let these go their way," He said of the disciples. But more perfectly will He then fulfil the prophecy of ver. 9. (*Family Churchman.*) **Jesus answered, I have told you I am He** (see chap. xvii. 12).—*The captive Saviour freeing His people*:—I. THE INSTRUCTIONS. Note—1. A sure proof of the willingness of our Lord Jesus Christ to give Himself to suffer for our sins. Christ did not seek a hiding-place in Jerusalem, or Bethany. If He had chosen to wait until the day, the fickle multitude would have protected Him. Instead of this, Jesus boldly advanced to the spot where Judas had planned to betray Him, as calmly as though He had made an appointment to meet a friend there, and would not be behindhand when he arrived. He said twice, "Whom seek ye?" He had to reveal Himself, or the lanterns and the torches would not have discovered Him. He went willingly, for since a single word made the captors fall to the ground, another would have sent them into the tomb. There was no power on earth that could have bound Him had He been unwilling. He who said, "Let these go their way," could have said the same of Himself. There were invisible cords that bound Him; bonds of covenant engagements, of His love to us. Let us take care, then, that our service of Christ is a cheerful and a willing one. Let us never come up to the place of worship merely because of custom, &c. Let us never contribute to the Master's cause as though a tax-gatherer were wringing from us what we could ill afford. Let our duty be our delight. His willing sacrifice ought to ensure ours. 2. Our Lord's care for His people in the hours of His greatest disturbance of mind. That word was intended—(1) To be a preservation for His immediate attendants. It is singular that the Jews did not arrest that little band. If they had done so, where would have been the Christian Church? Why did not the soldiers capture John?

He seems to have gone in and out of the palace without challenge. They were searching for witnesses, why did they not examine Peter under torture? The Jews did not lack will, for they were gratified when James was killed, and Peter was laid in prison—why were they suffered to go unharmed? Was it not because the Master had need of them? (2) A royal passport to all Christ's people in the way of providence. Fear not, thou servant of Christ, thou art immortal till thy work is done. When thou art fit to suffer, or to die, Christ will not screen thee from so high an honour. It is wonderful in the lives of some of God's ministers how strikingly they have been preserved from imminent peril. We cannot read the life of Calvin without being surprised that he should have been permitted to die peaceably, an honoured man. It is not less remarkable that Luther should seem as if he had carried a safe conduct which permitted him to go anywhere. So with John Wickliffe. Many times his life was not worth a week's purchase. When he was brought up for trial, it was a very singular circumstance that John of Gaunt should stand at his side fully armed, proudly covering the godly man with the prestige of his rank and power. I know not that Gaunt knew the truth, but vultures, when God has willed it, have protected doves, and eagles have covered with their wings children whom God would save. (3) Mystically understood the words have a far deeper meaning. The true seizure of Christ was not by Romans, but by our sins; and the true deliverance was not so much from Roman weapons as from the penalty of sin. The law of God comes out to seek us who have violated it, but Jesus puts Himself before the law, and He says, "Dost thou seek Me? Here I am; but let these, for whom I stood, go their way." But the text will have its grandest fulfilment at the last. When the destroying angel shall come, Christ shall stand forth in the front of all the blood-bought souls that came to trust in His mercy, and He will say to Justice, "Thou hast sought Me once, and thou hast found all thou canst ask of Me. Then let these go their way." Then shall the great manumission take place, because Christ was bound; then shall the deliverance come, because Christ slept in the prison-house of the tomb. 3. His saying concerning them. (1) Verbally understood, it could only relate to the souls of God's people; but here it is taken as though it related to their bodies. From which I gather that we are never wrong in understanding promises in the largest possible sense. It is a rule of law that if a man should get a privilege from the king, that privilege is to be understood in the widest sense; whereas a punishment, or penalty, is always to be understood in the narrowest sense. Now when the great King gives a promise, you may encompass everything within its range which can possibly come under the promise, and we may be sure that the Lord will not run back from His word. The grant of eternal life includes such providential protections and provisions as shall be necessary on the road to heaven. The house is secured for the sake of the tenant, and the body because of the soul. (2) It is not in the form of a promise at all. "Have I lost none." It relates to the past, but here it is used as a reason why none should be lost of the present. As Jesus has done in the past, so will He act in the future. II. THE SPIRITUAL APPLICATION. 1. Many seek Jesus, but do not know who He is. So that Christ says to them, "Whom seek ye?" Some here this morning are seeking rest, but they do not know that Jesus is the rest. 2. Those who seek Christ will find Him, but only because He reveals Himself to them. These men sought Christ to kill Him, yet He came and said, "I am He." So He said to the Samaritan woman. Whoever seeks Jesus, Jesus will show Himself to them. They did not find Christ with lanterns and torches. And you may come with a great many of your own inventions, but you will not so find Him. How could you expect to find the sun with a lantern? 3. When Jesus is found, there is always much to be given up. "If ye seek Me, let these go their way." There are always many things that you will have to let go if you have Christ, and this is very often the testing point. Men would like to go to heaven, but they must let go evil occupations, worldly pleasures, self-righteousness, &c. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Let these go their way.—*One sufficient for a sacrifice*:—When Wishart, the Scotch preacher, was seized and imprisoned by Bothwell, John Knox desired to share his fortunes; but Wishart, who had seen how precious a mind and heart lay behind the rugged features of his follower, would not allow it. "Gang home to your bairns," said he; "one is sufficient for a sacrifice." He accompanied Bothwell alone, and later on gave his life for a testimony. (*H. O. Mackey.*)

Then Simon Peter having a sword, drew it.—*The use of force in religion*:—I. UNAVAILING. The Church's feeble instruments can do as little against the world's battalions as Peter's sword could have done against the guardsmen of Cæsar. II. UNNECESSARY.

He who could have commanded twelve legions of angels had no need of Peter's rapier; the cause which is supported by "all power in heaven and earth" requires not to be furthered by carnal weapons. III. UNCHRISTIAN. Peter's action was in flagrant opposition to the precept that Master had taught (Matt. v. 39). For the Church to employ force is in total contradiction to the character of Christ's kingdom (ver. 36.) IV. UNREASONABLE. Had Peter been able to rescue Christ, that would not have proved either that he was right or that Christ's assailants were wrong. "Force is no remedy," and "no argument." So Christ said (ver. 23). Instead of resorting to magisterial authority, the Church should labour to convince and convert its opponents. V. UNWISE. Could Peter have delivered Christ, he would have hindered the Father's purpose. The Church, when she unsheathes the sword, retards rather than advances the triumph of truth. VI. UNSAFE. Peter's sword practice led to his identification, and to the suspicions and cross-examinations that brought about his fall. So when the Church resorts to violence, she may anticipate danger to herself. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Peter's sword:*—Three things worthy of notice—I. AN IMPULSE MANIFESTLY GENEROUS, WRONGLY DIRECTED. Peter was prompted, not by greed, ambition, or revenge, but by sympathy with his Master; a generous desire to protect Him. But this impulse, good in itself, was improperly directed; and how much good feeling is so still. 1. There is parental affection. How generally is this employed to the advancement of a child's temporal good, rather than to his spiritual; to pamper his appetite rather than to discipline his heart; to make him independent of labour, rather than to train Him to habits of honest industry. 2. There is religious sympathy. How often is this directed not to making our own characters so great and childlike as to be witnesses for God wherever we go, but to formulate and promote theological dogmas, and to establish and nourish little sects. 3. There is the philanthropic sentiment. This, instead of being directed in endeavours first to improve the moral heart of humanity, and then working from the heart to the whole outward life, and from the individual to the race, is directed to the creation and support of costly machinery for lopping off branches from the upas, supplying salves to the ulcers, and whitening the sepulchres of depravity. No, man can be improved only by first improving his heart; the fountain must be cleansed before the streams can be pure. II. A VIOLENCE ENTIRELY DEFENSIVE DIVINELY CONDEMNED. Did Peter expect his Master to say "Well done?" If so, he was disappointed; for Christ had only strong words of disapproval (*cf.* Matt. xxvi. 52). The words in Matthew may be taken as a prediction or as the law of humanity. If taken in the former sense, history supplies abundant fulfilment. Nations that have practised war have ultimately been ruined by war. If in the latter sense, we find instincts in the soul which lead to the revolt. Anger begets anger; love begets love; and "with what measure ye mete," &c. How could Christ approve of Peter's deed? It was contrary to the old law, "Thou shalt not kill"; and to the new, that we should return good for evil. III. A RESIGNATION ABSOLUTELY FREE, SUBLIMELY DISPLAYED. "The cup," &c. The sufferings of the good—1. Are a "cup," not an ocean. Happiness is an immeasurable sea, while misery is an exhaustible and exhausting quantity. 2. Are a gift from the Father, and not a curse from the devil. "What Son is He whom the Father chasteneth not." 3. Are to be accepted with filial resignation. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **The cup which My Father hath given Me.**—*Christ's cup:*—In Peter's temerity, notice the difference between military valour and Christian fortitude. He that faltered and was blown down by the weak blast of a damsel's question has now the courage with a single sword to venture on a whole band of men. Military valour is boisterous, and depends upon the heat of blood and spirits, and is better for a sudden onset than a deliberate trial; but Christian fortitude depends on the strength of faith, and lies in a meek subjection to God, and will enable us to endure the greatest torments rather than encroach on the consciences of our duty to God. In the words note—I. THE NOTION BY WHICH AFFLICTION IS EXPRESSED. In Scripture we read of—1. A cup of consolation (Jer. xvi. 7), taken from the Jewish custom of sending it to mourners or condemned prisoners (Prov. xxxi. 6, 7; Amos ii. 8). 2. The cup of salvation (Psa. cxvi. 13) or of deliverance, used more solemnly in the Temple by the priests, or more privately in the family. Sometimes called the drink offering of praise, and to which the cup of blessing (1 Cor. x. 16) has great respect. 3. The cup of tribulation (Psa. xi. 6; Jer. xxv. 15; Psa. lxxv. 8). It was to this that Christ referred here and in His agony. II. GOD'S ORDERING OF IT. "Which My Father hath given Me." Christ mentioned not the malice of His enemies, but the will of God. His hand in Christ's sufferings is often asserted in Scripture (Isa. liii. 10; Acts ii. 23, iv. 28).

God did not instigate those wicked wretches, yet it was predetermined by God for the salvation of mankind. III. CHRIST'S SUBMISSION. "Shall I not drink it." If God puts a bitter cup into our hand, we must not refuse it; for we have here Christ's example. The meaning is: The bitter passion which the Father hath laid upon Me, shall I not suffer it patiently? IV. LESSONS: 1. In all calamities we should look to God (Psa. xxxix. 9; Isa. xxxviii. 15). (1) Nothing falls out without God's particular providence (Lam. iii. 37, 38). (2) All cross issues and punishment, as well as benefits, come from God (Isa. xlv. 7). 2. It is a great advantage to patience when we consider God, not as an angry Judge, but as a gracious Father (Heb. xii. 7, 8; 2 Cor. vi. 18). 3. It well becomes His people to endure willingly whatever God calls them to. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The cup of suffering*:—1. It is but a cup; a small matter comparatively, be it what it will. It is not a sea, a Red Sea, a Dead Sea, for it is not hell; it is light, and but for a moment. 2. It is a cup that is given us. Sufferings are gifts (Phil. i. 29). 3. It is given to us by a Father, who has a father's authority, and does us no wrong—a father's affections, and means us no hurt. *Christ's cup and ours*:—We must pledge Christ in the cup that He drank of. I. It is but A CUP—a small matter comparatively, be it what it will. II. It is a cup that is GIVEN US. III. It is a cup given us by OUR FATHER. (*M. Henry.*) *The Father's cup*:—Affliction. I. PREPARED BY THE FATHER'S WISDOM. II. APPOINTED IN THE FATHER'S LOVE. III. DESIGNED FOR THE FATHER'S CHILD. IV. ACCEPTED FOR THE FATHER'S SAKE. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *All sorrows simultaneously present to the mind of Christ*:—All these approaching agonies were simultaneously present to the Saviour's mind. To us sorrows come separately. We can bear, one by one, trials which, coming all at once, would be overwhelming. If we can anticipate a few, others are mercifully concealed from our wisest calculations or saddest forebodings. Looking backward, we wonder how we passed through such difficulties. One reason is that they did not, and could not, occur together. The path must have led us quite through the morass before it climbed the precipice; must have guided across the burning sand before it reached the roaring torrent. In His case all the distresses of the future were piled together to appal His soul. The water of the lake, which in its gradual descent by its torrent-outflow, rolls harmlessly along the well-guarded channels, will if bursting forth in sudden flood, strain to the utmost, or sweep away, the strongest barrier. No wonder that the human nature of Christ was in agony! Besides, our fear for the future is more or less mitigated by hope. What we dread most may not come to pass. Something may intervene to divert the peril. The dark cloud may disperse without breaking over us. Or the reality may prove far less injurious than the fear. But in the agony of our Lord all the foreboding was certain to be verified. His prescience was all comprehensive, distinct, and certain. Therefore His suffering was unexampled. "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow." (*N. Hall, LL.B.*) *Christ's agony arising from His purity*:—In the case of this Sufferer, Divine purity was incarnated in a frail human body, which had come into close contact with sin. Absolute perfection was brought near to absolute depravity in its blackest phase—the approaching murder of the Just One, revealing intense hatred of goodness, cruel repulse of love, resolute rebellion against God. As a person in perfect health might be shocked when brought into a crowded, fever or small-pox ward, when the habitual attendants, accustomed to the signs of sickness and the fœtid air, might not suffer; as one coming out of the bright sunshine into a darkened room feels it to be blackness, while those dwelling there can see around them; as a virtuous woman would shrink with revulsion from the talk and the conduct of the utterly fallen and shameless—far more must the absolute Perfection of Divine holiness be in agony when brought face to face with deadliest depravity. Besides this, Divine love was brought into the presence of human misery. The holy God, hating sin, was the merciful God, loving the sinner; and therefore grieved because of the evils sin was bringing on its victims. (*Ibid.*) **Then the band . . . took Jesus and bound Him.**—*The bound Christ triumphant*:—They bound Him only as to His hands, for they led—not carried, nor dragged—Him to the high priest. Those hands were the hands indeed of the Nazarene that had held the hammer and the chisel and the plane; but they were also the hands of the Christ that had been laid upon the sick to heal them; that had touched the bier on which the widow's son was being borne to his burial; that had taken hold upon the hand of Jairius's daughter and raised her to life; that had been laid upon the eyes of the blind to impart sight to them; that had touched the tongue of the dumb and restored to it its speech; that had blessed little children; that, but even now,

had been placed upon the wound of an enemy to heal it; that this very day should be nailed for their advantage to the bitter cross—hands full of mercy. Note—I. CHRIST'S VOLUNTARY REPRESSION OF POSSESSED POWER. His enemies had often sought to take Him. They had even had Him in their hands—had been about to cast Him over the brow of the hill; but with perfect ease He had passed through the midst of them and escaped. One word from His lips had just driven them back affrighted. One petition breathed in the ear of the Father would have brought to His aid "more than twelve legions of angels." These bound hands, then, teach the hollowness of the sentiment that "self-preservation is the first law of life." Self-renunciation is life's supreme law. Jesus saw before Him enemies. His law was, Love your enemies; and the law of His lips was the law of His life. He knew that hostility was conquerable, not by might, but by love. And so He offered no hindrance. Like the mighty Judge of Israel, He could without effort have snapped the cords that held Him. He would not. These His enemies were ignorantly the ministers of His to do His service, binding the sacrifice with cords, by whose death the world was to have life. II. THE PERMITTED TRIUMPH OF EVIL IS TEMPORARY AND BUT THE OPENING OF THE DOOR FOR A WIDER GOOD. 1. The triumph of the enemies of Christ seemed complete. Little thought this rabble, as they clamoured for the death of this prisoner, that when those hands should be unbound to be nailed to the cross, there would be an eternal unbinding of that truth which was to plunge the sword into the heart of Judaism. The binding of those hands was the accumulation of power within them. The bound Jesus was mightier than the unbound. Hearts that have not been touched by the words that He spoke, are broken to see Him led as a lamb to the slaughter. 2. Looking out upon the woful evils which ravage earth—physical, intellectual, moral; diseases, superstitions, sins—one can scarce forbear to cry: Are the hands to which all power in heaven and on earth is committed still bound? But ever cometh the answer, "What I do thou knowest not now," &c. And "we trust that, somehow, good will be the final goal of ill." III. A MINORITY, WHILE SUBJECTED TO APPARENT DEFEAT, MAY CONTAIN THE PROMISE AND THE POTENCY OF VICTORY. The voice of a majority is not of necessity the voice of God. Mere might does not constitute right. There, in the Garden of Gethsemane, 1800 years since, stood One against a crowd—against the world. With Him there was one thing which was not with them: not merely the conviction—for doubtless they had their convictions, as have all majorities—but the absolute knowledge that He was in harmony with the will of God. They were clamorous for political expediency and for the rights of their religion; He was silent for love. Jesus proclaimed the truth throughout His public life, and stood to it there in the garden—One against many—that the basis, the only true basis of the social structure, is self-renouncing love. True, His was not an enviable position regarded humanwise. But one with God is not merely a majority, but victory; which is not measurable by immediate results, but by the fruitage of eternity. (*N. W. Wells.*) *The ecclesiastical trial of Jesus* (text and vers. 19–24):—I. THE PRISONER: Jesus. 1. The dignity pertaining to Him. (1) An innocent man. (2) A religious teacher. (3) A philanthropic citizen. (4) A patient sufferer. (5) Incarnate God. 2. The indignity put upon Him. (1) Seized by those He had befriended. (2) Bound by those He desired to liberate. (3) Led away as a criminal by those who were themselves transgressors. (4) Placed at the bar of one who should have been His advocate rather than His judge. II. THE JUDGE. Annas or Caiaphas. 1. Head of the State, the high priest ought to have protected the interests of Jesus, as a member thereof; and, above all, ought to have dispensed justice and right judgment. 2. Holder of a sacred office, he ought to have been incapable of violating the claims of either truth or right. 3. Vicegerent of Jehovah, he ought to have stood forth the champion of God's law. III. THE EXAMINATION. 1. Its character. Preliminary, followed by a second (ver. 24; Matt. xxvi. 57; Mark xiv. 53) and a third (Luke xxii. 66). The first was the practical, the second the potential, the third the actual and formal decision that sentence of death should be passed judicially upon Him. That of Annas was the authoritative *præjudicium;* that of Caiaphas, the real determination; that of the entire Sanhedrim at daybreak, the final ratification. 2. Its object. To entrap Christ into admissions which might afterwards be used against Him. 3. Its course. (1) The crafty question (ver. 19). (2) The prudent answer (ver. 20). (3) The undeserved blow (ver. 23). (4) The gentle response (ver. 23). IV. THE VERDICT. 1. Symbolized; by replacing the fetters, which had probably been removed during the trial. 2. Interpreted. Equivalent to an intimation that Annas regarded Jesus as a dangerous character, an uncomfort-

able person for unscrupulous schemers to have in their path, and, therefore, as one who had better be removed. It was so understood by Caiaphas. 3. Pronounced. Afterwards to the court of Caiaphas, and again in a full meeting of the Sanhedrim. Lessons: 1. The unspeakable condescension of Christ. 2. The infinite meekness of Christ. 3. The unflinching boldness of Christ. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Phases of a corrupt government in its endeavours to crush the light*:—Why did the government of Judæa plot for Christ's destruction? 1. Was there anything in His genealogy to account for it? No! He was one of their own race, descended from the most illustrious Hebrews. 2. Was there anything in His appearance? Certainly there was nothing repulsive in the fairest of the children of men. 3. It was because He was the embodiment and Advocate of Right—right between man and man, and man and God. The government was wrong to its very core. The right flashed upon its corrupt heart as sunbeams on diseased eyes. Hence as with all corrupt government they would put an end to it. I. BY THE EMPLOYMENT OF HIRELINGS (ver. 12). There are under all governments multitudes so dead to the sense of justice and the instincts of manhood, that they are ready at any hour to sell themselves to services the most disreputable. These are the ready tools of despots. II. IN THE NAME OF LAW (ver. 13). The greatest crimes have been perpetrated under the sanction of justice, "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die." Despots say that "law and order" must be respected. But no; if your law and order are built on moral falsehood, tread them in the dust. The progress of the world requires this. The heroes of unperishable renown have given themselves to this work. What is wrong in morals can never be right in government. III. UNDER THE PRETEXT OF A MISERABLE EXPEDIENCY (ver. 14). In relation to that "counsel," 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 the authorities. 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 fitness of a measure to an end does not make it right. The only standard of right is God's will, and Christ had not contravened that. 3. Their policy being radically wrong, was ultimately ruinous. It hastened the flight of the Roman eagle. Eternal principle is the only pillar to guide short-sighted creatures. Let governments be warned by the policy of Caiaphas. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Annas and Caiaphas*:—That there should have been two high priests needs explanation. One of these was a famous man whose name was "Merciful." (Heb. *Chanan*, here represented in a shortened form by the Gr. *Annas*). "Merciful" had once been the high priest according to Jewish law; but, more than twenty years before, Valerius Gratus, Pilate's predecessor, had put him out of office, and had put into it a nominee of his own. In the creed of every true Israelite this act was null. The law of God ordained that whoever was high priest was so for life; and a man could no more have two high priests at one time than he could have two fathers; therefore, "Merciful" was, in the sight of the orthodox, a great and sacred personage. More than this, we have reason to think that while his son-in-law held the post of high priest by the grace of the Emperor, he himself was by the same grace his *sagan*, or deputy; and this was an office so august that the person who held it might, on urgent occasions, go into "the Holy of Holies." He even received the appellation of high priest. So Luke uses the expression, "Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests;" the one being so *de jure*, the other *de facto*. It is easy to understand how the senior was virtually the primate, and how he would naturally keep his official residence in the high priest's palace, on one side of its vast quadrangle. "Merciful" was an old man of seventy. While the Jews regarded him as a potent force in their national affairs, he was also eminently acceptable to the Romans, for he was a priest who was touched with no inconvenient convictions; he was also a capitalist, willing to oblige a needy nobleman with a loan on fair terms; in him, too, they had a gentleman and a man of the world to deal with; he was cool, politic, and safe; altogether, in the judgment both of Jews and Gentiles, "Merciful" was just then, probably, the first man in all Jerusalem. Leaders of history know that persons who have most reverence for the priestly office have sometimes less than the least reverence for some particular priest. It was so here. "Merciful" was detested. In the popular opinion, his nature belied his name. "Call that man 'Merciful!'" it was thought, "you might as well speak of a merciful 'viper;'" and "viper" seems to have become his common cognomen. When he passed along the road in his palanquin, here and there a citizen might crouch down to the dust before him as if in speechless worship, but would be likely to

mutter under his breath, "Viper!" Subtle, deadly, gliding, tortuous, noiseless as the snake slipping along through the evening grass, and sometimes able to wait with wicked patience for his prey—thus we picture this "Merciful." The first old priest who saw Jesus in this world said of Him, as He lay across His mother's arms, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace," &c. Now another old priest looks on Him, but with cold, steely eyes that glitter and stab. The meaning of "Caiaphas," the name of this younger and more active representative of the sacerdotal party, is uncertain; but there is no uncertainty as to what manner of man he was. As to his theology, he was doubtless considered to be "liberal," or "broad;" for he "believed in neither angel nor spirit," and smiled at the doctrine of "a resurrection." Ostensibly, he was first of the priests, yet he cared more to work out problems in political mathematics than to ponder "the things into which angels desire to look." Although in every respect of the same party as the other priest, he was altogether different from him in his natural calibre. He wore no mask, he simulated no gentleness; but looked like the man he was, hard, bold, and unscrupulous. He was an intense Jew, and was ever on the watch to cross the plans of Pilate, but was also ever on the watch to avoid whatever might disturb safe relations with the Roman government. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Jesus before an iniquitous and incompetent tribunal:*—Before this judge is brought, not to be judged but to be condemned, the Judge of quick and dead, by an ungrateful and passionate people. The faintest parallel to this may be found in the case of those mutinous rebels of India, who in their blind rage and unreasoning fury, in their reckless frenzy and fanaticism, arraigned before them in mock trial one of their own judges, one of the best and noblest of those who come from a better land to sojourn a while in that less favoured country; one who spent his strength in doing good, and was known as the friend of the native; and who moreover might have escaped, only that, hero that he was, he refused to quit the post of duty. And they took him, that great and good man, and hanged him, the upright judge, in front of his own house, whence he had so often dispensed justice and mercy. This was the return they made—the base and barbarous return—"him they slew, and hanged on a tree." (*G. J. Brown, M.A.*) *Jesus judged:*—For blind men to be fair critics of Turner, for bats to be fair critics of sunshine, for worms to be fair critics of the open air, would be more conceivable than the possibility of men like these being fair judges of Jesus! How could such sinners understand the Holy One of God? Besides their unfairness from natural unfitness, there was unfairness from the fact that they were desperate conspirators, plotting against His life. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) **High priest that year.**—This expression used to be considered by commentators as proving that the Romans had made the high-priesthood an annual office: which we know to be contrary to the fact. In later years the true explanation has been hit upon which considers that "that year" denotes a memorable time, which distinguished the high-priesthood of Caiaphas among other terms held by other persons. That this is an old and an Oriental peculiarity of expression, and that the later explanation is the true one, appears from a parallel in the apocryphal book of Susanna (Sus. i. 5). These wicked elders were not judges of the people for that month only, but had been so for a long time: but they were the judges in the month which was signaled by the putting away of corruption, the vindication of Daniel as an upright and inspired judge, and by the rescue of the innocent from deadly calumny. So Caiaphas was the high-priest when that memorable year came round in which the one sacrifice for sin, for all time, was performed. (*S. S. Times.*)

Vers. 15–18; 25–27. **And Simon Peter followed Jesus.**—*The fall of Peter:*—I. FOREANNOUNCED (chap. xiii. 38). Three surprises. 1. The person concerned. Peter the man of rock, whose faith had appeared the brightest (chap. vi. 68; Matt. xvi. 16). Whose zeal had seemed the greatest (chap. xiii. 37), and whose courage had been accounted the boldest (Matt. xiv. 28). Had it been Thomas the desponding (chap. xi. 16), the wonder would have been less; had it been John the beloved, it could hardly have been more. Let it teach—(1) That no man knows himself or his fellows as Christ does. (2) That they who seem the least assailable are often the soonest overcome. (3) That no saint, however large his capacities or high his attainments, is beyond the possibility of a fall. 2. The time indicated. That night of the Paschal feast, &c., when Peter would have said that his faith was strongest and his love warmest. This too has lessons. (1) That times of highest spiritual excitement are often seasons of greatest danger. (2) That there are moments

when Christ's followers need most to be on their guard. 3. The sin predicted. Desertion would have caused a shock: it staggers one to read of denial. It discloses. (1) How near the best of saints are to the abysses of sin. (2) How suddenly and swiftly one may be hurled from a pinnacle of moral goodness to the lowest deep of guilt and shame. (3) How close even in renewed hearts lie the extremes of godliness and wickedness. (4) How needful it is for him who thinketh he standeth, to take heed lest he fall. II. ACCOMPLISHED. 1. The first denial (ver. 17). (1) The place—the court of the high priest, beside a fire. (2) The time—shortly after Peter had been admitted. (3) The questioner—the maid who kept the door. (4) The question—variously reported because variously given, first to Peter and then to the bystanders, but every time insisting on the fact that Peter was one of Christ's disciples. (5) The denial—spluttered forth in various forms, because of the uneasiness Peter felt, in all forms repudiating his discipleship, and telling a direct lie—"I am not." (6) The result—restless and unhappy: Peter withdrew from the fire, and sauntered out into the porch (Matt. xxvi. 71; Mark xiv. 68). While there a cock crew. If Peter's ears heard, his conscience did not. 2. The second denial (ver. 25). (1) The place—first in the porch and afterwards by the fire. (2) The time—"after a while." (3) The questioner—in the porch the maid, who was perhaps joined by another female domestic; by the fire the maid and the officers. (4) The question—still insisting on the fact of His discipleship. (5) The denial—to the maids, with an oath he denies all knowledge of Christ, to the officers he curtly denies his discipleship. 3. The third denial (ver. 27). (1) The place—the court (probably). (2) The time—a little after, when Christ's trial before Caiaphas was drawing to a close. (3) The questioner—the bystanders, among whom was a kinsman of Malchus. (4) The question—first the bystanders remark that he speaks like a Galilean, and must be a disciple; then one in particular maintains this vehemently; finally Malchus's kinsman identifies him with one whom he had noticed in the garden. (5) The denial—with cursing and swearing. Oh! Peter, how are the mighty fallen! III. EXPLAINED. By three things. 1. Peter's over-confidence in the upper room (chap. xiii. 3; Matt. xxvi. 33). "Pride goeth before destruction" (Prov. xvi. 18). 2. Peter's over-rashness in the garden (ver. 10). His lawlessness upon the sward made him timid in the palace. His foolish sword-practice wrought less damage to Malchus than to himself. 3. Peter's over-forgetfulness in the palace. If Peter forgot his own sin, he should not have forgotten Christ's words. A good memory would probably have averted his fall. IV. BEWAILED (Matt. xxvi. 75). Learn—1. That Christ accurately gauges the characters and foresees the histories of His people. 2. That Divine foreknowledge destroys not human responsibility, while Divine foreannouncement increases it. 3. That overweening confidence in oneself is no mark of grace or stability, but rather of the opposite. 4. That it requires little to lead a good man, left to himself, into sin, and once started on the downward path none can predict when he will stop. 5. That Christ knows, if the world does not, when Christians deny Him, and that no greater indignity can be put upon Him than to be disowned by such as bear His name. 6. That if a child of God sins He must and will be brought to repentance, perhaps suddenly and painfully, but always with tears. 7. That those who have truly sorrowed for sin will sorrow on every remembrance of it; yet not so as to hinder, but rather increase, their joy in God and in His mercy and grace. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Peter's denial of Christ*:—A grievous sin. The disciple disowned his Master, the servant his Lord. I. ITS ELEMENTS. 1. Falsehood. 2. Cowardice. 3. Profanity. 4. Persistence. II. ITS AGGRAVATIONS. 1. His close connection with Christ. 2. The repeated warnings. 3. Strong professions of devotion. 4. The imperative demands of the time and place. III. ITS MITIGATIONS. It was—1. Sudden. 2. Brief. 3. Never repeated. IV. ITS CHIEF CAUSES. 1. Self-confidence. 2. Blindness to near danger. 3. Negligence of precautions. 4. Fear of derision. (*M. Braithwaite.*) *The temporary failure of true courage*:—Here is true courage—I. NOBLY DISPLAYED (ver. 15). To follow One who was being dragged by Roman ruffians to undergo a mock trial, and who in a few hours would undergo a terrible crucifixion, revealed bravery of heart of no mean character. II. TEMPORARILY FAILING (ver. 16). It would seem that at this stage Peter's courage began to fail, for he halted at the door, so that John had to go and take him in. As he entered he was recognized by the portress (ver. 17). 1. Here is fear seeking to protect itself by falsehood (ver. 18). Fear had taken possession of Peter, and to protect himself he halted by the fire, mingling with the people who stood there, desiring, it may be, to be regarded as one of them. Fear, perhaps, is the most

prolific parent of lies. Greed is one—it fills the market with its fallacies; vanity is another—it fills social circles with misrepresentations; malice is a third—it hatches the slanders that destroy reputations and break hearts; but fear is the most fruitful. 2. But this fear was only temporary; his failing courage was soon restored. The look of Christ rallied the drooping forces of his moral manhood, and ever after he appears as a hero among heroes. Conclusion: Learn—1. The liability of good men to moral reactions. 2. Whatever the moral reactions, the good element will ultimately prevail. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Once denied, thrice denied:*—Lie engenders lie. Once committed, the liar has to go on in his course of lying. It is the penalty of his transgression. To the habitual liar, bronzed and hardened in the custom, till the custom becomes second nature, the penalty may seem no terrible price to pay. To him, on the other hand, who, without deliberate intent, and against his innermost will, is overtaken with such a fault, the generative power of a first lie to beget others, the necessity of supporting the first by a second and a third, is a retribution keenly to be felt, while penitently owned to be most just. Dean Swift says: "He who tells a lie is not sensible how great a task he undertakes; for he must be forced to invent twenty more to maintain that one;" and F. W. Robertson: "One step necessitates many others. The soul gravitates downwards beneath its burden. It was profound knowledge which prophetically refused to limit Peter's sin to one." Mr. Froude shows us Queen Elizabeth stooping to "a deliberate lie." At times "she seemed to struggle with her ignominy, but it was only to flounder deeper into distraction and dishonour." Nobody ever did anything wrong without having to tell one or more falsehoods to begin with: the embryo murderer has to tell a lie about the pistol or dagger, the would-be suicide about the poison. "The ways down which the bad ship Wickedness slides to a shoreless ocean must be greased with lies." (*F. Jacox, B.A.*)

Ver. 17. **Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?**—*Various answers to a direct inquiry:*—I. THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY "YES" WHEN THEY OUGHT TO SAY "No." This is hypocrisy. They who belong to this class are loud in their professions, are regular attendants at public worship, and push their way into Church offices. If there were no other day but the Sabbath, and no other place but the Church, such would pass without suspicion. But when you follow them into the world their "I am" becomes "I am not." Their life is cut into two halves, and each gives a denial to the other. Let not such point to Peter in vindication of themselves. He was a hypocrite to the world, and desired to pass himself off as a worse man than he was. But this wearing of the mask was not usual to him, and he wore it so clumsily that he was soon detected. And let not the hypocrite to the Church think that his mask is impenetrable. He cannot impose on God. II. THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY "No," AND WITH TRUTH. This is avowed ungodliness; and when expostulated with, such persons, in extenuation, say, "But we don't profess to be Christians," and thus in their estimation the only sin is hypocrisy. "There is A, who makes a great profession, but is no better than others, go and speak to him." This is a very dangerous, because insidious, opinion. Of course, Judas was worse than Caiaphas, but that did not minimize the latter's guilt. Whatever a man's profession may be, it in no way absolves him from obligations which exist irrespective of his profession. That a man does not profess to be a Christian can no more relieve him from the guilt of rejecting Christ than the fact that a thief lays no claim to honesty can exonerate him. Suppose a prisoner accused of a violent assault were to admit it, and then were to plead in extenuation that he never pretended to be a peaceful citizen. At the bottom of this lies the sophism that it does not matter what a man is or what he believes if he be only sincere. How absurd this is! If a man be sincerely Christ's enemy, he is His enemy with this addition, that he frankly admits it. Away with such subterfuges! The man who says, "I am not Christ's disciple," is guilty of repudiating His Saviour and dishonouring God's Son. III. THOSE WHO SAY "No" WHEN THEY OUGHT TO SAY "YES." 1. There are some who say this to the world. To this class Peter belonged. The fear of man brings a snare, and discipleship is denied to save from ridicule, penury, or martyrdom. This is distinct from hypocrisy, for the hypocrite's falsehood is told deliberately, and is the habit of his life, whereas these occasional fits of timidity are only like the deflections of the needle which are caused by some local influence; the general bearing of the soul is as true to Christ as the needle to the north. Still, such anomalies are to be guarded against. Where is your faith? Don't be afraid of adversaries and difficulties. Remember that God is on your side.

How many fears have been imaginary. Peter, except for his assault on Malchus, was in no more danger than John. 2. There are those who say this to the Church. Who does not know some excellent people who fear to make this avowal lest they should bring reproach on Christ? There is much in the modesty, &c., of such to be admired, but in some sort this is being ashamed of Christ, and the shirking of responsibility is a serious matter. A man may be a very good soldier though he wear no uniform and belong to no regiment, but if all men were like him there could be no army. So a man may be a good Christian, and yet belong to no Church, but if all men were like him there would be no Church, Sunday schools, home missions, &c. If it had not been for aggressive believers, the gospel would not have come to you to-day. If you say that you are not qualified for Church membership, the reply is that men do not join the Church because they are perfect any more than children go to school because they are educated. IV. THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY "YES," AND TRULY. They belong to Christ, and are not ashamed to say so anywhere and every day. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*)

Vers. 19, 20. **The high priest asked Jesus of His disciples and His doctrine.** *A conventional judge, an insolent sycophant, and an unique prisoner:*—I. A CONVENTIONAL JUDGE. Note—1. His officiousness. If he had been in possession of judicial power at this time, he had no right whatever to ask the prisoner concerning His disciples and doctrine. His business was with Christ's personal conduct? Was He guilty of crime? But in all probability Annas was not in possession of judicial authority, and so his officiousness was indecent and offensive. 2. Craftiness. The question was evidently designed to entrap Christ into statements that might be used against Him. Craftiness is despicable everywhere, but nowhere more than when it is most prominent, viz., in law courts. It is forsooth regarded as a qualification for judicial work. 3. Heartlessness. It might have been supposed that an old man brought up in the religion of the patriarchs, and long before Christ was born occupied the highest position, would have been touched at seeing this innocent and beneficent young man bound with chains. But no, his old heart is callous. The atmosphere of his high office had frozen all the fountains of humanity. Alas! Annas is not without successors. Quench love in the soul, and what is called justice becomes statutory rigourousness. II. AN INSOLENT SYCOPHANT (ver. 22). Here is an act of—1. Sycophancy. This man was one of those mean, craven souls who are ever ready to flatter superiors. He wished Annas to think that he saw in Christ's reply the want of respect due to so high a dignitary, and the miserable lacquey counted on the dignitary's approval. Such a spirit is—(1) Despicable, because it lacks all manly independence. (2) Pernicious, for it degrades the possessor, deceives others, and impedes progress. (3) Sadly prevalent. Parasites abound. 2. Insolence. He "struck Jesus," &c.—an innocent man who stood before him bound, and more than that, incarnate Divinity. The lowest natures are always the most insolent. The sycophant can have no self-respect, and consequently neither the desire nor qualification to respect others. III. AN UNIQUE PRISONER. Mark His reply—1. To the conventional judge (ver. 21). Note here—(1) Manly independency. There is no bowing down before this venerable official. Christ pays no respect for mere office. Nowadays office of itself is thought to have a just claim to honour. This is a huge fallacy. Legislative, administrative, regal offices are contemptible if not occupied by morally worthy men. Ignorance and depravity are bad everywhere, especially in high places. Mere office is an abstraction; it is the man who makes it worthy or unworthy. Christ has no respect for this man as a man, and therefore none for him as a judge. (2) Conscious honesty (ver. 21). Christ's referring the question to His disciples shows that He had nothing to be ashamed of. "I am no conspirator; what I have said and done has been in the face of all the world." It was this that made Him fearless and invincible. (3) Faith in humanity. No one had such a sense of men's depravity, yet He was prepared to trust to their verdict. This is the effect of conscious honesty. Treat every man as a rogue till you find him honest is the world's maxim. Christ acted on the opposite. The greatest rogues are ever the most suspicious. 2. To the insolent sycophant (ver. 23). Though a base minion Christ treats him as a man, and if he had a soul the rebuke must have shaken every fibre. An unique prisoner this! In truth, the judge and the sycophant were the prisoners: He was the Judge. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **I ever taught in the synagogue.**—*Christ's estimate of public worship:*—I. OUR LORD WAS A HABITUAL ATTENDANT UPON THE SERVICES OF THE SYNAGOGUE. There are fifteen distinct

reforonces to this. 1. Notice one or two of the laws of habit. (1) Youth is the period during which the habits of manhood ordinarily develop themselves into fixedness. Reading between the lines of Luke iv. 16, he must be blind who cannot discern that one of the factors in the childhood training of our Lord is His attendance upon the place of public worship. (2) It is a law of habit that the peculiar custom should assert itself at all times and places. In the life of Jesus the habit of attendance upon the synagogue constantly asserts itself. Matthew corroborates the text (Matt. iv. 23), and Mark and Luke confirm this testimony. Thus the being of Jesus, as He grew from a babe to a man, twined about the synagogue just as the growing vine twines about the support of its tendrils. His maturity centres about the synagogue just as the efforts of the workman centre about the tool with which he performs his task. 2. Humanly speaking, everything was against the formation of this habit. No reader of the Gospels will find it difficult to ascertain Christ's estimate of the synagogue services of His day. In those who gave alms at the door of the synagogue, and in those who loved to pray standing in the synagogue, He saw the hypocrite. In those who filled its chief seats He beheld the incarnations of wicked ambition, who taught for the doctrines of God the commandments of men. Indeed, the Sermon on the Mount was spoken to correct the errors which found a home there. He designated the great mass of those who crowded the synagogue by such titles as pretenders, children of hell, blind guides, whited sepulchres, serpents, generation of vipers. Yet it was the habit of Jesus to be one in such congregations. But He went to the synagogue not to be seen of men; His sole purpose was to meet God. He never permitted the abuse of an institution of God to interfere with His proper use of it. Can we, therefore, ignore that which was essential to the performance of the work of the Son of God in our behalf? When the minister notices the absence of the children of professing parents, he can but observe that the training which Joseph and Mary gave the child Jesus tells a different story, for they brought Him up to go to the synagogue. Besides, if the child Jesus was accustomed to church-going, how can parents bring up their children for God without training them in the church-going habit? 3. Our Lord was a stranger in many places during His earthly career, but we have read of no place in which He was a stranger to the synagogue. The history shows that wherever the Sabbath day found Him He found the synagogue, and doubtless He never neglected the Monday and Thursday services. So that our presence in the house of God in the community where we may spend our summer vacation, &c., is but an exhibition of the high example of Christ. 4. The synagogues which our Lord attended abounded in that, both in the way of preaching and practice, which merited His outspoken rebuke. If this, then, was no bar to His attendance, what right have we to allow what we do not like to interfere with ours? Grant that the preaching is as poor as that which fell on the ears of the Model Preacher; that our religious assemblies are as full of inconsistent church members, to stay away is to be unlike Christ. Francis Ridley Havergal was marking the example of Christ when she said, "An avoidable absence from the house of God is an infallible sign of spiritual decay. Disciples first follow Christ at a distance, and then, like Peter, do not know Him." II. THE SYNAGOGUE WAS THE PLACE, ABOVE ALL OTHERS, WHICH OUR LORD CHOSE FOR THE EXERCISE OF HIS MINISTRY. 1. He did not disregard the Temple convocations, yet those were limited to one locality, while the synagogue was found in every community. True, He did preach on the mountain, the lake, at the well, by the wayside, but other things being equal, He always chose the synagogue. And did He not fill the synagogue with the glory of His miracles? 2. So the work of our church buildings is to reproduce the facts of the synagogue history of our Lord. Indeed, they only do their work as they become such synagogues, for it is where two or three or more gather together (synagogue) in the name of Jesus that He manifests Himself to-day. The hymns of our religious assemblies must be an all hail to the power of His Name. Our prayers must find the reason of their presentation in His Name. Our preaching must have as its authority the seal of His Name. Our hearing must be with the attentive reverence which is due to His Name. And thus in our churches our Lord will preach the gospel to the poor, heal the broken-hearted, &c. The Son of God will manifest Himself to destroy the works of the devil. The Doer of Miracles will fill withered human nature with the power of God. (*G. W. F. Birch.*)

Vers. 22, 23. **One of the officers which stood by struck Jesus.**—*One struck Jesus*:—I. THE INCIDENT OF OUR TEXT: "One of the officers struck Jesus."

Observe—1. The circumstances. 2. All its aggravations. (1) The prisoner at the bar was struck—while yet only on trial, when no evidence had been found against him. (2) By one of the officers who were there to see that justice was done, an officer of the high priest, the highest minister of God. (3) In open court, in presence of the judge. (4) Without one word of rebuke from the high priest. (5) Merely because He refused to reply to ensnaring questions, and because with dignity and unanswerable argument He had appealed to the law which demanded that no man should be condemned except "at the mouth of two or three witnesses." 3. What followed. Trivial as the blow may have been, leaving no mark,—lightly as we might esteem it when compared with the agony of the garden or of the Cross, it was the only incident in His life of suffering that drew forth from Jesus one resentful word (ver. 23). He denied not that "He was made under the law," nor refused to be tried by the law. But He was not made under the priest nor the officer apart from the law, and would not be questioned by the one nor struck by the other contrary to the law. He could well have borne it; but, foreseeing that many of His people would afterwards be subjected to wrongs like this, He resented and rebuked it that they might know what His feelings were, and how they should act amid wanton outrage and gross injustice. II. THE LEADING LESSONS WHICH IT TEACHES. 1. By a very touching example it teaches us that the human sympathy of Jesus is true and tender. We have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, &c. It is not enough to say that He was tried, He was "touched;" He felt under trials as we do. He then can enter into our feelings and sympathise with us. In this one indignant saying, we see the bosom of Jesus throbbing with feelings that are all our own. III. HIS STRANGE FORBEARANCE TOWARDS THE TRANSGRESSOR. Twice in Scripture we find examples of insult and injury like this (Jer. xx. 1–4; Acts xxiii. 1–4). In both these cases, as in our text, these men of God resented the wanton outrage done to them. But while they resented the wrong, they denounced vengeance against the wrong-doers. But here, though the outrage was as great, and the dignity of the outraged far greater, He denounced no woe against the offender, He spared him if perchance he might repent and be converted. Perhaps that officer a few weeks later heard Peter on the day of Pentecost. How great was the forbearance of Christ! How assured is the hope of welcome still to each returning sinner! 1. The sin and shame of the man who strikes Jesus. Terrible was the sin of this man. But you say, "We have not been—we cannot be—guilty of sin like this." Yes we may be—most of us have been. How so? (1) At every blow we have struck at any of His disciples the Lord has said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" (2) Every wilful sin is an injury done to Him. Our sins put Him to open shame and make His wounds to bleed afresh. (*W. Grant.*) *Smiting Jesus*:—It is marvellous that any man could smite Jesus. Invested as He was with all power and authority, the daring audacity of the miscreant in smiting Jesus is most astounding. 1. It might have been thought that fear would have withheld man from smiting Him. He who had quelled the fierce tempest with the word of His mouth was not one to be smitten. He who had spoken to the very devils, causing them to rush terror-striken out of those whom they had possessed, exclaiming, "What have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us?" The worm fortifying himself against the Almighty! With one breath He could have hurled him into eternity. 2. It were reasonable to suppose that respect would have restrained him. This One received the obedience and homage of every creature. Was it not reasonable to expect that they should "respect the Son," though they had beaten some of the servants and cast stones at others, while they had killed some and shamefully handled others: disrespecting all? Verily, we would expect the Son should be respected. He was the meekest and gentlest that ever trod our earth. He could have gone amongst the young unicorns, not one would have butted Him; the most furious dogs would not have moved their tongues against Him. There was not a bear that would have put its paw on Him; nor a lion that would have put its claw on Him. He was the Second Adam with no more enmity in any creature against Him than there was against Adam before his fall. And no creature would have smitten Him except man. 3. It might have been expected that gratitude would have stayed the man from committing such an act. Here stood the greatest Benefactor the world ever beheld. He came here loaded with gifts. Are there not sufficient about to strike to-day? The Powers of Darkness will smite with all their force to-day. The Powers of Darkness will

come out against Me this day; but that is not surprising. I also came out against them. Hell is going to strike the blow in its own defence. Its arm is raised against an enemy. But why dost thou smite Me? I am come forth in thy favour, defence, interest. I am thy Friend. The law is going to strike to-day. But I am about to stand in a position in which it cannot avoid smiting Me. Justice unsheaths (whets) its sword to strike to-day. But Justice is armed with authority to strike. Who gave to thee this authority. My Father is going to strike. It pleaseth the Lord to bruise Me. I am to be smitten of God and afflicted. But there are eternal benefits to result from this. I am to be stricken for the transgressions of men, and to be bruised for their iniquities. But myriads shall be healed with these stripes, and this chastisement will prove the peace of many. But why dost thou smite Me? Whilst many stand amazed at the cruelty of this man in smiting Christ in the court, there are thousands amongst us who treat Him in precisely the same manner. That doeth the backslider daily. 1. It was the rashness of the high priest's servant, fired by his zeal for his master, which incited him to strike the blow. But the backslider smites Christ in cool blood, taking care to find the most tender spot; he smites Him "in the apple of His eye." 2. The high priest's servant smote Him but once. But many a man persists in striking blow after blow. The moment He is up he strikes again, keeping Him down continually: He is at this moment trampled under his feet! 3. This official struck the Lord in his ignorance. Had he known Him he would not have thus treated Him. The backslider can have no doubt respecting Him. Wilfully does he strike Him after receiving a knowledge of the truth. Being once enlightened he puts the Son of God to an open shame "Why dost thou smite Him?" 1. Has He not been sufficiently smitten? Dost thou wish to add to His wounds? 2. Do not smite Him more. Forbear, lest He be angry, lest His wrath be kindled but a little; for should He strike thou shalt perish from the way. No blow destroys a man until He smites. 3. Extend thy hand to Him. Tell Him thou art sorry, and that thou wilt never smite Him again. Do this, and He will forgive all thy former blows. (*David Roberts, D.D.*) *Jesus smitten*:—The narrative shows—I. How RELIGION IS OPPOSED. 1. With inveterate prejudice. 2. With licentious violence. 3. With hypocritical pretences. II. How IT IS TO BE MAINTAINED. 1. With undaunted firmness. 2. With unruffled patience. From the whole learn—(1) What to expect. (2) How to act. (*C. Simeon.*) *The hand that struck Jesus*:—When Henry Martyn was at Shirez, in Persia, translating the New Testament, he seems to have been delighted with the following incident, which he notices in his journal (June 28, 1811):—"The poor boy while writing how one of the servants of the high priest struck the Lord in the face, stopped and said, 'Sir, did not his hand dry up?'" *The horror of smiting Jesus*:—King Crœsus had a son who was dumb all his days until the siege of Sardis, when, seeing a Persian soldier rush to strike the king, this dumb son of his found his voice, and cried, "Man, kill not Crœsus!" This burst of anguish broke the impediment, and he spoke for the first time in his life. As I enter into the spirit of the fact, and seem to see a contemptible slave strike the face of Jesus, a fiery sting strikes my own face, I feel my heart burst, and my brow burn; it seems to me that had I been dumb, and a witness of this deed, I should have spoken out! So any Christian is ready to say. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Treatment of insults*:—Bryardine, a missionary to Grenoble, was enforcing the duty of forgiving our enemies, when he perceived that a large portion of his audience consisted of soldiers. Anxious to denounce duelling, and seeing that the military were strongly excited, he said, "Perhaps some high-spirited soldier burns to ask how a humble missionary can even conceive how a man of honour feels when he has been outraged by a blow? I am prepared to confess that I know not what those feelings are; and my knowledge is derived from a book that describes the worst of all insults with an indignation at least equal to what modern honour can inspire. I have been taught by my Bible how a blow may be felt, and how it should be resented. The Bible informs me that the Saviour of the world, without a murmur against His executioners, submitted to all that could embitter the agonies of death. It was not until He received a blow that He condescended to open His mouth. And what said He then? Let the Bible tell us, and let the duellist, if he can, surpass the example. *Non-retaliation the Christian's victory*:—In the Christian combat, not the striker, as in the Olympian contest, but he who is struck, wins the crown. This is the law in the celestial theatre, where angels are the lookers-on. (*Chrysostom.*)

Ver. 26. **Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?**—*In the garden with Christ:*—I. A GREAT PRIVILEGE. To be with Christ. 1. In the garden of the heart, enjoying His love (chap. xiv. 23; Rev. iii. 20). 2. In the garden of Gethsemane having fellowship with Him in His sufferings (Phil. iii. 10; 1 Pet. iv. 13). 3. In the garden of the Church, communing with Him in the ordinances of religion (Matt. xviii. 20; Solomon's Song i. 4). II. A HIGH RESPONSIBILITY. 1. Upon the believer in this situation the world's eye rests with minute observation: it sees the individual in the garden (Acts iv. 13). 2. Concerning the believer in this situation the world's mind cherishes enlarged expectations, it anticipates that a Christian will neither be ashamed of nor deny his Lord (chap. xiii. 35). 3. To the believer in this situation the world's tongue often puts troublesome questions: it asks him to give a reason for the hope that is in him (1 Pet. iii. 15), and to tell the truth at all risks concerning himself and his Master. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *In the garden with Jesus:*—These words are fitted to remind us of—1. THE STRONG CLAIMS WHICH JESUS HAS ON OUR LOVE AND SERVICE. The garden! what solemn and interesting associations does the word recall! The very mention of it brings before us the whole train of events on the night of the Redeemer's betrayal. Yet the mere severity of the suffering endured, however much it might awaken our pity, could not command our allegiance, if it were not for the fact that it was endured for us. It was sacrificial woe. Remorse could not have caused it, for He had done no sin. Neither could the fear of death, for to suppose that is to put the Master beneath the level of many of His own martyr followers. No! "The chastisement of our peace" was upon Him, and He was bearing those stripes by which we are to be healed. He was making His soul an offering for sin. Never does sin appear so sinful as it does in Gethsemane. When you are tempted, think of the garden. Will you repay Him with ingratitude, who suffered for you there and thus? Can sin ever seem to you again a trivial thing, when you know that its weight, when laid upon the Christ, wrung out of Him such tears and agonies? II. THE PRIVILEGES WHICH WE HAVE ENJOYED FROM CHRIST. Peter must have been especially touched by it in this. He might not know the full significance of the Saviour's agony; but he could not fail to remember that he had been one of those who were chosen to accompany Him as far as man could go into the depths of His anguish, and that again would bring back the memory of those other occasions on which, with James and John by his side, he had stood with the Master. He had thus been favoured not merely with the privilege of a common disciple, but with special tokens of his Lord's regard. Ah! little wonder that, as these memories crowded upon him, he went out and wept. But have not we received privileges from Jesus almost as great as those which Peter enjoyed? Shall it then be said that He has chosen us out of the world and given us the blessings of salvation, and yet that we blush to acknowledge Him before our fellows? Ye that have been in the garden with the Lord, see to it that ye forget not the privileges He there conferred upon you, and, above all, beware of the guilt of him who turned his privilege into a curse, for "Judas also which betrayed Him knew the place." III. THE PROTESTATIONS OF ATTACHMENT WHICH WE HAVE MADE TO CHRIST. Again and again Peter had declared, that though all men should deny the Lord, he would not, and in the garden itself he had shown his zeal in his Master's defence; but where are his love and courage now? Let him that is without sin in this respect cast the first stone at the fallen apostle. You have made declarations as sincere as Peter's, yet where were they, when you joined men in turning religion into ridicule? when before a slight temptation you fell back into your old sin? It is an easy thing to work up a sensational effervescence of feeling, and to sing ourselves into apparent enthusiasm about Jesus and His love, but mere emotion is only the prelude to a fall like Peter's. The divorce between religion and life is one of the deadliest heresies of our times. Men would lock up religion in the Sabbath and the Church; but so confined, she will pine away and die. It is better that you should never enter the garden with the Lord than that you should enter it to betray Him with a kiss. IV. THAT EVEN THE UNGODLY EXPECT A CERTAIN CONDUCT FROM THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN WITH JESUS IN THE GARDEN. The high priest's servant looked for something better than this flat denial. So the unconverted expect that professing Christians should be better than themselves. They do the gospel the honour of believing that if men acted according to its principles they would be lofty in their aims, pure in their motives, and upright in their actions; and when a man professes to be a Christian, they look to see the proof in his character and conduct. The very charge of inconsistency which they so often bring against those who call themselves by the name of Christ is a tacit homage to

the gospel. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Christians watched*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S PRIVILEGE. The disciples were little aware of the greatness of the occasion when Christ went into the garden for the last time. He made that place henceforth sacred to sorrow, devotion and love. 1. Some opportunities come to us but once in life; if not improved they pass for ever. Noah was in the ark only once. The three Hebrews were in the furnace only once. Paul was but once caught up into the third heaven. So the disciples were called only once to witness such sorrow in Gethsemane. 2. Theirs was a very enviable distinction. It is delightful to be made the sharer of the joys of a friend, to partake with him in the bright honours of a triumph; but the truest proof of friendship is when you are selected to possess his confidence in the hour of adversity. Your ear alone receives the secret: your arm alone is sought for a support. Christ showed His disciples His need of them. Surely this was an enviable portion. 3. They showed themselves miserably unworthy. Christ had to rebuke those who were so highly favoured. Christians have now privileges which they fail to appreciate—the Word, the Spirit, Divine dealings. There are seasons which it requires grace to improve, as seasons of affliction. It is sad to lose a mercy, but worse to allow trial to pass unsanctified. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S OBSERVERS. 1. The worldly. The kinsman of Malchus had good reason for remembering Peter, and Peter had reason to dread the recognition. This accounts for Peter's efforts to clear himself. Worldly men are sometimes malicious observers, glad to see Christians go wrong; but often they like to see something better than they realise, and are disappointed when Christians go wrong. All society has a real interest in the elevation of the standard of morals. The world generally only despises what is despicable in character. It dislikes pretence, sanctimoniousness, narrowness, readiness to lengthen the creed and shorten the decalogue. 2. Fellow Christians. Other disciples knew what Peter did, and had to sorrow. The Church has a property in every member, and is always pained when any walk inconsistently. Conclusion: 1. We are answerable for the effect of our character and example upon those who walk around. We are to walk in wisdom towards them that are without. The spies discouraged others. Often Christians do the same now. 2. We should so live as to lead others to admire the results of being in the garden with Jesus. The Jews took knowledge of the disciples that they had been with Jesus. 3. Let us beware lest we bring upon us the rebuke of the world. Why should it say in scorn, "Did I not see thee," &c. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*)

Ver. 27. **Straightway the cock crew.**—I. A WITNESS FOR GOD. Proclaiming—1. His creative power in endowing so humble a creature with so valuable an instinct. 2. His providential wisdom in ordering this particular "crowing" just at the moment when it was required to awaken Peter's conscience. II. A TESTIMONY FOR CHRIST. Declaring—1. His foreknowledge, both of the events of time and of the acts of men. 2. His divinity, since He who could beforehand read the thoughts of Peter and regulate the habits of a fowl could only be the Maker of both. III. A PREACHER FOR PETER. Setting forth—1. His sin in denying Christ, its shame and aggravations. 2. His duty to repent and return with tears and confessions. IV. A SERMON FOR ALL. Concerning—1. The danger of spiritual slumber. Peter's conscience was not awake when he was in the palace. 2. The duty of constant watchfulness. Peter was not upon his guard when among the soldiers. 3. The importance of avoiding temptation. Had Peter remained without he would probably have been safe. 4. The power of littles. The crowing of the cock led to the recovery of Peter's soul. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Backsliding must be checked at its beginnings*:—The rail diverges but a little where the switches are turned, but before long the branch line is miles away from the main track. Backslide a little and you are on the way to utter apostasy. The mother of mischief is small as a midge's egg: hatch it, and you shall see an evil bird larger than an ostrich. The least wrong has in it an all but infinity of evil. You cannot say to sin, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Like the sea when the dyke is broken, it stretches forth its hand to grasp all the surrounding country. The beginning of sin is like the beginning of strife, and that is said to be as the letting out of water: no man knows what a flood may come when once the banks are burst. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 28-32. **Then led they Jesus . . . to the Hall of Judgment.**—Literally *the Prætorium* where the procurator dwelt, either the spacious and magnificent palace built by Herod (Jos. "Ant." xv. 9, 3), and subsequently used by Roman governors,

or more probably a building in the Tower of Antonia at a north-west corner of the Temple. The ordinary residence of the governor was at Cæsarea (Acts xxv. 1), but during the Passover his habit was to visit the metropolis, partly to preserve order, and partly to uphold the prestige of the Roman power. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **They themselves went not in . . . lest they should be defiled.**—*Spurious sanctity* is—I. COMMON. How many religionists are afraid to enter certain places lest they should receive a taint! Papists stand aloof from all Protestant scenes of worship; Protestants from Catholics; Anglicans from Nonconformists; Dissenters from Episcopal. Who are these men of spurious sanctity? Are they lawyers who never take advantage of their clients; merchants who never practise dishonesty on their customers; doctors who never impose on their patients; servants who never cheat their masters; aristocrats who are never haughty and licentious? I trow not. The chances are that they belong to those classes. For no order had Christ a profounder contempt. "Woe unto you," &c. II. IRRATIONAL. It is founded on an absurd idea of—1. Localities—it presupposes that some places are more holy than others. Is St. Peter's holier than St. Paul's? or St. Paul's than any other sanctuary? Nay, every spot is "holy ground" since God made it, and is present with it. True, the purpose for which a certain place has been set apart may be good or bad, but the place is the same. 2. Human obligation. It supposes that a man is bound to be more holy in one place or time than in another, more holy in church, and on the Sabbath, than elsewhere on any other day—a preposterous fiction. Man, though of complex elements, is but one being and moral in all. "Whatever he does" is bound to be to "the glory of God." 3. Mind. It supposes that the mind is some passive substance that can be defiled by some outward element or agent irrespective of its own choice and effort—a piece of stone you can daub or wash. But it is not so. Nothing ontward can effect the mind independently of itself. It can make itself filthy in scenes and services supposed to be the most holy; it can keep itself pure in places the most vile. The body when in a healthy state can appropriate everything that is necessary from nature and to expel what is pernicious. The soul has a power analogous to this. Let us use it as Noah did, who amidst a foul generation "walked with God," and fulfilled a noble destiny; as Paul used it at sceptical Athens or dissolute Corinth, and who proved that "all things work together for good," &c. III. PERNICIOUS. 1. It is a positive injury to its subject. The religionist who moves about the world with the dread of having his soul defiled, is like a man who enters a sick room afraid of inbreathing disease. He is nervous, and loses his brightness and buoyancy. The spurious saint lacks naturalness and elasticity of soul. Afraid of being defiled, he shuns the scenes of innocent recreation, and trembles all over in the presence of schismatics and heretics. 2. It is a calumny on true religion. The religion of Christ is happiness, and these spurious saints are the greatest obstructions to the progress of Christianity. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Scruples and no scruples:*—I. SCRUPLES. The Jewish hierarchs were afraid of—1. Ceremonial defilement. Good! they had not otherwise been faithful Jews. 2. Exclusion from the feast. Good again! it was a mark of true religion to observe the ordinances. II. NO SCRUPLES. The rulers were not afraid—1. To send in Christ to Pilate's house. They could not risk contamination, but he might, if indeed He could be more defiled then he already was. 2. To plot the murder of the Son of God. Yet they were the leaders of religious society in their day! Heaven's favourites if any were. Lesson: Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. (*T. W*

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ıday abroad will make much ado about saints'-

days at home! Absurd strictness about Lent, and excess of riot and licentiousness in carnival, will often go together. Poole remarks, "Nothing is more common than for persons over zealous about rituals to be remiss about morals." (*Bp. Ryle.*) *False scrupulousness*:—How much more particular men are to seem clean outside than to be clean inside. Very few men, or women, will go to church in their working dress, or with untidy garments of any sort; but a great many men and women will go to church without any mental or spiritual preparation for the services there. Ten times more attention is commonly paid on a Sunday morning to blacking boots, and to arranging hair, and to putting on one's best clothing in the showiest way, than to family prayers and to private devotions, in "getting ready for church." It is a very rare thing for a person to go to church without washing the face and hands in advance of the start from home. It is not as rare for one to go to church without an attempt to clean up—inside. Very often a mother will tell a teacher that her little boy or little girl doesn't come to Sunday school because of a lack of decent clothing. More rarely does a mother admit that her boy or girl is so viciously disposed as to endanger the morals of the other scholars in her child's class. Is there such a great difference, after all, in the spirit of our neighbours—not to include ourselves—nowadays, and the spirit of those Jews who would plan to crucify Jesus, but would shrink from going to their religious services with soiled hands and defiled garments? (*H. C. Trumbull.*) *Superstitious scrupulousness*:—In Sir Fowell Buxton's account of his visit to the prison at Civita Vecchia (Life, c. xxix.) may be found the following curious illustration:—"It is odd enough that Gasparoni is very religious now: he fasts not only on Friday, but adds a supererogatory Saturday . . . But, curious as his theology now is, it is still more strange that, according to his own account, he was always a very religious man. I asked him whether he had fasted when he was a bandit? He said, 'yes,' 'Why did you fast?' said I. '*Perche sono della religione della Madonna.*' 'Which did you think was the worst, eating meat on a Friday or killing a man?' He answered without hesitation, 'In my case it was a crime not to fast, it was no crime to kill those who came to betray me.' With all his present religion, however, he told the Mayor of the town the other day, that if he got loose, the first thing he would do would be to cut the throats of all the priests: and the Mayor said in this he perfectly believed him, and if he were now to break out, he would be ten times worse than ever. One fact, however, shows some degree of scrupulosity. The people of the country bear testimony that he never committed murder on a Friday!" **Pilate then went out.**—*Pilate* is introduced without any further characterization as a well-known personage, the name Pontius Pilate showing that he was connected with the *Gens Pontia*, and that one of his ancestors or himself had received the cognomen *Pilatus*, adorned or furnished with a javelin (Virgil Æn. xii. 121), on account of meritorious services. Called "the governor" (Matt. xxvii. 2; Tacit. Ann. xv. 44), he was the fifth Roman procurator of Judæa, his predecessors having been Caponius, Marcus Ambivius, Annius Rufus, Valereius Gratus. Pilate had held the office for ten years during the reign of Tiberius. His arbitrary conduct in introducing Cæsar's ensigns into Jerusalem, and in bringing water into the city for which he paid with money belonging to the Temple, led to successive risings amongst his subjects (Jos. "Ant." and "Wars"). Philo accuses him of "bribery, violence, robbery, cruelty, insult, continual executions without semblance of justice, endless and unendurable atrocities." If this, perhaps, as the testimony of an enemy is too strong, it is certain that Pilate was a Roman governor of the regulation type, who acted without the slightest regard for the peculiarities (especially religious) of the provinces over which he ruled, and punished every opposition to his arbitrary conduct with the greatest severity. It would not be easy to find another man so well fitted to drive the Jewish nation to desperation. Accused before Vitellus, the preces of Syria, he was deposed, and sent to Rome to answer for his administration. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The character of Pilate*:—Pilate was a thorough and complete type of the later-Roman man of the world. Stern, but not relentless—shrewd and world-worn—prompt and practical—haughtily just—and yet, as the early writers correctly observed, self seeking and cowardly—able to perceive what was right, but without moral strength to follow it out—the Procurator of Judæa stands forth a sad and terrible instance of a man whom the fear of endangered self-interest drove not only to act against the deliberate convictions of his heart and conscience, but further to commit an act of cruelty and injustice, even after those convictions had been deepened by warnings and strengthened by presentiment. (*Bp. Ellicott.*) *Christ before Pilate—the trial opened*:—I. THE SITUATION. 1. The place—the prætorium or

palace of Pilate. 2. The time—Friday morning, after day-break. 3. The prisoner—Jesus sentenced and bound. 4. The prosecutors. (1) Their personal dignity—the Jews, members of the Sanhedrim, through their servants and the soldiers. (2) Their religious scruples. (3) Their murderous zeal—hurrying before the governor with their victim at the first approach of dawn (Prov. i. 16). 5. The judge—Pilate. (1) His office—procurator or governor of Judæa. (2) His character—unjust, tyrannical and cruel. II. THE PROCEDURE. 1. An indictment demanded (ver. 29). Pilate's motive may have been—(1) Contempt of the Jews. (2) Pity for Jesus, or—(3) Respect for Roman law (*cf.* Acts xxv. 16). 2. An evasion attempted (ver. 30). A formal indictment was—(1) Not convenient for the Jewish leaders. To have asserted that they had condemned Jesus as a blasphemer for calling Himself God's Son, to a heathen like Pilate, familiar with the notion of God's appearing on the earth, would probably have led to Jesus' liberation as a harmless fanatic, as well as to their expulsion from the judgment seat (Acts xviii. 16). Hence they urged that it was—(2) Not necessary for the governor. The circumstance that they had come to him was proof enough that Christ was no mere every-day offender. 3. A concession offered (ver. 31). Pilate was unwilling to accede to their illegality and to stoop before their insolence. If he was to be executioner he must also be the judge; if they were to be the judges they could be their own headsmen, and withdraw the case from Roman jurisdiction altogether, and finish it up at their own tribunals. Pilate saw that the Jewish hierarchs intended murder, for which he was not inclined, and with exquisite irony, knowing their impotence to inflict death, tells them to go as far as their law will allow. 4. An admission made (ver. 31). Brought to bay, the human sleuth hounds were obliged to divulge their secret, viz., that they intended to take the life of their victim, but could not do so without his assistance. III. THE ISSUE. 1. The purpose of Pilate fixed. He would not stir without an accusation. 2. The design of the Jews frustrated. They had purposed to cut their prisoner off without troubling the world with any explanation of His offences. 3. The counsel of God fulfilled (ver. 32). Lessons: 1. The debasement of conscience seen in the Jewish hierarchs. 2. The instincts of justice, operating even in a bad man—exemplified in Pilate. 3. The impossibility of defeating God's counsel—observed in the actions of both. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The twofold appeal of Pilate*:—THE FIRST APPEAL (ver. 29). What response was made (ver. 30)? Here we have—1. Baseless calumny. "If He were not an evil-doer—meaning that that was a well-attested fact. But what evil had He done? The calumny was implied rather than expressed, and thus it generally works. Assuming wrong in the character traduced, it expresses it in oblique innuendo, a nod of the head, a shrug of the shoulders," &c. 2. Arrogated superiority. "If he had not," &c., *we* could not have done such a thing—so vital is our sympathy with rectitude—we, oh no, not for the world. There is a good deal of social influence in arrogated superiority. Let a man assume that he is a great thinker, or scholar, or pre-eminently holy, and credulous fools will believe him. As a rule our contemporaries take us not for what we are, but for what we assume to be. 3. Crouching sychophancy. "To thee"—the great judge—deeming it an honour to Pilate. Corrupt men always work out their best designs by crawling servility to men in power. II. THE SECOND APPEAL (ver. 31). The response showed that—1. They were animated by a mortal malice—nothing but Christ's death would satisfy them. 2. Thus mortal malice was restrained by Providence. (1) Public law. They would have inflicted capital punishment had not the law taken away that power. (2) A Divine decree (ver. 32). Had it been left to the Jews, Christ would have been stoned. Sinners live under a grand system of restraints, otherwise the world would be a Pandemonium. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 33–38. **Then Pilate entered into the Judgment Hall again.**—*Christ before Pilate; or, worldly views of religion*:—The text is connected with the strangest scene ever witnessed in a court of justice since the world began. Much has been said and written concerning Pilate's conduct on this occasion. He has been represented as weak, unjust, and vacillating. The condemnation of ages rests upon his memory. With all this we must concur. We cannot, however, less than perceive that he was anxious on the whole to do what was right; he would have been only too glad to set the prisoner free; in delivering Him to be crucified, he gave way to popular clamour against his own express convictions. Let us bear in mind that Christ submitted to be tried before Pilate of His own accord; it was His own voluntary act; there was no power in the universe that could have compelled Him to undergo such humiliation as this. Let us remember also what is even more im-

portant, that Christ is on His trial still; not as a culprit before Pilate, but as one who seeks admission to every human heart. Now, it has occurred to me, that the conduct of Pilate at this trial may serve to illustrate the conduct of many to whom the gospel is now preached. I. THE QUESTION OF CHRIST. "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?" Setting aside the immediate reference of this question, let us turn to ourselves; by so doing we may learn two important lessons. 1. The danger of relying upon others in matters affecting the soul's welfare. The voice of the gospel to every one who inquires after the way of salvation is this: "Sayest thou this thing of thyself?" And this implies the possibility of our making religion the subject of our investigations, without being thoroughly awakened to its unspeakable importance in connection with ourselves. But there is another and larger class of men who belong to neither of these classes—men who approach religion neither as men of the world nor as philosophers—men who conform to religious forms and observances simply because they are fashionable. 2. The necessity of acting upon our own convictions in these matters. This is suggested by the very tone of the question, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself?" We cannot serve God acceptably unless we obey the promptings of our own hearts, the dictates of our own consciences, the persuasions of our own minds. Though good works are beautiful in themselves, still, that which gives them their real value is the willingness, the heartiness, the thoroughness with which they are performed. We cannot help wondering in our serious moments that religion, which is confessedly of the highest importance to man, whether as a sojourner in this world or as a citizen of the world to come, should be made so little of in our daily life. All this shows how necessary it is that the question of our Saviour should be brought home to every one of us—"Sayest thou this thing of thyself?" As far as we are personally concerned, it matters not so much what others may think, or say, or do; our chief business is to search our own hearts. I believe that much of our inconsistency—that glaring discrepancy between profession and practice—may be traced to the lack of honest self-examination. II. THE ANSWER OF PILATE. "Am I a Jew?" &c. 1. An unwarrantable assertion of superiority. "Am I a Jew?" These words sound very like an expression of scorn. To be thought a Jew would have been, in Pilate's estimation, little less than an insult. He was a Roman, a member of the race which then ruled the world, and therefore resented the very idea of being numbered among a despised and conquered people. You cannot have failed to observe the air of self-assurance with which some people nowadays speak of religion. They seem to take for granted, that to be religious is to be weak, ignorant, and superstitious. They consider their own godlessness to be an unmistakable proof of wisdom. From the vaunted pedestal upon which they stand, they look down upon those who endeavour to serve God, as the misguided victims of priestcraft and fanaticism. Their irreligiousness is their pride, their infidelity is their boast, their forgetfulness of God is their glory; to be influenced for a moment by purely religious motives they would regard as a disgrace. They are not "Jews"—not they! They are not religious—not they! but they are something better—they are philosophers, they are adepts in science, they are well-informed and accomplished men of the world! But how hollow such pretensions are, after all! The universal testimony of the best, the wisest, and most experienced of mankind is this: that religion alone is true wisdom; that they who fear God and keep His commandments occupy the most satisfactory position, both as regards time and eternity. 2. An unwarrantable assumption of indifference. "Am I a Jew?" Pilate seemed to argue, that since he was not a Jew, the question whether Christ was a king or not, was one which did not affect him. In claiming to be the Messiah, Christ made Himself King, not only of the Jews, but of the whole world. We frequently meet men who talk of religion as something which concerns everybody but themselves. They forsooth lead a kind of independent existence; being attached to no religious community—being interested in no religious faith. To every human being it is of infinite consequence whether the Christian religion be true or not. For if it be true, what hope can that man have who refuses to embrace it? And if it be false, what hope is there left for the restoration of our fallen race? 3. An unwarrantable renunciation of responsibility. "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me." In these words, and indeed all through the trial, Pilate endeavours to cast upon others the whole of the responsibility connected with the condemnation of Christ. (*D. Rowlands, B.A.*) *Pilate's first examination of Christ*:—I. AN IMPORTANT QUESTION (ver. 33). 1. Its occasion. Pilate having demanded an accusation, the whole company began to accuse Christ

of perverting the nation from its allegiance, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that He is a King (Luke xxiii. 1). The Jewish leaders, surmising that Pilate would ask an indictment, had pre-arranged to say nothing about the blasphemy, but to trump up a charge of treason. 2. Its motive. Pilate wished to ascertain the truth. 3. Its reception. Instead of answering, Christ inquired who had prompted the question (ver. 34), so as to know how to reply. If Pilate had asked spontaneously, Christ would have understood that he meant king in a political sense; if the Jews had suggested the question then the word would probably have a theocratic import. On the former hypothesis, Christ's answer would be No! in the latter, Yes! 4. Its vindication. Pilate had not put the question of his own accord. He would never have dreamed of troubling about Christ or His pretensions. Christ's own people had placed Him at the bar (ver. 35)—constructive evidence that He had done something wrong. 5. Its repetition. If He had not committed treason, what other wickedness could have so roused the ire of His countrymen (ver. 35). II. A SUBLIME DECLARATION. Concerning—1. His kingdom (ver. 36). Setting forth—(1) Its origin—heavenly. (2) Its nature—spiritual. (3) Its character—peaceful. (4) Its members—Christ's servants, sons of the truth (ver. 37). 2. His kingship. Announcing—(1) His pre-temporal existence (*cf* vi. 28). (2) His supernatural birth. He who had been before all time had been "born." (3) His Divine mission—to bear witness to the truth. (4) His loyal subjects. III. AN UNWORTHY REPLY. 1. Astonishment (ver. 37)—(1) That one so abject should think himself a king. (2) That one so forlorn should speak of servants. (3) That one so defenceless should even entertain the idea of "fighting." 2. Scepticism. What is truth? (ver. 38). The language of—(1) Insincere inquiry. (2) Contemptuous indifference. (3) Open infidelity. Truth, in Pilate's judgment, was a phantom. 3. Rejection. It was Pilate's day of grace; it passed and never returned. Learn—1. The grace of our Lord who, though a King, stooped to be treated as a criminal. 2. His majesty, which in His lowest humiliation Pilate could not fail to recognise. 3. His Divinity. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Pilate's address and Christ's reply*:—I. CHRIST'S REPLY TO PILATE'S ADDRESS (vers. 33–34): given to warn Pilate not to be prejudiced against Him on account of reckless charges. "Sayest thou this," &c., appeals—1. To the infidel—(1) When he objects to the Divinity of the Bible. Does he cavil against its difficulties on hearsay, or because he has honestly investigated the subject for himself. Think for thyself. (2) When he objects to the doctrines of the Bible. Does he dilate on the absurdity of the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection after independent examination? 2. To preachers. When you hear men talk nonsense, and advocate, reprobation, &c., ask them this question. II. PILATE'S TREATMENT OF CHRIST'S REPLY. There is here—1. A haughty scorn that is always contemptible. "Am I a Jew?" Do you suppose I belong to that despised race? There is a noble scorn for all that is mean and false; but to scorn birth is despicable. Albeit it is common, although men like Garfield have a moral splendour beside which that of aristocracy pales. Oh, Pilate with all thy disdain there were greater ones in Palestine than in Rome—Moses, David, Solomon, Paul! 2. A judicial procedure that is commendable. "Thine own nation," &c. With their miserable prejudices I do not concern myself; let me hear the truth from Thine own lips. Common sense and justice tell us that in all cases the prisoner ought to be thus treated. But to the disgrace of our law courts the mouth of the accused is closed. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **What hast Thou done?**—*The great question:*—It was a question perhaps partly of pity, partly of contempt. Soon he was asking another question, half in sadness, half in jest—"What is truth?" To neither question was the Roman to have an answer. Yet—I. THERE WERE SOME WHO COULD HAVE TOLD PILATE "HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL." Had he asked the question in the city streets, there would have come to him a woman, once the despised and insulted of her sex, and she would have told how her life had been one of disgrace and misery, and how He had given her new life, new hope, new aims. If he had asked his question in certain homes, the answer would have been, "Thanks be to God, He gave me my sight; whereas I was blind, now I see." If the question had been put in the home at Bethany, the answer would have been, "There was sadness and the shadow of death over our home; but Jesus came to us and turned our darkness into light, and called our brother back to us." Many a prodigal son would have borne witness that he had wandered from home, and come to want and misery and how Jesus had told him that he might arise, and go to his Father. II. WE MAY ASK THAT QUESTION NOW AFTER NEARLY NINETEEN CENTURIES OF CHRISTIANITY. Christ has conquered the world by the power of His Cross, even as He said, "I, if

I be lifted up," &c. 1. Lofty and lowly alike have been drawn to Him. Charles V., the mighty Emperor died saying, "Lord, I come." The poor cottager passes away with the murmured prayer, "Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes." Lately, a poor man, fatally injured on the Thames, said with his last breath, "Put me to sleep," strong in the faith of Him who said, "If he sleep he shall do well." 2. Jesus has made men, and women, and tender children strong by faith to suffer, to bear hardship, and loss, and insult, and death for His name's sake. It was this faith in Jesus which made one of our Arctic explorers—a godly old sailor—say, when asked about the dangers of his voyage, "The ice was strong, but the love of Christ was stronger." III. WHAT HAS JESUS DONE FOR YOU? 1. Grasp the great truth—Jesus has died for me, to redeem me from my sins. How lightly some of us speak those awful words—Christ died for me! We have not felt all that they mean. There was a poor ignorant man who had heard something of the love of Jesus when a child, but as a man had lived without God in the world. The only thing he cared for was his dog, and by and by he was unable to pay the tax, and was told he must pay, or get rid of the dog; so he determined to drown his faithful companion. Arriving at the waterside, the man seized the dog, and in spite of its pleading looks cast it into the river, and held it down, even beating its head with a stone. Suddenly he over-balanced himself, and fell forwards into the deep water. There, as he sank helpless for the last time, he felt himself seized, and dragged towards the shore, and on reaching it he found it was his dog, with bleeding head and sad, loving eyes, which had saved his life. On the sick bed, from which he never rose, that rough, half-heathen man told the story of his rescue, and how the devotion of the dog had brought to his mind for the first time the love of Jesus in saving those who were His murderers. 2. And more than this, Jesus lives to make intercession for us, to grant us forgiveness, &c. IV. WHAT HAST THOU DONE FOR HIM? Have you ever given anything to Jesus, who gives all to you? Have you brought of your gifts like the wise men, love, pure as gold, worship, fragrant as incense, self-sacrifice bitter as myrrh? Or, instead, have you tried to drag Jesus to Calvary? Every time we sin deliberately, we are trying to crucify the Lord Jesus afresh. Rembrandt painted his own portrait among the faces of those who were taking the Saviour down from the cross. (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*)

Ver. 36. **My kingdom is not of this world.**—*The kingdom of Christ:*—I. ITS NATURE. "Not of this world," because—1. It is spiritual. Utterly unlike those shifting, earthly sovereignties which are founded in arms, maintained by policy, and passed, by death, from one hand to another; or to that rude and turbulent anarchy, which has often cast down and destroyed nations. Throughout our Lord's ministrations, He never would employ force at all. From the first, He was careful to teach that the weapons of the Christian warfare are not carnal, that the wrath of man would never work the righteousness of God. "Not by might, nor by power," &c. 2. The setting up of this kingdom in any individual heart is related to the principle of an invisible administration, to the transference of service from one unseen master to another, so that our sinful bondage may be broken and a spiritual freedom gained, which the world indeed seeth not nor can see. "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us," &c. Messiah has no born subjects, no hereditary followers; His servants are all the redeemed from a bondage which, until the day of His power came upon them, they have no power to throw off. The fact is important as showing that the affairs of the spiritual kingdom, though administered by an omnipotent hand, are yet administered only in harmony with the conditions of our moral liberty. Christ will not have forced subjects. 3. The influences which tend to its growth and establishment, come not of observation, can never be understood by the world, but do their work silently, secretly, making a sort of life within a life, a life hid with Christ in God. 4. In this world, even to the spiritual eye, the sight of its glorious realities cannot be shown. Visions of the King in His beauty are not for this earthly state: we must wait for the day of His appearing. "Now we see only through a glass darkly." II. HOW IT IS MAINTAINED AND SUPPORTED. 1. The means by which Christ's subjects are brought into this kingdom are not of this world. Christ uses no force, bribes or guile. He makes us so willing that on His drawing them they run after Him. What is the agency which works in the heart? It is the power of love; the remnants of a better nature appealed to to say whether such a Saviour should be slighted by anybody with a heart at all? 2. There are laws and statutes by which the spiritual government is carried on. These are not

like those which belong to a kingdom of this world—confined to the outward life, to the loyalties of an external obedience, and the homage of the lip and knee. The empire of Christ is over the heart, and is satisfied with nothing but the casting down of heart pride, and the rooting out of heart sin, and the maintaining of heart-allegiance and duty. And Christ claims to have the ordering of our whole inner life; to give the law to conscience, the rule to the judgment, the choice to our wills, to direct the current of our affections, and to fashion the course of our lives. And He thus maintains His dominion over us. 3. Christ has chastisements for those who infringe the laws of His kingdom; but they are not like the chastisements of this world, nor are they administered after the same capricious and uncertain rule. "There is a 'needs be' for this chastening. Christ sees something in us which WE see not—something that hinders repentance, love, prayer." 4. The rewards are not of this world, by which we are urged to become His subjects. The world has no part in this; does not even understand it; the peace of God—the consolations of Christ—the fellowship of the Spirit—the justified and unburdened conscience—the tranquil delights of devotion—death and the great future contemplated without dismay. Our experience belonging to the kingdom of the invisible, "we look not," says the Apostle, "on the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Unseen triumphs, an unseen King; the unseen rewards of the righteous when they shall sit with Christ upon His throne. Conclusion: 1. In this world Christians are not unfrequently afflicted and poor people, esteemed lightly and uncared for. How comforting is the thought that there is a King to protect and bless and defend them. 2. As children of the kingdom, Christ has a special property in us. The name He has given to us—the blood He has shed for us—the victories He has won for us—the agencies He has set up for us in His Word and sacraments, are all so many pledges that He will never leave us. 3. Christ is a King, then, but He is a spiritual king. Whether we look at the individual or the collective triumphs of His kingdom, we cannot find out the law of success. We scatter the incorruptible seed, but we know not whether shall prosper, this or that. No account can be given why to this man the message is blessed, and to that man it should fail; why to this it should be a savour of life unto life; to that a savour of death unto death. All is spiritual, unseen. When the word prospers we see nothing but the fruits, and these are developed often secretly, slowly silently. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Christ's kingdom:*—I. CHRIST HATH A KINGDOM. 1. Providential. 2. Mediatorial. II. WHAT KIND OF A KINGDOM? It differs from worldly kingdoms—1. In pomp and glory. 2. In its subjects. 3. Rule. 4. Homage. 5. Weapons. 6. Privileges. 7. Penalties. III. THE PRIVILEGES OF ITS SUBJECTS. 1. All their business is transacted in the court of Christ. 2. They are free. 3. They have free trade with heaven. 4. Right to all the Saviour's ordinances. 5. His protection. 6. Will be victorious. IV. WHY CHRIST'S KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD. 1. Because He would confound the wisdom of the world. 2. Because He delights to exercise the graces of His saints. 3. That His power and wisdom may appear more glorious. (*J. Burroughs.*) *The spirituality of Christ's kingdom:*—I. WHAT DOES CHRIST MEAN BY THE TERM "MY KINGDOM"? It means the empire Christ came to found on earth, or in other words, the Church which He purchased with His blood. Although our Lord came on earth as Man, and that a poor, sorrowful, despised one, yet did He come commissioned from heaven to found an empire which should outlast and outlive all powers and dominations then existing. 1. The empire of Christ consists of those who own allegiance to Him. It was once far otherwise with them; with the weapons of the rebel grasped tightly in their hands, and with hearts burning with hell's hatred, they blasphemously shouted, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." 2. The empire of Jesus consists of those in whose heart He reigns. In every human breast there is by nature some hideous hateful Dagon; some proud usurper of the Saviour's throne. But in the hearts of those who are included in the kingdom this Dagon has been hurled with ignominy to the ground. The ark of the Lord has entered, and before it the idol has fallen. 3. The kingdom of Jesus is, as we have already said, His Church. 4. One thought more, and I will close this first division of our subject. The kingdom of Christ shall last for ever. And when this world, with all its proud domains, shall have been consumed in the general fire, then transplanted into heaven, shall this kingdom shine, the only one that has outlived the general wreck of time. II. LET US NOW CONSIDER WHAT IS SAID CONCERNING THIS KINGDOM. It is "not of this world." 1. Its institution was not of this world. Monarchs founded it not; princes formed it not; nor is it the creation of a state. It is in its origin most emphatically "not of this world." So far from the world

aiding its institution, it has been set up in spite of the world's most bitter opposition. Had it been of the world, then the world would have loved its own, but as it came from above, it hated it. 2. Its subjects are not. There is not a single man, woman, or child, who is truly a subject of Christ and a member of His kingdom, concerning whom it may not be said, he or she is not of this world. All the members of Christ's Church have been "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." No man is born by nature a child of this kingdom; were it so the kingdom would at once be of this world, which it is not. Moreover, it is not in the power of man to introduce a subject into this kingdom; for, were it so, then again the kingdom would be of this world, which it is not. 3. Its defence is not. It requires no imperial legislation to maintain its existence, nor armies to subdue its foes. It thrives best when left alone, and grows the fastest when unaided by the world. 4. Its laws are not. The laws which are binding on the Church are only those which have been framed in heaven, and are transcribed into God's statute-book, the Bible, and we laugh all others to scorn. 5. Its commerce is not. No kingdom on the face of the whole earth has such a commerce, or rejoices in such a trade as the kingdom of our Lord. It traffics in the costliest and choicest things, and all its merchants are merchant princes. Its ships are never wrecked. Its bank—for it has but one—possesses wealth that is infinite, and therefore can never break. The Church's commerce is "not of this world." The port with which she trades is the port of heaven. Her vessels are her prayers, some larger and some smaller, yet all equally insured against shipwreck; the faintest sigh as well as the most eloquent petition reaches the ear of God. All come back laden with blessing, for never was praying breath spent in vain. The costly, precious wares she is constantly receiving consist of such treasures as pardon, peace, joy, contentment, and holiness, all of which are "precious things of heaven." Her export consists of thanksgiving, gratitude, love, devotion. But oh, did I not say very rightly that her trade is nearly all import? What poor returns we make for the mercies that are literally heaped upon us! How lightly laden are our ships of praise! 6. Its precepts are not. Herein does the Church's unworldliness shine transcendently. "Do to others as they do to you" is the maxim of the world. "Do to others as ye would that they should do to you" is the precept of this kingdom. "Pay him back in his own coin" is the precept of the world. "Pay him back in heaven's coinage" is the maxim of the Church. 7. Its pomp and splendour is not. We say not it has none, for it has. It is a kingdom of kings, and a nation of priests. Every subject is arrayed in royal robes, and the poorest is an "uncrowned monarch." The kingdom which is from above should be content with the glory that heaven gives it, and not seek to array itself with the importance and grandeur of a world which it professes to renounce. 8. Its weapons are not. This fact the verse seems to teach most clearly, for says our Lord, "If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." We are not allowed to pioneer the way for our religion by the spear, nor enforce its truths by the sword, as Mahomet did his lies. (*A. G. Brown.*) *The invisible growth of Christ's kingdom*:—You tell your child that this pine-tree out here in the sandy field is one day going to be as large as that great sonorous pine that sings to every wind in the wood. The child, incredulous, determines to watch and see whether the field-pine really does grow and become as large as you say it will. So, the next morning, he goes out and takes a look at it, and comes back and says, "It has not grown a particle." At night he goes out and looks at it again, and comes back and says, "It has not grown a bit." The next week he goes out and looks at it again, and comes back and says, "It has not grown any yet. Father said it would be as large as the pine-tree in the wood, but I do not see any likelihood of its becoming so." How long did it take that pine-tree in the wood to grow? Two hundred years. The men who lived when it began to grow have been buried, and generations besides have come and gone since then. And do you suppose that God's kingdom is going to grow so that you can look at it and see that it has grown during any particular day? You cannot see it grow. All around you are things that are growing, but that you cannot see grow. And if it is so with trees and things that spring out of the ground, how much more is it so with the kingdom of God! That kingdom is advancing surely, though it advances slowly, and though it is invisible to us. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ's kingdom not of this world*:—An attempt had been made to alarm the emperor by connecting the Christian hope of Christ's second coming with the intrigues of the Jews for the recovery of their independence. Domitian at once questioned the grandchildren of

Jude (he had heard that they were the race of David) as to the nature of the glorious kingdom for which they were looking. He was only reassured by learning how poor they were, and by seeing their horny hands, which proved that these supposed rivals of Cæsar were nothing more than simple labourers. (*E. de Pressensé, D.D.*) *Christ's kingdom not of this world*:—I. THE KINGDOM WAS EMPHATICALLY HIS. 1. Nothing arrests our attention more forcibly than the extraordinary claims our Lord asserted for Himself. Commingled with the most lowly humility, there was the quiet assumption of an authority more than regal. How would it have sounded had Aristotle said, "I am the light of the world"? had Socrates said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour"? &c.; had Plato said, "I am the resurrection and the life"? And yet these amazing declarations fall as naturally from the lips of Christ as dew falls upon the grateful flowers. To the Jewish people there was no greater name than that of Moses; but Christ put the crown on the head of Moses when He said, "He wrote of Me." David's memory was a heritage of glory; but Christ reminded the people that while David sat on a thone, He was His subject, and called Him Lord. Solomon was a synonym for all regal splendour; but Christ said, "A greater than Solomon is here." All these astounding claims find their justification in two incontestable facts—first, that they were true; and second, that it was necessary to assert them. Their truth was demonstrated by all subsequent events, and becomes increasingly manifest with the progress of the ages. Their proclamation was necessary to the accomplishment of the great purposes for which He became incarnate. To have withheld any essential fact about Himself would have been, not humility, but treason to the truth itself and hurtful to humanity. It was therefore perfectly in harmony with the great ends of His mission that, with nothing but a retinue of fishermen in His train, and that at the very moment when He was about to be betrayed by one of His own followers, He should have quietly said to them, "I appoint you a kingdom." And the strangest fact in the annals of government is this, that, after the lapse of near two thousand years, it numbers more subjects than ever acknowledged allegiance to any other sovereign. 2. The kingdom was His, too, by appointment and by purchase. He would not receive it from any hand but that of the Highest. When the god of this world offered Him all the kingdoms for a single act of homage, He rebuked the tempter. When the people wished to make Him a king, He resisted, for He had heard the declaration of the Father, "I have set My King upon the holy hill of Zion." II. THIS KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD, and differs from all others—1. In its origin. It was not the product of the historic forces then at work in the world, such as give rise to the kingdoms of men. There was nothing in the drift of the times to develop it. There was no existing philosophy, religion, or nation out of which such a kingdom could have emerged. If it could not have come from—(1) The Greek, worshipping physical and intellectual beauty, much less from—(2) The Roman, who had now entered upon the darkest period of his intellectual and moral history. (3) Nor was it the product of dormant forces in the Jewish nation; on the contrary, the principles of the kingdom and the spirit which animated them were diametrically opposed both to the principles and spirit of the Judaism of the time. 2. In its purpose. The design of an earthly kingdom is to secure the temporal interests of its subjects, and the kingdom of Christ incidentally cherishes the temporal interests of man; but its grand aim is to restore the lost image of God in the soul, to found a kingdom which will include what is best in all religions, being larger than any ecclesiastical organization. 3. In its character, as an inward and spiritual kingdom, in contradistinction to all that is outward and material. We invariably associate with the word kingdom the idea of territory; the idea of power, as expressed by fleets and armies; the idea of luxury and state, as displayed in palaces and ceremonies; the idea of a succession to the throne, elective or hereditary. But in the kingdom which is not of this world there are none of these accessories. It is limited by no boundaries; it is cumbered by no pomp or insignia of authority, &c. It is a kingdom in which the subjects do not elect their king, but one in which the King elects His subject. It is not a kingdom in which one king succeeds another, but in which one immortal King reigns through all generations. It is not a kingdom in which there are inequalities of hereditary rank. No coronet could add to the glory of that title, and no wealth could augment the riches of that joint-heir with Jesus Christ. 4. In its foundation, which is—(1) In the conscience, and so regulates all the movements of the life. (2) In the intellect. It so illumines the understanding, furnishes new ideas for the imagination, and fills the memory with sweet and sacred treasures. (3) In the heart, and

purifies all of its emotions by the expulsive power of a new affection. (4) It sets up the kingdom of truth in the soul. 5. In its duration, which is everlasting. III. But while this kingdom is spiritual and inward, it is not one of secret experiences only; it is one which KINDLES A NEW LIFE AND BECOMES A KINGDOM OF POWER. In the estimation of men of the world this kingdom is an airy, unreal thing. They can understand a kingdom that has a visible king in it, with a palace, &c.; but a spiritual citizenship is an empty, abstract ideal. Nevertheless, it is a kingdom of power, as is proved—1. By its early triumphs. Its first triumphs were in the land where it originated: under a single sermon thousands of men entered upon a new life. It pervaded Judæa, Asia Minor, Europe, that by becoming European it might become universal. It seized upon great cities—Antioch, Ephesus, Thessalonica, Corinth, Athens, Rome. 2. By the individual transformations it effects. The gospel of this kingdom declares its ability to regenerate men. This is a unique claim, setting it in sharp contrast with all other religions. If it can re-create men, then its Divine origin is demonstrated. It was the objection urged by Celsus, that it undertook impossible things, such as "making men over again." The Christian Fathers, in their reply, asserted that the illustrations of the power of Christianity to do this very thing were visible everywhere. Does any candid man believe that there was no radical difference between Tertullian, Ignatius, Polycarp, Clement, and Augustine, and the educated gentlemen of the pagan civilizations? What would he say of Fénélon contrasted with Mirabeau, Pascal with Voltaire, Henry Martyn with Thomas Paine? Conclusion: It is evident, from what has been said, that—1. The gospel never loses its power—never grows old. The Cross of Christ is still the world's great magnet. 2. Though the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, that does not imply that we have no relations to any other government than His. The civil power is ordained of God, and we are commanded to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." Every good citizen is under obligation to the government whose laws protect him and whose departments are so arranged as to minister to his convenience and advantage in numberless ways. It is greatly to be desired that the relations between the Church and the State should ever be those of mutual respect, goodwill, and confidence. The Church dishonours its own high calling and mistakes its true mission in the world when, by any ecclesiastical legislation, it attempts to interfere with the functions of civil government. And the State transcends its authority, and invades a province over which it has no jurisdiction, when it undertakes to control Church life and order. 3. Though this kingdom is not of this world, it is the kingdom the world most needs. Its restraining, conservative power is needed to secure its greatest temporal interests. (*H. D. Hoge, D.D.*) *The true kingdom*:—It will be necessary to guard this declaration from two misconstructions. 1. It does not imply indifference to the political government of this world. 2. It does not imply monastic seclusion from the engagements of this world. What, then, is the Saviour's meaning? I answer—Christ's kingdom is a purely spiritual constitution. He came not to found a physical empire, but to establish the sovereignty of great and holy principles. When may it be justly said that a man's kingdom is of this world? I answer—I. WHEN MAN'S ENERGIES ARE EXCLUSIVELY DEVOTED TO THE ACCUMULATION OF EARTHLY TREASURES. There are men whose creed may be condensed into one word—Gold! They look at all nature and institutions through this medium—Gold. When they gaze upon the landscape, it is not to admire the undulation of hill and dale, the stately wood or swelling river, but to speculate upon its properties as a farm. II. WHEN MAN FAILS TO EXERT ANY EFFORT FOR THE MORAL ELEVATION OF HIS RACE. Some men profess that their benefactions are known to none but God and the recipients. Others determine not to let the left hand know what the right hand doeth; and this is by no means an unwise policy where the right hand is doing nothing, and therefore has no tidings to communicate. III. WHEN MAN DRAWS HIS HIGHEST JOYS FROM THE FASCINATIONS OF THIS LIFE. The carnal mind knows nothing of any joy but that which flows through earthly channels. His highest study is the promotion of self-comfort. When can it be truly affirmed that a man's kingdom is not of this world? I answer—I. WHEN MAN REGARDS THE WORLD AS A MEANS RATHER THAN AN END. The watchword of the Christian is, "Here we have no continuing city." He uses this world as the builder uses scaffolding, merely for temporary purposes, or as a waiting-room in which he tarries till the chariot of death shall bear him home, or as a school in which he prosecutes his rudimentary studies, with a view to the engagements of a higher academy; he never looks upon this world as a final resting-place. If he has wealth, it is to him a means of usefulness; if he has

influence, he employs it in the promotion of the highest good. II. WHEN MAN REGARDS THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD AS OF SUPREME IMPORTANCE. III. WHEN MAN CAN CHEERFULLY RELINQUISH HIS EARTHLY POSSESSIONS. It is hard work for a monarch to abandon his kingdom. Into whatever region he may pass he feels himself an exile; however far into distant realms he may travel, he can never find a throne; his kingdom is behind him, and must remain there for ever. Not so with the Christian. He has not entered upon his kingdom yet; he is born to it, but at present is journeying towards the land in which he shall reign as king and serve as son. Under these circumstances he cannot feel the strong attachment to the charms of this world which binds the hearts of those who are without hope as to the mysterious future. The man whose kingdom is of this world is sorely tried when death demands a separation. Young man! that which engages most of your affections is your kingdom. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Christ's kingdom not of this world*:—Christ is the only Founder of a religion in the history of mankind which is totally unconnected with all human policy and government, and, therefore, totally unconducive to any worldly purpose whatever; all others, Mohammed, Numa, and even Moses himself, blended their religious institutions with their civil, and by them obtained dominion over their respective peoples; but Christ neither aimed at nor would accept of any such power; He rejected every object which other men pursue, and made choice of all those which others fly from and are afraid of. He refused power, riches, honours, pleasure, and courted poverty, ignominy, tortures, and death. Many have been the enthusiasts and imposters who have endeavoured to impose on the world pretended revelations, and some of them from pride, obstinacy, or principle have gone so far as to lay down their lives rather than retract; but I defy history to show one who ever made his own sufferings and death a necessary part of his original plan, and essential to his mission. (*Soame Jenyns.*)

Ver. 37. **Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king, then?**—*Jesus, the King of Truth*:—We are told by Paul, that our Lord before Pilate witnessed a good confession. It was a good confession—1. As to the manner of it, for our Lord was truthful, gentle, prudent, and yet uncompromising, and courageous. His spirit was not cowed by Pilate's power, nor exasperated by his sneers. 2. As to the matter of it; for, though He said but little, that little was all that was needful. He claimed His own rights, and, at the same time, declared that His kingdom was not of this world, nor to be sustained by force. In our families, or among our business acquaintances, we may have to meet some petty Pilate; may we then also be true witnesses. Note—I. That our Lord CLAIMED TO BE A KING. The question was but half earnest; the answer was altogether solemn. 1. Our Lord's claim was made without ostentation or desire to be advantaged. There were other times when, if He had said "I am a King," He might have been crowned amid general acclamations. He had no ambition for the gewgaws of human sovereignty. But now, when no good can come of it to Himself; when it will bring Him derision rather than honour; He speaks out plainly. 2. The clearness of His avowal; there was no mistaking it. When the time has come for the truth to be spoken, our Lord is not backward in declaring it. Truth has her times most meet for speech, and her seasons for silence. 3. Our Lord's claim must have sounded very singularly in Pilate's ear. Jesus was, doubtless, very much careworn, sad, and emaciated after recent experiences, and must have looked very unlike a king. Yet never earth saw truer King! None of the line of Pharaoh, or the race of the Cæsars, was so intrinsically imperial. The carnal eye could not see this, but to the spiritual eye it is clear. The real Christ of to-day, among men, is unknown and unrecognized as much as He was among His own nation eighteen hundred years ago. 4. This claim shall be acknowledged one day by all mankind. To Him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord! II. Our Lord declared THIS KINGDOM TO BE HIS MAIN OBJECT IN LIFE. "To this end," &c. 1. He was always the Lord of all, but to be King through the power of truth, it was essential that He should be born in our nature. (1) Because it seems unnatural that a ruler should be alien in nature to the people over whom he rules. (2) That He might be able to save His people. Subjects are essential to a kingdom. But all men must have perished through sin, had not Christ come into the world and been born to save. (3) Moreover, truth never exerts such power as when it is embodied. Truth spoken may be defeated, but truth acted out in the life of a man is omnipotent. Now, Christ was truth. 2. He added, "For this cause came I into the world."

(1) Out of the bosom of the Father that He might set up His kingdom, by unveiling the mysteries which were hid from the foundation of the world. (2) From the obscure retirement of Joseph's workshop. Since He was to be a King, He must leave seclusion, and come forth to do battle for His throne. He came not forth because He courted popularity; but that, the truth being published, He might set up His kingdom. It was needful that He should come out into the world and teach, or truth would not be known, and consequently could not operate. III. Our Lord revealed THE NATURE OF HIS ROYAL POWER. We should have thought the text would have run to this end . . . "that I should establish My kingdom." But had our Lord said that He might have misled Pilate; but when He said that His kingdom was truth, and that its establishment was by bearing witness to the truth, then, though Pilate did not understand Him—for it was far above his comprehension—yet, at any rate, he was not misled. 1. Our Lord, in effect, tells us that truth is the pre-eminent characteristic of His kingdom, and that His royal power over men's hearts is through the truth. He dealt not with fiction, but with facts; not with trifles, but with infinite realities. 2. Jesus has power over His people because He testifies not to symbols, but to the very substance of truth. The priests lost their power over the people because they went no further than the shadow, and sooner or later all will do so who rest in the symbol. The Lord Jesus retains His power over His saints because He reveals the substance, for grace and truth are by Jesus Christ. 3. This power lies in the fact that He brings forth unalloyed truth, without mixture of error. His teaching is no combination of God's Word and man's inventions. Men taught of His Holy Spirit to love the truth, recognize this fact and surrender their souls to the royal sway of the Lord's truth, and it makes them free, and sanctifies them. Jesus taught—(1) That worship must be true, spiritual, and of the heart, or else it would be nothing worth. (2) That all false living was base and loathsome. He poured contempt on the phylacteries of hypocrites. 4. But our Lord came not only to teach us the truth, but a mysterious power goes forth from Him, which subdues chosen hearts to truthfulness, and then guides truthful hearts into fulness of peace and joy. Have you never felt when you have been with Jesus, that a sense of His purity has made you yearn to be purged of all hypocrisy and every false way? IV. Our Lord disclosed THE METHOD OF HIS CONQUEST—"That I should bear witness for the truth." 1. Christ never yet set up His kingdom by force of arms. Mahomet drew the sword, falsehood requires the rack of the Inquisition, but truth needs not such unworthy aid; her own beauty, and the Spirit of God, are her strength. Moreover, Jesus used no arts of priestcraft, or tricks of superstition. None can say that He reigns over men by the glitter of pomp, or the fascination of sensuous ceremonies. No kingdom is worthy of the Lord Jesus but that which has its foundations laid in indisputable verities; Jesus would scorn to reign by the help of a lie. True Christianity was never promoted by policy or guile, by doing a wrong thing, or saying a false thing. 2. What truth did He witness to? Ah, what truth did He not witness to? Did He not mirror all truth in His life? In an age of shams, He was always sweeping away pretences and establishing truth. 3. This is the way in which Christ's kingdom is to be set up in the world. For this cause was the Church born, and for this end came she into the world, that she might set up Christ's kingdom by bearing witness to the truth. I long to see you all witness-bearers. You must do it personally and collectively. Never join any Church whose creed you do not entirely and unfeignedly believe. I would not retard Christian unity, but there is something before unity, and that is, "truth in the inward parts" and honesty before God. Let us bear witness to the truth, since there is a great need of doing so just now, for witnessing is in ill repute. V. Our Lord described HIS SUBJECTS—"Every one that is of the truth," &c. Wherever the Holy Spirit has made a man a lover of truth, he always recognizes Christ's voice and yields himself to it. Those who love pure truth, and know what Christ is, will be sure to fall in love with Him and hear His voice. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Christ the King of truth:—This entire conversation with the Roman governor will grow clearer, if, in every instance, we substitute "reality" or "genuineness" for "truth." I. CHRIST CAME TO THIS WORLD TO INCARNATE THE "TRUTH" IN A LIVING HUMANITY. "To this end was I born," &c. 1. So He was "born." Pre-existence must certainly be suggested, or the expression sounds like tautology. Pilate felt the power of this one word; for afterwards when the Jews told him that Jesus had been proclaiming Himself the "Son of God," he recalled it (chap. xix. 7–9). 2. He was born for one definite or supreme "end"; He was brought into the world to manifest truth to mankind. Let us discriminate—(1) Not ultimate truth, but

available truth. Man wanted first and needed most what he could use for himself in life. Hence, Jesus Christ always preached religion, and not theology; He was practical, and not either abstruse or scientific. (2) Not speculative truth, but Divine truth. Christ never wasted time in mere imagination; what He preached was direct as if from heaven. That was why the people were astonished at His doctrine (chap. iii. 31–33). (3) Not dogmatic truth, but experimental truth. Christ was the only religious leader who embodied His teaching in the living, breathing, moving form of a common man in the pursuit of every-day existence. (4) Not ethical truth, but spiritual truth. Very wisely once wrote Lord Bacon: "There are three parts in truth: first, the inquiry, which is the wooing of it; secondly, the knowledge, which is the presence of it; and thirdly, the belief, which is the enjoyment of it." A proper place, perhaps, into which our Lord's witness should be cast, is found in this last division. For it was no office of His to put forth a new code of morals for others to prove or acquire; He received His revelations from His Father, and what agitated His mind and heart was the wish to have men true enough to enjoy them. He set to others the will of His Father to obey; but He first showed them it was His will by Himself respecting it (Matt. iii. 15). II. JESUS CAME TO TEACH TRUTH TO THE WHOLE RACE. For this "cause" came He into the "world." 1. Look at this word "world"; what was it? Its three main divisions are indicated in the superscription on the cross (chap. xix. 19–22). All these people claimed to seek the truth. (1) The Greeks were seeking by philosophy, culture, debate and high art. In the time of Christ, these artists of Athens and Corinth pushed their inquiries into the minutest details. In architecture they were governed by rigid axioms as to proportion; their Parthenon would never have been a "true" building with one less of its curves. In the drama, they insisted on "the unities." They had "the line of beauty" for every feature of a statue, and "the tone of colour" for each shade of the painter's pictures. They even counted the digits, and called only the threes, sevens, and tens perfect. But when they came to conduct, they had no such thing as fixed conscientiousness: the juster Aristides became, the sooner they banished him; and the more moral Socrates' lectures grew, the nearer came the time for him to drink the hemlock. (2) The Latins were seeking truth by inexorable law. They were going to compel human beings to become true by correct drawing, just as they would triangles or trapeziums. But they had only very poor success; they got nothing in the end but a mere book of laws and a phalanx of soldiers to show the world what truth was. The populace grew rigid and machine-like; the higher classes reacted into vice and ingenious forms of immorality. (3) The Hebrews were seeking truth by ceremonial devotion. They had the Scriptures; but they exalted the letter above the spirit, and those glosses which tradition had added far above them both. Hence the people waxed false with the prismatic distortions of what was true. They claimed a supremacy over the rest of the world because of these "oracles of God" lodged in their hands; and they displayed the Word on their foreheads, but hid it not in their hearts—phylacteries instead of principles. 2. Look at this word "cause." What was the real cause for which Christ entered this wistful world of ours? (1) Fix attention upon the facts. He found the race crying out for the truth. Men wanted something they could trust. And just then there was heard a single voice in answer, "I am the Truth," &c. (2) This was Jesus' "cause;" what did He get for it? They crucified Him! There may have been Greeks at the passover in Jerusalem; but this crucifixion was offensive. Most of the actors were Jews, and they shrieked for Barabbas instead of Jesus. And Pilate, the leader of the Latins, stood there washing his hypocritical hands! Plainly, Jesus Christ was a failure so far. III. JESUS CAME TO "BEAR WITNESS" UNTO THE TRUTH, and that He did. 1. In despite of His rejection, He left behind Him a testimony for the true which has lifted into hope the wicked race that slew Him. "Whole centuries," says Schiller, "have shown philosophers as well as artists, busied in embodying truth and beauty in the depths of a vulgar humanity; the former appears often to sink at first; but the latter struggles up afterward, victorious in her own indestructible energy." Jesus' self-sacrifice was not lost upon the world, after all. Men are nobler, and women are happier, even little children are more blest, because the Truth went to Golgotha, and was slain upon the cross. 2. What Jesus declined when, in prosperity, He could now afford to accept, when, in a desperate suffering for truth's sake, God's providence gave it to Him. Pilate's title credited to the Son of man all that He ever claimed. Through pain and ignominy, He was now recognized as the world's monarch. Niebuhr writes: "I do not know what to do with a metaphysical God;

I have often said that I want no other than the God of the Bible who is heart to heart with me." When Pilate said, "*Ecce homo!*" it meant, "*Ecce rex!*" 3. The only hope of our race is found here in Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the kingdom of truth (1 John v. 19, 20). (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *The kingdom of the truth*:—The whole fabric of the Christian religion rests on the monarchy of Christ. The Hebrew prisoner who stood before the Roman judge claimed to be the King of men: and eighteen centuries have only verified His claim. 1. On what title does this claim rest? (1) Had the Messiah founded His kingdom on force, He would simply have been a rival of the Cæsars. This was all that Pilate meant at first by his question. As a Roman he had no other conception of rule. But the empire of strength was now passing away; for no kingdom founded on force is destined to permanence. "They that take the sword," &c. Before Pilate, Christ distinctly disclaimed this. "If My kingdom were of this world," &c. (2) The next conceivable basis is prescriptive authority. The scribes' and priests' conception. They claimed to rule on a title such as this—"It is written." But Christ spoke lightly of venerable institutions and contravened opinions which were grey with the hoar of ages. He taught, as the men of His day remarked, on an authority very different from that of the scribes. Not even on His own authority. "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" (3) He might have claimed to rule on the ground of incontrovertible demonstration of His principles. This was the ground taken by every philosopher who was the founder of a sect. Apparently, after the failure of his first guess, Pilate thought that he was called to try some new pretender of a truth which was to dethrone its rival system. This seems to be implied in his bitter question. For in those days it was as in our own: the opinion of to-day dethroned by the opinion of to-morrow: the heterodoxy of this age reckoned the orthodoxy of the next. And Pilate, having lived to see failure after failure, smiled bitterly at the enthusiast who again asserted His claims to have discovered the undiscoverable. And indeed, had the Redeemer claimed this—to overthrow the doctrine of the Porch and of the Academy, and to enthrone Christianity upon their ruins, by mere argument, that sceptical cry would have been not ill-timed. 2. In these three ways have men attempted the propagation of the gospel. (1) By force, when the Church ruled by persecution. (2) By prescriptive authority, when she claimed infallibility in the popery of Rome or the popery of the pulpit. (3) By reasoning, in the age of "evidences," when she pledged herself to rule the world by the conviction of the understanding, and laid deep and broad the foundations of rationalism. I. THE BASIS OF THE KINGLY RULE OF CHRIST. Christ is a King in virtue of His being a witness to the truth. 1. Truth is used here in a sense equivalent to reality. It would indeed fritter down the majesty of the Redeemer's life, to say that He was a witness for the truth of any number of theological dogmas. The realities of life, of the universe, to these His every act and word bore testimony. He was as much a witness to the truth of the purity of domestic life as to the truth of the doctrine of the Incarnation: to the truth of goodness being identical with greatness as much as to the doctrine of the Trinity—and more—His mind corresponded with reality as the dial with the sun. 2. In being a witness to reality, we are to understand something deeper than that He spoke truly. Veracity is a correspondence between words and thoughts: truthfulness a correspondence between thoughts and realities. To be veracious, it is only necessary that a man give utterance to his convictions: to be true, it is needful that his convictions have affinity with fact. Let us take some illustrations of this distinction. (1) The prophet tells of men who call good evil, and evil good; yet these were veracious men; for to them evil was good. There was a correspondence between their opinions and their words, but none between their opinions and eternal fact: this was untruthfulness. The Pharisees were men of veracity. They thought that Christ was an impostor, that to tithe mint, anise, and cummin was as acceptable to God as to be just, and merciful, and true: yet veracious as they were, the title perpetually affixed to them is, "Ye hypocrites." The life they led being a false life, is called, in the phraseology of the Apostle John, a lie. (2) If a man speak a careless slander against another, believing it, he has not sinned against veracity: but the carelessness which has led him into so grave an error, effectually bars his claim to clear truthfulness. Or a man may have taken up second-hand, indolently, religious views: may believe them: defend them vehemently,—Is he a man of truth? 3. It is implied that His very Being, here, manifested to the world Divine realities. Human nature is meant to be a witness to the Divine, and the difference between Christ and other men is this: they are imperfect reflections, He a perfect one of God. There are mirrors which

are concave, which magnify the thing that they reflect: there are mirrors convex, which diminish it. And we in like manner, represent the Divine in a false, distorted way. In One alone has the Divine been so blended with the human, that, as the ocean mirrors every star and every tint of blue upon the sky, so was the earthly life of Christ the Life of God on earth. 4. As truly as it was said by Christ, may it be said by each of us, "To this end was I born," &c. (1) The architect is here to be a witness. He succeeds only so far as he is a witness, and a true one. The lines and curves, the acanthus on his column, the proportions, all are successful and beautiful, only so far as they are true: the report of an eye which has lain open to God's world. If he build his lighthouse to resist the storm, the law of imitation bids him build it after the shape of the spreading oak which has defied the tempest. If man construct the ship which is to cleave the waters, calculation or imitation builds it on the model upon which the Eternal Wisdom has already constructed the fish's form. (2) The artist is a witness to the truth; or he will never attain the beautiful. (3) So is the agriculturist; or he will never reap a harvest. (4) So is the statesman, building up a nation's polity on the principles which time has proved true, or else all his work crumbles down in revolution: for national revolution is only the Divine rejection stamped on the social falsehood. 5. Christ's kingdom formed itself upon this law: "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice;" that eternal law which makes truth assimilate all that is congenial to itself. Truth is like life: whatever lives absorbs into itself all that is congenial. The Church grew round Christ as a centre, attracted by the truth: all that had in it harmony with His Divine life and words, grew to Him (by gradual accretions): clung to Him as the iron to the magnet. The truer you are, the humbler, the nobler, the more will you feel Christ to be your King. You may be very little able to prove the King's Divine genealogy, or to appreciate those claims to your allegiance which arise out of His eternal generation: but He will be your Sovereign and your Lord by that affinity of character which compels you to acknowledge His words and life to be Divine. "He that receiveth His testimony hath to set to his seal that God is true." II. THE QUALIFICATION OF THE SUBJECTS OF THE EMPIRE OF THE TRUTH. 1. To be true: "He that is of the truth heareth My voice." Truth lies in character. Christ did not simply speak truth: He was Truth. For example. The friends of Job spoke words of truth. Scarcely a maxim which they uttered could be impugned: cold, hard, theological verities: but verities out of place, in that place cruel and untrue. Job spoke many hasty, impetuous, blundering words; but the whirlwind came, and, before the voice of God, the veracious falsehoods were swept into endless nothingness: the true man, wrong, perplexed, in verbal error, stood firm: he was true though his sentences were not. 2. Integrity—which means not simply sincerity or honesty, but entireness, wholeness, soundness: that which Christ means when He says, "If thine eye be single or sound, thy whole body shall be full of light." This integrity is found in small matters as well as great; for the allegiance of the soul to truth is tested by small things rather than by those which are more important. There is many a man who would lose his life rather than perjure himself in a court of justice, whose life is yet a tissue of small insincerities. We resent hypocrisy, and treachery, and calumny, not because they are untrue, but because they harm us. We hate the false calumny, but we are half pleased with the false praise. Now he is a man of integrity who hates untruth as untruth. To a moral, pure mind, the artifices in every department of life are painful: the stained wood which deceives the eye by seeming what it is not, marble: the gilding which is meant to pass for gold; and the glass which is worn to look like jewels. "These are trifles." Yes, but it is just these trifles which go to the formation of character. He that is habituated to deceptions and artificialities in trifles will try in vain to be true in matters of importance: for truth is a thing of habit rather than of will. 3. Doing the truth. Christianity joins two things inseparably: acting truly, and perceiving truly. If any man will do His will, &c. (1) It is a perilous thing to separate feeling from acting. The romance, the poem, and the sermon, teach us how to feel. But the danger is this; if feeling be suffered to awake without passing into duty, the character becomes untrue. "We pity wretchedness and shun the wretched." We utter sentiments, just, honourable, refined, lofty—but somehow, when a truth presents itself in the shape of a duty, we are unable to perform it. And so such characters become by degrees like the artificial pleasure-grounds of bad taste, in which the waterfall does not fall, and the grotto offers only the refreshment of an imaginary shade, and the green hill does not strike the skies, and the tree does not grow. Their lives are a sugared crust of sweetness trembling

over black depths of hollowness: more truly still, "whited sepulchres"—fair without to look upon, "within full of all uncleanness." (2) It is perilous to separate thinking rightly from acting rightly. He is already half false who speculates on truth and does not do it. Truth is given, not to be contemplated, but to be done. Life is an action—not a thought. And the penalty paid by him who speculates on truth, is that by degrees the very truth he holds becomes to him a falsehood. There is no truthfulness, therefore, except in the witness borne to God by doing His will—to live the truths we hold, or else they will be no truths at all. It was thus that He witnessed to the truth. He lived it. Conclusion: The kingly character of truth is exhibited strikingly in the calmness of the bearing of the Son of Man before His judge. Veracity is not necessarily dignified. There is a vulgar effrontery—a spirit of defiance which taunts, and challenges condemnation. Again, the man of mere veracity is often violent, for what he says rests upon his own assertion: and vehemence of assertion is the only addition he can make to it. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Christ's real kingdom*:—I. THE ROYAL PROCLAMATION. 1. Every monarch must have some sort of "Divine right"; what was the right that Jesus here asserted? (1) It might have been the right of possession. Christ could have said to him, "I am that Messiah who was predicted by their prophets to reign." But Pilate could have answered, "I do not recognize the right of even the Jew's Messiah to be a king." (2) It might have been the right of conquest. Jesus might have told him that He had subjected these people by His miracles, that He proved Divine authority by wielding Divine power. But to this Pilate had, for a ready reply, the woeful fact that it was the Jews who had already delivered this so-called Messiah into his hands. (3) It might have been the right of acceptance; for Christ, in sober earnest, could have appealed away from priests to populace, and reminded Pilate that once He had been obliged to withdraw Himself, lest they should make Him a king "by force;" and just now He rode in a royal triumph even into the gate of Jerusalem. But here, again, Pilate was at liberty to interrupt Him with a fine sarcasm, in the suggestion that He had better settle such matters with Herod, the regular heir. (4) What Jesus did assert, was the right of personal genuineness as a man, and hence as the King of men. The heathen governor, of course, did not dare dispute this; indeed, he hardly knew what it meant. "What is truth?" 2. What was the nature of His kingdom? (1) It was spiritual in every particular. It did not need any fleet or flag; it would not want either army or arsenal; it did not propose to collect customs or make treaties. This imperial officer saw clearly that Jesus offered no menace to Cæsar. (2) And yet this kingdom was to be organic. It would have its laws, orders, rulers. It openly announced that it would lay its hand on men and money, lands and seas, in order that it might use them as means of advancement in raising the race to the image of God in purity, and holiness, and strength. II. THE PROCESS BY WHICH THIS KINGDOM WAS ESTABLISHED ON THE EARTH. 1. In the beginning, Christ united a few true men to Himself for the sake of the work they could do. It was not the coming together of a people, who, as soon as they began to feel the need of government, elected a king. 2. Then He joined these to each other by rendering them efficient in the instant conversion of souls. He chose Andrew, and at once managed it so that Andrew "found" Simon, &c. And in order to show the principle on which this extension of His spiritual sway must proceed, He took pains to say that Nathanael was accepted, because he was a genuine, true man, precisely what every one needed to be in a kingdom of truth. 3. Then a tremendous sifting of the entire community ensued (chap. vi. 53–58, 66–71). The point which our Lord pressed was that of a supreme and vital union to Himself. 4. The next step, now become essential, was for our Lord to disappear from their sympathy and sight. There was springing up, naturally enough, a human regard, which was diverting His adherents from truth alone (chap. xvi. 5–7). 5. Finally, Jesus went away, and the promised Comforter came to guide into all truth. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *The heavenly King*:—At a missionary meeting on the island Rarotonga, one of the Hervey group in the Pacific Ocean, an old man, a candidate for church fellowship, said, "I have lived during the reign of four kings: in the first we were continually at war, and a fearful season it was, watching and hiding with fear were all our engagements. During the reign of the second we were overtaken with a severe famine, and all expected to perish; then we ate rats and grass, and this wood and that wood. During the third we were conquered, and became the peck and prey of the two other settlements of the island; then if a man went to fish he rarely ever returned, or if a woman went any distance to fetch food she was rarely ever seen again. But during the

reign of this third king we were visited by another King, a great King, a good King, a powerful King, a King of love, Jesus the Lord from heaven. He has gained the victory, He has conquered our hearts; therefore we now have peace and plenty in this world, and hope soon to dwell with Him in heaven." *The kingdom of truth:*—I. THE KINGDOM OF THE KING. Truth—1. In its profound essence, as a revelation of God. 2. In its highest power as the Gospel. 3. In its broadest extent, as the uniting bond of all life. 4. In its bodily appearance, as the Person of Christ. II. THE KING OF THIS KINGDOM. Christ is personal truth itself, as the light Centre of all life, thoroughly at one with itself, and therefore the Light of the World. III. THE TITLE OF THE KING. Perfect agreement of His birth and office, His ideal and His historical vocation. IV. HIS GOVERNMENT—1. The faithful Witness with His testimony. 2. The Host-leader of all faithful witnesses. V. THE INCREASE OF HIS KINGDOM. The word received as His voice by all who are of the truth. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) **To this end was I born.**—*The low ends of modern society:*—Apparently, the end of society is still what it has always been—amusement, and nothing else. As years go on, the race after pleasure grows in severity and speed. New modes of enjoyment are invented, and fresh ingenuity is exhibited in combining as many of them as possible. There is absolutely no such thing as rest or pause. What space is there amid the thronging, surging crush, for those delicate sentiments which make the higher life of humanity to grow and prosper? Such as these want light and air: they have neither. Society, in a word, knows no other existence except that which is material, and gross, and selfish. It talks vaguely of duty. At heart it is disposed to be sceptical as to whether there exists any real sanction for the performance of duty; and smiling a smile, which is more like a sneer of despair, puts the question by. It is struggling to find a sure foothold. It has plunged into a quagmire, has bid adieu to the firm ground on one side, and has not reached the firm ground on the other. In the worst sense of the phrase, it is in a state of transition. It has defiantly shaken its head at, and turned its back on, the old ologies; it has still to find consolation in the new isms. Thomas Carlyle says, "To speak in the ancient dialect, 'we have forgotten God;' we have quietly closed our eyes to the eternal substance of things, and opened them only to the shows and shams of things." Its old ideals, its old faiths, its old standards of duty, of right and wrong, are dissolving or dissolved. It is unsettled, and it is aimless. What society wants is seriously to ask whither it is going, and on what principle it is acting. (*The Standard.*) *An aim in life:*—Christ's life was unique, yet it was like ours in some features. We came from God and return to God. Christ had a definite purpose in life. God has a purpose for all human lives. That purpose set in motion the Reformation, and all revolutions by which society is moulded. This is the Christian view of life. Let us look at its influence as related to character—I. IT IS AN INSPIRING FAITH. Want of purpose is a source of weakness. II. THE GROUND OF TRUE SELF-RESPECT. III. A MOTIVE FOR MODESTY. Let us not measure ourselves among ourselves, but ask, "Am I doing God's will?" IV. IT FOSTERS COURAGE. Difficulty cannot dishearten those conscious of fulfilling a Divine trust. Conclusion: 1. If you see yourself doing your own will, stop! 2. Remember that no question is of greater importance than the discovery of God's plan of your life. (*Prof. E. B. Coe.*) *The truth delivered and attested by Jesus:*—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TRUTH HERE? AND FOR WHAT SPECIAL REASONS IT WAS THE END OF CHRIST'S BEING BORN, AND COMING INTO THE WORLD TO BEAR WITNESS TO IT? 1. By the truth we are to understand—that of which Jesus Christ is said to have been "full" (chap. i. 14); and which, as well as grace, "came by Him" (chap. i. 17). That into which the "Spirit of truth" was promised to guide His disciples; which, "if they continued in His Word" (chap. viii. 31, 32), they were to "know," and which was to "make them free." The "truth as in Jesus" (Eph. iv. 21). It includes—(1) All the doctrines of the gospel, especially those that are of a primary importance, as those concerning the fall and recovery of man; the Divinity and atonement of Christ; the agency of the Holy Spirit. (2) The precepts, promises, and threatenings. It is that system of truth, the articles of which are linked together in a kind of chain; that analogy or "proportion of faith," according to which every one that prophesies or preaches is to conform his doctrine (Rom. xii. 6), that he may "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. iv. 11). 2. Now the end for which Christ was born, was that He "might bear witness unto the truth." It is certain He came also for other important ends, but one principal end, without which the others would have been unavailing, was that here spoken of. The reasons of this are—(1) Because the truth is the only means of our illumina-

tion (Psa. xix. 7, 8). If we are translated "out of darkness into marvellous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9); if we, who "were sometime darkness, are now light in the Lord;" if we are "not of the night nor of darkness," but "children of the light, and children of the day" (1 Thess. v. 5); it is surely not by error and false doctrine, but by the truth. Hence the Holy Scriptures, which are "a light shining in a dark place" (2 Pet. i. 19), are said to be able to make us "wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16); and we read of the "light of the glorious gospel" (2 Cor. iv. 4). (2) Because it is the chief means of quickening us, who are naturally "dead in sin," and begetting in us "repentance unto life" and living faith, which "comes by hearing" it (Rom. x. 17); hence it is termed the "Word of Life" (Phil. ii. 16), and said to be "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. iv. 12); and Christ's words are said to be "spirit and life" (chap. vi. 63). (3) Because it is the grand object, as well as means, of that faith whereby we are saved (Eph. i. 17, 18); we are described as being "chosen to salvation through belief of the truth" (2 Thess. ii. 13; Mark xvi. 16). (4) Because it is a principal means of our salvation. The original cause is the grace of God; the meritorious cause is Christ's atonement; the efficient cause is the Holy Ghost; but the instrumental cause is the "Word of truth" (chap. xv. 3), and faith therein. Hence—(*a*) The truth is the chief instrument of our regeneration (James i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 23; Psa. xix. 7). (*b*) By it we are made free (chap. viii. 31–36; Rom. viii. 2). (*c*) By it we are safely guided in the way to heaven (Psa. xix. 11; 2 Pet. i. 19). (*d*) By it we are strengthened for duty, for suffering, and for all the conflicts of our spiritual warfare (2 Cor. vi. 7; Eph. vi. 14–17). (*e*) By the declarations and promises of it, we are comforted and supported amidst all present trials and troubles (Rom. xv. 4). (*f*) By it we are "thoroughly furnished to every good work," and made useful among men, even "burning and shining lights" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). (*g*) By it we are at length fully sanctified and perfected in holiness (chap. xvii. 17; Eph. iv. 11–16). (*h*) By it we are finally saved (2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2; Rom. i. 16). II. IN WHAT WAY, AND FOR WHAT IMMEDIATE PURPOSES HE BORE WITNESS TO IT? 1. He did so by word, or by His doctrine, which revealed and explained the truth. Thus He personally, clearly, and fully bore witness to every part of it—(1) As to the unity and perfections of God (Mark xii. 29; Matt. v. 48). (2) His spiritual nature (chap. iv. 23, 24). (3) The nature, dignity, condescension, sufferings, death, and exaltation of the Son (chap. xiii. 14; viii. 58; xvii. 5; Matt. xx. 18, 19). (4) Our depraved state by nature (chap. iii. 5, 6; Matt. xv. 19). (5) Our redemption through Him (chap. iii. 16). (*a*) The nature and necessity of repentance towards God, of faith in himself, of regeneration, of sanctification (Matt. iv. 17; v. 8. 48; xviii. 3; Luke xviii. 14; John xiv. 6). (*b*) He revealed the immortality of the soul (Matt. xxii. 32); the resurrection of the body (chap. v. 25, 28, 29); a future judgment (Matt. xxv. 31, 32; xii. 36); the joys of heaven (Matt. xxv. 21); the miseries of hell (Matt. xxv. 46; Luke xvi. 23). 2. By His astonishing miracles, and by prophecies afterwards fulfilled: *e.g.*, the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. xxiv.; Luke xxi.). Thus He afforded a rational ground whereon all men might believe, or be left without excuse (chap. v. 36; x. 37, 38; xv. 24). 3. By His sufferings, death, and resurrection; for He laid down His life in attestation of the truth of His doctrine, and witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate. Thus He showed that the truth, which He had delivered, was no trivial matter, but of infinite importance, that mankind might lay it to heart, and maturely consider, and "give earnest heed to it" (Heb. ii. 1). 4. By His Spirit, by whose enlightening and gracious influences we may understand the truth, experience its efficacy, and find it to be "the power of God unto salvation" (chap. xv. 26; Acts ii. 39; 1 Thess. i. 5). 5. By His example, directing and inciting to the practice of it; His precepts, commanding and enjoining it; His promises, alluring and inviting to it; His theatenings, deterring us from the neglect of it. 6. By His apostles, who were witnesses both to Him and the truth (Luke xxiv. 48; John xv. 27; Acts i. 8, 22; v. 32); and, like their Master, bore testimony to it, by their doctrine, "declaring the whole counsel of God" (Acts xx. 20, 21, 27; 2 Cor. ii. 17; iv. 1, 2; 1 Thess. ii. 9, 11, 12); by their miracles (Rom. xv. 18, 19; 2 Cor. xii. 12), and prophecies fulfilled; by their example (2 Cor. vi. 3; 1 Thess. ii. 10); by their sufferings; (1 Cor. iv. 11–13; 2 Cor. iv. 8–11; vi. 3–10; xi. 23–31; 1 Thess. ii. 2; 2 Tim. i. 8–12; ii. 9–13). III. WHO ARE OF THE TRUTH, AND HOW THEY HEAR THE VOICE OF CHRIST? 1. They are "of the truth"—(1) Who are rescued from the influence of "the father of lies," and are no longer blinded and deceived by him, or by the word and the spirit of it (1 Cor. ii. 12), or by the flesh, through Satan's agency. (2) Who

are no longer deprived of discernment and judgment, as to their understanding, or of feeling as to their conscience; who are not biassed as to the choice and intention of their will; nor entangled and occupied by the creature in their affections. (3) Who are sincerely desirous to know, receive and submit to the truth, however opposed to their preconceived opinions, and their accustomed and confirmed habits. (4) Who, for this purpose, are truly willing to part with any temporal honour, gratification, or profit, which appears inconsistent with the attainment of this object, and especially, whatever they find in themselves contrary to the Divine will, and are ready to submit to any loss, reproach, difficulty, or suffering, to which they may be exposed in the way of obedience. (5) Who, conscious how liable they are to be mistaken, deceived, and misled, in their inquiries after the truth, and endeavours to obey it, dare not lean to their own understanding, or trust in their own efforts, but apply to God in prayer and faith, to be "guided into all" sacred and Divine "truth." (6) Who "call no man master" on earth, but remember "one is their Master, even Christ" (Matt. xxiii. 8), and therefore, "seek the law at His mouth." (7) Who comply with their duty, as far as they know it already, remembering Christ's words (chap. vii. 17). Such persons will consider every part of Christ's doctrine as infallibly true and infinitely momentous, and will, therefore, desire and delight to hear, read, and meditate upon it, at all opportunities (1 John iv. 5, 6). 2. In regard to the manner of "hearing Christ's voice," we should do it—(1) With reverence. (2) With humility. (3) With seriousness. (4) With attention. (5) In a childlike and teachable spirit. (6) With faith. (7) With love. (8) With meekness and patience. (9) In a spirit of prayer. (10) With an obedient mind. (*J. Benson.*)

Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice.—*Christ satisfying the instinct of truth*:—Does any one challenge the expression, "instinct of truth," and speak of an opposite tendency—that of falsehood—as the instinct of fallen humanity? There is much to support this. "David said in his haste, I say deliberately that 'all men are liars,'" exclaimed a famous statesman. The world is full of falsehood. The very framework of society rests upon semblances and false assumptions. Still this instinct has not superseded in fallen man the instinct of truth. Society could not exist if truth were not more probable than falsehood. There is falsehood enough to necessitate caution; there is still an overplus of truth sufficient to justify confidence. I. THE INSTINCT OF KNOWING TRUTH. 1. It is in human nature to crave satisfaction of knowledge. We see this in very low examples. A trial which shocks every pure feeling finds ten thousand readers who have no motive but vulgar curiosity. This is the twist the Fall has given to the instinct of knowledge. It is the very snare by which man fell. But there is an instinct underlying this—not corrupt, but wholesome—the desire to know the highest truth, to be informed about God, His will, His love. The Fall did not destroy this. That sort of guessing which is the amount of nature's help towards this knowledge is felt to be unsatisfactory. Let me not think but know is the instinctive cry. 2. There are many counteracting influences to this desire. (1) Indolence taking refuge in the thing in hand—in the received opinion, traditions, &c. (2) Prejudice—never so strong as in matters the most important and mysterious, never so jealous as when there is most at stake and least in sight; never so sensitive as in a region in which change involves both effort and singularity. (3) Formalism. These influences have a tendency to dull without satisfying that natural thirst which God has implanted in us. 3. Every man in whom this instinct of truth is, will hear Christ's voice, *i.e.*, will recognize in His gospel the satisfying responses, because—(1) He speaks with authority. His "verily, verily" has a ring of certainty. It is not every positive man who convinces; many rouse opposition, because positiveness sometimes is the mask of weakness, the stimulant of suspicion. It was not so with Christ. The people felt that there was a difference between Him and the scribes in this matter. How convincing is the voice of a man who thoroughly knows his subject. Contrast the lecture of a real master with that of a smatterer! Christ was at home in His subject. "We speak that we do know." A man eager for Divine knowledge will find satisfaction here because there is no traditional tentative doctrine, but the word of One who can say, "This is true." (2) Christ satisfies the instinct of truth by not only speaking it, but being it—"I am the Truth." Only in a Person can the instinct be satisfied. The knowledge of things, books, theology, &c., can never quench this thirst. The knowledge of a Person, in whom all truth centres and from whom it radiates with light and warmth to every point in the circumference of being, is provided by the gospel. II. THE INSTINCT WHICH PROMPTS TOWARDS BEING TRUE. 1. There are, indeed, men who

dread truth. Some men prefer carrying about them the suspicion of some fatal malady to running the risk of making suspicion certainty by going to a physician. So in things spiritual. 2. This indisposition arises from—(1) Timidity. There is an impression that certain sins are unpardonable, concerning which we may as well be ignorant as desperate. (2) Procrastination. Anything which involves exertion is deferred till a more convenient season—a season always a little beyond. (3) The innate gambling spirit of human nature, which loves the excitement of chance. These powers are mighty, but they do not disprove the assertion that there is an instinct of being true—a desire in men to see themselves as they are! 3. How does Christ satisfy this. (1) By removing the question altogether from the province of innocence. His message is to the sinful. It is a question, then, only of degree, between one who comes to Him and another. He does not say, "I come to save *such and such* sinners," but all, even the worst. He encourages us to be entirely frank with ourselves and Him. (2) Christ says, "Be true," and interprets this to mean, "Walk in the light with a brave, resolute, consistency." There is a natural horror of hypocrisy. In treating this as the one detestable vice, Christ appealed to an instinct of truth which has survived the Fall. Then He drew to Himself all that is sound, honest, noble; and, in demanding truth as His one condition, proved also His own adaptation to the instinctive demands of those whom He came to save. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Truth its own evidence*:—When a man knows he is telling you the truth everything about him corroborates his sincerity. Any accomplished cross-examining lawyer knows within a little whether a witness is genuine or a deceiver. Truth has her own air and manner, her own tone and emphasis. Yonder is a blundering, ignorant country fellow in the witness-box; the counsel tries to bamboozle and confuse him, but all the while he feels that he is an honest witness, and he says to himself, "I should like to shake this fellow's evidence, for it will greatly damage my case." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Characteristics of Christ's disciples*:—I. THEY ARE OF THE TRUTH (1 John iii. 18, 19). This implies—1. Uprightness and integrity of character. 2. A stedfast attachment to the doctrines and precepts of the gospel. The whole of Divine revelation is called the truth; but the gospel is so called by way of eminence. "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth" (2 Cor. xiii. 8). 3. A stedfast attachment to Christ, the Truth itself, the essential Truth of God. He is the original of truth, and its brightest manifestation. 4. An intimate relation to God, as the God of truth. They are begotten by the Word of truth, and bear a resemblance to the Author of truth. II. THEY HEAR THE SAVIOUR'S VOICE. Many heard His voice indeed, while He was on earth, who derived no real benefit. They gave Him the hearing, as many do His ministers, and that was all; but His chosen people both hear and receive the truth in love. "My sheep hear My voice," &c. Whether He speaks to them in His word, or by His ministers, or whether in a way of providence, they hear and approve, believe and obey. Such as truly hear His voice, hear it—1. With seriousness and attention. 2. With judgment and understanding. He tells us that His sheep not only hear His voice, but they know it; they distinguish it from the voice of strangers. 3. With affection and delight. Those who have heard with understanding would be always hearing. They are ready to say, "It is the voice of my Beloved," &c. 4. As addressed to themselves, and as applicable to their own case. They do not hear for others. With Samuel, they say, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth." 5. With a humble resolution to believe and obey. Peter and Matthew heard the Saviour's voice, saying, "Follow Me;" and they instantly obeyed. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*)

Ver. 38. **Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth?**—*The scepticism of Pilate*:—In all deference to Lord Bacon, we cannot believe that this sentence was spoken in jest. In Pilate's whole conduct there is no trace of such a tone. It betrays much of uncertainty, nothing of lightness. He was cruelly tormented with the perplexity of efforts to save his prisoner. He risked his own reputation. He pronounced Him, almost with vehemence, to be innocent. He even felt awe, and was afraid of Him. In such a frame of mind, mockery was impossible. Sarcasm there was: but it was mournful, bitter sarcasm which hides inward unrest. I. THE CAUSES OF PILATE'S SCEPTICISM. 1. Indecision of character. He first throws the blame on the priests—and then acknowledges that all responsibility is his own: washes his hands. And then—"Knowest thou not that *I* have power," &c. He pronounces Jesus innocent; and then delivers Him to be scourged; yields Him up to be crucified, and then tries every underhand expedient to save Him. What could a mind,

like a feather on the wind, know of truth, which remaineth like a rock amidst the changeful fashions of the minds of men? "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." 2. Falseness to his own convictions. Pilate had a conviction that Jesus was innocent. Instead of acting at once on that, he argued and debated till the practical force of the conviction was unsettled. I do not say that a man is never to re-examine a question. A young man of twenty-three, with such light as he has, forms his views: is he never to have more light? Is he never in manhood, with manhood's data and experience, to modify, or even reverse, what once seemed the very Truth itself? Nay, this were the weak pride of consistency, the cowardice which dares not say I have been wrong. The best and bravest have struggled from error into truth; they listened to their honest doubts, and tore up their old beliefs by the very roots. Distinguish however. A man may unsettle the verdict of his intellect; it is at his peril that he tampers with the convictions of his conscience. Every opinion and view must remain an open question, freely to be tried with fresh light. But there are eternal truths of right and wrong, upon which it is perilous to argue. Now Pilate was false to his conscience. Jesus' innocence was not a matter of probability, nor one in which fresh evidence was even expected. Every charge has fallen to the ground. When a man brings a clear and practised intellect to try questions, by the answer to which he does not mean to rule his conduct, let him not marvel if he feels, as life goes on, a sense of desolation; existence a burden, and all uncertain. 3. The taint of the worldly temper of his day. Pilate knew how many systems pretended to an exclusive possession of truth; and how the pretensions of each were overthrown by another. And his incredulity was but a specimen of the scepticism fashionable in his day. And his desire to save Jesus was precisely the liberalism current in our day as in his—an utter disbelief in the truths of a world unseen, but at the same time a half-benevolent, half-indolent unwillingness to molest the poor dreamers who chose to believe in such superstitions. This is the superficial liberalism which is contracted in public life; never going deep; satisfied with the brilliant flippancy which treats religious beliefs as phases of human delusion, seeing the hollowness of the characters around, and believing that all is hollow; and yet not without moments of superstition, as when Pilate was afraid hearing of a Son of God; not without moments of horrible insecurity, when the question, "What is truth?" is a sarcasm on themselves and human life, wrung out of the loneliest and darkest bewilderment that can agonize a human soul. To such a character Jesus would not explain His truth. God's truth is too sacred to be expounded to superficial worldliness in its transient fit of earnestness. 4. That priestly bigotry which forbids inquiry and makes doubt a crime. (1) The priests of that day had much to answer for. One—of whom they only knew that He was a man of unblemished life—came forward to proclaim the truth. But it was new; they had never sanctioned such; and so they settled that the thing was heresy. Then they proceeded to bind that decision upon others. A man was heard to say, "Why, what evil hath He done?" Small offence enough, but it savoured of a dangerous candour towards a suspected man; and in the priestly estimate, candour is the next step to heresy. They stifled Pilate's soul's rising convictions with threats and penalties—"If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." (2) The results of this priestcraft were twofold. The first was seen in the fanaticism of the people; the second in the scepticism of Pilate. And these are the two results which come from all claims to infallibility, and all prohibition of inquiry. They make bigots of the feeble-minded who cannot think; cowardly bigots, who at the bidding of their priests or ministers swell the ferocious cry for the persecution of some opinion which they fear and hate; turning private opinion into civil crime; and they make sceptics of the acute intellects which, like Pilate, see through their fallacies, and like Pilate too, dare not publish their misgivings. And it matters not in what form that claim to infallibility is made. These two things must follow—you make fanatics, and you make sceptics; believers you cannot make. II. THE MODE APPOINTED FOR DISCOVERING THE TRUTH. 1. I am not about to be guilty of the presumption of answering the question which Jesus did not answer. The truth cannot be compressed into a sermon. Think you, that if Christ Himself could have answered that question in a certain number of sentences, He would have spent thirty years of life in witnessing to it? Some men would compress into the limits of one reply, or one discourse the truth which it took Christ thirty years to teach, and which He left unfinished for the Spirit to complete. 2. The truth is infinite as the firmament above you. In childhood, both seem near and measureable; but with years they grow and grow; and

seem further off, and further and grander, and deeper and vaster, as God Himself; till you smile to remember how you thought you could touch the sky, and blush to recollect the proud and self-sufficient way in which you used to talk of knowing or preaching "the truth." 3. The truth is made up of principles; an inward life, not any mere formula of words. God's character; spiritual worship; the Divine life in the soul. How shall I put that into sentences ten or ten thousand? "The words which I speak unto you are life." How could Pilate's question be answered except by a life? 4. The appointed ways to teach this truth. (1) Independence. Independence is nothing more than a deep sense of personal responsibility; a determination to trust in God rather than in man to teach; in God and God's light in the soul. You choose a guide among precipices and glaciers; but you walk for yourself; you use your own strength; you rely on your own nerves. You select your own physician, deciding upon the respective claims of men, the most ignorant of whom knows more of the matter than you. You prudently hesitate at times to follow the advice of the one you trust most, yet that is only independence without a particle of presumption. And so precisely in matters of religious truth. No man cares for your health as you do; therefore you rely blindly upon none. No man has the keeping of your own soul, or cares for it as you do. For yourself therefore, you inquire and think, and you refuse to delegate that work to bishop, priest, or church. (2) Humbleness. There is no infallibility in man. We may err: that one thought is enough to keep a man humble. There are two kinds of temper contrary to this spirit. (*a*) A disputing, captious temper. Disagreement is refreshing when two men lovingly desire to compare their views to find out the truth. Controversy is wretched when it is an attempt to prove one another wrong. Therefore Christ would not argue with Pilate. (*b*) A hopeless spirit. Pilate's question breathed this. He felt that Jesus was unjustly condemned, but He thought Him in views as hopelessly wrong as the rest. In that despairing spirit no man gets at truth: "The meek will He guide in judgment. . . ." (3) Action. This was Christ's rule—"If any man will do His will. . . ." Here we are in a world of mystery, where all is difficult, and very much dark—where a hundred jarring creeds declare themselves to be the truth, and all are plausible. How shall a man decide? Let him do the right that lies before him. Whatever else may be wrong, it must be right to be pure—to be just and tender, and merciful and honest. It must be right to love, and to deny one's self. Let him do the will of God, and he shall know. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The sceptic's question answered by himself* (Text and chap. xix. 5):—1. As out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, so, out of the mouth of a witness as unconscious as they, God has ordained strength because of the enemy. It is said that in nature the stinging nettle is closely attended by the healing blade, so here the sceptic's question with its most appropriate answer. It may be worth while, for once, to get a sermon from the Procurator's chair. 2. Though the preacher is ancient, the subject is not, for the sceptical question which he answered so well is a question of the day. The truth doubted is the same which unbelief doubts now. For Pilate did not doubt his senses or his reason on the reality of the plain palpable facts of observation, but the truth which Christ had been speaking, the truth about God and eternity and duty and destiny. And his position was not one of denial, only of agnosticism. He asks the question and does not wait for the answer, a method of investigation which is by no means obsolete in the nineteenth century. 3. Now let us look at the answer; and as we think of it, we remember what Christ said the very day before: "I am the Truth." There is—I. THE TRUTH ABOUT HUMANITY. What is man? What are we to think of human life? Come now, ye biologists, here is a life to study! Come, ye anthropologists, "Behold the man!" By all means study all kinds of men, the most degraded specimens you can find if you choose; but do not consider your induction complete till you have given as much attention at least to the noblest and the best. You know the common reference to the play of *Hamlet* with Hamlet left out. Surely you do not intend to reach a conclusion as to man's place in nature with THE MAN left out? Why should attention be fixed so exclusively on the facts which belong to the lower phases of life? So long as one keeps working mainly amongst molluscs or even among troglodytes, it is not difficult to think that all is only "living matter." But when we come to the higher ranges of life we cannot dispose of them in so easy a way. It is impossible to do it honestly in dealing only with ordinary men; the difficulty is greatly increased when we are confronted with great minds and noble souls; but when we look at the greatest of all, it becomes nothing less than an insult to reason to suggest it. It is impossible to believe that we are

looking at a mere phase of the animal life flickering up for a moment and falling back again to be "cast as rubbish to the void." It becomes manifest that in Him there is life clear out of the range of protoplasm and its variations, infinitely higher than any conceivable mode of living matter. See how the life shines out in contrast with the poverty and meanness of its setting, a demonstration that spirit and not flesh is the ultimate truth of humanity. See Him before Pilate, His form scarred, to all appearance a common criminal. And then think of that great soul of His, see it in its awful and majestic loneliness; compare the magnificence of this spirit with the shame of the flesh; the glory of the life with the abjectness of the living matter; and then say, if you dare, that the real truth of that manhood is to be found in the paltry matter of it, and not in the magnificent, glorious Divine Spirit. Behold the man, and see that spirit lords it over matter, and life triumphs over death. And, accordingly, when we read a little further on of His resurrection from the dead, we cannot be surprised. It is the survival of the fittest. Is He not, of all men that ever lived, the very fittest to survive, and can we suppose that nothing in that noble soul survived after He bowed His head and gave up the ghost? It is not possible. The Apostle Peter was certainly right when he said it was not possible that He should be holden of death. II. THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD. As we continue beholding the "Man" He grows upon us wonderfully, as He grew upon His first disciples who began by asking: "What manner of man is this?" and ended by seeing in Him "the glory of the Only Begotten," &c. We find that noble life reflecting all of the glory of God which it is possible and needful for us to see. Elsewhere in nature we can, as it were, touch the hem of His garment, but we cannot know Him till we look upon His face. The face is nature's mode of revelation and recognition. Your face is not yourself, it is only the outward expression or incarnation of your spirit; but if I refuse to look into your face and will not listen to your voice, I must remain unacquainted with you. In the same way, the Man Christ Jesus is the face of God to us. By looking at Him we become acquainted with our Father in heaven; not otherwise. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Hence present day agnosticism. The agnostic is perfectly right in saying that God cannot be known by the pure intellect, but neither can we know one another in any such way. "Behold the man" is the gospel for the agnostic. III. LIVING, SAVING TRUTH. It has a wondrous power on the beholder. As we look and listen we are brought to our knees, constrained to cry out for pardon and for purity. And as we watch Him through the shame and agony of that awful day—crucified for us—our hearts are won. Divorced from sin, the hatefulness of which is seen in the awful sacrifice as nowhere else; divorced from sin we are yielded unto God and have peace, and hope, and life. And as still we follow Him through the gates of death up to the throne on which He now is seated, we find as deep a meaning in the second word of Pilate as in the first—"Behold your King." And now we know Him as our life, for His Spirit takes the throne of our heart, and as we still continue beholding in the Man Christ Jesus, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory by the Lord, the Spirit; and thus there is developed in us true life, not the mere agitation or fluctuation of living matter for a few years; but life indeed. (*J. Monro Gibson, D.D.*) *Pilate's question*—"*What is truth?*"—He who asked it was the only man to whom the Redeemer vouchsafed no reply. All other inquirers after truth received a prompt and full response. The reason must be looked for in the character of Pilate, in the spirit and temper in which the question was propounded. Pilate was an educated Roman, and the age in which he lived was one of almost universal scepticism among educated Romans. Christianity to such a man could be, of course, only a new sect of Judaism, and Jesus only the deluded founder of a new heresy. Pilate has ever had his successor, and there is a remarkable likeness between this age and his in the prevalence of scepticism among the educated classes. It is now fashionable to be a disciple of Comte, of Herbert Spencer and of Darwin. The conflict thickens around us, and the very conflict itself creates a class of men who treat all religious beliefs as equally harmless delusions. To these Pilate-minded souls there comes no reply to the light, flippant cavillings concerning ethereal verities. Pilate's cry is in the air to-day. It is repeated on every side, in treatise, novel, poem, magazine, journal. What is God? What is Christ? What is man? What, then, is the spirit in which the question must be asked to obtain a reply? I. IT MUST NOT BE IN PILATE'S SPIRIT—IN SCEPTICISM OR SCEPTICAL INDIFFERENCE. Such a spirit is wanting in the very first element to ensure success. It is like the act of a traveller, knocking at the gate of some deserted oracle of Isis or of Delphos, and

demanding in derision a response from the dead divinity. In this light, what an absurdity—nay, what an insult—is the prayer-gauge of Professor Tyndall. In what does it differ from the wild experiment of Rousseau? He will cast a stone at a particular tree, and if it strikes the tree he will conclude that the Deity has accepted the test, has guided the universe, and that there is a God. If the stone misses the mark, he will conclude there is no God. He hurls the stone, which flies wide of the mark. There is no condescension to such a trifler. The cry of the flippant sceptic will never reach the heavens. "He that comes to God must believe that He is." II. IN THE SPIRIT OF AN EARNEST SEEKER OF TRUTH. "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." Every one wishes to have truth on his side, but it is not every one who wishes sincerely to be on the side of truth. He that does shall most surely find the precious pearl. There is such a thing as honest doubt. There is the real perplexity of truth-loving minds grappling with some difficulty which they would fain remove. To such Jesus says, "If ye continue in My word ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." The history of Christianity abounds with illustrations of this. In the latter part of the last century, Lord Lyttleton and Gilbert West agreed to write something in favour of infidelity. For this purpose Lyttleton chose the conversion of St. Paul, and West the resurrection of Christ. They were honest doubters, and, being honest, their studies ended in conviction. Both took up their pens and became champions of Christianity; Lyttleton produced a treatise on the conversion of St. Paul, "to which," says Dr. Johnson, "infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer." West, a work on the resurrection of our Lord, of masterly power. How different the spirit of Strauss, Renan, Buckle, and Spencer! III. IN A SPIRIT OF WILLINGNESS TO FOLLOW IT, TO OBEY ITS VOICE, TO SUBMIT TO ITS GUIDANCE. Men, it is to be feared, are too often afraid to know the truth, lest it prove a hard master. They "love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Unbelief in religion has its seat in the heart, and not in the head; in the will, and not in the understanding. And it will ever be found that in those communities and nations where the greatest corruption in morals prevails, there infidelity abounds. It was only a degradation like that of France in the days preceding her first revolution that could have produced the monstrous unbelief of those days. But to earnest souls, to honest hearts, to men who are willing to do God's will, willing to be changed, to be made pure, here is an infallible test. (*Bp. Cummins.*) *What is truth?*—A question. I. IMPORTANT. Nothing more necessary for the mind to know. II. OLD. Men in all ages have been asking it. III. INTRICATE. Not to ascertain what is truth relative and ephemeral, but what is truth absolute and eternal. IV. ANSWERED. Jesus has replied to it for all time, "I am the Truth." (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *What is truth?*—Pilate received no answer, but, first, he did not wait for one, and therefore showed a disregard to its importance; and therefore, secondly, the Saviour saw that He was in a state of mind that would render an answer worse than useless. If a man asks the way to Zion with his face thitherward, direction will be thankfully received; but when a man abuses or neglects the light he has, more would only enhance his guilt and misery. So there are many inquirers who will succeed no better than Pilate. 1. The superficial inquirer. Truth is that which he is too frivolous to discover or comprehend. 2. The inattentive inquirer. He is too indolent to attain it. The promise of success is only to the diligent, "If thou criest after knowledge," &c. 3. The prejudiced inquirer. He never sincerely denies or impartially examines, and takes the Bible in his hand to raise objections rather than to sit at the Master's feet and become wise unto salvation. 4. The proud inquirer. Truth is too humbling for him to submit to. It is no easy thing to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. 5. The sensual inquirer. Truth is too holy for his lust, and he makes the Bible his enemy by his wickedness, and then hates it because it does not prophecy good. 6. The sincere inquirer. We will take the question from him rather than from Pilate. I. THE TRUTH ITSELF. 1. Moral truth, truth between man and man, consists in the agreement between our thoughts and words. Religious truth is that which shows us things as they are in relation to God and our responsibility to Him. Truth shows us things also as they ought to be, God being judge. It is possible for truth to be made known, and it has been made known so far as is necessary: and if this be admitted then in the Bible alone is it to be found in purity and perfection. This Word is truth. Some wish that Christ had answered the question. What light He might have thrown had He said, "This is truth." But He has answered it, and

you have His reply in your hands. And that reply is sufficient, whatever some may say. If you come to this Book and ask how it was that sin was permitted to enter into this world, &c., you will read no answer; but if you ask, "What must I do to be saved?" the response is so plain that a wayfaring man though a fool need not err. 2. Viewing the gospel then as an answer to the inquiry, let us refer to its facts. Now the birth, miracles, death, resurrection of Christ, &c., are facts, or they are nothing. Take, *e.g.*, the Resurrection. Everything depends upon that, and if that be incapable of proof there is no event that can be proved by any testimony whatever—for the apostles were eye, ear, and hand witnesses (1 John i. 1). 3. But have not controversies arisen about Scripture doctrines? Yes; but observe the following rules and you will not go far astray. (1) Pray for guidance to the Father of lights. (2) Acknowledge no human authority in Divine things. (3) Remember that Christians do not differ so much as some imagine—when they pray they are all one. (4) Do not be guided by any single phrase, but by the entire texture of revelation—its strain and tendency. (5) That is likely to be truth which agrees the most with the experience of those who give the best evidence of being "born again" and "led by the Spirit." II. THE IMPORTANCE OF FINDING THE TRUTH. This importance—1. Depends on the value of the truth itself. The gospel is the one thing needful. All the suffering in the world has arisen from the loss or absence of truth. Satan fell because "he abode not in the truth." While Adam abode in the truth he was safe; but as soon as he believed the devil's lie he fell, and involved all his posterity in his ruin. Idolatry is a lie, so is Pharisaism and Popery. What a blessing if they could all be driven back to the place from whence they came. 2. Appears from the character and procedure of God Himself. He is "the God of truth," and His Spirit is "the Spirit of truth." Observe—(1) What God has done for the truth. He has magnified it above all His name. A thousand miracles have been wrought for it, and ages have been employed to accomplish it. A whole nation was separated to be its depositaries and witnesses. Prophets and apostles were inspired, and ministers have been raised up to preach it. Christ was born to be a witness to it. (2) What has been done by it? It has abolished human sacrifices and gladiatorial exhibitions; softened the horrors of war; made marriage honourable; raised the tone of public morals, &c. "What has it not done for our country, our families, ourselves?" (*a*) By this truth we have been born again. (*b*) It has been our comfort in affliction. (*c*) It has fed our understanding. (*d*) It has opened a thousand sources of pleasure. (*e*) It prepares us for all the duties of life. (*f*) It will be our great solace in death. III. THE USE WE ARE TO MAKE OF THE TRUTH. We are—1. To seek to understand it. Let us explore the length and breadth of our heritage. 2. To apply it to the purposes for which it is given—not to gratify the curiosity, amuse, or furnish matter for controversy, but to believe in Jesus Christ and have life through His name. 3. To confess it. While we are to believe "with the heart" we are to confess "with the mouth." "Whosoever shall be ashamed," &c. 4. To defend it. "Earnestly contend for the faith," &c. 5. To diffuse it. (*W. Jay.*) *Truth described*:—Truth, the mother of Virtue, is painted in garments as white as snow. Her looks are serene, pleasant, courteous, cheerful, and yet modest: she is the pledge of all honesty, the bulwark of honour, the light and joy of human society. She is commonly accounted the daughter of Time or Saturn, because Truth is discovered in the course of time; but Democritus feigns that she lies hid in the bottom of a well. (*Andrew Tooke.*) *Characteristics of truth*:—Truth is the most glorious thing: the least filing of this gold is precious. Truth is ancient; its grey hairs may make it venerable; it comes from Him who is the Ancient of Days. Truth is unerring: it is the star which leads to Christ. Truth is pure (Psa. cxix. 140): it is compared to silver refined seven times (Psa. xii. 6). There is not the least spot on truth's face: it breathes nothing but sanctity. Truth is triumphant: it is like a great conqueror; when all its enemies lie dead it keeps the field, and sets up its trophies of victory. Truth may be opposed, but never quite deposed. In the time of Diocletian things seemed desperate, truth ran low: soon after was the golden time of Constantius, and then truth did again lift up its head. When the water in the Thames is lowest, a high tide is ready to come in. God is on truth's side, and so long there is no fear but it will prevail. "The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved" (2 Pet. iii. 12), but not that truth which came from heaven (1 Pet. i. 25). (*T. Watson.*) *Transcendent importance of religious truth*:—I. THE TRANSCENDENT IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH TO MAN. This might be proved, inasmuch as man is—1. An intellectual being. The reason of man forms the link between man and his God, and in as far

as it is unperverted, seeks after truth. There was no feature in the mighty mind of Newton, who grasped the universe almost in his span, that was so remarkable as his childlike, simple love of truth. Truth in art, in science, in metaphysics, in morals, and in nature, ought to be the aim of the mind, but if truth in pursuits which have merely to do with things seen and temporal be of moment, how much more truth, even in an intellectual point of view, in reference to the reality of a world that never changes and that never passes away. If to know the glorious works of God be an exalted study, how much more to know the nature of that Great Architect who built and beautified the universe! If to measure the dimensions, and to understand the proportions of things visible be noble, how much more to explore and to investigate the nature, the proportion, and the dimensions of the wondrous things that are connected with the world to come! 2. A moral and responsible being. All within us and without us tell and testify that we have to do with the great unseen God. The ties which bind the creature to his Creator and his Preserver, must of all ties be the most intimate. There is a conscience in man that testifies, and a reason that responds to the testimony, that there is verily a God that judgeth in the earth. If it were not that man is a responsible being, why do we find among the savage as well as the sage a conscience exercising its power. If then man be a responsible being, how emphatically interesting to man to know that God with whom he has to do—how he may approve himself in the sight of his Heavenly Ruler, and how he may enjoy His favour. 3. An immortal being. Were man what the infidel represents him, it might be indeed of little moment what man knew, or of what he was ignorant. But if man be an immortal being, then that fact stamps upon man an infinite worth, and stamps, therefore, upon religious truth a worth that is infinite also. 4. A fallen being. The proofs of evil are as plain as the proofs of existence, and along with these there are proofs that that depravity is not accidental, but that it is the painful consequences of man's own fatal choice. There is a sense of guilt upon man that makes him dread to meet his God. If it were all well with man, if there were peace in his conscience, it might be, comparatively speaking, of little moment to ascertain truth. But, being guilty, man needs to know how he may be reconciled to God; how his guilt may be removed and his ruin remedied. II. WHERE THEN IS TRUTH TO BE FOUND? "Thy Word is truth." Then how transcendent the importance of the Scriptures of truth to man. 1. As an intellectual being. Does man sigh for information respecting God, His character, the worship He requires? Let Him open the Scriptures of truth, and there he finds "shallows in which a lamb may wade, and depths in which an elephant may swim." There are those glorious heights—that sublime morality—those splendid discoveries which elevate and expand the intellect. Yea, the Word of God is the great foster-mother of all the arts and sciences of civilized life. 2. As a responsible being. He asks reason, but it can give him little information; conscience, but its rays are half quenched within him. But let him open the Word of God, and there you will see written, as in letters of light, all that his Father would have him to do, so plain, that "he who runs may read." 3. An immortal being. It does not point him to a Mahometan paradise, or tell him of a place of liquid fire, such as heathen poets have described, but in its simple sublimity tells us that "after death comes the judgment;" of "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched;" of heaven, in the simple declarations of glory. 4. As a sinful being. If it simply told us how we might know God and ascertain His will and the dread sanctions of His law, it would but have enhanced our misery and increased our guilt. But it is as a revelation to lost man of the glad tidings of eternal life through the blood of the Lamb that the Book of God is of most transcendent interest to man. (*H. Stowell, M.A.*)

Pilate saith unto them I find no fault in Him.—*Pilate's first attempt to rescue Christ:*—I. THE SECRET MOTIVE. A conviction of the innocence of Christ (ver. 28). A valuable testimony. 1. Directly to the blamelessness of Christ. Whatever violations of ecclesiastical law or social custom might be laid to Christ's charge, Pilate saw that He was no plotter of sedition. 2. Indirectly to the sinlessness of Christ. That the charge of treason was the strongest the Jews could prefer—the one they could most easily establish—may be assumed. If, therefore, this failed, it is more than likely that every other would have proved abortive. II. THE OSTENSIBLE PRETEXT—a desire to honour Jewish customs (ver. 39). 1. The custom was dubious. (1) On the one hand it might be eulogized as a fitting mark of a festive season, and a reminder of the Divine clemency, of which the feast was a memorial. (2) But on the other its observance involved a crime (Prov. xvii. 15),

and the liberation of Barabbas was no boon to the people. 2. The pretext was bad. Christ required not to be liberated *ex gratia*, but as innocent. III. THE FORMAL PROPOSAL—to release Jesus (ver. 39). Pilate committed three mistakes. 1. In not immediately discharging Christ. Justice commanded, and conscience prompted to this. Had he done this he might have suffered, but he would have acted courageously and right. But he hesitated, and was lost. 2. In proposing to release Christ as a matter of grace instead of justice. There are times when compromises are permissible, but when one course alone is right and the other sinful, there is no room for compromise. 3. In putting Christ in competition with Barabbas. To do so was—(1) A moral wrong—knowing as he did the character of both. (2) A tactical mistake; for though intended in Christ's interest, believing that between the two the people would never hesitate, it had exactly the contrary result. IV. THE UTTER DEFEAT—by the preference of Barabbas (ver. 40). 1. With unexpected eagerness. It must have startled the governor to hear the people's response, to see his hopes so quickly blighted. But the hope of the wicked is usually shortlived (Job viii. 13; v. 13). 2. With prompt decision. 3. With deafening clamour. Learn—1. The danger of trifling with conscience. 2. The doubtfulness of compromise. 3. The madness of sin. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Pilate's verdict*:—I. THE FIRST ACCUSATION WAS THAT HE WAS A MALEFACTOR (ver. 30). 1. This was a novel charge. For when He stood before Caiaphas nothing was said of any evil that He had done, but only of evil that He had spoken. This had broken down, and they did not venture upon it a second time, because they knew that Pilate did not care what the man had said. The Romans were a practical people, and so Pilate asked, "What hast Thou done?" For this reason the priests brought forward this newly-invented accusation, which might mean little or much, as the hearer chose to interpret it—malice is seldom specific in its charges. 2. It was a charge which they did not attempt to sustain. How craftily they evaded the task of supplying proof! Their suborned perjurers were left behind. "If He were not a malefactor," &c., "You must take it for granted that He is guilty, or we would not say so." This style of argument we hear now: we are expected to give up the faith because scientists condemn it, and they are such eminent persons that we ought to accept their dicta without further delay. I confess I am not prepared to accept their infallibility any more than that which hails from Rome. The Roman governor was not to be overridden by priests, neither are we to be led by the nose by pretendedly learned men. 3. They could not have sustained the charge, and so far they were wise in not attempting the impossible. They might be foolhardy enough to wrest His words, but they hesitated before the task of attacking His deeds. Before His awful holiness they were for the moment out of heart, and knew not what slander to invent. 4. This charge was never denied by Christ. It was useless to deny it before the priests. He had already challenged them to find fault with His life, saying, "I spake openly," &c. But there might have been some use, one would think, in His answering to Pilate, for Pilate was evidently very favourably impressed with his prisoner. But our Lord had come on earth on purpose to be "numbered with the transgressors." He says nothing because, though in Him is no sin, He has taken our sin upon Himself. Yet further, our Lord willed that by being counted as a transgressor by Pilate He might die the death appointed for malefactors by the Roman law. If the Jews had put our Lord to death for blasphemy, it would have been by stoning; but then, none of the prophecies predicted this. The death ordained for Him was crucifixion. Call Him not malefactor, but benefactor. What a benefactor must He be who in order to benefit us allows Himself to be branded as a "malefactor"! Should not this sweeten every title of reproach that can ever fall upon us? II. THE SECOND CHARGE WAS THAT OF CLAIMING TO BE A KING. 1. This charge, in the sense in which they intended it, was utterly false, for when the multitude would have made Him a king, He hid Himself: and ever declined to usurp judicial functions. 2. This charge did not come from the governing power. When Pilate asked, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" the wise reply was, "Sayest thou this of thyself?" &c. As the governor of this nation you have to watch carefully, for the people are seditious; have you ever seen or heard anything of Me that looks like an attack upon your authority? 3. It was a frivolous charge on the very face of it. How could that harmless, forsaken Man be a peril to Cæsar? Moreover, it would seem a strange thing that the Jewish people should bring before the Roman governor their own king. Is this the way that subjects treat their monarchs? 4. The Lord never denied this charge in the sense in which he chose to understand it. (1) He explained what He meant by being a king, and

notice carefully that He did not explain it away. (2) Having explained His meaning, He confessed that He was a King. III. THE ACQUITTAL WHICH PILATE GAVE TO JESUS. This verdict is that of all who have ever—1. Examined Christ. Some have examined Him with an unfriendly eye, but in proportion as they have been candid, they have been struck with His life and spirit. No character like that of Jesus is to be seen in history, nay, not even in romance. If any one says the four Gospels are forgeries, let him try to write a fifth which shall be like the other four. 2. Associated with Christ. One disciple who was with Christ betrayed Him, but he spoke nothing against Him. Nay, his last witness is. "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." If there had been a fault in Jesus, the traitor would have spied it out; his unquiet conscience would have been glad enough to find therein a sedative. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" is the challenge of Jesus, to which there is no reply. 3. Lived with Christ spiritually. In the course of His providence He has brought some of us very low. What is the verdict? "I find no fault at all in Him." He is everything that is lovely. He is all my salvation and all my desire. Out of so many believers surely some one or other, when they came to die, would have told us if He is not all that He professes to be. 4. Of every one some day. If any of you reject Christ, when you shall stand at His judgment-seat, you shall then be obliged to say, "I find no fault at all in Him." There was no failure in His blood, the failure was in my want of faith; no failure in His Spirit—the failure was in my obstinate will. Conclusion: 1. Beware of an external religion, for the men who falsely accused Christ were very religious people, and would not go into Pilate's hall for fear of polluting themselves. 2. Shun all proud worldliness like that of Pilate. 3. Submit to Jesus the King. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 40. **Not this Man but Barabbas.**—*Barabbas*:—The name seems to tell a tale. *Bar*, signifies "son;" as, Barjonah, "son of John;" and Bartholomew, "son of Tolmai;" *abbas* was the Greek form of the Hebrew word for "father." It looks as if the name here had, years before, been given in fond endearment to this creature when young, and that it meant "father's own boy." Perhaps there was sadness in the unfolding of the young life, and by degrees the bud of promise burst into a flower of deadly nightshade. We know nothing with certainty; but on such a subject as this the imagination will work, and we think of the "father's boy" as ruined by unwise fondness; we see the natural history of such indulgence in the indulged child becoming the sorrow of his father and the shame of his race. Whatever was the process we here see the result. Are the officers of justice looking for the hand that accomplished the last bold robbery? or that applied the match that made the last explosion? or the hand that struck the last blow in the dark? or has there been a secret muster of dangerous force, and they want to find the "head centre" of the conspiracy, and the captain of the gang? I think that in many such searchings, Barabbas was the criminal wanted. On this occasion, he had been arrested as the leader of an insurrection, and under colour of political aspirations was a convicted robber and murderer. It has even been thought by critics who are not to be slighted that this adventurer professed to be the leader of a religious as well as a political revolt, and that he arrogated to himself the title of "Messiah." "Jesus," we are told by some authorities, was one of his names, and that Pilate's question took the form, "Do you wish that I should release to you Jesus who is called the Christ, or Jesus Barabbas?" There he stands! "Dangerous" is written on his face,—robber, plotter, desperado, murderer, caught red-handed; at the sight of him horror creeps over me, my heart beats hard throbs, and the muscles of my hand stand out like cords of iron. "Jews! Turn your eyes away from this type of demonized humanity, and look at Him against whom he has been set up as rival, Jesus, the wiser than the wisest, kinder than the kindest, purer than the purest, better than the best; what say you, will you release Him?" When this appeal is made, the cry comes back, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Barabbas versus Christ*:—Not the only time that a robber has been preferred to Christ. It is a choice that is made by multitudes in Christian England, as it was by that infuriated rabble eighteen hundred years ago. Why should I mince matters? You are preferring something before Christ. Its name may not be Barabbas. The ban of society may not rest upon it. And yet for all that, it is a robber. 1. It robs you; it robs you of peace, happiness, Christ. Anything you choose before Him robs you of Him. He will take no second place in your heart. 2. It robs Christ of you. You belong to Him; He made you; He

bought you with His blood. Many prefer—I. THEIR SINS TO CHRIST. Jesus stands before you. Deity come down to humanity, humanity exalted into Deity. He says, "Come unto Me." But men refuse. Failing there, He stands, shall I say higher, or lower still? On Calvary; and thence His dying voice again says—"Come." But—will you believe it?—this call of a dying Redeemer dies away unheeded. "Not this Man, but"—but—oh! who or what is this rival, who blinds your eyes to the grace of that heavenly form? Sin is its name, that hideous, deformed, repulsive thing. 1. Sin is a robber. It robs you of—(1) Your peace of mind. The sinner is not a happy man. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." (2) Heaven. Remember, while you are imbibing its stolen draughts, and rolling its forbidden fruit as a sweet morsel under your tongue, that is not the end of it. You would not knowingly harbour a thief beneath your roof, and yet you scruple not to make a home for sin in your heart—that heart for which Jesus is asking and waiting in vain. 2. Sin, like Barabbas, is also a leader in sedition. What is it that disturbs the peace of nations, that snaps the bonds of fraternity, and breaks up the foundations of a people's prosperity, but sin? 3. Like Barabbas, sin is a murderer—it was a murderer from the beginning; it murders souls with an eternal dying. II. EASE AND SELF-INDULGENCE. Here we come from the outer circle of the world into the inner circle of the Church. How many pay Christ the compliment of coming to church once a Sunday, and here their service begins and ends! There are men who name that name which is the synonym for all that is disinterested and unselfish, who think more of their champagne than they think of the Church, and who give more for their champagne than they give to their Saviour. If I were an author, ambitious of signalizing myself by writing the shortest volume ever known, I would come to some of the members of our genteel suburban churches, and ask their permission to write an account of what they are doing for Christ and for the world. Brief indeed would be the history! A solitary cipher would describe all that many are doing for the Lord that bought them, and for a perishing world! There is a passage that must be a precious solace to some so-called Christians—"We which have believed do enter into rest." But remember, that is the labourer's rest after toil, not the idler's rest from toil. But I have another passage to set over against this—"Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion!" Yes, woe, for this ease is a Barabbas, a robber. 1. It robs your fellow-men. There are multitudes of ignorant, hungry, afflicted, dying, to whom a Christian visit is like an angel's presence. Your selfishness robs them of that. 2. It robs Christ of the reward of His sufferings, of jewels to His crown. Who knows what little one might have been led to Jesus had you taken your place in the Sabbath-school? 3. It robs yourselves—(1) Of present happiness. It is the working Christian who is the happy Christian. While "he waters others, he is watered also himself." (2) Of the Divine approbation; it will deprive you of that encomium at the day of reckoning which it were well worth spending a thousand lives to hear—"Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." You are loving your ease better than Christ. What if Christ had loved His ease better than you? III. GAIN. All some men are living for is pounds, shillings, and pence, as though no Christ had ever lived and died. There was no room for Christ in the inn; there is no room for Him in the shop and in the counting-house, I fear. Now, this Barabbas is a robber. Ah! you think that you are growing rich; but instead of this, you are being daily robbed, and growing unutterably poor. You would soon be alert if you thought a thief was at your till. This Barabbas of mammon is robbing you—1. Of your precious probation time here on earth. 2. Of your souls. Wealth is "the pearl of great price," that lies in the field of business, and men will sell all that they have to enable them to buy that field. They will sell their veracity, their honour, their principles, their manliness, and of necessity, in the end, lose their souls. But "what shall it profit a man," &c. (*J. Halsey.*)

Barabbas preferred to Jesus:—I. THE SIN AS WE FIND IT IN THIS HISTORY. The sin will be more clearly seen if we remember that—1. The Saviour had done no ill. No law, either of God or man, had He broken. 2. He had even conferred great temporal blessings upon them. Oh ravening multitude, has He not fed you when you were hungry? Did He not heal your sick? 3. Wherein did His teaching offend against morality or the best interests of man? What did He preach for? No selfish motive could have been urged. The true reason of their hate, no doubt, lay in the natural hatred of all men to perfect goodness. To be too holy in the judgment of men is a great crime, for it rebukes their sin. II. THE SIN WHICH HAS BEEN THE GUILT OF THE WORLD IN ALL AGES, AND WHICH IS THE WORLD'S GUILT NOW. 1. When the apostles went forth to preach the

gospel, and the truth had spread through many countries, there were severe edicts passed by the Roman Emperors. Against whom were these edicts framed? Against the foul offenders of that day. I find that they were borne with and scarcely mentioned with censure; but tortures of every kind, were used against the innocent, humble followers of Christ. 2. Then the world changed its tactics; it became nominally Christian. The Pope of Rome put on the triple crown, and called himself the Vicar of Christ; then came in the abomination of the worship of saints, angels, and images, the mass, &c., and every head bowed before the sovereign representative of Peter at Rome. The Church of Rome was equal in sin to Barabbas. 3. Since that day the world has changed its tactics yet again; in many parts of the earth Protestantism is openly acknowledged, and the gospel is preached, but what then? Then comes in the Barabbas of mere ceremonialism, orthodoxy, or morality. III. THIS WAS THE SIN OF EVERY ONE OF US BEFORE OUR CONVERSION. 1. What company did you like best? Was it not that of the frivolous, if not that of the profane? When you sat with God's people, their talk was very tedious. 2. When we had time for thinking, what were our favourite themes? 3. And what were our pleasures? 4. Some of us have to confess with shame that we were never more in our element than when conscience ceased to accuse us and we could plunge into sin with riot. What was our reading then? Any book sooner than the Bible. 4. What were our aspirations then? Self was what we lived for. 5. Where did we spend our best praise? Did we praise Christ? No; we praised cleverness, and when it was in association with sin, we praised it none the less. It would have been the same to-day with us, if almighty grace had not made the difference. It was mighty grace which made us to seek the Saviour. IV. THERE ARE DOUBTLESS MANY HERE WHO THIS DAY PREFER BARABBAS TO CHRIST. 1. Let me state your case. There are those who would have been followers of Christ but that they preferred—(1) Drunkenness. (2) Some favourite lust. (3) Gain. (4) Acquaintances and friends. 2. Let me plead Christ's cause with you. Why is it that you reject Christ? Are you not conscious of the many good things which you receive from Him? You would have been in hell but for Him? Why will you prefer your own gain and self-indulgence to that blessed One to whom you owe so much? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Not Barabbas but Jesus:*—Tremellius was a Jew from whose heart the veil had been taken away, and who had been led by the Holy Spirit to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. The Jews who condemned Christ had said "Not this man," &c. Tremellius, when near his end, glorying in Christ alone and renouncing whatever came in competition with Him said, "Not Barabbas but Jesus." (*Whitecross.*) *The choice of Barabbas:*—I. POPULAR. Popular election wrong for once! *Vox populi non semper vox Dei.* II. FRENZIED. When passion rules judgment dies. III. CRIMINAL. They desired a murderer and killed the Prince of Life (Acts iii. 14). IV. FOOLISH. They chose an enemy and rejected a Friend, and such a Friend! V. FATAL. It sealed their destruction as a people. VI. PREDICTED (Isa. liii. 3). VII. OVERRULED. It brought salvation to the world, even to the Jews (*cf.* Psa. lxxvi. 10; Amos v. 8; Isa. xl. 4; Rom. viii. 8). (*T. Whitelaw D.D.*) *The choice and its consequences:*—Barabbas was a robber; but He was not a common thief. He was a political adventurer, as we gather from combining the narratives. The two "malefactors" were probably His comrades; and it is not hard to identify the section of the people to whom he belonged. They were "Zealots," men whose resentment of heathen usurpation was so profound and bitter that they would keep no truce with Rome. They would pay neither toll nor tax, and in their continual risings became mere brigands robbing and murdering to gratify personal passion as well as religious ends. Judas the Gaulonite (Acts. v. 37) is mentioned by Josephus as the earliest distinguished leader of the party; and to his action the historian traces the downfall of the Jewish nation. Theudas was another of their leaders; Simon the Cananæan, one of Christ's disciples, had been originally of their numbers; and Paul was supposed (Acts xxi. 38) to be implicated in their proceedings. Judas is said to have risen up "in the days of the taxing" (*cf.* Luke ii. 1). The movement, therefore, was about the age of Jesus. He found Himself surrounded by its influences, but He from the first distrusted and repelled it. His hostility to such methods of advancing the kingdom of God is shown in the temptation. Throughout His ministry He was beset by the temptation to aim at political influence for the advancement of God's kingdom, and to encourage political expectations to His followers. It was presented to Him by His friends and by His enemies, and by the people who were neither, but were ready to become either according as He should flatter or deny their hope of deliverance from

Rome. A signal instance of the disappointment of the people is recorded in chap. vi. When He declined the crown "many of His disciples went back," &c. Another incident occurred when the Pharisees and Sadducees came "tempting Him" to show them a sign from heaven, some portent which should prove His Messiahship by the overthrow of the powers of the world. He promised them no sign but that of Jonas—the minister of God's mercy to the Gentiles. Perceiving the impossibility of satisfying the people's requirements, and forecasting the issue, He set Himself to prepare the disciple's for it and "from that time forth to show how He must be rejected," &c. The incident of the tribute money brought the climax nearer. His recognition of Cæsar was repressive of the people's hopes, and shut Him out from being their representative. And now they who a few months before had asked Him, "How long dost Thou make us to doubt?" declare that they are no longer in doubt. There had come to the Jews one of those critical hours which sometimes arrive for men and nations, when their hesitancy is determined; when they do an irrevocable deed, and in doing it reveal their deepest choice, what has been the actual bent of their purpose all the time of their apparent indecision. The Jews rejected Christ because His spirit and purpose were not theirs. Barabbas was their true representative, not Christ; henceforth Barabbas will be their leader; with Barabbas they will fall and be judged. The chief priests and elders have alienated the people finally from Jesus; but to do this they have betrayed their trust. They are no longer the people's leaders; they are drawn on in the current of the feeling they invoke. They have flattered the prejudices and aroused the passions of the crowd; in the great disasters which subsequently befell the nation they were either the unwilling instruments of popular prejudice, or the victims of the fury of the mob. To recognize the full significance of their action we must remember that up to this, they had been uncommitted to the violent procedure of men like Barabbas. The Zealots were popular heroes, but they had met with no favour from the heads of the nation: the priestly party objected both to their objects, and to their way of securing them; and elders from among the Pharisees, while partially sympathising with their spirit, absolutely disapproved their methods. But the malice of the rulers against Jesus was more potent than their convictions concerning the destiny and policy of their nation: they were ready to face any possibility rather than that Jesus should escape. The same self-abandonment which afterwards appeared in their cry, "We have no king but Cæsar," is evident in their stirring up the multitude to ask for Barabbas. They are twice betrayers of their nation. They encourage the people in the way of insurrection; they invoke Cæsar as their king. The final result of their action was seen when Jerusalem was compassed about with armies and torn by intestine strife. Barabbas holding garrison in the Temple, and Cæsar thundering at the gates—"Whose was the anguish in that death hour?" The world contains no record of horrors like the seige of Jerusalem; and the most frightful feature of the narrative is the conduct of the Zealots. They had proved themselves men void of understanding, with neither ruth nor scruple; and yet the people could not cast off the habit of obeying them: there were no other leaders whom they could choose. The name "Zealots" was lost in their other name, "murderers"—*Sicarii*, or dagger-men. The whole city was given up to their government, and their conduct was such as to move the heart of Titus, who invoked God to witness that this was not his work. Such was the issue with which the incident before us was charged; such the portentous prophecy when, under the instigation of their chief priest and rulers, the Jews cried out, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." (*A. Mackennal, D.D.*) *The scene as depicted in art*:—One of the most striking works of that true spiritual genius, George Tinworth, represents the release of Barabbas and the condemnation of Christ. Pilate is delineated as the centre of the group; he is standing washing his hands, thus emphasizing the innocence of Jesus, who, at his left, is seen bound and in custody, led away to be scourged and crucified. Barabbas is on Pilate's right; he is stooping down, free and light-hearted, to rejoin the people. Barabbas is styled in an inscription below his figure, "The world's choice." The inscription below Jesus is "The Good Shepherd." The levity of the call for Barabbas and the unerring Divine Judgment, are suggested by a reference to Eccles. viii. 12. The general lesson of the composition is one with which historians, moralists, poets have made us familiar—

> "Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the throne—
> Yet that scaffold sways the Future, and behind the dim unknown
> Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."

Tinworth's genius appears in the extraordinary vividness with which he has conceived and expressed the fact that Barabbas was personally popular. While Jesus comes forward, sorrowful and solitary, followed by supercilious smiles or cold despite, those who have known Barabbas crowd around him to congratulate him; the very soldiers who have been his jailers clasp his hands, as if they were sorry to lose a boon companion. Intensity of moral purpose, elevation of spiritual thought, are hindrances to popularity; the absence of these is distinctly favourable to a superficial geniality, which may blind even to the heinousness of crime. Christ could never have been "the world's choice." (*Ibid.*)

CHAPTER XIX.

VER. 1. **Then Pilate, therefore, took Jesus and scourged Him.**—*Pilate's second attempt to rescue Christ:*—I. A SHAMEFUL INFLICTION ON JESUS. Scourging and mockery (vers. 1–3). 1. The character of it. (1) Severe. (2) Insulting. (3) Illegal—because Christ had been pronounced innocent. 2. The object of it—(1) As preliminary to execution. (2) As a method of examination. Pilate may have hoped that this would elicit from Christ something which would either secure His release or justify His crucifixion. (3) As a means of appeasing the Jews. II. AN EARNEST APPEAL (vers. 4–5) to the Jews. Setting Christ before them, clothed in purple, crowned with thorns, a mocking king of woe, he appeals to—1. Their sense of justice. 2. Their feelings of compassion—"Behold the Man!—have you no pity?" 3. Their perception of truth. Was it reasonable that that meek Prisoner should be a rival to Cæsar? III. A HOPEFUL DECISION by Pilate (ver. 6). 1. The fierce demand—"Crucify Him!" A week ago they cried Hosannah. 2. The firm reply—"Take ye Him." Pilate again refuses to incarnadine his hands. Only, Pilate, having put thy foot down, pray heaven for strength to keep it fast. 3. The forceful reason—"I find no crime in Him." If those blood-thirsty ruffians will have Him crucified they must do it themselves. Learn—1. The certainty that Christ's words will be fulfilled. Six months before He had predicted this (Matt. xx. 19). 2. The depth of humiliation to which Christ stooped for men. 3. The difficulty felt by even wicked men in doing crimes. Conscience "makes a man a coward . . . fills one full of obstacles . . . beggars any [wicked] man that keeps it" ("Richard III." Act i. scene 4). 4. The moral insensibility which men professing religion may at times exhibit. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *A wonderful picture*:—Like every great historical picture, this one contains special points for special attention. It contains three life-like portraits. I. THAT OF OUR LORD HIMSELF. We see the Saviour scourged, crowned with thorns, &c. Yet this was He whom angels delighted to honour, and who spent His time in going about doing good. Surely the sun never shone on a more wondrous sight. 1. Let us admire that love of Christ which "passeth knowledge." There is no earthly love with which it can be compared, and no standard by which to measure it. 2. Never let us forget, when we ponder this tale of suffering, that Jesus suffered for our sins, and that with His stripes we are healed. 3. Let us diligently follow the example of His patience in all the trials and afflictions of life, and especially in those which may be brought upon us by religion. When He was reviled, He reviled not again. II. THAT OF THE UNBELIEVING JEWS. We see them for three or four long hours obstinately rejecting Pilate's offer to release our Lord—fiercely demanding His crucifixion—declaring that they had no king but Cæsar—and finally accumulating on their own heads the greater part of the guilt of His murder. Yet these were the children of Israel and the seed of Abraham, to whom pertained the promises, &c. These were men who professed to look for a "Prophet like unto Moses," and a "Son of David," who was to set up a kingdom as Messiah. Never, surely, was there such an exhibition of the depth of human wickedness. Let us mark the danger of long-continued rejection of light and knowledge. There is such a thing as judicial blindness; and it is the last and sorest judgment which God can send upon men. He who, like Pharaoh and Ahab, is often reproved but refuses to receive reproof, will finally have a heart harder than the nether millstone, and a conscience past feeling, and seared as with a hot iron (Prov. i. 24–26; 2 Thess. ii. 11). III. THAT OF PONTIUS PILATE. We see the Roman governor—a man of rank and high position—halting between two opinions in a

case as clear as the sun at noon-day, sanctioning from sheer cowardice an enormous crime—and finally countenancing, from love of man's good opinion, the murder of an innocent person. Never perhaps did human nature make such a contemptible exhibition. Never was there a name so justly handed down to a world's scorn as the name which is embalmed in all our creeds. 1. Let us learn what miserable creatures great men are, when they have no high principles within them, and no faith in the reality of a God above them. The meanest labourer who fears God is a nobler being than the king, ruler, or statesman, whose first aim is to please the people. 2. Let us pray that our own country may never be without men in high places who have grace to think right, and courage to act up to their knowledge, without truckling to the opinion of men. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *A threefold type of sinners*:—I. THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST CONVICTION. To this class Pilate belonged. To do this is—1. Hard work. How difficult did Pilate find it! 2. Fiendish work. Satan and his legions do it. II. THOSE WHO SIN FROM CONVICTION. Such were the chief priests and officers, &c. Innumerable heathen, heretics, persecutors believe they are doing right whilst they are perpetrating the greatest enormities. There are no crimes blacker than those enacted from religious convictions. III. THOSE WHO SIN WITHOUT CONVICTION—the soldiers and the thoughtless rabble. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Pilate taking Jesus*:—1. The surrender of innocence. 2. The triumph of malice. 3. The abuse of authority. (*S. S. Times.*) *Took Jesus*:—1. From whose custody? 2. For what purpose? 3. On what grounds? 4. With what results? (*Ibid.*) *Jesus delivered to be crucified*:—Shows—I. THE PERPLEXITY AND SHAME LIKELY TO BE EXPERIENCED BY ONE WHO ACTS FROM SELFISH EXPEDIENCY INSTEAD OF HIS CONVICTIONS OF RIGHT. Poor mockery of a ruler! Set by the Eternal to do right upon earth, and afraid to do it; told so by his own bosom; strong enough in his legions and in the truth itself to have saved the Innocent One and kept his own soul, he could only think of the apparently expedient! Type of the politician in all ages, who forgets that only the right is the strong or the wise. II. THE POWER OF POPULAR CLAMOUR, AND THE NECESSITY AT TIMES OF RESISTING IT. Very impressive is the voice of a multitude. Its applause is intoxicating, its condemnation dreadful, its strenuous demand most difficult to deny. When this voice represents the ripe moral sentiment of an intelligent people, or when it is the swift, honest judgment of that people in regard to wrong, then *Vox populi est vox Dei*. But the clamour by which Pilate was swayed was a different thing. It was the voice of a mob inflamed by passion, worked upon by wicked and crafty leaders—the voice of Satan. Whenever a crowd is foolish or mad, has a cumulative force, and reaches a colossal magnitude. Hence the horrors of the French revolution, and the toleration and support given now and then by the people of a nation to great wrongs. In such cases public opinion is not to be heeded. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." It is well then to stand up like Luther at Worms and say, "To act against conscience is unsafe and unholy. Here stand I, God help me. Amen." This was the spirit of the apostles, martyrs, and reformers. III. THAT CHRIST'S CLAIM TO KINGSHIP, WHICH EXCITED SUCH RIDICULE, WAS A TRUE AND VALID CLAIM. Some of the most precious doctrines were first uttered in derision. The grace of Christ to sinners was the subject of a sneer—"He receiveth sinners," &c. The necessity which constrained Him to die for the salvation of man was set forth in the jeer, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." Here before Pilate His claim of Kingship was made the occasion of brutal merriment. But Jesus was indeed a King! As such He came attended by a retinue of angels, and inquired for by the wise men. Through all the centuries since His kingly dignity has been owned. When the Crusaders proposed to crown Geoffrey of Bouillon king of Jerusalem, Geoffrey said, "I will not wear a crown of gold in the city where my Saviour had a crown of thorns!" He is—1. A beneficent King. He rules in the interests of His subjects. "Woe to the conquered" was the old cry. But Christ's conquests bring good to the conquered. The more perfect their submission, the more perfect their felicity. 2. A perpetual King. His throne is established for ever. "Conceive of Cæsar," said Napoleon, "the eternal emperor watching over the destinies of Rome. Such is the power of Christ." 3. His kingdom is constantly advancing. Because the tide ebbs, no intelligent man, viewing the naked sand, would say, "The sea is losing its dominion." He would answer, "Wait awhile," confident that it would reoccupy its lost ground. So with Christianity. In Damascus there is a mosque which was once a Church. Over its portal the Christian inscription still stands—"Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth through all generations." For twelve centuries that writing has

been contradicted, seemingly, and probably the Moslem has suffered it to remain to convict Christianity of a vain boast. But that inscription may be regarded as a solemn prophecy that the Moslem sway is but temporary, and that the faith which has been driven from its sanctuary will return. Even now the signs of its return appear. IV. THE SPIRITUAL CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM. He explicitly said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world," &c. But He did not leave His cause impotent and defenceless. There are other forces besides armed battalions. The Word of God, the Spirit of truth, the religious faculties on which they act, faith, hope, love, duty, sacrifice, and prayer; by means of these Christ sent forth His apostles to conquer the world. Christ's patience, self-restraint, and forgiving Spirit were potent even at His trial and crucifixion. They invested Him with that majesty which could not be obscured by indignities, which awed the scoffing Pilate into respect, and moved him to an unwonted desire to do justly; which brought the thief on the cross to repentance, and led the centurion to exclaim, "Truly, this was the Son of God." And in proportion as the followers of Christ have trusted these forces, they have been successful. Alliance with secular power, or reliance on physical force, has proved disastrous. (*Sermons by the Monday Club.*)

Ver. 2. **The soldiers platted a crown of thorns.**—*The unwilling tribute:*—According to prophecy the Messiah was to fill the three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. Carnal expectation ignored the two former, and built its hopes on the latter. They were unwilling to be taught by the Prophet, they could not support the Priest, as His demand of sacrifices and offerings was beyond the extent of their love for religion; but they were willing that a King might reign over them. The kingly idea attached to the person of Christ agitated them the most. The Roman soldiers crowned and worshipped Him in derision; these were the rugged steps leading up to His throne. I. THE CROWN OF THORNS WAS AN EMBLEM OF THE ASCENDANCY OF JESUS THROUGH SUFFERING TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" &c. The course was not understood by His persecutors, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels," &c. He gave to all the subjects of His future kingdom an example of—1. Willing service. Even with the crown on His head, His last strength was spent in the service of truth and justice. 2. Entire submission to the will of God. "He was oppressed," &c. Such an example of service and submission claims for Him the crown which the thorns symbolized. II. THE PURPLE ROBE WAS EMBLEMATIC OF THE POWER WHICH HE WOULD EXERCISE OVER MANKIND. The other evangelists call it scarlet, but a robe with the colour of red in it was generally called purple. The one used was, no doubt, an old left-off robe of the proconsul. It was an emblem of power, worn by governors and generals. A reed was also put in His hand to represent the sceptre. Jesus is King—1. By Divine appointment. "Yet have I set My King upon My holy Hill of Zion." The government was to be on His shoulder. All judgments are committed to His care. 2. By virtue of His influence. Men's thoughts are captive to the obedience of Christ. The hearts of the sons of men are in His hand. The kingdoms of this world are bowing to His authority. The angels of God worship Him. III. THE MOCK HOMAGE WHICH WAS PAID IS AN EMBLEM OF THE ADORATION WHICH HE WILL RECEIVE (ver. 3). They saluted Him in terms of loyalty which they did not feel; but myriads have since said, "Crown Him Lord of all." The vision reveals the four and twenty elders casting their crowns before the throne. And in another vision, "On His head were many crowns." (*Weekly Pulpit.*) *The mock crown:*—God intended that the evil of sin should be fully manifest by the death of Christ. Those who had a hand in it show by their malignant spirit what a hell the world would become if there were no check upon it. But submitting as He did, Christ checked that spirit, and seemed to say, "Do your worst on Me, and let it suffice for ever." I. TO WEAR THIS CROWN CHRIST HAD LAID ASIDE THAT OF DIVINE MAJESTY. What a contrast is here. They mocked Him in all His characters. As a Prophet they said, "Prophesy unto us"; as a Priest, "He saved others," &c. In bitter scorn of His Kingly claims, they crowned Him with thorns. We can pity the great who are degraded, or impoverished, because, being human, we can measure the depth of their descent; but we have no power to gauge the height from which Christ "humbled Himself." He left a world of glory for one of meanness, one of purity for one of crime, &c. He who had created all things was sold for thirty pieces of silver. He who was the source of bliss suffered anguish. He who had worn the royal robes of heaven was clad in a cast-off robe of office. He who had borne the crown of the universe was tormented with the spiky

circlet of mockery. None could have placed it on His brow but by His consent; and the power by which He laid aside the one led Him to receive the other. II. BY WEARING THIS CROWN OF MOCKERY CHRIST ADDED A GLORY TO THAT WHICH HE WEARS ETERNALLY. It is not the weight of gold in a crown, or its jewels, that are the measure of its value, but the character of its wearer. Judged thus, what glory attaches to the crown of Christ! It was wondrous love to man that led Him to wear the thorn-crown, and never was there such a crown as that which He now wears. We have read of crowns given for distinguished services, of crowns won by splendid victories, of crowns worn by hereditary right, royal crowns, imperial crowns, &c., but where is one like that which Jesus now wears? He conquered suffering and death for us, and now every spike of that mock crown is a jewel inwrought with that of His Divine majesty. III. BY WEARING THE MOCK CROWN CHRIST GAINED A FURTHER RIGHT TO BESTOW A CROWN OF LIFE ON ALL THE FAITHFUL—one without thorns. "Be thou faithful unto death," &c. "To Him that overcometh," &c. That which Christ died to obtain at such a cost must be worth having. Eternal bliss alone could balance such Divine sufferings. We may say, like Paul, "With a great sum obtained I this freedom." "Ye were not redeemed," &c. As Jonathan stripped Himself (1 Sam. xviii. 4) of his royal robes and put them, as signs of honour and love, on David, so Jesus was stripped that we might have the covering of His righteousness. He hungered, thirsted, sorrowed, was made a curse, &c., that we might not hunger, &c. IV. THE POWER CHRIST GAINED OVER HUMAN SOULS BY WEARING THAT MOCK CROWN. 1. Men are led to mourn the guilt that brought Him such pain. "Weep not for Me" He said, knowing that the sin which could so treat Him was far more terrible than all suffering. Thorns are pressed on Him such as these—(1) Indifference to His sufferings. (2) Unbelief in His great work. (3) Unreality of professed belief. (4) Inconsistency of life. (5) Greed of worldly gain and pleasure. (6) Neglect of others for whom He died. Surely He has had thorns enough thrust in already. Will you add more? 2. He gains such intense affection as He could have obtained in no other way. We could never have loved majesty or power; but Jesus we can love as God manifest in the flesh. Nothing arouses love like a sight of the crucified Saviour. Hence the cross has been His stepping-stone to dominion over souls. (*Homiletic Magazine.*) *The crown of thorns:*—Of other plants growing in the vale of Jericho, we noticed the Nebk, the most abundant thorn in the Holy Land. Hasselquist ("Voyage and Travels") says, "In all probability this is the tree which afforded the crown of thorns put on the Head of Christ: it grows very common in the East." This plant was very fit for the purpose, for it has many small and sharp spines, which are well adapted to give pain. The crown might be easily made of these soft, round, and pliant branches: and what in my opinion seems to be the greatest proof, is, that the leaves much resemble those of ivy, as they are of a very deep green. Perhaps the enemies of Christ would have a plant somewhat resembling that with which emperors and generals were used to be crowned, that there might be calumny even in the punishment. (*Wilson's "Lands of the Bible."*) The thorn bushes, which during the summer and autumn had been so dark and bare, were clothed with delicate green sprays of finely-serrated leaves, which almost hid the sharp, cruel-looking thorns. They were sprinkled with little round buds; when they opened, they threw out silky tufts of crimson, crowned with golden-coloured powder. The seed vessel is round, and divided into four quarters: at first it is almost white, but gradually becomes pink: and at the apex there is a little green tuft, in the shape of a Greek cross. When the seed is quite ripe, it is about half-an-inch in diameter, and of a very shining red colour. I have never seen a plant of which so beautiful, and at the same time so cruel, a crown could be composed. This thorn is the *Proterium spinosum.* About Easter it is seen in all its beauty, the leaves glossy and full-grown, the fruit or seed-vessels brilliantly red, like drops of blood, and the thorns sharper and stronger than at any other time. No plant or bush is so common on the hills of Judæa, Galilee, and Carmel as this. (*Roger's "Domestic Life in Palestine."*) *The martyr's crown:*—When John Huss, the martyr, was brought forth to be burned, they put a paper over his head, on which were pictured three devils, and the title, "heresiarch." When he saw it, he said, "My Lord Jesus Christ, for my sake, did wear a crown of thorns: why should not I, therefore, for His sake, wear this ignominious crown?" (*Bp. Ryle.*) *A pillow without thorns:*—How well did that converted Tahitian, Bara his name was, understand the comfort to be derived from these thorn-wounds of Jesus; when on his death-bed, he said: "The blood of Jesus is my sure foundation. He is the best of all

kings. He gives me a pillow for my head without thorns." (*R. Besser, D.D.*) **They put on Him a purple robe.**—This again was done as a mark of contempt and derision, in order to show how ridiculous and contemptible was the idea of His kingdom. The colour, "purple," was doubtless meant to be a derisive imitation of the well-known imperial purple, the colour worn by emperors. Some have thought that this robe was only an old soldier's cape, such as a guard-house would easily furnish. Some, with more show of probability, have thought that this "robe" must be the "gorgeous robe" which Herod put on our Lord, mentioned by St. Luke, when he sent Him back to Pilate (Luke xxiii. 11), a circumstance which John has not recorded. In any case we need not doubt that the "robe" was some shabby, cast-off garment. It is worth remembering that this brilliant colour, scarlet or purple, would make our blessed Lord a most conspicuous object to every eye, when He was led through the streets from Herod, or brought forth from Pilate's house to the assembled multitude of Jews. We should call to mind the symbolical nature of this transaction also. Our Lord was clothed with a robe of shame and contempt, that we might be clothed with a spotless garment of righteousness, and stand in white robes before the throne of God. (*Bp. Ryle.*)

Ver. 3. **Hail, King of the Jews!**—*The mock homage*:—These words were spoken in contemptuous imitation of the words addressed to a Roman Emperor, on his assuming imperial power: "Hail, Emperor!" It was as much as saying, "Thou a King indeed! Thou and Thy kingdom are alike contemptible." (*Ibid.*) It was the kingdom of the Jews itself that the soldiers laughed at. They regarded Jesus as the representative of the Messianic hope of the Jews. They would turn to ridicule these royal hopes, which were known widely in the heathen world, more especially as they aspired to the dominion of the whole earth. (*Hengstenburg.*)

Ver. 4. **I find no fault in Him.**—*Pilate's confession*:—Alas! it was discoursing to wolves about the innocence of the lamb. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) It is very noteworthy that this expression is used three times by Pilate in the same Greek words in St. John's account of the passion (chap. xviii. 38; xix. 4–6). It was meet and right that he who had the chief hand in slaying the Lamb of God, the Sacrifice for our sins, should three times publicly declare that he found no spot or blemish in Him. He was proclaimed a Lamb without spot or fault, after a searching examination, by him that slew Him. (*Bp. Ryle.*)

Ver. 5. **Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man.**—*Ecce Homo*:—"Behold the Man"—I. FROM PILATE'S STANDPOINT. 1. He was a Roman, and apart from the interests of the empire, cared little for the creed or worship of the Hebrews. It was no part of his duty to interfere with the religion of the people he was ruling. Provided it did not lead to sedition he was content to let it contemptuously alone. "What is truth?" he asks, "What is it worth? What has it done? Is it worth any one's while risking anything for it? It is power, and not truth we need. Let us have something practical, tangible, and not vain and idle discussions about abstract questions." 2. Pilate is a type of a vast multitude. Like the compilers of an encyclopædia, they cannot avoid becoming acquainted with the titles of religious subjects, parties, men. Yet if pressed would deliver themselves very much after Pilate's fashion. To offer Christ to men of this character is to "cast pearls before swine." What is the "truth in Christ" to them? He may be "chief among ten thousand," and able to give pardon, and righteousness, and grace, and glory. But He is not money, business. He cannot give social rank, political success; and so they spurn the offer. This man is a sample of Satan's workmanship—the devil's masterpiece. But "what shall it profit a man," &c. II. FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE JEWS. 1. The guilt of Pilate was great, but it is not for a moment to be compared with that of the high priest. "He that delivereth Me unto thee hath the greater sin." They saw the light and hated it. They knew the truth and rejected it. They could not resist the evidence that Jesus was the Christ; but He was a Christ so different from Him whom they desired that they cried, "Crucify Him!" 2. Here is another and far more perilous standpoint: to look upon Christ and His religion as something to be hated and banished. Let me speak faithfully of the danger of this class. The sin that will banish the perpetrators from the presence of the Lord at His coming is not the sin of Adam. That has been atoned for by the second Adam. It will not be the sin of ignorance. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It will not be any word or deed too

heinous to be forgiven; for there is no exception to the gracious offer: "If we confess our sins," &c. But it will be that of rejecting—calmly, wilfully, and persistently—the greatest offer which God has made to us: His Son as our personal Saviour. "He that believeth not," &c. III. FROM THE BELIEVER'S STANDPOINT. During the "Reign of Terror" an old French gentleman walked up to the gate of the prison in hope of getting a brief interview with his son, then lying under sentence of death. His name was Loiserolles. As he stood there, the dreaded cart arrived at the prison door. "Loiserolles" was one of the names shouted; and "Here I am, Loiserolles!" was answered suddenly from the crowd. The voice was not that of the young prisoner—asleep at that moment in his cell—it was older, feebler, and a trifle more eager than a prisoner's might be supposed to be. But there was no time or care to make investigation. The father was taken for the son, bound, hurried off, and executed. He died for his boy who was asleep. Not till long afterwards did the younger Loiserolles know at what a sacrifice his life had been purchased. And if we may be allowed to compare small things with great, I would say that the day of our trial and judgment was passed; the morning of our execution had arrived. We, as prisoners of sin, were summoned to receive the death penalty; the sons of men were called. But "I am the Son of Man" was the answer given to the challenge. "If, therefore, ye seek Me, let these go their way." The central truth of our Christianity is the Saviour that died for us and rose again. Can you look upon Jesus in this light? Do you see Him to be your Substitute, Intercessor, Prince, and Saviour? Then you have beheld the Man. (*R. Balgarnie D.D.*) *Ecce Homo:*—See—I. His HUMANITY attested. His flesh was lacerated, His body bruised. II. His INNOCENCE confirmed. Scourging had elicited no secret crime. III. His MAJESTY revealed. He endured without complaint. IV. His LOVE proclaimed. He suffered stripes that sinners might be healed. V. His DIVINITY suggested. Only a Son of God could have borne Himself so. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Ecce Homo, or perfect humanity*:—When you point to any object or event you never know what the witness really sees. Hold a picture before a score of people, and they all see and value it differently. In a wild district I saw a rude stone wall. To the simple builder and passers by it was just so many stones held together by mortar. But an instructed eye saw in succession blocks of quartz, trap, schist, sandstone, conglomerate, and other suggestive monuments of the world's history. Point out the stars to a multitude. All see the same objects, and yet not the same. I. WHAT THE ACTORS IN THAT TRAGEDY BEHELD. All the world was in that crowd. 1. Pilate; or what worldliness beheld. A mysterious man—no ordinary criminal. Superstition is never far from worldliness. There was fear in the mind of Pilate at something supernatural at the back of demeanour so strange, placid, and holy. 2. The priests; or what bigotry beheld. Jesus has not respected their traditions and echoed their dogmas; therefore, He is an imposter and blasphemer. There is no hate like priestly hate. Bigotry in the midst of revealed religion is farther from God than heathen worldliness. There was some lingering susceptibility in the breast of Pilate; in the Hebrew priest, none. Pilate saw something which excited both awe and pity. The priests nothing but the hideous creation of their own malignant passions. 3. The mass; or what ignorant resentment beheld. The Christ of their desire was only a more vulgar rendering of the political Messiah of the infuriated priests. Scarcely a week ago, they greeted Him as their King. But there is Jesus, weak, bound, silent, and trampled upon. They saw one who raised their expectations to the highest, and disappointed them. A mob is never so savage as when it conceives itself to be imposed upon by one whom it has made its idol. They therefore join in the cry, "Crucify Him!" 4. The soldiers; or what heathen brutality beheld. A hardened Roman in the ranks could feel nothing but contempt for a Jewish criminal. Such men could admire and adore a Cæsar who could lead them through fields of slaughter to the fame of a Roman victory. They understood that He was a sham king from a district in fanatical and turbulent Galilee. 5. Nicodemus; or what unavowed discipleship beheld. Lack of courage and decision brought no consolation in this dread hour. Little has he risked to avert this tragedy, and he is beginning to feel it. 6. The centurion; or what heathen piety beheld. "The Son of God." 7. Peter; or what the unfaithful apostle beheld. Jesus cast one look on him, but the apostle could encounter that eye no more. 8. Judas; or what the traitor and apostate beheld. From that eye, so downcast, he has often seen look forth the love of God. The memory of that sight is fire unquenchable, the writhing of the worm that never dies. 9. John; or what the disciple whom

Jesus loved beheld. He could not look for his tears; but yet he saw what few eyes there witnessed, but what we need to see to-day—our Incarnate and Redeeming God. 10. Mary; or what the mother and the believing woman beheld. How her motherly love and her religious reverence are wounded by the suffering and shame heaped on her Son and Saviour! There are other holy women here. Shame on the men among His followers! Where are they? II. WHAT WE BEHOLD IN THE MAN OF SORROWS. 1. A man. (1) He was born of a woman. He passed through the life of a little child. (2) In the home of Joseph, at Nazareth, there were many boys and girls. It was no unimportant contribution to the development of our Saviour's wide and sympathetic manhood, that brothers and sisters were the companions of His first years. The temptation in the wilderness was not our Saviour's first nor last trial. His young life had its tests. (3) Our Lord, too, was born in circumstances favourable to the culture of a true manhood. Among the humble poor, and inured to a lowly calling. Men who begin their career at the summit of society do not uncommonly acquire much real fellow-feeling with classes which lie farther down. Men from the ranks, who have lived through the grades in their ascent, develop human sympathies deeper and broader. Every great worker for God and humanity has to be brought by some means or other into personal contact with the multitude. Galilee was a more important school than the halls of the Rabbis at Jerusalem. (4) Jesus had His personal friendships. He is beneath a man or above him, who is without human friendship. 2. A tempted man (Heb. iv. 15). One with the form and the faculties of a man, is yet not a man if without temptation. 3. A suffering man. That pain is allotted to sinful creatures is not surprising. But here is one who never transgressed a precept. He suffered with the race and for the race which He came to save. But the ministry of suffering must come to every man. We bring into the world only raw materials. The discipline of life must weave the precious fabric. The suffering Jesus garnered in His sinless humanity the precious fruits of trial and sorrow (Heb. ii. 10). When your soul is bowed down, to which friend would you go in your sorrow? You could not repair to inexperienced amiability and to goodness unruffled by trial. A bosom so smooth has not treasured the balm of fellow-feeling for which the smitten heart aches to its very core. 4. THE Man. Jesus is the only one who can be so styled. He is the perfection of humanity. Human beings at the best are a mixture of good and evil. Jesus Christ was "separate from sinners." He belonged to a totally different classification. He has more than every man's excellence, and exhibits no man's defect. Qualities seemingly opposite and irreconcilable were habitually blended in Him. The extreme of ease and dignity, loftiness and condescension, gentleness and severity, manly firmness and womanly sympathy, &c. 5. Is He man only? Nay, verily. Standing alone as a creature, no one can be complete as a man. One only perfect Man has been in our world, and He was the Incarnation of God. (*H. Batchelor.*) *Behold the Man*:—I. THE FALSE AND IMPIOUS ASSUMPTIONS RESPECTING THE LORD, WHICH THE JEWS, IN CONNECTION WITH HIS EXHIBITION TO THEM, INDULGED. They regarded Him—1. As mean, when He was eminently dignified. 2. As guilty, when He was absolutely innocent and holy. 3. As being hostile to their interests, when He was infinitely kind and benevolent. II. THE RIGHTFUL TRIBUTE WHICH THE EXHIBITION OF HIM IN HIS TRUE CHARACTER MUST ALWAYS SECURE. "Behold the Man!" and there ought to be—1. Homage. 2. Penitence. 3. Trust. 4. Love. (*J. Parsons.*) *Behold the Man*:—I. WHOM THE WORLD DESIRED. This is He of whom the prophet spake—"the desire of all nations shall come." At the Fall, preparations were begun for the advent of the Deliverer, and continued without intermission. 1. We all know in general what forms these preparations assumed: how the early promise of Eden was brightened and enlarged; how sacrifice was instituted at the very gates of Paradise; how a great system of type and shadow succeeded pointing to Him; how the law became a schoolmaster leading unto Him; how prophets foretold His sufferings and glory. 2. While thus instructing them so carefully in spiritual things, He was also conducting them providentially, and was making the lessons of their outward life—the mercies and the judgments, the wars and the captivities, the declensions and revivals of their national history—to co-operate with the things more expressly gracious, in preparing a way for "the Messenger of the covenant," and in preparing the mind and heart of the Church, to give Him a loving and loyal welcome. Accordingly, we see a grand procession of joyful worshippers at the opening of the New Testament history—angels, shepherds, Simeon

and Anna, and the wise men. 3. In the outer world, also, God was working by His providence and Spirit to prepare the nations for the coming of His Son. We behold a succession of rising and falling monarchies, of dreadful battles, the building and the burning of cities, the terrors of superstition, constant strange movement, but never to any "dawning of the day," and man, as man, felt more deeply as time rolled on the moral hopelessness of his condition without celestial help. There was thus a yearning for deliverance, a longing in the hearts of men for relief, and liberty, and higher life—for recovery of long-lost fellowships, and for returning presence of God. Then, in the fulness of time, He comes to answer the world's questionings, to relieve its sorrows, to meet its deepest wants. "Behold the Man" whom all other men in their best moments were yearning for and inly pining to see! How strange then that we have to say—II. WHOM THE WORLD CRUCIFIED. 1. If ever there was an act in which this whole world was united, the crucifixion of the Son of God was that act. It was the fair outcome and expression of its moral dispositions, and its spiritual state before God. It was not without a struggle that it was done; there were many relentings and misgivings, just as there are now to men when they sin. In following the steps of His pilgrimage and ministry, we sometimes think that the world is going to open its heart and receive Him at once. But how fallacious such appearances! The world, thus put on its solemn trial, failed to prove itself true, and brought out before other worlds the most conclusive proof of its depravity and guilt. "The light shone in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." One who "did no sin," who missed no opportunity of doing good and glorifying God—was not suffered to live. There was much to attract in His life and character, but, as the event proved, there was more to repel; and humanity, which had fallen before in the first Adam, fell again just before it rose in the second. Christ was "the desire of all nations" before He came, and that proved that man had not fallen into an irretrievable degradation—that seeds and elements of good were working in him still, and that the great Father was not forgetful of His prodigal children. Christ was the rejected of all nations when He came, and this proved that our fall was not a temporary and a trifling circumstance, but that it had rent the most sacred bonds, and filled human nature with guilt and sin. 2. But oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! The world crucified His Son, and He made that very crucifixion the means of the world's life. The same event which proved the sinfulness of our nature as nothing had ever proved it before, turned full upon the world in sudden revelation the love and mercy of God; and what to our natural judgment would have seemed the most impregnable of barriers in the way of our return to God, was made the means of our repentance, and the gate of everlasting life. He vindicated Divine righteousness while proclaiming Divine mercy; He honoured the law by making the gospel. III. WHOM THE WORLD WILL CROWN. Heaven has crowned Him already. 1. But earth must crown Him too. And she will. He must be honoured in the very scene of His humiliation. He must gather joys where He sowed tears and sufferings. He must claim a kingdom where He shed His blood. And not a murmur of dissent will be heard from shore to shore as proclamation is made through every land that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ." 2. We neither know exactly how nor when this great result is to be brought about; the times and the seasons are reserved in the Father's power. But what of that? If I cannot tell the length of the prophetic days, am I to hope or labour any the less earnestly for that blessed day of millenial peace and joy which, when they have elapsed, will come? If I cannot interpret aright the sound of one angel's trumpet, am I not to speed "another angel who flies in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach." (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *Behold the Man!*—I. WHOM? *The* Man—perfect humanity. 1. Physically, Christ was perfect—(1) In form. It is not without significance that He is the principal figure in art, and that the world's great painters have depicted Him as "the altogether lovely." We have no portrait of Him extant, but it is difficult to believe that the genius of eighteen centuries has nothing corresponding to its ideal. (2) In health. He bare our sicknesses, but was never ill Himself. No disease could prey upon a sinless body. What vigorous health must Jesus have had to have maintained such unruffled calmness and nerve, through these protracted proceedings, after the agony of Gethsemane; and then after such sufferings to have survived to die on the Cross. 2. Intellectually. (1) He was without doubt. He had perfect intuitions of God and Divine things. Hence the perfect confidence with which He moved towards each of the phases of His great career. (2) He was without error. He had perfect

knowledge of all things that pertained to His mission. Hence He never made a mistake, or failed to deliver a necessary truth. (3) He was "the Truth" personally. Compare Him with others. 3. Morally. (1) He was without sin, as confessed by Himself, Pilate, Judas. Peter tells us He "did no sin." John, that He "had no sin." (2) He was entirely holy. Not only was there no law broken by Him: He fulfilled all righteousness. (3) He was utterly self-abnegating and beneficent. "He went about doing good." "Greater love hath no man than this," &c. II. IN WHAT CHARACTER. 1. As a Saviour. Had He not been a man He could not have qualified Himself for this office by death. Had He not been *the* Man, the Man appointed, perfect, Divine, His death had been of no avail. But being "without blemish," He was the accepted "Lamb of God that taketh away," &c. 2. As an example. Students require the best models in art, music, literature. Perfect imitation may be beyond reach; but the study of imperfect models infallibly ensures imperfection. So with man. But there is only one perfect Model—Him who left us an example that we should follow His steps. 3. As a Friend. Who possesses such qualifications for friendship as Christ? 4. As Lord. III. WHERE. 1. Under conviction of sin—"To whom shall we go?" 2. In trouble. 3. In difficulty. 4. In the hour of death. 5. In the day of judgment. (*J. W. Burn.*) *The mind directed to Christ*:—The hour of the Saviour's sufferings was come—Judas had betrayed Him—His disciples forsaken Him—His enemies apprehended Him—but Pilate seeks to release Him; hence the scene before us. Let us inquire —I. WHAT WE SHALL BEHOLD IN THE MAN CHRIST JESUS. 1. The perfection of purity, meekness, and benevolence. 2. An amazing work for the redemption of mankind. 3. The boundlessness of the Father's grace. II. THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH WE ARE TO BEHOLD THE MAN CHRIST JESUS. 1. That our hearts may be melted into contrition. 2. That wavering faith may be established. 3. That Christian principle may conquer carnal policy. 4. That love may be cherished towards all His followers. 5. That believers may be comforted in suffering and in death. (*Congregational Pulpit.*) *The appeal of Pilate*:—Weakness is sometimes not much better than wickedness. It places a man at the disposal of other weaknesses—Ahab, Pilate. We have here—I. AN APPEAL FOR PITY FOR CHRIST. It was this; not a mocking. Pilate was anxious to get Christ off. It was not to aggravate Christ's misery, but to excite the compassion of His foes. Pity—1. For a prisoner. 2. For a prisoner unjustly accused. 3. For a prisoner whose sufferings and shame men enhanced by cruel mocking. Dressed up as a king. And yet He was one. Men can only caricature the reality of Christ and Christianity. II. AN APPEAL FROM PILATE TO THE JEWS. 1. From Pilate. (1) An old soldier. (2) A heathen. (3) One who despaired of truth. 2. To the Jews—(1) To whom He came. (2) Who had opportunity to test His claims. (3) Who were convinced of them, but rejected Him, because He was not the rebel they wanted. III. AN APPEAL FROM ONE WHO NEVERTHELESS PUT CHRIST TO DEATH. Pilate did his utmost to save Jesus, with one exception, his own interest. He tried by expression of his own conviction, by delay, by solemn acts, by appeal to justice and to pity. He would not endanger self. So now men may feel for Christ—do much for Him—reprove others, and yet stop short at sacrifice.—1. Of worldly interests. 2. Of sinful lusts. (*A. J. Morris.*)

Ver. 6. **When the chief priests therefore and officers saw Him.**—*Pilate at bay*:—I. THE CLAMOUR. "Crucify Him!" 1. Its occasion: the presentation of Christ—"therefore." One would have expected, as Pilate doubtless did, that revenge would be satiated by the bleeding form of One who had offended them by His teaching, and by the humiliation of One whom they had charged with kingly ambition. Here surely was an end of His prestige—the people would never listen to Him again, or shout hosannahs any more. Instead of this, these human tigers having tasted blood, only thirsted for more. 2. Its nature. (1) Cowardly, inasmuch as its object was an innocent defenceless prisoner. (2) Ferocious, for it called for a death, of all deaths the most humiliating and cruel. To have cried "Drown!" "Behead!" "Poison!" would have argued some relic of pity; for these would have been comparatively painless means of putting their victim out of His misery. 3. Its accordance with the Divine plans. This was the form of death deliberately chosen and predicted by Jesus. Hence the clamour was an unconscious means of helping to fulfil His prophecies of being "lifted up." "He causeth the wrath of man to praise Him." II. PILATE'S RESPONSE TO THE CLAMOUR. "Take ye Him," &c. A response —1. Contemptuous: showing the governor's repugnance to being the dirty tool of an unscrupulous and fanatical mob. All the Roman's sense of right and pride of

race come out here. 2. With a merciful design. It meant "I have nothing to crucify Him for; crucify ye Him if ye dare!" It was something like the reply of a British officer in India to a Brahmin who consulted him with reference to a Sutee. It was represented that the burning of a certain widow was in conformity with the laws of their religion. "Very good," said the officer, "you carry out your laws and I will execute mine. According to mine, to burn a widow is murder, and I will hang every man connected with the murder." Pilate doubtless thought that this would be an end to the matter. He little knew, apparently, those with whom he had to deal. III. THE GROUND FOR PILATE'S RESPONSE, "I find no fault in Him." This is the third time that Pilate made this confession. It should go for something, for it came from an experienced Roman judge—after a personal examination; after a trial, when all the odds were against the prisoner; after excruciating torture; and was made to a people whom Pilate had every reason to desire to propitiate. The only inference that can be drawn is that there was no fault in Jesus. And if Pilate found no fault in Him can we? (*J. W. Burn.*) **I find no fault in Him.**—*The faultlessness of Jesus*:—I. OF WHOM THIS IS SAID. 1. The Man Christ Jesus. Behold the Man! Can you find any fault—(1) With His character, which was "holy, harmless," &c. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (2) With His words, which were untainted by falsehood, malice, wrath (except for hypocrisy and evil doing), but were full of grace, love, and truth. (3) With His actions, which were all straightforward, righteous, beneficent. 2. The Teacher. Will you find fault with—(1) The matter of His teaching. Produce its like from pagan sages or even inspired prophets! (2) The manner: so tender, illustrative, interesting, forceful. "Never man spake as this Man." 3. The Saviour. Can you find fault with—(1) His power to save. "He is able to save to the uttermost." (2) His willingness. "Come unto Me." "This Man receiveth sinners"—now. 4. The King. No fault can be found with One the principle of whose government is to cause all things to work together for His subjects' good. II. BY WHOM THIS IS SAID. 1. Pilate, the Roman judge, after the most careful examination. What would Pilate not have given had it been possible to find fault, and so extricate himself. 2. Judas His betrayer. "I have shed innocent blood." What would not that guilty conscience have given to have found one flaw on that spotless innocence. 3. The saved sinner who has trusted in Him and found mercy. 4. The afflicted believer who finds His grace sufficient. 5. The dying saint. "Yea, though I walk through the valley," &c. 6. Angels and glorified spirits. "Worthy is the Lamb." What then is the conclusion to be drawn from all this? 1. All other men—the most wise and the most saintly—are faulty somewhere. But this Man had no fault. 2. Upon no other man has this verdict been passed. Friends or enemies, or himself, have found some fault. But neither friend nor foe could find fault with Jesus. Nor did He find fault with Himself. Was He not then the Holy One of God? (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 7. **The Jews answered him, We have a law.**—*Literalism and party spirit*:—I. WHAT WAS THE MOTIVE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND PRIESTHOOD IN COMPASSING THE DEATH OF CHRIST? It was the one fixed idea of devotion to the law of Moses. It was the stubborn toughness of character which made the Jewish people the backbone of the world. It was the hereditary mark of the house of Levi, which in their zeal for their race knew no other ties. When they took up stones they could not bear to think that Christ was greater than Abraham. When the council met at the raising of Lazarus, Caiaphas declared that one man must die for the people, that was the concentrated essence of the general feeling that the national existence was at stake. And when on that second meeting, convened in the dead of the night in the high priest's palace, it was no want of solemnity which called forth the adjuration, no false assumption of horror when he rent his robes and demanded the sentence of death. And when they saw their designs accomplished it was doubtless with a proud satisfaction that they were fitly celebrating their festival. "We have a law." Yes, a Divine law, the type and centre of all law. "And by that law He ought to die" (see Levit. xxiv. 16). Often has Jesus declared Himself the Son of God. True, there is in Him an authority which teaches not as Scribes teach; a wisdom which forces us to acknowledge that never man spake as this Man; a power before which storms are hushed and sick healed; a goodness which rises above all legal institutions. All this might seem to be a far higher fulfilment of the law than could be attained by His death. But still the letter of the law, immemorial usage, say that He must die. So they argued, and with such arguments must have acted

as they did. They little thought how that nation and those institutions which they had endeavoured to preserve at so dreadful a cost, were doomed by the very act by which they sought to save them. II. WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL LESSONS? The fact that this crime was not the result of rashness, but was the result of fixed adherence to usage, and resistance to change, might teach us—1. That there are times when such a frame of mind is not the sign of a religious spirit, but a mark of audacious and reckless presumption. 2. That the most enormous evils may flow from carrying to excess any one idea however good. In the story of the Crucifixion we may see reflected the evil of narrowness of purpose, exclusiveness of admiration, idolatry of a single principle, the bowing down to "the idols of the cave," the idols of the party, shop, or sect that happens to be ours. Common sense is the one salt which alone can save such exaggerations from their own corruption. Had Caiaphas been open to the new influences, he would have seen in the very law and prophets he was upholding the best witness to Him he was condemning for blasphemy. 3. The value of those feelings of common humanity which justly resist all efforts of hard logic or dry reason to set them aside. Nothing could be more complete than the arguments by which the conduct of the priests was sustained; but within and above all they might have seen a pathos of suffering to which they were nevertheless wholly insensible, by which the whole world has since been moved to sympathy. Witness the revulsion of feeling with reference to other historical events—the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, the outrage on Cromwell's remains, &c. (*Dean Stanley.*)

Vers. 8–12. **When Pilate therefore heard that.**—*Pilate's second interview with Christ*:—I. THE STARTLED INQUIRY—on the part of Pilate (ver. 9). 1. Its occasion—(1) Not the outcry of the Jews for Christ's death. Pilate had already twice resisted that. (2) Not the reminder that he, a governor, ought to respect their laws. (3) But the intimation that Christ had called Himself "The Son of God" (ver. 7). 2. Its motive—(1) Not idle curiosity or angry impatience. The situation was too solemn for the former, too critical for the latter. (2) Not horror at the supposed blasphemy. Pilate had not so high a religious consciousness. (3) Not alarm lest he should be accused to Tiberius. It had not come to that yet. (4) But semi-superstitious fear, lest Jesus, whose preter-human greatness had impressed him, should after all be the offspring of some divinity—in which case it would be far from comfortable to him to fight against the gods. 3. Its import—(1) Not to what country dost thou belong? Pilate knew this. (2) But of what race art Thou? human or divine? Next to "Is there a God?" the greatest question of the day. II. MYSTERIOUS SILENCE—on the part of Christ (ver. 9). 1. Predicted (Isa. liii. 7). 2. Becoming. The question was—(1) Irrelevant. The problem before Pilate was that of Christ's guilt or innocence, not of His origin. (2) Unnecessary. Pilate had evidence enough, and had already decided that Jesus was without crime. (3) Insincere Pilate was not prepared to accept the answer Christ might give. He had not done so on a former occasion (chap. xviii. 38). (4) Too late. Pilate was not likely now to be able to extricate himself from the net in which he had been taken. 3. Eloquent—more significant than speech it proclaimed His Divine origin. 4. Perplexing. Pilate could not understand Him. III. ANGRY REMONSTRANCE—on the part of Pilate (ver. 10). 1. Offended dignity. Pilate had marvelled greatly at his prisoner's taciturnity when the mob first gnashed their teeth at Him (Matt. xxvii. 14); but was not he the embodiment of imperial authority, "To *me* dost Thou not speak?" putting ruffled pride and mortified vanity into his tones. Men whose causes and arguments are weak generally take shelter behind their self importance. Men commonly stand on their dignity when they have nothing else to stand on. 2. Mean intimidation. The vicegerent of Rome could not resist telling his prisoner that His life and death were in his hands! It was the speech of a small dignitary who was a great coward. 3. Mistaken assumption. Unjust judges and persecutors have often since supposed that they held the life of Christ's followers and Christ's cause: but they have erred as Pilate did. IV. DIGNIFIED CORRECTION—on the part of Christ (ver. 11). 1. Pride rebuked. Pilate conceived of himself as a sort of *deus minor* invested with at least a delegated omnipotence: Christ tells Him that both he and Cæsar were simply instruments by which God worked, and in particular that he had no power over Him except as the temporary holder of the magisterial office; and that it was owing to that circumstance entirely that he had anything to do with the case. 2. Error corrected. Whatever part Pilate had to play in this momentous drama and whatever authority he had to wield, he held it not from

Cæsar, who himself was a vassal of the King of kings, but from above (Rom. xiii. 1; Prov. viii. 15). Hence the exercise of that power was determined not by such an accident as the answer that might be extracted from Christ. A great and illuminating thought for Pilate. 3. Sin qualified. Pilate and his prisoner have changed places. Pilates sin was great—against evidence, conscience, heaven's warning, and Christ could say nothing to underestimate these. Only He closes not the door of hope. In the transaction there had been a greater sinner—Caiaphas. In comparison with Pilate's guilt that of the High Priest was as a mountain to a feather, an ocean to a stream. Lessons: 1. The judicial blindness into which an unbelieving soul may fall (2 Cor. iii. 4)—exemplified in the Jewish nation and the priests. 2. The paralysing fear of a guilty conscience (Job xviii. 11)—illustrated in Pilate. 3. The real reason why the Jews rejected Christ—He was not the sort of Messiah they wanted (1 Cor. i. 23). 4. The dignified reticence with which heaven treats men's demands for more evidence—enough having been provided to enable all in earnest to decide the attitude they shall assume towards Christ (Luke xvi. 29, 31). 5. The insufferable vanity which official dignity not unfrequently inspires in small souls. 6. The necessity of remembering that the source of all power and authority is God—to whom therefore all must eventually render account (Rom. xiv. 12). 7. The different degrees of culpability attaching to different sins (Matt. xi. 22, 24; Luke xii. 47). 8. The duty of keeping silence (James i. 19). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **He was the more afraid.**—*Pilate's fear*:—I. OF THE PEOPLE. II. OF THE EMPEROR. III. OF THE PRISONER. (*S. S. Times.*) *The cowardice of guilt*:—Men who have lost their innocence cannot preserve their courage. (*Lord Clarendon.*)

Ver. 9. **Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.**—*The silences of Christ*:—I. CHRIST PRESERVES SILENCE IN THE PRESENCE OF FALSE AND MALIGNANT ACCUSATIONS (Matt. xxvii. 12-14). But why? Not simply because He was sublimely conscious of innocence, for there may come times when it is the duty of the innocent to defend their reputation by every lawful means. But there was no necessity for answer. Neither the men who made the statements nor the people who heard them put any faith in them—nay, they knew them to be manufactured lies. The echo of their own voices, not His voice, should condemn them—the most powerful condemnation of all. The memory of that Prisoner's calmness and quiet dignity would haunt the false accusers night and day like a perpetual shadow until death stilled the throbbing of their tortured brains and hearts. Does not something of the same kind mark the history of the past and Christ's dealings with men? Since the days of His earthly life false charges have been made against Him and His gospel without number. His character has been maligned, His words perverted, His claims despised. Men who hate the grandeur and purity of His teachings, who fear lest their own pretensions should be despised, have sought, by every false and selfish means, to slander Christ and Christianity. Eager, impatient Christians have even prayed for some mighty display of power to put an end to the wicked accusations, though it might involve swift judgment on the enemies of the faith. But the heavens have been dumb, Christ has been silent, and His disciples have wondered why it should be so. But such silence has been best for the Church and for the foes of the faith, while it is most in harmony with the dignity and majesty of the Divine nature. Christ cannot answer every false accuser. There is the truth; let that be His vindication. And this silence has justified itself; for where to-day are the many charges that have been urged against our Lord? Have they not disappeared, or confuted one another? We have only to set one class of opponents of Christianity over against another, and their statements become mutually destructive. II. CHRIST PRESERVES SILENCE IN THE PRESENCE OF UNWORTHY CURIOSITY. The scene which illustrates this point is recorded for us by Luke alone (Luke xxiii. 9). Let any man treat religion as a thing to be speculated about, as a matter for purely intellectual pleasure, as a question for exciting controversy, as only one of many strange phenomena abounding in the world, and therefore to be accounted for, and there will be no response from the heavens. Christ will be silent to that man; he will never discover the truth. Religion belongs to our moral and spiritual nature; it has to do with our hearts and their profoundest needs. Our desire to ascertain its truth and its meaning must be accompanied by a resolve that if we discover it to be true we will apply it to our individual necessities, a resolve to reverence it with our whole natures, to obey its every command, to cling to it with an enthusiasm and love strong as life itself. Then Christ will speak, and testify to mind and heart concerning Himself.

To other motives Christ will not deign a reply. His deathlike silence will be our greatest reproach. III. CHRIST PRESERVES SILENCE IN THE PRESENCE OF RESISTED CONVICTION. Perhaps history does not present a more saddening picture than that of Pilate, the governor, in his judicial dealings with Jesus Christ. "Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer." The man's nature evidently quivers with anxiety—yet his question is met with absolute silence. Why is this? Here is a truly anxious inquirer. At first sight the conduct of Christ seems strange. But we must remember two things. 1. The man's previous conduct. He had been convinced of Christ's innocence, and yet had given way to the clamours of a mob. When men have despised the voices that have appealed to them, what right have they to expect further revelations? 2. Jesus Christ knew the man, knew his weakness, knew he would ask but with no desire to do, and the King of Truth was not to be trifled with. There are men who have trifled with truth and conscience, with all the interests of their souls, with every influence given to draw them heavenward, and yet they wonder they are not saved, that Christ does not answer their first prayer. Why, so far as right is concerned, they have forfeited it all by their contemptuous treatment of Divine influences. More than that, they have thus rendered themselves, in a measure, incapable of receiving further revelations from heaven. (*W. Braden.*) *The silences of Jesus*:—I. BEFORE CAIAPHAS AND FALSE WITNESSES (Matt. xxvi. 63; Mark xiv. 61). The Faithful and True Witness before liars and hypocrites. II. BEFORE HEROD (Luke xxiii. 9). The Holy One of God before the idle curiosity of a flagitious prince. III. BEFORE THE ACCUSATIONS OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS AT PILATE'S BAR (Matt. xxvii. 14). The Sinless One before charges the speakers knew were lies. IV. BEFORE PILATE (chap. xix. 9). The King of Truth before an insincere inquirer. V. BEFORE THE SYRO-PHŒNICIAN WOMAN (Matt. xv. 23). Incarnate love before a humble and earnest petitioner. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Christ's silence*:—He was acting according to His own precept (Matt. vii. 6). *Christ's silence*:—This is very strange. Hitherto He had spoken freely and replied to questions; now He refused to speak any more. I. THE REASON MUST BE SOUGHT IN THE STATE OF PILATE'S SOUL. He deserved no answer, and therefore got none. He had forfeited his title to any further revelation about his prisoner. He had been told plainly the nature of our Lord's kingdom, and the purpose of His coming, and been obliged to confess publicly His innocence. And yet he had treated Him with flagrant injustice. He had, in short, sinned away his opportunities, forsaken his own mercies, and turned a deaf ear to the cries of his own conscience. Hence our Lord would have nothing more to do with him. II. Here, as in many other cases, WE LEARN THAT GOD WILL NOT FORCE CONVICTION ON MEN, and will not compel obstinate unbelievers to believe, and will not always strive with men's consciences. Most men, like Pilate, have a day of grace, and an open door put before them. If they refuse to enter in, and choose their own sinful way, the door is often shut, and never opened again. There is such a thing as a "day of visitation," when Christ speaks to men. If they will not hear His voice they are often left to reap the fruit of their own sins. It was so with Pharaoh, Saul, and Ahab, and Pilate's case was like theirs. III. We must not forget that PILATE'S WICKED REFUSAL TO LISTEN to his own conscience, AND OUR LORD'S consequent REFUSAL TO SPEAK TO HIM ANY MORE, WERE ALL OVERRULED BY THE ETERNAL COUNSELS OF GOD to the carrying out of His purpose of redemption. If our Lord had revealed who He was, and forced Pilate to see it, the crucifixion might perhaps never have taken place, and the great sacrifice for a world's sins might never have been offered. Our Lord's silence was just and well merited. But it was also part of God's counsels about man's salvation. IV. Note that THERE IS "A TIME TO BE SILENT," as well as "a time to speak." This is a matter in the social intercourse of daily life, about which we all need to pray for wisdom. To be always saying to everybody everything we know, is not the line of a wise follower of Christ. V. Note that IF WE DO NOT MAKE A GOOD USE OF LIGHT AND OPPORTUNITIES,—and if we resist Christ speaking to our conscience,—A TIME MAY COME WHEN, LIKE PILATE, WE MAY SPEAK TO CHRIST, and ask things of Him, AND HE MAY GIVE US NO ANSWER (Prov. i. 24–32). (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The tribute of Christ's silence to His Deity*:—This silence was the most emphatic answer to all who had ears to hear it, was a reference to what He had said before (chap. xviii. 37), and so a witness to His Divine origin. Would any mere man, of true and upright character, have refused an answer to a question so put? Let the modern rationalist consider this. (*Dean Alford.*) *The situation*:—I. SILENT DIGNITY. II. UNCOMPLAINING SUBMISSION. III. HELPLESS TYRANNY. (*S. S. Times.*)

Vers. 10, 11. **Then said Pilate unto Him, Speakest Thou not unto me?**—*Pilate's response*:—I. WEAKNESS RAGING IN THE PRESENCE OF POWER. II. COWARDICE STORMING IN THE PRESENCE OF COURAGE. III. SIN WRITHING IN THE PRESENCE OF SANCTITY. IV. MAN BOASTING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD. (*S. S. Times.*) **Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee? . . . Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above.**—*All power from God*:—Men are inclined to think that they have power for good or power for evil because of their wealth, station, or influence. They fail to consider that all their power is a simple trust from God; and that not only are they responsible for the use they make of it, but the power itself is liable to be taken away from them, or held in check at the command of God at any instant. Men are free agents in the use of all their faculties and all their possessions; but their free agency is a gift of God; and God has not surrendered His watch or His control of every free agent in His service or among His opponents. No man has power for good or for evil except as God consents to that man's temporary exercise of power. There is a warning in this thought to those who may have fancied that they could either serve or resist God of their own strength. There is comfort and cheer in this thought to those who are threatened, or who are imperiled by the hostility of others. A man can, in a sense, help God's cause by generous giving, or by earnest doing—if God permits man to give help in that way. A man can, in a sense, harm God's cause by opposing the right, or by withholding the aid that he ought to render—if God permits the man to do harm in that way. But, in the truest sense, no man can render a service to the devil, or harm a hair of a believer's head, unless God consents to this exercise of the man's power. But in either case the man is responsible for what he would like to do. By God's permission he is a free agent there. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) **Therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.** *The greater sin*:—These words are a declaration of the great guilt of the Jewish nation and its rulers in asking Pilate to exercise his God-given authority against the Son of God. Pilate did what he did ignorantly and in unbelief; they knew he knew not. The greater sin was committed by the men who with the Scriptures in their hand called on him who had not those Scriptures to condemn their own Messiah. I. PILATE'S POWER WAS FROM ABOVE. 1. As governor. "There is no power but of God," &c. The recognition of this lies at the root of all true politics. Earthly crowns are thus linked with the heavenly. Kings and magistrates are by reason of their office responsible to God. Not personally, as other men, merely. It is just because of their office that they are bound to consecrate everything that their office gives them power over to the service of Him from whom they have received their power. 2. As a Gentile governor. The Jews, for their sins, had been given over to Gentile dominion. So that in a double sense Pilate's power was not his own, nor from Rome, nor from the people, but from God, and was therefore to be specially used for God. He might not know all this; but Israel knew it, for their prophets, Daniel especially, had taught them it; and therefore they had the "greater sin." II. EVEN A BAD MAN'S POWER IS FROM GOD. Our Lord affirms this of Pilate when using that power for the perpetration of the greatest crime ever committed. Let no man therefore point to the sins of potentates and say, Can the power of these men be given them from above? Listen to our Lord's words here, or St. Paul's when in the days of Nero he said (referring to the words of Christ), "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," *i.e.*, authorities holding from above; and when he proclaims civil government to be "the ordinance of God"; nay, when he calls the civil ruler "the minister of God." III. THE USE OF GOD-GIVEN POWER FOR A BAD PURPOSE IS ALLOWED OF GOD. Pilate is free to act; but he is responsible to God for his actions. God overrules his wickedness and employs him as an instrument for carrying out His purposes. He ought to use his power for a good purpose; not for condemning the Son of God, but for honouring Him; and when he abuses his authority he is doubly guilty, though that guilt is made use of by God. What a reckoning is at hand with the kings of the earth for the abuse of their power (Psa. lxxxii.)! Like Pharaoh working out Israel's deliverance, Pilate here works out the deliverance of the Church, according to the purpose of God. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *Greater and lesser sins*:—The delivering of Christ to suffer and to die is sometimes spoken of as a good deed (Rom. viii. 32). And it was no sinful act in God; but was an act of—(1) Love (chap. iii. 16). (2) Infinite justice. When He had taken our debt upon Him, it was just that He should suffer for it. But in Judas it was a wicked act. God delivered Him to Judas, Judas to the priests, the priests to Pilate, and Pilate to death. There was sin in all those, but there was

no sin in God. I. THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN WHICH ALL SINS ARE ALIKE. 1. In the same definition. They are all a breach of the law. 2. In the desert of them (Gal. iii. 10: Rom. vi. 23). Every transgression of the law deserves death. 3. In that the same price is paid to satisfy for them; no little sin is satisfied with less than the blood of Christ. 4. In respect of the possibility of the pardon of them; it was ill-said of Cain, "Mine iniquity is greater than can be forgiven" (mar. Gen. iv. 13). II. IN WHAT RESPECT IS ONE SIN SAID TO BE GREATER THAN ANOTHER? When one sin is said to be little, it is not meant absolutely as if any sin were little, but comparatively. There are three Scripture comparisons. 1. Some sins are called gnats, others camels (Matt. xxiii. 24). 2. Some motes, and others as beams. 3. Some pence, and others talents. Note that some sins—(1) Are more displeasing to God than others. (2) Grieve the conscience more than others. (3) Procure more plagues and punishments in this world than others. (4) Sink people lower in hell than others. (5) Spread more of their infection upon others. (*a*) By the example. He that begins in a sin, that sin is greater in him than in others; therefore, Adam's sin was great, because we all sinned in him. (*b*) In respect of the penal consequence: the sin of David in numbering the people was great; and it appeared, because God did visit it on His people, and slew thousands of them; therefore, all sins are not alike. III. WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES ONE SIN GREATER THAN ANOTHER. Judas's sin was the greater for four reasons. 1. It was a leading sin (Acts i. 16). He is called the guide to them that took Jesus. Take heed how you are, any of you, guides to others to sin. 2. That which moved Pilate was fear of Cæsar; but it was not fear that made Judas betray Christ, but love of money (*cf.* Matt. xxvi. 14, 15 with Luke xxii. 3, 4, 5). Satan entered into Judas. So, where the love of money is, it is a sign that the devil is entered. There is no sin so great but the love of money will make a man commit it; so it was with Ananias and Sapphira; Satan had filled their hearts. 3. The greatest aggravation of Judas's sin was the price—thirty pieces of silver; the price of a common servant (Exod. xxi. 32). 4. The dissimulation that was in it. (1) Pilate was a heathen, a stranger to Christ. (2) Pilate did it openly; but Judas did it in the night, when honest people were a-bed. (3) What Judas did, he did with a kiss, but Pilate did not do so (Matt. xxvi.). 5. The deliberation and contrivance that was in it (Luke xxii. 21). Pilate's hand was not there. Every premeditated sin is a great sin (Mic. ii. 1). It is one thing to be overtaken with a fault, and another thing to overtake it. Conclusion: What happened to Judas for this sin? 1. He died by his own hand despairing. 2. It brought him to his own place. 3. His name stinks to this day. (*Philip Henry.*)

Vers. 12–16. **From thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him.**—*Pilate's last attempt to rescue Christ.* I. DESPAIRING STRUGGLES BY A FEEBLE SOUL (ver. 12). 1. The earnestness of this attempt. Already he had endeavoured to rescue Christ—(1) By refusing to proceed without an accusation (chap. xviii. 29). (2) By offering a choice between Barabbas and Jesus (chap. xviii. 39; Matt. xxvii. 17). (3) By scourging Christ and thus appealing to their sympathy (ver. 5). These stratagems were defeated, perhaps largely because Pilate had not been in earnest. Now he bends himself with energy and determination to the task. 2. The reason of this attempt. (1) The inward conviction of fear that Christ was a supernatural being. (2) The deepening impression made by Christ's person and character. (3) The secret apprehension that it would not be safe to proceed farther against Christ. (4) The gentleness Christ had displayed in palliating his offence. II. DEXTEROUS MANŒUVRING BY A CRAFTY FOE. "But the Jews cried out," &c. The last arrow that the Jews had in their quiver, was—1. Sharply pointed. It was a return to the original indictment of sedition which Pilate an hour before had waved aside as absurd. Now they show the governor how adroitly it may be turned against himself. Tiberius would hardly regard as a loyal act the liberation of one who had professed to be a king. 2. Correctly aimed. The shaft found the open joint in Pilate's harness and went straight to his heart. There was nothing that Pilate had more reason to dread than deletion to the emperor. 3. Powerfully driven home. Like men bent on having their way, they cried out with one simultaneous yell. And they had it! The procurator reeled as one shot. III. IGNOMINIOUS SURRENDER BY AN UNJUST JUDGE (ver. 13). The capitulation was—1. Cowardly. These accused hierarchs had proved better players than himself for Jesus' life. With truth, justice, conscience, heaven, Christ and God on his side he had lost the game because he was a coward. The one thing he could not contemplate without a shudder was being reported to the emperor. 2. Complete. The struggle so long,

and at one time so gallantly and to appearance so hopefully, maintained was ended. There was no mistaking the import of Pilate's next actions, the fetching out of Jesus, the sitting down upon the judge's chair, and perhaps the handwashing. 3. Contemptuous. "Behold your King!" as if intimating with fierce disdain and stinging mockery of the people that had conquered him, that the thorn-crowned prisoner was indeed their King. 4. Conclusive. The deed was irrevocable (ver. 16). If for a moment there was hesitation while for the last time he asked, "Shall I crucify your King?" it was only for a moment, it was swept away before the awful shout, "We have no king but Cæsar." Lessons: 1. The difficulty of doing right when self-interest stands in the way, "If self the wavering balance shake, its rarely right adjusted" (Robert Burns). 2. The feebleness of every soul that hesitates to follow conscience. Had Pilate listened only to the still small voice within he had been invincible. 3. The guilt incurred by openly defying conscience. Christ palliated Pilate's sin before the preceding interview: it is not clear that He would have done so after that interview closed. 4. The degeneracy into which a soul may fall by turning away from Christ. Priests and people elected Cæsar for their king rather than have God's Son for their Messiah! (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Pilate; or, worldly policy*:—We have here an illustration of —I. WORLDLY POLICY. The main motive that led to Pilate's final decision was a regard to his safety and his ease. He felt that to take a determined stand on the innocence of our Lord would involve peril to his position; and he was not prepared to incur that danger. It is by such considerations that men are moved and confronted in doing wrong. We live in a time of expediency, in the sense of not doing right lest it should be unprofitable. A high civilization and a large development of the commercial spirit is always in danger of fostering this. In public affairs, the favourite point of view is the economic; the popular inquiries are, what will it cost? Dishonesty is practised in business because it is lucrative, and conscientious conviction is suppressed lest it should lead to social disrepute. Oh! beware of Pilate's sin; learn the grand lesson that we have nothing to do with consequences when truth and right are involved. It will often happen that sincerity and righteousness will entail loss and suffering; and he who would keep a good conscience must lay his account with these. If we be not prepared for them, if we will only cleave to godliness when it is "gain," and to honesty when it is the best policy, there is nothing for us but to go in Pilate's steps, and abandon Christ, though convinced that there is no fault in Him at all. II. WORLDLY POLICY RESISTING AND EFFECTUALLY SUBDUING THE STRONGEST CONVICTIONS OF DUTY. Pilate wished and tried to deliver Christ, without sacrificing himself, for that purpose. He did not choose to do wrong; he did much to avoid doing it. And this may be the case with us: it often is. We do not fall at once. We set ourselves manfully against the besetting suggestions of interest, pleasure and good opinion. We enter the contest with a sincere desire to be right. It is long, perhaps, before we are prepared to give up; we strive to subordinate circumstances to our convictions; we go on, now under one pretence and now under another, until all pretences are exhausted: but at last an election must be made, Christ must be sacrificed or sin must be resigned, and, like the young man we feel the pressure of his demands to be too strong for us, and depart from him though "sorrowful." And there are times when the case assumes an especially solemn form; that, *e.g.*, of deep spiritual conviction, and that of decision as to the general way and course of life. Then is Christ before us, arraigned and accused by the Sanhedrim of passion, interest, and sophistry, before the Pilate of reason, conscience, and true affection; the conflict may be long and painful; ingenious devices may be used to terminate or to postpone it: but escape and delay are both impossible; a decision must be made; and the soul reluctantly, and with a tearful eye, resigns the Saviour, and gives itself up to sin, and to a lie. And often this decision is final; it cannot be reversed. "If we sin wilfully," &c. III. WORLDLY POLICY BRINGING A MAN INTO BONDAGE TO THOSE HE SHOULD GOVERN. Pilate was afraid of being accused by the Jews of unfaithfulness to the Roman emperor. He was the governor, and was deterred from doing right by the malice of the people over whom he presided. He was subject to those who were subject to him. Worldly policy often makes us abdicate our proper functions, and serve when we should reign. We are in the world, and in the Church, to do good, and to maintain righteousness. Whatever our superiority over others, and our means of affecting them, it is a faculty intended to resist their evil and advance their welfare; but if we give heed to the suggestions of selfishness; we not only do wrong, but do wrong to those whom we allow thus to

influence us. Pilate, the governor, is the instrument of the Jews. IV. WORLDLY POLICY DERIVING STRENGTH FROM A MAN'S OWN MISDEEDS. Pilate's rule in Judæa was very far from what it should have been. He could not therefore afford to provoke the nation. He must do wrong again, because he had done wrong already. And how often do we see sin working in this way! We have put ourselves in the power of the world by our transgressions and inconsistencies. Could we bring an unsullied character, human esteem and honour, with us to the task, we might hope to make some impression, but now there will be the mocking surprise, the bitter retort, the hot wrath; and the will to do good, as in Pilate's case, is chained by the memory of past evil. And if past sins may make us subject to men, they are still more likely to make us slaves to ourselves, "When we would do good, evil is present with us." How many are there who, like Pilate, would let Christ go, aye and welcome Him as the Son of God, but for the oppressions of former iniquities! could they but blot them out, what would they not do! but the tyranny of lust and worldliness is strong upon them; and he is sacrificed, and they are sacrificed, to "old sins." (*A. J. Morris.*) *Pilate's weakness:*—Was Pilate exceptionally weak in this thing? He wanted to be of service to Jesus, but he was not quite ready to be ruined for Him. There are corresponding tests of fidelity to the right in every man's experience all the way along in life. A public official or representative has to decide whether he will yield to some unjust popular clamour in behalf of a special interest, or against an obnoxious class, or lose all his hopes of promotion and even all fair prospect of well doing in the public service. A business man must meet the question whether he will conform to some established method of wrong-doing in the line of his business, or abandon his prospects of "success" in life. An employé finds himself face to face with the problem, how he can do the work that is required of him, at the times when it is called for, consistently with his conscience and the law of God; and whether he is willing to accept the consequences of standing out against the necessities of his employment as it is. The position of Pilate was, after all, no more trying than is the position of almost every man who faces Christ and Christ's cause to-day; and now, as always, only he who is ready to lose his life, and to lose a great deal more than life, for the sake of Christ, can fairly be called a true and faithful servant of Christ. Pilate was weak under such a pressure as this. Would to God he had been the last weak one in such an emergency! (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) **If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend.**—*Cæsar or Christ:*—I. CÆSAR'S FRIEND. 1. An enemy of Christ. 2. A lover of self. 3. A slave of man. Such Pilate was! II. CHRIST'S FRIEND. 1. A lover of the truth. 2. A doer of the right. 3. A champion of the wronged. 4. A sympathizer with the suffering. 5. A servant of conscience. 6. A denier of self. Such Pilate might have been. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*)

Ver. 13. **When Pilate therefore heard that.**—*The down grade:*—Pilate's time for playing with the situation is gone; now the situation plays with him. First he said, not asked, "What is truth?" Now his frightened heart, to which the emperor's favour is the supreme law of life, says, "What is justice?" (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) **A place that is called the pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.**—Both these words occur here only, and are instances of the writer's minute knowledge of the localities in Jerusalem. It may have been better to have preserved the Greek name (Lithostrōton), as well as that by which the place was known in the Hebrew (Syro-Chaldaic), of the time. The word literally means stonepaved, and was the Greek name for the tesselated "pavement" of marble and coloured stones with which, from the time of Sylla, the Romans delighted to adorn the Prætorium. The Chaldic word means "an elevated place," so that the one name was given to it from its form, and the other from the material of which it was made. Suetonius tells us that Julius Cæsar carried about with him such pieces of marble and stone, but the mention of the "place" bears the impression that it was a fixture in front of the Prætorium at Jerusalem, in which the Bema was placed; or it may have been a portion of the northern court of the sanctuary to which Pilate came out, if we identify the Prætorium with the tower Antonia (*cf.* Matt. xxvii. 27). Josephus mentions that the whole of the Temple mountain was paved with this kind of mosaic work. (*Archdeacon Watkins.*)

Ver. 14. **It was the preparation of the passover.**—The name *Paraskeue* was given to the day of the week, our Friday, the day before the Sabbath, and had absolutely nothing to do with any preparation for the passover. The Gospels show

this beyond a doubt (Mark xv. 42; Matt. xxvii. 62; Luke xxiii. 54). If any confirmation were wanted it may be found in the fact that the name is applied in a Græco-Roman decree quoted by Josephus ("Ant." xvi. 6, sec. 2) to the week day which answers to our Friday. Even the phrase which seems most to suggest a different view, "the preparation of the passover," here in John, does not mean more than "Passover Friday"; the Friday in Passover week, and coming, therefore, before a Sabbath more solemn than others (ver. 31). It may be noted further that the term *Paraskeue* was adopted by the Church, Western as well as Eastern, as a synonym for the *Dies Veneris*, or Friday. (*Ibid.*) **And about the sixth hour.**—It is difficult to harmonize this statement with Matthew's narrative, according to which, at mid-day, Jesus had been for some time on the cross, and still more with Mark xv. 25, where it is said that it was the third hour, *i.e.*, nine o'clock, when Jesus was crucified. But let it be remembered—1. That the day as a whole was divided, like the night, into four parts of three hours each. This explains why mention is scarcely ever made in the New Testament of any hours except the third, sixth and ninth (*cf.* Matt. xx. 1–5), and why also the expressions "almost" or "about" are so frequent (Matt. xxvii. 46; Luke xxiii. 44; John iv. 6; Acts x. 3–9). The ὡς, *about*, is expressly added here. It is therefore certainly allowable to take the mean here, both in Mark and John, especially if it be remembered that the apostles had not watch in hand. As Mark's third hour may extend from eight to ten o'clock, John's sixth certainly includes from eleven to twelve. 2. But above all account must be taken of an important circumstance that Matthew and Mark have given to the scourging of Jesus, the meaning which it ordinarily had, and have regarded it as the beginning of the whole punishment. They have consequently identified the two judicial acts which are strictly distinguished by John, that whereby Pilate condemned Jesus to scourging, and that whereby He delivered Him over to the last penalty of death. It is easily conceivable that Mark, having lost sight of the entire interval between the two condemnations, has dated the pronouncing of the sentence of death at the time which was properly that of the sentence of scourging. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) **He saith unto the Jews, Behold your King.**—*The two kingdoms:* —The words are words of scorn, at once angry and bitter. Pilate is exasperated by the obstinate determination of the Jews to have the blood of Jesus. He has an infidel's contempt for the bigotry and fanaticism of these fierce zealots. He has the contempt of a Roman soldier for conquered provincials, writhing in vain under the heel of the conquerer. And yet, for the moment, these fierce fanatics are too strong for him. They know their own mind, and he does not know his. Thus, in this supreme moment, which (humanly speaking) sealed the fate of Jesus, there come into clear view two distinct kingdoms—two absolutely antagonistic forms of royal power: one, represented by the crown of thorns—the other, by the imperial sceptre of Rome; one, impersonated, then and ever since, in Jesus the crucified—the other, for the moment, in a Tiberius. And the question—not then only, but at all times and for all men—is: To which of these two diverse and antagonistic kingdoms shall we yield the homage of our hearts—the indivisible loyalty of soul and will? There is a power which addresses itself to the eye—which dazzles, and by dazzling attracts. And, again, there is a power which addresses itself, not to the eye of sense, but to the spirit within; and which attracts, not by any external dazzling, but by an interior subjugation, to which conscience and heart yield themselves freely and joyfully. The empire of Rome was of the former kind; the empire of Jesus Christ was, and is, of the latter. Power of the former kind is essentially local and fleeting and transient; power of the latter kind may be universal and eternal. The kingdom of Christ has upon it the marks, which indicate, to say the very least, the possibility of such universal and everlasting empire. The ruins and *débris* of the Roman empire are all that survives to show where and what it once was. Christ's kingdom grows stronger and stronger, larger and larger, with every passing century. Even now it is only in its infancy. What will it be? Now this kingdom is founded upon service and sacrifice. He stoops to conquer. He stoops to the likeness of men, in order to conquer humanity for God. The cross is His passport to the throne of our hearts. In our best moments we all acknowledge His right to reign over us. But ever and again, side by side with that kingdom of His, which is not of this world, there comes into view a kingdom which is of this world; the allurements of wealth, or pleasure, or interest, or power—the life lived to self, and not to God. This is our "Cæsar," brethren. It is of this, that we find ourselves, again and again, tempted to cry, "We have no king but Cæsar." More than this. According as we yield ourselves to the sway of the one kingdom or of the other—the kingdom

which is of this world, or the kingdom which is not of this world—accordingly do we exercise, in our own small place and day, the powers of that kingdom. They transmit themselves through us as their agents, and we become workers for the one kingdom or the other, as the case may be. Will we offer ourselves to Christ, our rightful king, in a truly loyal allegiance? Forthwith, behold, we become, as it were, a medium of communication between Him and the world around us. He works through us. He seats us, if we may say so, on the lowest step of His own throne. We share His present power, even now; as we shall share His future, final triumph, hereafter. If, on the other hand, we yield ourselves to the Cæsar of this world, and allow him practically, in any one or more of his many forms, to rule over us; we do so, not for ourselves only and to the peril of our own souls, but for others also and to the peril of theirs. "No man liveth to himself." No man can so isolate himself from his fellows, that no influence, either for evil or for good, shall pass through him to them. No man can either ruin or save his own soul, without doing something, it may be much, to ruin or to save the souls of others. The picture may seem to some overdrawn. True: it is an ideal picture. In actual experience, no life is wholly surrendered to the sway, either of the kingdom of Christ, or of the kingdom of this world. Motives, actions, characters—all, in real life, are, more or less, mixed. The worst have traits of goodness. The best bear at least the scars of conquered evil. Yet still, the weight of every human soul—the momentum of every human life—is flung distinctly and unmistakably, in its net result, either on Christ's side or on Cæsar's. Brethren, which of these two alternatives do we embrace? (*D. J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Ecce Rex*:—1. Pilate spake far more than he understood, and therefore we shall not confine ourselves to his meaning. 2. Everything concerning our Lord was more than ever full of meaning just then; the saying of Caiaphas, the fleeing of the disciples, the dividing of His garments, the soldier piercing His side, &c. 3. It was to the Jews that Jesus was brought forth, and by them He was rejected; yet was He distinctly declared to be their King. 4. The same is repeated at this day among those favoured with special privileges; but whether they accept Him or not, He is assuredly in some sense or other their King. 5. To the summons of the text the answer was mockery. 6. We would with deepest reverence draw near and behold our King. Behold Him—I. PREPARING HIS THRONE. 1. He lays the foundation of it in His suffering nature. 2. He makes it a throne of grace by His atoning griefs. 3. He prepares access to it through His ability to have compassion on those who come to Him, by partaking in all their sorrows. 4. He canopies and glorifies it by the shame to which He willingly and unreservedly yields Himself. Believe in the perpetuity of a throne thus founded. II. CLAIMING OUR HOMAGE. By the right of—1. Supreme love. 2. Complete purchase. 3. Grateful consecration, which we heartily accord to Him under a sense of loving gratitude. Glory in rendering homage thus made due. III. SUBDUING HIS DOMINIONS. 1. Jews and Gentiles are won to obedience by beholding His sufferings for them. 2. This brings in His own elect everywhere. 3. This restores backsliders. They look to Him whom they have pierced, and return to their allegiance. 4. This holds all His true servants captive; they glory in yielding their all to Him who was thus put to shame for them. 5. This subdues all things unto Him. By His Cross and Passion He reigns in heaven, earth, and hell. Bow low before the sceptre of His Cross. IV. SETTING FORTH THE PATTERN OF HIS KINGDOM. He stands there the Prophet and the Type of His own dominion. 1. It is no earthly kingdom: the difference is palpable to all. 2. It is associated with shame and suffering, both on the part of the King and of His loyal subjects. 3. It is based on His love and self-sacrifice: this is His right of sovereignty, this His force of arms, this the source of His revenue. 4. It is made resplendent by His woes: these are the insignia and ornaments of His court; His glory even in heaven. Glory only in the Cross. V. PROVING THE CERTAINTY OF HIS KINGDOM. 1. Is He King there in His shame? Then, assuredly, He is King now that He has risen from the dead, and gone into the glory. 2. Is He King amid shame and pain? Then He is able to help us if we are in like case. 3. Is He King while paying the price of our redemption? Then, certainly, He is King now that it is paid, and He has become the Author of eternal salvation. 4. Is He King at Pilate's bar? Then truly He will be so when Pilate stands at His bar to be judged. Conclusion: 1. Come hither, saints, and pay your accustomed worship! 2. Come hither, sinners, and adore for the first time! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 15. **But they cried out . . . Crucify Him.**—As the "Crucify Him!" falls

upon our ears, it is simply the cry of an excited mob, instigated by the chief priests and elders. It falls painfully upon our Christian, and even upon our civilized, ears. We do not like to see human nature wrought up to such a pitch of frenzy. And if He whose cruel execution is thus demanded is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, then this cry pierces our very souls. But let us, while we gather around the cross, close our outward ear and hear with the ear of faith. Then other voices will reach us, and, though they utter the very same sentence, it will sound very differently and produce a far different impression. We hear a voice —I. FROM THE DIVINE SIDE. 1. From the throne of God. "Let Him be crucified" is the decree of the Almighty, the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." This shedding of the precious blood of Christ, as of "a lamb without blemish and without spot," was "fore-ordained before the foundation of the world." We cannot discern the point at which God's sovereignty and man's free agency meet: we know that they were without excuse who nailed the Redeemer to the tree; but underlying all, overruling all, accomplishing all, is the Divine purpose. Through that guilty act of man there was wrought a mysterious but most real purpose of Divine love. "God so loved the world," &c. We shall never know at what a cost nor understand the terrible strain upon the heart of the infinite Father. But though there entered into His ear that deepest wail of sorrow, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He only answered by His silence—"Let Him be crucified." It was a terrible price to pay, but only thus can sin be taken away and man be saved from everlasting death. 2. From the cross itself. Christ had prayed a little before that if it were possible for human salvation to be secured in any other way He might be spared. But not otherwise. It was for this purpose He had taken human nature upon Him. "Lo, I come," &c. And now, He asks not for deliverance; nay, though He is able to come down from the cross, yet will He not do it. "Let Me be crucified" is the utterance of the willing sufferer. "I have power to lay down My life, and I will lay it down for My sheep." "For the joy that is set before Me I will endure the Cross and despise the shame." "Father, forgive them," &c. 3. The Holy Spirit joins His voice. In all that He had caused to be written He had foreshadowed the death of the Son of God. The sacrifice in Eden; the sacrifice of Abel; the paschal lamb and the scapegoat; the sacrifices offered every day upon the Jewish altar; all pointed to this Lamb of God now laid upon the altar of the cross. How then, saith the Spirit, shall "all be fulfilled" unless He be crucified? II. FROM THE HUMAN SIDE. Is there no petition for this atoning death from the lips of the sinners themselves whom God has so loved? I will suppose that we are gathered about the cross of Christ, and that the consciousness of our sin and misery has dawned upon our minds and is burdening our souls. Shall we enter our protest? Shall we say, "Let Him not be crucified." Oh, then, if He should heed our cry, what would become of us? We cannot by any means save ourselves. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"; and we cannot make ourselves alive. We are sold unto Satan; we are powerless to deliver ourselves; only One can do that, and He in one way only, viz., by being crucified. If He dies the death, at that instant the doors of our prison-house will fly open and Satan will be powerless to hold us. But not otherwise. And so we cry, "O Son of God, die for us." Are we selfish? Would we have Him perish that we may live? Ah, if the condition of our salvation were His everlasting destruction, God forbid that we should demand the awful sacrifice! For what would heaven be with such a memory as that? But when we know that, "having died for our sins, He will rise again for our justification"; that He would far rather die for us thus than to have us lost; and that our salvation will be a source of joy to Him for ever, we can say, while we mourn that our sins have pierced Him and made it necessary for Him to die, "Let Him be crucified." Conclusion: 1. Let nothing draw you who are Christians away from Christ crucified even for one careless moment. 2. What shall be said to those who seem so indifferent about this great event? Shall heaven and hell be moved by this scene, and any of us men, for whose salvation it occurred, pass by it? (*G. D. Baker, D.D.*) **The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.**—*No king but Cæsar*:—1. There is nothing which shows more completely what sin is, than the scenes which centre about the death of our Lord. We see wicked men now, but they act generally under restraint; but here sin seemed to be without restraint; and it carried the Jews on to a wickedness unparalleled in history. For Christ did nothing in the whole course of His life to anger men. What aroused evil passions was simply the righteousness that was in Him. Therefore, if we desire to understand what sin itself is, we must look at it in those wicked

men, who would have nothing but the blood of the sinless Saviour. 2. In the text we see the degradation of sin. These Jews renounced every thing of national honour and greatness, every hope concerning the Messiah; every principle of patriotism; and they confessed themselves the abject slaves of their Roman conquerors. Heretofore, their highest glory was that God was their King; and in the strength of this position they had endured, with a certain air of grandeur, their oppression. But the language, "We have no king but Cæsar," was a complete abandonment of all their claims. What was it all for? Simply that hatred might satiate itself in the blood of One who had conferred upon them the highest benefits. It was sin in the heart, acting without restraint, showing its true self. In order to carry out purposes of wrong, it is not unusual to find men falsifying their whole past record, and placing an indelible stain upon their characters. See what avariciousness and covetousness will make a man stoop to, the many mean, tricky, and dishonest actions. See what ambition will bring men to. See how the inordinate appetite for strong drink will bring men from respectability to the gutter. See how impurity, unchastity, and all the vices of fleshly sensuality, destroy manhood. He abandons every thing, to serve the Cæsar of his own sinful lusts and passions. 3. In the end these Jews got more than they wanted from Cæsar. When they were made to feel the iron heel of the despot in the destruction of their city, how their minds must have reverted to the day when they cried out to Pilate, "We have no king but Cæsar"! So is it with sin when it has finished its work. Its imperious will must be submitted to. When at last the man has reached that awful end in eternity, when there is no thought, desire, affection, will, but to do iniquity; when he is entirely under the control of sin, and is enduring the suffering consequent upon sin—then will be realized the bitter degradation and curse to which sin legitimately tends. (*C. S. Abbott.*) *Christ, a great King*:—Latimer, while preaching one day before Henry VIII., stood up in the pulpit, and seeing the king, addressed himself in a kind of soliloquy, thus: "Latimer, Latimer, Latimer, take care of what you say, for the great King Henry VIII. is here." Then he paused, and proceeded: "Latimer, Latimer, Latimer, take care what you say, for the great King of kings is here." (*W. Baxendale.*) *The universal sovereignty of Christ*:—When Alexander the Great set forward upon his great exploits before leaving Macedonia, he divided amongst his captains and nobles all his property. On being rebuked by a friend for having, as he thought, acted so foolishly in parting with all his possessions, reserving nothing for himself, Alexander replied, "I have reserved for myself much more than I have given away: I have reserved for myself the hope of universal monarchy; and when, by the valour and help of these my captains and nobles, I shall be monarch of the world, the gifts I have parted with will come back to me with an increase of a thousand-fold." (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 16. **Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified.**—*When?*—I. NOT WHEN THE EVIDENCE AGAINST JESUS WAS CONCLUSIVE. Charges had been made, but nothing had been proved. Neither in their testimony, nor in the utterances of Jesus Himself, did Pilate find any ground for passing the death-sentence. II. NOT WHEN HEROD SENT HIM BACK TO PILATE. Had that ruler sent word that Christ was worthy of death, Pilate might have yielded, and "then" have passed sentence on the prisoner. But Pilate says: "No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto Him." III. NOT WHEN HIS WIFE URGED HIM TO PLEASE THE JEWS. Herod had, indeed, beheaded John the Baptist through his wife's influence. But, singularly enough, Pilate's wife defended the righteous Prisoner. IV. NOT WHEN HE THOUGHT THAT THE MOTIVES OF HIS ACCUSERS WERE JUST AND HOLY. Pilate was not by any means deceived by them. V. NOT WHEN HE HAD NO POWER TO DELIVER CHRIST FROM THEIR RAGE. "Knowest Thou not that I have power," &c. The power lay absolutely in his hands. The Jews knew this, and Pilate knew it. He never could have pleaded that he was powerless. VI. NOT WHEN HIS CONSCIENCE FAILED TO ACT IN THIS MATTER. If ever Pilate's conscience was active, it was just at this time. To the very last it strove with him, even to the extent of making him wash his hands. His testy answer to the Jews, later on, when they wanted the superscription over the cross changed, shows that he was irritated at having been dragged into the position in which he found himself. VII. WHEN HE SAW THAT BY REFUSAL HE WOULD FORFEIT THE FAVOUR OF THE JEWS. He did not want to do wrong, if he could help it. But, at the same time, he did not want to lose the favour of the Jewish leaders. Two desires strove within him for the mastery. The conflict was long and bitter. All argu-

ments but one were in favour of the release of Jesus. But all just arguments had to go to the wall before the one selfish motive of popularity. Conclusion: And are there no modern Pilates? The youngest child has had experience enough to enable him to sympathize keenly with this man. 1. For no one lives long in this world without finding that, sooner or later, duty and desire conflict with each other. Not for lack of light, but for lack of will, do men go astray. 2. Like Pilate, men seek to evade the responsibility for their actions. How often "circumstances" are blamed, or companions are made the bearers of the responsibility. "Inability" to resist is pleaded. Any flimsy excuse is laid hold of and magnified, in order to shift the guilt of the act from the sinning soul. Pilate's hand-washing seems to us frivolous and childish. Is it any more childish than half of the foolish excuses offered for the evil deeds of many? 3. It is very possible that a previous misdeed of Pilate's may have occurred to him as a reason for this iniquitous act (Luke xiii. 1). Is it too fanciful to suppose that at this time Pilate saw an opportunity to regain the popularity which then he had lost? One lie calls for another, and one dishonest deed begets a second. The only way out of past wrong is to confess it, and break from the bondage of old-time sins. Otherwise, the last state of a man simply becomes worse than his first. (*A. F. Schauffler.*) *The morally wrong ever inexpedient*:—I. A DIFFICULTY REMOVED DESTINED TO APPEAR IN MORE TERRIBLE FORMS. "Then delivered he," &c. In this no doubt Pilate felt that he had got rid of a difficulty. How to meet the claims of his imperial master, maintain his popularity with the Jews, and save his conscience, constituted a difficulty that had distracted him beyond measure. Now handing Christ over to the Jews he would breathe more freely. Alas! the difficulty is merely temporarily shifted and pushed for a moment out of sight, but otherwise becoming more huge and revolting. No difficulty can be removed by outraging or ignoring rectitude. 1. One man has a financial difficulty: accumulated debts drag him down, and he knows not how to deliver himself. He makes himself bankrupt, or forges a bill and fancies the difficulty removed. Not so. 2. Another has a social difficulty. By amorous impulses and reckless vows, he has committed himself to some one whom he comes to loathe as an intolerable infliction. In an evil moment he uses a razor or administers a poison, foolishly supposing that the difficulty is got rid of. But the old tormentor, though buried in the earth, is alive in memory to haunt it for ever. 3. Another has a moral difficulty; his conscience is oppressed with a sense of guilt, and he seeks to remove the difficulty by resorting to drink and revelry. But the sleeping conscience soon awakes. II. A CONQUEST ACHIEVED WHICH MUST OVERWHELM THE VICTORS IN ULTIMATE RUIN. "And they took Jesus and led Him away." The Jews were now triumphant: but of what worth was their victory? Even in this life they felt the rebound. A few years on, and the king they chose ravaged their country, destroyed their Temple, extinguished their national life, and scattered them throughout the earth. Truly the "triumphing of the wicked is short." History abounds in instances of conquests reversed and victors vanquished. "Whoso taketh the sword shall perish by the sword." The slaveholders martyred John Brown, and thought they had killed the anti-slavery movement; but in the course of a few years the cause of slavery was ruined. The principle is this—what is wrongfully achieved must lead to ruin. A man struggles for a fortune. He achieves it, but how? He struggles for senatorial honours, but how? The *how* is the question. All the produce of human labour, however valuable, if unrighteously obtained, the justice of the universe turns into stone that will grind the possessors to powder. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **And they took Jesus, and led Him away.**—*The procession of sorrow*:—I. CHRIST AS LED FORTH. Pilate scourged our Saviour according to the custom of Roman courts, and gave him over to the Prætorian guards to insult him. We do not read that they removed the crown of thorns, and therefore it is probable that our Saviour wore it along the *Via Dolorosa*. They put on Him His own clothes that the multitude might discern Him to be the very man who had professed to be the Messiah. We all know that a different dress will often raise a doubt about the identity of an individual; but lo! the people saw Him in the street wearing His garment without seam. How they led Him forth we do not know; perhaps with a rope about His neck, since it was not unusual for the Romans thus to conduct criminals to the gallows. We care, however, far more for the fact that He went forth carrying His cross. This was intended at once to proclaim His guilt and intimate His doom. 1. We learn here as we see Christ led forth that which was set forth in shadow by the scapegoat. Did not the high-priest bring the scapegoat, and put both his hands upon its head, confessing the

sins of the people, that thus those sins might be laid upon the goat? Then the goat was led away by a fit man into the wilderness, and it carried away the sins of the people. Now we see Jesus brought before the priests and rulers, who pronounce Him guilty; God Himself imputes our sins to Him; He was made sin for us; and, as the great Scapegoat, led away by the appointed officers of justice. 2. Jesus was conducted to the common place of death. Our great Hero, the destroyer of Death, bearded the lion in his den, and slew the monster in his own castle. 3. He was led thither to aggravate His shame. Calvary was like our Old Bailey. Christ must die a felon's death in the place where horrid crimes had met their due reward. In this, too, He draws the nearer to us, "He was numbered with the transgressors," &c. 4. But the great lesson is, "let us go forth, therefore, without the camp, bearing His reproach." (1) The multitude are leading Him forth from the Temple. He is not allowed to worship with them. (2) He is exiled from their friendship. No man dare whisper a word of comfort to Him. (3) He is banished from their society, as if He were a leper. See, here is a picture of what we may expect from men if we are faithful to our Master. It is not likely that we shall be able to worship with them, have their friendship, or be received into their society. Go ye, then, like the Master, expecting to earn reproach, without the camp. II. CHRIST CARRYING HIS CROSS. I have shown you, believer, your position; let me now show you your service. Christ comes forth from Pilate's hall with the cumbrous wood, all too heavy for His exhausted frame; so they place it upon Simon, a Cyrenian. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus, two persons well known in the early Church; let us hope that salvation came to his house when he was compelled to bear the Saviour's cross. Let us comfort ourselves with this thought, that in our case, as in Simon's—1. It is not our cross, but Christ's which we carry. When your religion brings the trial of cruel mockings upon you, then remember, it is Christ's cross; and how delightful is it to carry that. 2. You carry the cross after Him. Your path is marked with footprints of your Lord. 3. You bear this cross in partnership. It is the opinion of some that Simon only carried one end of it. That is possible; Christ may have carried the heavier end. Certainly it is so with you. Rutherford says, "Whenever Christ gives us a cross, He cries, 'Halves, My love.'" Others think that Simon carried the whole of the cross. If he carried all the cross, yet he only carried the wood of it; he did not bear the sin which made it such a load. If you think that you suffer all that a Christian can suffer, yet, remember, there is not one drop of wrath in all your sea of sorrow. Jesus took that. 4. Although Simon carried Christ's cross, he did not volunteer to do it, but they compelled him. I fear that the most of us carry it by compulsion; at least when it first comes on to our shoulders we do not like it; but the world compels us to bear Christ's cross. I do not think we should seek after needless persecution. That man deserves no pity who purposely excites the disgust of other people. We must not make a cross of our own. Let there be nothing but your religion to object to, and then if that offends them, it is a cross which you must carry joyfully. 5. Though Simon had to bear the cross for a very little while, it gave him lasting honour. The cross we have to carry is only for a little while at most. "I reckon that these light afflictions," &c. III. CHRIST AND HIS MOURNERS. When the voice of sympathy prevailed over the voice of scorn, Jesus paused, and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me," &c. This was a very proper sorrow; Jesus did not by any means forbid it, He only recommended another sorrow as being better. 1. Weep not because the Saviour bled, but because your sins made Him bleed. The Lord thinks far more of the tears of repentance than of the mere drops of human sympathy. 2. Weep over those who have brought that blood upon their heads. We ought not to forget the Jews. 3. Sorrow deeply for the souls of all unregenerate men and women. What Christ suffered for us, these must suffer for themselves, except they put their trust in Christ. IV. CHRIST'S FELLOW-SUFFERERS. There were two other cross-bearers, malefactors. Their crosses were just as heavy as the Lord's, and one of them had no sympathy with him, and his bearing the cross only led to his death, and not to his salvation. I have met with persons who have suffered much, and therefore suppose that because of that they shall escape punishment. Yonder malefactor carried his cross and died on it; and you will carry your sorrows, and be damned with them, except you repent. No sufferings of ours have anything to do with the atonement of sin. V. THE SAVIOUR'S WARNING QUESTION. "If they do these things in the green tree, what will they do in the dry?" "If I, the innocent substitute for sinners, suffer thus, what will be done when the sinner himself shall fall into the hands of an angry God?" Remember that when God

saw Christ in the sinner's place He did not spare Him, and when He finds you without Christ, He will not spare you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 17-25. **And He bearing His cross went forth.**—*The lonely Cross-bearer:*—I. BEARING THE CROSS FOR HIMSELF (Isa. lxiii. 3). 1. An aggravation of His misery. 2. An intensifying of their sin. 3. A heightening of His love. 4. An enlargement of their hope. II. BEARING THE CROSS FOR US. 1. As an expiation of our guilt (Col. i. 20; ii. 14). 2. As a pattern for our life (1 Pet. ii. 21). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The great Cross-bearer and His followers* (Text, and Mark xv. 20, 21):—1. When our Lord had been condemned, the execution of His sentence was hurried. Every moment of delay was wearisome to the Jews. It was the day of the passover, and they wished to have this matter finished before they went with hypocritical piety to celebrate the festival. We do not wonder at their eagerness; but at Pilate we do wonder. In all civilized countries there is usually an interval between the sentence and the death. As the capital sentence is irreversible, it is well to have a little space in which possible evidence may be forthcoming, which may prevent the fatal stroke. With the Romans it was usual to allow the reasonable respite of ten days. Now Pilate might have pleaded this; and he was culpable, as he was all along, in thus yielding to the clamour for an immediate execution. When once we begin to make the wishes of other men our law we know not to what extremity of criminality we may be led. 2. Being given over to death, our Saviour was led away outside the city. (1) Because by the Jews He was treated as a flagrant offender who must be executed at the Tyburn of the day. Alas! Jerusalem, thou didst cast out thy last hope. (2) Because He was to be consumed as a sin-offering. The sweet-savour offerings were presented upon the altar, and were accepted of God, but sin-offerings were burnt without the camp or gate, because God can have no fellowship with sin. (3) Because He died, not for Jerusalem, nor Israel alone, but for the race. Out in the open He must die, to show that He reconciled both Jews and Gentiles unto God. (4) That we might go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. "Come ye out from among them," &c. 3. Let us draw near our Lord for awhile, and carefully observe each instructive detail. I. HIS DRESS. 1. The crown of thorns. Jesus died a crowned monarch. The Man by whom we are redeemed is crowned with that product of the earth which came of the curse. 2. He was bound. By Roman custom criminals were bound with cords to the cross which they were doomed to carry. "Bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar." 3. Jesus wore His own clothes—(1) For identification, that all who looked on might know that it was the same person who had preached in their streets and had healed their sick. (2) That there might be a fulfilment of prophecy. "They parted My garments among them," &c. Other raiment could readily have been rent and divided. (3) To indicate that our Lord's passion was a true and natural part of His life; He died as He lived. His death was not a new departure, but the completion of a life of self-sacrifice, and so He goes to die in His ordinary everyday garments. Does not it almost seem as if people put on their Sunday clothes because they regard religion as something quite distinct from their common life? Can we not wear our own clothes, habits, characteristics, and peculiarities and serve the Lord? Is there not some suspicion of unnaturalness in services which require men to put on a strange, outlandish dress? It is ill for a man when he cannot lead his fellows in prayer till he has gone to the wardrobe. II. HIS COMPANY. 1. The rough Roman soldiers, strong, muscular, unfeeling men, ready to shed blood at any moment. I do but bid you look at them to remind you that from beneath their eagle our Saviour won a trophy; for their centurion confessed, "Certainly this was the Son of God." 2. Two malefactors. He must not be separated from the basest of men. I mention them because our Lord won a trophy by the conversion of one of them. 3. The scribes and Pharisees and high priests. Their hate was insatiable, but it was accompanied with fear, and that night it was seen that Christ had conquered them, for they begged a guard to prevent their victim from leaving the tomb. 4. A great rabble. The same, who a week ago shouted, "Hosanna!" The Lord endured the popular scorn as He had once received the popular acclamation. He lived above it all. 5. Kindly women. 6. We must now leave the company, but not till we have asked, Where are His disciples? Where is Peter? Did he not say, "I will go with Thee to prison and to death"? Where is John? Holy women are gathering, but where are the men? Though the women act like men, the men act as women. III. HIS BURDEN. Our Lord carried His own cross at the commencement of the sorrowful

pilgrimage. This—1. Increased His shame. It was a custom of the Romans to make felons bear their own gibbet. *Furcifer*, "gallows bearer," was hissed at men in contempt, just as "gallows-bird" is now. 2. Note next its weight. 3. There was a typical evidence about this. If Simon had carried Christ's cross all the way, we should have missed the type of Isaac, who carried the wood for his own sacrifice. 4. The spiritual meaning of it was that Christ in perfect obedience was then carrying the load of our disobedience. 5. It also has a prophetic meaning; that cross which He carried through Jerusalem shall go through Jerusalem again. It is His great weapon with which He conquers and wins the world. "The government shall be upon His shoulder;" that which He bore on His shoulder shall win obedience, and they that take His yoke upon them shall find rest unto their souls. IV. HIS CROSS-BEARER. 1. He was pressed into this duty. The word used signifies that the person is impressed into the royal service. How often has a burden of sorrow been the means of bringing men to the faith of Jesus! 2. His name was Simon; and where was that other Simon? What a silent but strong rebuke this would be to him, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Simon Peter lost a crown here, and another head wore it. 3. Simon was a Cyrenian—an African—I wonder if he was a black man. In Acts xiii., we find mention of a Simeon that was called Niger, or black. Surely the African has had his full share of cross-bearing for many an age. Blessed be he, whether African or Englishman, that has the honour of bearing the cross after Christ. 4. He was coming in from the country. How often the Lord takes into His service the unsophisticated country people, who as yet are untainted by the cunning and the vice of the city. 5. He was the Father of Alexander and Rufus. Which is the greater honour to a man, to have a good father, or to be the father of good sons? Under the Old Testament rule we usually read of a man that he is the son of such a one, but here we come to another style. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ bearing His cross:*—Our Lord, when a workman in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, had willingly carried pieces of timber in the service of His foster-father. Here, with no less cheerfulness, He bears to Golgotha the timber of the cross, in order to raise the altar on which He is to be sacrificed, and to do the will of His Father in heaven. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) *The crucifixion of Christ:*—I. THE CROSS IS THE POWER OF GOD FOR EXPOSING SIN AND FOR SUBDUING THE SINFUL HEART. What will sin do? Show us this and you give us the best exposition of sin. This gospel story tells us that sin crucified the Son of God. But the Cross, as we have said, is God's power for subduing the sinful heart. The subduing power of the fact that we crucified Christ, our best Friend, may be illustrated by an incident which Bronson Alcott relates as having taken place in his school. He made it a law that all offences should be punished in order that the authority of the school might be kept inviolate. The punishment of offences he decreed should be borne by himself He intended to put every offending scholar under the power of this thought, "I made my friend and teacher suffer." So much for the law of the school; let us see how it worked. Mr. Alcott gives us this instance: "One day I called before me a pupil, eight or ten years of age, who had violated an important regulation of the school. All the pupils were looking on, and they knew what the rule of the school was. I put the ruler into the hand of the offending pupil and extended my hand. I bade him strike. The instant the boy saw my extended hand and heard my command, I saw a struggle begin in his face. A light sprang up in his countenance. A new set of shuttles seemed to be weaving a new nature within him. I kept my hand extended. The school was in tears. The boy struck once, and he himself burst into tears. I constantly watched his face, and he seemed in a bath of fire which was giving him a new nature. He had a different mood toward the school and toward the violated law. The boy seemed transformed by the idea that I should take chastisement in the place of his punishment." II. THE CROSS GIVES US A STANDING EXHIBITION OF THE WAY IN WHICH SOME MEN TREAT CHRIST. I wish to speak especially of the soldiers at the cross, who are an ancient type of a modern class. They gamble for the seamless robe of Christ. To them the garments of Christ were everything, but Christ Himself was nothing. They prize the garments but despise Christ. When Christ was within the robe, it had healing virtue; but when Christ was crucified it had no healing, life-giving power whatever. There are multitudes to-day who are like these soldiers. For example, there are crowds of citizens in this republic who glory in the civil rights which our national fathers bequeathed, but they hate and crucify the Christ of our fathers. It was under the inspiration of Christ that our fathers sacrificed

and fought for the rights which they bequeathed. If there had been no Christ, there would have been no Plymouth Rock Pilgrims in Massachusetts. There is no fact more patent in history than this: American freedom owes its origin to Christ. Yet there are Americans by the thousand who would take the freedom and crucify the Christ. But what is freedom disassociated from Christ? What is it worth in comparison with the freedom which throbs with the life of Christ? Freedom, when it is a robe with the living Christ in it, will cure and keep in life the nations which touch its hem; but freedom, when it is a robe torn from Christ, will let the nations die even while they handle it, own it, and boast about it. We needed Christ to procure our liberty and we need Christ to secure our liberty. III. THE CROSS WITH ITS SACRIFICE FOR SIN OPENS UP TO US THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION. (*David Gregg.*) *Bearing the cross*:—The Rev. C. Simeon, in conversation with a friend, once said, "Many years ago, when I was an object of much derision in this university, I strolled forth one day afflicted, with my little testament in my hand. I prayed earnestly to my God that He would comfort me with some cordial from His Word, and that on opening the book I might find some text which should sustain me. The first text which caught my eye was this, 'They found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name,' &c. You know Simon is the same as Simeon. What a world of instruction was here! What a blessed hint for my encouragement! To have the cross laid upon me that I might bear it after Jesus. What a privilege! It was enough. Now I could leap and sing for joy as one whom Jesus was honouring with a participation in His sufferings." (*W. Baxendale.*) *Cross-bearing for Christ*:—At a large Sunday-school anniversary it was found that the speakers expected had failed, and none were ready to take their places. After some singing the meeting became dull, and the interest seemed to be dying out. The superintendent, who had set his heart on success, was anxious, and at a loss to know what to do, but finally gave a general invitation to the scholars to repeat any texts or hymns they had learned. He was pleasantly answered, but only for a short time. Eventually a boy of Jewish caste, with piercing eyes, in the midst of deep silence rose and repeated: "Jesus, I my cross have taken, All to leave and follow Thee," &c., in a voice so thrilling as to move the whole audience. Many eyes were moist, for the story of the young Jew was known. His father had told him he must either leave the Sunday-school or quit home for ever; and the hymn showed what he had given up to follow Christ. The meeting was inspired with new life. Friends gathered round him at the close, and business men united in securing him a situation by which he could earn his own living. (*Christian at Work.*) *The cross of Christ*:—I. UNDER THE CROSS (ver. 17). 1. The weary pilgrim—Jesus. (1) Exhausted by the agony and the subsequent excitement. (2) Suffering through the scourging. (3) Burdened with the weight of the cross, the upright lying along His back, the transverse fastened to His fettered hands. (4) Degraded by the white tablet borne before Him, or suspended from His neck, proclaiming His alleged crime. 2. The varied attendance—robbers, soldiers, &c. 3. The sorrowful way. II. UPON THE CROSS. Jesus in the midst, numbered with transgressors (ver. 18), arrived at Golgotha. The cross was—1. Furnished with its victim. As it lay upon the sward, with nails driven through His hands and feet (Psa. xxii. 16; Luke xxiv. 40), He prayed (Luke xxiii. 34). 2. Upraised to its position. Suspended by His hands and feet, His body resting on an upright peg, our Lord was exhibited a spectacle of woe—the priests and people mocking His misery. 3. Set in the midst. On either side a crucified robber proclaimed Him the worst of the three. III. ABOVE THE CROSS. The title (ver. 19). 1. Its conspicuous position—seen by all. 2. Its threefold language—to be read by all. 3. Its providential use—to attest—(1) Christ's true humanity, "Jesus of Nazareth." (2) His Messianic dignity: "King of the Jews." (3) Israel's sin: they had crucified their Sovereign. (4) The world's hope: Israel's rejected Messiah was the Saviour of men. IV. BENEATH THE CROSS. Gambling for the Saviour's clothes, the soldiers fulfilled prophecy (vers. 23, 24). 1. Heartless cruelty. 2. Moral insensibility. 3. Appalling criminality. 4. Unconscious instrumentality. V. NEAR THE CROSS. The Galilean women: the post of love (ver. 25). 1. Their names. (1) Mary, the mother of Jesus. True to her motherhood she was there to be pierced (Luke ii. 35). 2. Mary's sister, Salome, the wife of Zebedee, and mother of the Evangelist, who was thus Christ's cousin, which may account for the mental and spiritual affinity between them. (3) Mary, the wife of Clopas, or Alphæus, the mother of James the less and Joses. (4) Mary Magdalene. 1. Their position by the cross, marking—(1) Their courage—not afraid of crowd or soldiers.

(2) Their fidelity in contrast to the male disciples. (3) Their affection. (4) Their sympathy—intending to console Him, as they doubtless did. (5) Their privilege—a gracious opportunity of hearing His last words. Lessons: 1. The completeness of Christ's obedience (Phil. ii. 8). 2. The depth of His humiliation (Isa. liii. 12). 3. The reality of His atoning work (2 Cor. v. 21). 4. The certainty of His Messiahship, proved by the title. 5. The moral insensibility to which depraved natures may sink (Eph. iv. 19). 6. The heroism of women when inspired by faith and love (Dan. xi. 32). 7. The startling contrasts of life—the soldiers and the women. 8. The power which still lies in the Cross to reveal human hearts. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **A place called the place of a skull, which is in Hebrew Golgotha.**—Two explanations of the term are given. 1. That it was the spot where executions ordinarily took place, and therefore abounded in skulls; but according to the Jewish law, these must have been buried, and therefore were no more likely to confer a name on the spot than any other part of the skeleton. In this case, too, the language would have to be plural instead of singular. 2. That the form of the spot was bold, round, and skull-like, and therefore a mound or hillock in accordance with the common phrase, for which there is no direct authority, "Mount Calvary." Whichever of these is the correct explanation, Golgotha seems to have been a known spot—outside the gate (Heb. xiii. 12), but close to the city (ver. 20); apparently near a thoroughfare on which there were passers by. This road or path led out of the "country," and was probably the ordinary spot for executions. Why should it have been otherwise? To those who carried the sentence into effect Christ was but an ordinary criminal, and there is not a word to indicate that the soldiers in "leading Him away" went to any other than the usual place for what must have been a common operation. A tradition at one time prevailed that Adam was buried in Golgotha, and that from his skull it derived its name, and that at the crucifixion the drops of Christ's blood fell on the skull and raised Adam to life. The skull commonly introduced in early pictures of the Crucifixion refers to this. (*Sir G. Grove.*) *The traditional site of Golgotha* is consecrated by three chapels of different sects. An opening, faced with silver, shows the spot where the cross is said to have been sunk in the rock, and less than five feet from it is a long brass open-work slide over a cleft in the rock which is about six inches deep, but is supposed by the pilgrims to reach to the centre of the earth. This is said to mark the rending of the rocks at the Crucifixion. But there is an air of unreality over the whole scene, with its gorgeous decorations of lamps, mosaics, pictures, and gilding; nor could I feel more than the gratification of my curiosity in the midst of such a monstrous aggregation of wonders. Faith evaporates when it finds so many demands made upon it. When it is assured that within a few yards of each other are the scene of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac; that of the appearance of Christ to Mary; the stone of anointing; the place where the angels stood at the Resurrection; the tombs of our Lord, Joseph, and Nicodemus; the column to which our Lord was bound; His prison; the burial place of Adam; the tree in which the goat offered instead of Isaac was caught, and much else. (*Cunningham Geikie, D.D.*) *The probable site of Golgotha*:—There is little in the New Testament to fix its exact position, though Heb. xiii. 12 is enough to prove that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is not on the true site. The name Golgotha may well have referred to the shape of the ground, and, if this be so, a spot reminding one of a skull must be sought outside the city. It must, besides, be near one of the great roads (Mark xv. 29). That Joseph carried the body to his own tomb, hewn out in the rock, and standing in the midst of the garden, requires further that Calvary should be found near the great Jewish cemetery of the time. This lay on the north side of Jerusalem. Now, just here, outside the Damascus gate is a knoll or swell which fulfils all these conditions. Rising gently towards the north its slowly rounded top might easily have obtained, from its shape, the name of "a skull." This spot has been associated from the earliest times with the martyrdom of Stephen, who could only have been stoned at the usual place of public execution. And this is fixed by local tradition as "the Place of Stoning" where offenders were not only put to death, but hung up by the hands till sunset after execution. As if to make the identification still more complete, the busy road, which has led to the north in all ages, passes close by the knoll, branching off, a little further on, to Gibeon, Damascus, and Rameh. It was the custom of the Romans to crucify transgressors at the sides of the busiest public roads. Here then, apparently, on this bare rounded knoll, rising about thirty feet above the ground, the low yellow cliff of Jeremiah looking out from its southern end, the Saviour of the world was cruci-

fied. (*Ibid.*) **Where they crucified Him.**—*Crucifixion*:—The common mode of inflicting it, in all probability, was to strip the criminal—to lay him on the cross on his back—to nail his hands to the two extremities of the cross-piece, or fork of the cross—to nail his feet to the upright piece, or principal stem of the cross—then to raise the cross on end, and drop it into a hole prepared for it—and then to leave the sufferer to a lingering and painful death. It was a death which combined the maximum of pain with the least immediate destruction of life. The agony of having nails driven through parts so full of nerves and sinews as the hands and feet must have been intense. Yet wounds of the hands and feet are not mortal, and do not injure any great leading blood-vessel. Hence a crucified person, even in an eastern climate, exposed to the sun, might live two or three days, enduring extreme pain, without being relieved by death, if he was naturally a very strong man and in vigorous health. To a sensitive, delicate-minded person, it is hard to imagine any punishment more distressing. Whether the person crucified was bound to the cross with ropes, to prevent the possibility of his breaking off from the nails in convulsive struggling—whether he was stripped completely naked, or had a cloth round his loins—whether each foot had a separate nail, or one nail was driven through both feet—are disputed points which we have no means of settling. Of one thing, however, we may be sure. The feet of a crucified person were much nearer the ground than is commonly supposed, and very likely not more than a foot or two from the earth. In this, as in other points, most pictures of the Crucifixion are grossly incorrect, and the cross is made out to be a piece of timber so long and so thick that no one mortal man could ever have carried it. Concerning the precise amount of physical suffering, and the precise effect on the human body in a crucifixion, the following medical account by a German physician, named Richter, says—"1. The unnatural position and violent tension of the body caused a painful sensation from the least motion. 2. The nails driven through parts of the hands and feet, which are full of nerves and tendons, and yet at a distance from the heart, created the most exquisite anguish. 3. The exposure of so many wounds and lacerations brought on inflammation, which tended to become gangrene, and every moment increased the poignancy of suffering. 4. In the distended parts of the body more blood flowed through the arteries than could be carried back into the veins: and hence too much blood found its way from the aorta into the head and stomach, and the blood vessels of the head became pressed and swollen. The general obstruction of circulation caused an internal excitement, exertion, and anxiety, more intolerable than death itself. 5. There was the inexpressible misery of gradually increasing and lingering anguish. 6. To all this we may add burning and raging thirst." When we remember, beside all this, that our Lord's head was crowned with thorns, His back torn with savage scourging, and His whole system weighed down by the mental and bodily agony of the sleepless night following the Lord's Supper, we may have some faint idea of the intensity of His sufferings. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Nature's testimony to the Crucifixion*:—A person who travelled through Palestine told me that an ingenious person, his fellow-traveller, who was a Deist, used to make merry with all the stories that the Romish priest entertained them with as to the sacred places and relics they went to see, and particularly when they first showed him the clefts of Mount Calvary, which is now included within the great dome that was built over it by Constantine the Great. But when he began to examine the clefts more narrowly and critically, he told his fellow-travellers that now he began to be a Christian; "for," said he, "I have long been a student of nature and the mathematics, and I am sure these clefts and rents in this rock were never made by a natural or ordinary earthquake, for by such a concussion the rock must have been split according to the veins, and where it was weakest in the adhesion of the parts; for thus," said he, "I have observed it to have been done in other rocks, when separated or broken after an earthquake, and reason tells me it must always be so. But it is quite otherwise here, for the rock is split athwart and across the veins in a most strange and supernatural manner. This, therefore, I can easily and plainly see to be effect of a real miracle, which neither nature nor art could have effected; and therefore I thank God that I came hither to see this standing monument of a miraculous power by which God gives evidence, to this day, of the divinity of Christ." (*J. Fleming.*) *The crucifixion realized*:—A little girl in a mission-school sat on the front seat; and, when the superintendent was telling about how they hanged Jesus on the cross, the tears came to her eyes, and she had to get up and go out. In the afternoon she came back smiling; and the superintendent asked her, "Mary, where did you go this morning?" And she said, "Oh,

teacher! I could not stand it when you spoke to us about Jesus being nailed on the cross; for I felt just as if I helped to pound the nails in; and I went off a little piece from the school, and got down on my knees, and told Jesus that my sins helped to hang Him on the cross; and I asked Him to please forgive me for helping to kill Him; that I was so sorry! but now I feel so happy!" *Impression of the Crucifixion:*—Col. Gardiner was won from a life of worldly pleasure by a dream in which he saw the Saviour hanging on the cross, and saying, "I have suffered this for thee, and is this thy return?" The deep conviction of his ingratitude led him to repentance and a life of piety. *Christ's cross:*—Krummacher describes the mysterious cross as a rock, against which the very waves of the curse break; as a lightning-conductor, by which the destroying fluid descends, which would have otherwise crushed the world. Jesus, who mercifully engaged to direct the thunderbolt against Himself, does so while hanging yonder in profound darkness upon the cross. There He is, as the connecting link between heaven and earth; His bleeding arms extended wide, stretched out to every sinner; hands pointed to the east and west, indicating the gathering-in of the world of man to His fold. The cross is directed to the sky, as the place of the final triumph of His work in redemption; and its foot fixed in the earth like a tree, from whose wondrous branches we gather the fruit of an eternal reconciliation to God the Father. (*J. Caughey.*) *Prizing the cross:*—Tacitus reports that though the amber-ring among the Romans was of no value, yet, after the emperor began to wear it, it began to be in great esteem: it was the only fashion amongst them. So our Saviour has borne His cross, and was borne upon it. We should esteem it more highly than many of us do, and bear it daily in remembrance of Him. (*W. Baxendale.*) *Love in the cross:*—Do not be afraid to bow before Jesus. That cross is the enfranchisement of theology. It stands up against heaven to say, "God, with His infinite power, is not cruel. God is the sufferer, and not one that makes suffering." The Divine nature is not one that oppresses races, as the cluster is pressed, that the wine may flow out into the vintner's cup. The testimony of Christ's life, and the mission of Christ's death, and that everlasting love that streams from the cross of Christ is, "God so loved the world." Loved it? No mother ever loved her child half so much. And yet, what mother is there that did not, in her small, feeble way, symbolize the whole atonement of Christ? What mother is there that did not bring forth her child with pangs, and strong crying and tears? What mother is there that did not take the utter helplessness of the little babe for weeks and months, and give her life for it? How she gives up her sleep; how she gives up her heart's desires; how she foregoes pleasure; how she withdraws herself from society; how she gives the whole royalty of her rich nature to that little child that can neither speak nor think, nor know what helps it! And then, through what sickness does she watch! And with what labour and pain does she develop the child! And how does she bring it finally to intelligence and virtue and manhood, all the way through a living sacrifice of love for the child! (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The cross our safety:*—There is an affecting passage in Roman history which records the death of Manlius. At night, and on the Capitol, fighting hand to hand, he had repelled the Gauls and saved the city when all seemed lost. Afterwards he was accused, but the Capitol towered in sight of the Forum where he was tried, and as he was about to be condemned he stretched out his hands and pointed, weeping, to that arena of his triumph. At this the people burst into tears, and the judges could not pronounce sentence. Again the trial proceeded, but was again defeated; nor could he be convicted till they had removed him to a low spot, from which the Capitol was invisible. What the Capitol was to Manlius the cross of Christ is to the Christian. (*Preacher's Lantern.*) *The cross the soul's haven:*—While your bark is tossed about at sea, it is very likely that she wants a new copper bottom, or the deck requires holy-stoning, or the rigging is out of repair, or the sails want overhauling, or fifty other things may be necessary; but if the wind is blowing great guns, and the vessel is drifting towards those white-crested breakers, the first business of the mariner is to make for the haven at once, to avoid the hurricane. When he is all snug in port, he can attend to hull and rigging, and all the odds and ends besides. So with you, child of God, one thing you must do, and I beseech you do it. Do not be looking to this, or to that, or to the other out of a thousand things that may be amiss, but steer straight for the cross of Christ, which is the haven for distressed spirits; fly at once to the wounds of Jesus, as the dove flies to her nest in the cleft of the rock. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Plea from the cross:*—A clergyman in Germany, who had exercised the ministerial office for twelve years, while destitute of faith in and love to the

Redeemer, one day, after baptizing the child of a wealthy citizen, one of the members of his congregation was invited, with some other guests, to a collation at this person's house. Directly opposite to him, on the wall, hung a picture of Christ on the cross, with two lines written under it:—"I did this for thee; what hast thou done for Me?" The picture caught his attention; as he read the lines they seemed to pierce him, and he was involuntarily seized with a feeling he never experienced before. Tears rushed into his eyes; he said little to the company, and took his leave as soon as he could. On the way home these lines constantly sounded in his ears—Divine grace prevented all philosophical doubts and explanations from entering his soul—he could do nothing but give himself up entirely to the overpowering feeling; even during the night, in his dreams, the question stood always before his mind, "What hast thou done for Me?" He died in about three months after this remarkable and happy change in his temper and views, triumphing in the Saviour, and expressing his admiration of His redeeming love. (*J. Whitecross.*) *The three crosses:*—I. THAT OF JESUS; dying for sin—redemption. II. THAT OF THE IMPENITENT ROBBER; dying in sin—perdition. III. THAT OF THE PENITENT ROBBER; dying out of sin—salvation. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) There were three hanging there. The first was the Saviour; the second to be saved; the third to be damned. The pain of all three was one; but the cause diverse. (*Augustine.*) *Jesus in the midst:*—On the cross, between earth and heaven; in the grave, between the living and the dead; on the throne, as separating between the saved and the lost. Everywhere, in all time, in whatever aspect or relation, men shall contemplate the Saviour, the same central object shall meet them—"Jesus in the midst." We cannot look upon Christ as lifted up without seeing—I. THE JUNCTION POINT BETWEEN THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL. The sacrifice of the Cross constitutes that crisis in all dispensational history, at which shadows were to become substances, outlines perfect forms, and the pale lamps, which had shed light on the ancient sanctuary, to give place to the Bright and Morning Star. The veil of the Temple was rent, and it told of a covenant waxed old; of the superseding of the blood of bulls and goats by the blood of Him who, "through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God." Christ was "the end of the law for righteousness;" the end of the prophecies for fulfilment; the end of devout anticipation as of a surety the Lord's anointed; the end of all expected revelation, as God speaking to us by His Son. And He was especially in the midst of the two systems, as He hung upon the cross. For He felt all the terrors of the law, while His lips were dispensing all the tender charities of the gospel. And He saw, in marked contrast, the effect of the two systems—the chief priests and rulers hurling the mockery on the one side, and the great company of people lamenting Him on the other. And yet all are looking to Him; all are drawn towards Him. Whether to revile or to pity, to blaspheme or to pray, none could turn their eyes to any other object. He who in heaven has a throne which is above every throne, seemed to have a cross which was above every cross. II. CHRIST OCCUPYING SOME MYSTERIOUS ISTHMUS BETWEEN CONDEMNATION AND FORGIVENESS—a place where the two seas meet—that of infinite justice, unable to clear the guilty; and that of the infinite mercy, cleansing from all spot of sin. Here mercy triumphs, for wrath is done away; and yet justice is honoured, for the victim dies. Both these attributes put in their claims. Neither of them, without dishonour to the Divine character, could endure to have them set aside. But the meeting here was not hostile. These attributes met to embrace, to unite, to shed, each on the other, new glory; to vindicate, each for the other, its prescriptive and everlasting claims. It seemed as if in the whole universe there was but one spot, where, in a posture of reconciliation, God and man could meet. Thither the Eternal Father would repair to make sublime demonstration of His holiness; thither the penitent child was to go to lay down the burden of his sin. And over that cross they were to be made one. III. A REPRESENTATION OF CHRIST AS HE IS IN THE WORLD NOW. 1. The cross is set up in the midst of condemned men. Men dying, with the means of life before them—lost, while a look would save them. One, like Pilate, sees no fault in Christianity, but will not yield to it; another, like Herod, is curious to see what Christianity is, and mocks it; and a third, like Judas, sells it. 2. The circumstance shows how very near two people may be to the same outward Christ, ordinances, truth, influences for good—and yet the one to be subdued to penitence, and the other hardened. 3. Especially is the scene emblematical of the different effect produced on two persons by affliction and Divine chastisement. Jesus is in the midst—having emptied a cup more bitter far than any of which they have tasted—and that too in order that any bitterness in their cup might be mitigated or

pass away. And both these afflicted ones will look to Him. But how? One is chafed, and stubborn, and rebellious. The other is subdued, and tender, and heart-stricken. And therefore his looking to Jesus is one of humble, loving faith. IV. AN EMBLEM OF THE SOLEMN ADJUDICATIONS OF THE LAST DAY. "That cross," says Augustine, "was the tribunal of Christ, for the judge was placed in the middle; and whilst one thief who believed was set free, the other who reviled was condemned." They who on earth were divided by the cross, are they who in heaven will be divided by the throne. The impenitent here will be the lost there; the railing here will be the accursed there—on the left hand both, whether at the cross or before the throne. But the humble and the trusting shall be on the right hand. And their life in heaven will be a continuation of their life on earth—a looking to "Jesus in the midst"—in the midst of His saints, to be glorified; in the midst of His angels, to be worshipped; in the midst of the upper paradise, a tree of life; and in the midst of the throne of God, "a Lamb as it had been slain." (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Jesus in the midst:*—It is to this position that our Lord owes His glorious title of Mediator. He is the Days-man who stands between the perfection of a holy Creator and the imperfections of His creatures. And it is in virtue of this office that He is entitled to His position as the central object in the economies of grace and of judgment. Very interesting and instructive it is to notice how frequently this position —"in the midst"—is assigned to our Lord. He is represented as—I. "In the midst" OF HEAVEN (Rev. v. 6; vii. 17). Twice the expression is employed of the mystical tree of life—the type of Christ (Rev. ii. 7; xxii. 2). His maintenance in this position is the secret of heaven's harmony. Just as in the solar system the planets observe a fixed relation to each other because they all have a common relation to the sun, just as their motions are the very embodiment of order and harmony because of this common relationship, so the countless intelligences of heaven all fall into their own proper relationships to each other because of their common relation to the central object. II. "In the midst" OF THE CHURCH. He was "in the midst" of that embryo Church, the simple peasants whom He gathered around His person (Luke xxii. 27). "Where two or three," &c. Here we have a description of the first component elements of the Christian Church. In keeping with this, we notice that He takes His rightful place at the moment when He greets His Church after His resurrection. "Jesus Himself stood in the midst." Once again we are permitted to gaze upon the risen Lord, now no longer visibly present, yet still "in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," *i.e.*, of the Church as she exercises her office of light-bearer. She shines by reflecting the light shed upon her by the Master, just as the moon reflects the light of the sun. Or, once again, He is represented as in the midst of the Church in her worship, "inhabiting the praises of Israel" (Heb. ii. 12). But, alas! the great sin of the outward Church has ever been to put Christ on one side. How often has the Church placed a hierarchy, a system, a party, a creed, a superstition, &c., in the place that belongs to Him. Hence our unhappy and disastrous divisions. If Christians are to draw nearer to each other, it must be by a determined attempt to restore the Lord Jesus to His proper position. Then we shall find it possible to make some progress towards the enjoyment of that harmony in our relations with each other which ought to characterize the sons of God on earth, and which must bind all together in heaven. III. As with the Christian Church at large, so with THE INDIVIDUAL HEART. "Know ye not that Christ is within you?" &c., not as a distinct part of our being, but as a power pervading and supreme over all. This is what St. Paul meant when he exclaimed, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Let us not think of assigning Him a corner in the palace. Christ will not accept such a subordinate position. IV. When Christ is in the heart, He will also be "in the midst" of OUR HOME. Of how many of us may it be said, as it was said of Martha, that she "received Him into her house"? How many of us can fill in our name where the word Martha stands? If we would really have Him abiding with us, it must not be so much as a mere guest, "a wayfaring man turning aside to tarry for a night," but as the true though invisible Head of the house, just as He is the true though invisible Head of the Church. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." In our domestic arrangements, it is His will that must be consulted. We cannot keep Him in our closet, and deny Him the right of access to our scenes of social intercourse and pleasure. We cannot place Him at the head of our family on Sunday, and bid Him go into retirement for the remainder of the week. V. "In the midst" of OUR WORLDLY BUSINESS. Ah, this fatal distinction between sacred and secular! how much it has done to

drive religion out of our lives! Surely everything becomes sacred that is done with Jesus in the midst. Our offices are consecrated as actually as our churches; holiness to the Lord is written upon the very "bells of the horses;" upon our ledgers and cash-books. VI. "In the midst" OF ALL CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE. "They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them," &c. How possible it is to work for Christ, and yet in our very work to deny Christ His proper place in relation to the work; to be guilty of self-seeking even while we seem to be endeavouring to further His cause (Jer. xlv. 5). It is when we see Jesus in the midst that self loses its tyrant power, and worldly motives cease to influence us. Conclusion: How are we to ensure the presence of Jesus in the midst of our hearts, and therefore in the midst of our lives? By accepting Him as the Mediator between God and man. (*W. Hay-Aitken, M.A.*) *The centre of the universe—Jesus in the midst:*—1. All men have looked up to the heavenly bodies. This fact invests them with additional interest. We have not seen the men of past ages; we cannot see those of distant continents; but we can look at the same objects as they all have looked at. 2. In a higher degree, when we look into the pages of the Word of God, and consider how many eyes have looked at the same words—wondering, weeping, inquiring, praying, and scoffing; and how many hearts have beat over the same book, do we feel that this great light of time has been uniting the generations. 3. In a still higher degree do we feel the uniting power of one great central object—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." As we look, our gaze is drawn to Calvary and its three crosses—resting at last upon the middle cross. On one cross the physical suffering is doubly darkened by the gloom of despair; on another it is lighted up by hope and faith; on the middle cross it is crowned and glorified by the infinite and unutterable love of God. Many executions took place on Golgotha. Why then should these three have remained, burning like beacons in the night of time? It is because "Jesus is in the midst." And, as around that central cross there were all kinds of lookers at the time, so has it been in every time. There fell on that cross the look of hate, and of love, of indifference, and of interest. I. JESUS IN THE MIDST OF THE VISIBLE WORLD. 1. Jerusalem was in the middle of Palestine, and Palestine in the middle of the civilized world. The cross, then, was literally in the midst of the visible world: and its position there is symbolical of Christ's position, for His life was lived between the two great continents of history—the ancient and the modern. A new civilization dates from His birth—the old civilization died in His death. And thus, in relation to human history, as developed in place and time, it is a simple geographical and chronological fact that "Jesus is in the midst." 2. Nature is a part of the visible world, and Christ is the centre of nature, for He is its Creator. "All thing were made by Him," &c., and "by Him all things consist"—the whole material universe is held together by Him. 3. The Hebrew Theocracy was a part of the visible world, and Christ Jesus was in the midst of it. (1) The Tribes went up to Jerusalem as their centre. The centre of Jerusalem was the Temple. The centre of the Temple was the Holy of Holies, and the centre of the Holy of Holies was the mercy-seat, sprinkled with blood, containing the Law, of which the shed blood was the satisfaction; all of which represented our Saviour's mediatorial work. (2) This was His position in relation to the whole life and history of the Jews. In so far as they were children of God, they were moulded after the image of the Son of God. His Spirit inspired the prophets. In the dark house of bondage, and at the bitterest hour of their history, Jesus is found in the midst, making a fourth in the furnace of Babylon. 4. Heathendom is a part of the visible world, and Jesus is in the midst of it. For what mean those victims slain in sacrifice all over the world? Jesus is "the desire of all nations," and is in their midst—if only in this negative sense, that the void at the heart of humanity can be filled only by Him. 5. Coming to Christendom, Christ is the visible centre of it. Europe embraces the highest life in the world, and the centre of that highest life is Christ. The great Church in the middle of every capital city is called a Christian Church. Jesus is acknowledged to be the source of all our moral and spiritual activities. And if we enter the world of thought, most emphatically is Jesus in the midst here. His Person includes the inmost and ultimate question in every sphere. Do we try to form a science of theology? The foundation must be our doctrine of the Person of Christ. The view we take of that will determine our view of God, man, sin, atonement. Jesus very soon became the central figure in the schools. At twelve years of age He was found in the Temple. If we take any ultimate question, we find Jesus the living and practical solution of it. Do we take the question, How can finite man ever know the infinite God? Jesus

is the Man who knows God fully. Hence the variety of forms in which the account of His life is ever appearing in modern times. 6. The political world is a part of the visible world; and the rightful place of Christ is in the midst of it, too. If any one rules a nation in the name of any one but Christ, he is a usurper. Christ's cross has been the centre of the past; His crown will be the centre of the future. "All kings shall fall down before Him," &c. II. JESUS IN THE MIDST OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD. 1. The true Church on earth is a part of the invisible world; and Jesus is in the midst of it. In the midst of—(1) The individual life. He is the most intimate Counsellor, Friend, and Companion of every Christian soul. (2) The Christian family. His presence is the bond of its perfectness. (3) The little prayer-meeting. "Where two or three," &c. (4) The Christian Church on earth viewed as a whole. "Lo! I am with you alway," &c. "In the midst of the candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man." All true lights are fed by the hand of Christ. 2. Lifting our eyes to the Church in heaven, it is still the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne. The throne itself is in the midst; the first position of dignity and power in the universe, and Christ sits upon it. He must, therefore, be God—King of kings, and Lord of lords. Further, it is as the Lamb that He is on the throne—showing that the centre of His work is His sacrifice of Himself. His highest value to the world is not that He is a pattern of virtue merely, or a moral Reformer. The Apostle conducts us from company to company until we come to Him who is in the midst. "Ye are come unto Mount Sion," &c. 3. But, higher still, Jesus is in the midst of the Godhead. In the threefold name, Jesus is in the midst; and in the manifestation of the three-one God, He occupies the same position. In the First Dispensation there was the revelation of the Unity or first Person of the Godhead. Our dispensation is that of the Holy Spirit, for in it we have a revelation of the work of the third Person. But in the midst of the two, there is the manifestation of the second Person. 4. Jesus is in the midst of all the Divine attributes. They have their harmonious meeting-place in Him. He is love, and love is the bond of the Divine perfectness as well as of human. In Him the problem has been solved, how God can be just and yet the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus. III. JESUS IN THE MIDST BETWEEN THE TWO WORLDS. 1. He descended into the visible that He might translate us into the invisible. He is the only Door between the two worlds. Through that, ministering angels, and all Divine and saving influences, come forth to enlighten and enliven this lower world; and through it there pours in return the multitude of sinners saved by grace. He is the spiritual reality symbolized in Jacob's ladder. He has this position because He is in the midst—between God and man. In the translation of sinners from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, Jesus is in the midst. He was lifted up on the cross between the two worlds that He might draw all men unto Him. 2. At the moment of death Jesus stands on "the dark frontier," to receive the soul of the believer. There are weeping friends on the one side, and rejoicing angels on the other; and the Saviour is between the two. 3. And, last of all, who is this sitting on the great white throne—the holy angels with Him? The Son of man; "Jesus is in the midst!" In conclusion: Is all this true of Jesus of Nazareth? Then—1. He is indeed "the Wonderful, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father." 2. What sort of a universe would this be without Christ? It would not be a universe—a cosmos, or a well-ordered system of thing; but a chaos. Yea, if there were no Christ, evil would triumph. 3. Consider what the life and heart of the individual man is without Christ. It has no centre. All its pursuits, however refined, are worse than useless. All its pleasures are short-lived and false. Apart from Christ, there can be no aim in a human life adequate to the worth of that life. (*F. Ferguson, D.D.*) *Salvation no failure*:—Now, away among the mountains, I know a place, where once three shepherds, brothers, were to leap, as they had often done, from rock to rock, across the narrow chasm through which the swollen waters rushed onward to their fall. Bold mountaineers, and looking with careless eye on a sight which had turned others dizzy, one bounded over like a red deer; another followed—but, alas, his foot slipping on the smoothly treacherous ledge, he staggered, reeled, and falling back, rolled over with a sullen plunge into the jaws of the abyss. Quick as lightning, his brother sprang forward—down to a point where the waters issue into a more open space, just above the crag over which they throw themselves into the black, rock-girdled, boiling cavern. There, standing on the verge of death, he eyes the body coming; he bends—his arm is out—thank God, he has him in his powerful grasp. Bravely, brotherly done! Alas! it is done in vain. The third brother, sad spectator of the scene, saw him swept from his

slippery footing: and, in their death not divided, as of old they had lain in their childhood, locked in each other's arms they went over, horribly whelmed in the depths of the swirling pool. Not so perished our elder Brother, and the thief He stretched out His hand to save. He plucked him from the brink of hell; He saved him on the dizzy edge of the dreadful pit. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*)

Vers. 19-22. **And Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross.**—*The superscription on the cross*:—I. A GLORIOUS FACT UNCONSCIOUSLY PUBLISHED TO THE WORLD—the royalty of Jesus. This is one of the greatest truths of the Bible, although Pilate only meant it in scorn. How often the worst of men utter the highest truths! Some event strikes on the soul, and the truth flashes out like fire from flint. Hence the utterances of ungodly men may repay attention. II. A REVENGEFUL PASSION GRATIFYING ITSELF BY FRAUD. The Jews compelled Pilate to violate his conscience. Now it is over, his passion finds vent in a falsehood such as would torment the instigators of his crime. He did not believe Jesus to be a king at all. No passion is more ravenous than revenge; and fraud in the form of slander is, in these days, its most potent weapon. III. A WICKED TRANSACTION, BRINGING ITS OWN PUNISHMENT. The accusation was that Christ had made Himself a King, and now the Jews find over the cross a statement that the Crucified was their King. How intolerable to these descendents of illustrious patriarchs and monarchs! How bitterly they must have felt the haughty reply, "What I have written," &c. "I have been pliable in working out your designs, now I am inexorable. I scorn you." Thus a small instalment of their retribution came at once. "Be sure your sin will find you out." IV. A MORAL OBLIQUITY WHICH ESTIMATES WHAT IS TRULY GLORIOUS A DISGRACE. Had the Jews seen things in a right light they would have gloried in this superscription. That Malefactor was "the glory of His people Israel." As Sage, Saint, Hero, King, there never had been or would be one like Him. Depraved men are ever acting thus. Sinners see degradation when there is nobility. If men saw things as they are, they would often see ignominy on thrones, and royalty in the beggar's hut. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The superscription on the cross*:—I. WHAT IT TESTIFIES—of Jesus of Nazareth. 1. His Majesty. 2. His victory. 3. The foundation of His kingdom. 4. His jurisdiction and government. II. IT WAS—1. Read of all. 2. Vexatious to many. 3. Obstinately defended by one. III. LEARN—1. Wilt thou pass it unheeded? 2. Wouldst thou alter it? 3. Wilt thou not accept it? (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *The inscription on the cross*:—This was what Pilate wrote on the cross of Christ. Instead of mourning over *your* cross, write on *it*—I. JESUS, *i.e.*, Saviour. If He has delivered you from sin and its consequences you need not be greatly concerned about the mere scratches of life. II. NAZARETH. If you are poor, unknown, despised, remember that Christ your Redeemer came from Nazareth. Despite your present condition, you may yet do something in the world. III. KING. Never forget that your Saviour is supreme. You, therefore, are safe. IV. JEWS. We owe much to the Jews. By a Jew we are saved. Conclusion: Put this inscription on your cross and it will lighten it. On the cross of—1. Persecution. You are not alone; your Master bore this before you. 2. Public profession. Remember Christ, and you will find nothing to be ashamed of. 3. Temptation. 4. Poverty and pain. Jesus bore them all and will surely keep you. (*C. Spurgeon, jun.*) *The inscription on the cross* illustrates—I. THE UNCONSCIOUS TESTIMONY OF BAD MEN TO THE TRUTH. Pilate the vacillating, the superstitious, the cowardly, the civil, causes a statement to be written about Christ, than which no apostle's argument, no angel's song could be more truthful. The Kingship of the carpenter's Son, the royalty of the peasant teacher of Nazareth. Similarly Balaam and Caiaphas, and they who cavilled at Christ because He received sinners, were all unconsciously testifying to great truths, *e.g.*, Balaam to the moral fascination of a godly nation, Caiaphas to the necessity of vicarious sacrifice, the cavillers to the mercy of the great philanthropist. II. THE FAILURE OF MERE CULTURE TO EFFECT THE HIGHEST ENDS. These three languages the unlettered could not understand; but he who could read all used his knowledge in the service of the deadliest murder. Culture without religion is but civilized barbarism and disguised animalism. "Not by might nor by power," &c. III. THE OMNISCIENT ARRANGEMENTS OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE. The fact that these languages were employed reminds us of the historic marvel that this was just the epoch when most naturally Hebrew faith, Greek eloquence, and Latin empire, could combine to serve the propagation of the new evangel. Christ came "in the fulness of time." IV. THE UNIVERSAL AVAILABLENESS OF CALVARY. The fact that most concerns the peoples of

all centuries and climes is not transcendental, but an event which all can understand—a death—1. The death of a Man. Its availableness is illustrated in its relation to the population of the city then. For it happened not at the distance of a long pilgrimage, but "near the city." And it was explained in three languages, one or other of which the motley group that passed by could understand. So it is with the spiritual meaning of that fact—"Say not in thy heart who shall ascend . . . the Word is nigh thee." V. THE WORLD-WIDE VICTORIES OF THE CROSS. Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, have known, or is gradually knowing, the triumph of Christ. And His wondrous biography, infallible teaching, and redeeming power, is now proclaimed not in three, but in hundreds of languages, and "every tongue shall confess that Christ is Lord." (*U. R. Thomas.*) **Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.**—*Jesus of Nazareth* (Preached at Nazareth on Good Friday):—What are the lessons of Good Friday? I. THE UNIVERSAL LOVE OF GOD TO HIS CREATURES. 1. That is why it is so truly called Good Friday. It has its good news as much as Christmas or Easter Day. It was by His death, more even than by His life, that He showed how His sympathy extended far beyond His own nation, friends, family. "I, if I be lifted up," &c. 2. This is a truth which comes home to us with a peculiar force in Palestine. What is it that has made this small country so famous; that has carried the names of Jerusalem and Nazareth to the uttermost parts of the earth? The death of Christ. Had He not died as He did, His religion, name, country, would never have broken through all the bonds of time and place as they have. 3. This universal love of God in Christ's death is specially impressed upon us in Nazareth. What Christ was in His death, He was in His life. And if we wish to know the spirit which pervades both, we cannot do so better than consult His first sermon at Nazareth (Luke iv. 18). "The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him"—(1) "To preach the gospel to the poor," the glad tidings of God's love to the humble, neglected, dangerous classes, the friendless, the oppressed, the unthought for, the uncared for. (2) "To heal the broken-hearted," as a good physician heals, not with one medicine, but with all the various medicines and remedies which Infinite Wisdom possesses, all the fractures, and diseases, and infirmities of our poor human hearts. There is not a weakness, a sorrow, a grievance, for which the love of God, as seen in the life and death of Christ, does not offer some remedy. (3) "To preach deliverance to the captive." Whatever be the evil habit, inveterate prejudice, master passion, or the long indulgence, which weighs upon us like a bondage, He feels for us, and will set us free. (4) To "give sight to the blind." How few of us there are who know our own failings, who see into our own hearts, who know what is really good for us! That is the knowledge which the thought of Christ's death is likely to give us. For every one of these conditions, He died. Not for those only who are professedly religious, but for those who are the least so. Christianity is the only religion of which the Teacher addressed Himself, not to the religious, the ecclesiastical, the learned world, but to the careless, the thoughtless, the rough publican, the wild prodigal, the heretical Samaritan, the heathen soldier, the thankless peasants of Nazareth, the swarming populations of Galilee. II. WHATEVER GOOD IS TO BE DONE, IN THE WORLD, even though it is God Himself who does it, CANNOT BE DONE WITHOUT A SACRIFICE. 1. So it was especially in the death of Christ. So it was in His whole life, from the time when He grew up, "as a tender plant," in the seclusion of this valley, to the hour when He died at Jerusalem, was one long struggle against misunderstanding, opposition, scorn, hatred, hardship, pain. He had doubtless His happier and gentler hours—we must not forget them: His friends at Bethany, His apostles, His mother. But here, amongst His own people, He met with angry opposition and jealousy. He had to bear the hardships of toil and labour, like any other Nazarene artisan. He had here, by a silent preparation of thirty years, to make Himself ready for the work which lay before Him. He had to endure the heat and the cold, the burning sun, and the stormy rain, of these hills and valleys. "The foxes" of the plain of Esdraelon "have holes," "the birds" of the Galilean forests "have their nests," but "He had," often, "not where to lay His head." And in Jerusalem, though there were momentary bursts of enthusiasm in His behalf, yet He came so directly across the interests, the fears, the pleasures, and the prejudices of those who there ruled and taught, that at last it cost Him His life. By no less a sacrifice could the world be redeemed and His work be finished. 2. In that work, in one sense, none but He can take part. "He trod the winepress alone." But in another sense, often urged upon us in the Bible, we must all take part in it, if we would wish to do good to ourselves or to others. We cannot improve ourselves, we cannot assist others, except by exertion. We

must, each of us, bear our cross with Him. When we bear it, it is lightened by thinking of Him. When we bear it, each day makes it easier to us. Once the name of "Christian," of "Nazarene," was an offence in the eyes of the world; now it is a glory. But we cannot have the glory without the labour which it involves. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Pilate preaching the gospel*:—Pilate knew that "Jesus" was thought to be a most despicable name; and that "Nazareth" with the Jews was a proverb of condensed contempt. But "God held his hand while he did write." All unconscious, he was used as an instrument for publishing words of deep and mystic potency. First things are significant things, especially in the history of a dispensation. The first voice we hear speaking of Christ after His crucifixion is the voice of an angel, and the first title given to Him is Jesus of Nazareth. The first time that the Saviour was preached by man was under this title. Peter felt its infamy when "one of the maids of the high priest" said to him, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth." But soon as the Spirit was poured out, Peter rang out the name "Jesus of Nazareth." The first time that Jesus Himself, after His enthronement, spoke, He made Himself known under these words (Acts xxii. 8). Taking these things into consideration, we find that what was done by man only in contempt, has been turned by God into the most effectual means of exalting the Saviour and preaching the gospel. I. "THE CROSS," on which the writing was placed, first arrests our attention. 1. Was it like the thing sometimes looked at before the glass, put on admiringly, then taken off, then dropped among the tinkling trinkets? Like the thing that sparkles in the crown, or blows in the banner, or flames on the spire? We need have no superstitious fancy about this artistic device; only let us be careful not to allow the sight of it to deaden the sense of what Christ's cross really was. It was a shame! And when it was lifted up, I should have thought that any man would look another way. Any dying man is a sacred being, any dying scene a sacred place; but Jesus was nailed upright in a crowd to die. And then it was that Pilate hammered over the dying head the mocking proclamation. 2. I would not make the physical cross a theme for merely descriptive or declamatory words; nor do I make a venture into the sea of God's deep thoughts about the atonement; but I know that Jesus on that cross, dying for sinners, did in some way suffer what is instead of His people dying. We may enter this scene, but not as artists, sculptors, poets, musicians, talkers with a hard, ready rattle of syllables, but as priests, with stilled hearts and reverential steps; we may pause, but with prayer; we may look, but through tears. Pilate was the instrument of the fulfilment of Christ's words—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth," &c. II. THE NAME "JESUS." "Joshua," to which "Jesus" corresponds, means "the Lord's salvation," or, "the Lord of salvation." 1. By the time of our Lord's advent, the Jews had got to place the lowest possible construction on the predictions of a Saviour. They thought only of a political salvation; and every leader of an insurrection was tempted to call himself the Jesus of prophecy. There is some ground for the opinion that Barabbas played the part of a false Christ, taking the name of Jesus. The Roman governor of Judæa would know that the Jews looked upon the name Jesus as belonging to "the coming man," who should save them from the Romans. This to his mind would make it a name of scorn. At this hour the Jews were also ashamed of it. 2. Never was greater mistake about a name than this. Its true interpretation had been given by the angel, "For He shall save His people from their sins;" and if the same angel was the one who announced His resurrection, it is no wonder that the first word of announcement was "Jesus." He would triumph in that name. We share in this triumph. Some persons mainly think of Christ as a Saviour from penalty. We know indeed that by the cross the Saviour removes legal impediments in the way of pardon; but is that all? Is He simply like one who clears off old scores for us; wipes out the past as a child wipes off a false sum from his slate; who says, "Let bygones be bygones;" who holds the paper with the dreadful writing on it in the flame until it burns right away and says, "There, I have nothing against you!" Is that all? Not so. He will save me by setting me right, and not merely by setting right my relation to His law. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." III. THE APPELLATIVE "OF NAZARETH." The Jews had objected to part of Pilate's superscription, but not to this, for it expressed exactly what they were determined to affirm. According to His own account, He was "Jesus of heaven" (chap. viii. 23, 42). Just see what this implies. 1. A contradiction of Christ's claims to be the Heavenly Witness. Yet it was overruled so as to be the means of their glorious vindication. Keep in mind the distinction between a teacher and a witness. A teacher is one

who imparts knowledge; a witness is one who gives evidence. We expect him to tell us the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth from what has passed in his own personal presence. This is what Christ claimed to be. When Nicodemus said, "We know that Thou art a Teacher sent from God," His answer meant, "More than that, I am a Witness." "We speak that we do," &c. So at last with Pilate, He claimed to be the Heavenly Witness. "To this end was I born," &c. Of course no mere mortal could give evidence about anything that happened before He was born. God might say to any one of us (Job xxxviii. 4–7); but Christ, being the Witness giving the gospel revelation, had from the nature of the case to give evidence as to facts that belong to a place far above this world, and to a period far before it. Of course this claim includes the claim to be the Son of God. If a real Witness, it is plain that His birth was not the point of emergence from the blank of non-entity; but the arrival of a Traveller who said, "I am come forth from the Father, and am come into the world." Of course it is a mystery—the doctrine that Eternity should clothe itself in the garment of Time. But Mystery is the sign of the Infinite; and that which is not mysterious is not Divine. The animus of the inscription on the cross is endorsed by the Jews. "He is only Jesus of Nazareth." But this most public contempt of Christ's claims only led to their most public and irresistible vindication. The cross, which called attention to the one, calls attention to the other. The death on the cross led to the stupendous miracle of the Resurrection, by which He has been "declared to be the Son of God with power." 2. To insinuate the charge of sin; but it has been overruled to call attention to His spotless holiness. Nazareth was looked upon as the very sink of Galilee. There have been such Nazareths in old England. London had one in a place called Alsatia; many a nest of wreckers by the seaside was a social Nazareth. There are Nazareths now, to be in which implies loss of character; places that are like hells on earth; but Jesus lived thirty years in Nazareth of Palestine. Even the candid Nathanael said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But the critics of Christ can find no spot in Christ even there. Christ's pure life in polluted Nazareth was a great fact in the great gospel apparatus. It provided for the most searching chemistry of character; and after living so long under the action of such a test, He was found perfect. Such a human diamond found in filth, yet drinking in and flashing out again the pure light of God, could owe nothing to the filth in which it was discovered. Such holiness in Nazareth must be that before which all angels cry aloud, Holy, Holy, Holy! 3. This appellative pleased those who scorned Christ as the "son of a carpenter," for as such He was well known at Nazareth; but it reminds us of the honour due to Him as the Friend of poor and working people. It was as much as to say, "a carpenter is not a king;" but, besides that, it was meant to suggest, "Who would belong to a religion that has for its sacred central personage a carpenter?" The same spell would work in the same way now, and thousands who now profess Christianity would not do so, if doing so would make them look so low, socially, as did the first followers of the Carpenter. Let us call to mind the significance of the fact that the man Christ Jesus was a carpenter, and trace afresh the reasons why we should glory in it. It helps to make Him very real and homely; to make us feel that our religion is not a thing that belongs to some mysterious world of its own; but a thing for use, for the work-day world, for the majority. It helps to make us feel that He belongs to us all. Human princes take territorial names for their own distinction; Jesus takes a territorial name. And what is it? "Jesus of Paradise?" "Jesus of Glory?" "Jesus of Jerusalem the Golden?" No! but "Jesus of Nazareth," the place where He was only known as "the Carpenter." He was insulted by that name in His last hour on earth, but, now, it is one of the names by which He is known in the heraldry of heaven. IV. THE TITLE, "The King of the Jews." In writing this, Pilate intended to express the most extreme contempt. Not contempt for the religion of Jesus. In matters of religion he had no bias one way or the other; in his opinion, one religion was as good as another. He was not conscious of any active contempt for the person of Jesus; but he thought to use Him as an instrument to mortify the Jews. It was as much as to say, "There, you vile Jews! Your King is that! then what are you? Your own grand monarch is now nailed on His throne. Know yourselves!" They would have made no objection if Pilate had written, "He said, I am King of the Jews!" At the time when Jesus was born, men were eagerly asking, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" No one, however, thought for a moment of looking for Him at Nazareth. As was shrewdly said in a London yard by one of its native evangelists, "If the Prince of

Wales had lived thirty years in Raymond's Yard, folks would not have believed that he was the Prince of Wales. I expect that Nazareth was a poor sort of place, like this; yet there He was. If you find a sovereign in the mud, you think it only a farthing till you come to change it; and so, because they found Jesus at Nazareth, they never thought that He could be a King!" Even so. At the same time, it was not altogether the thought of Nazareth that made the Jews refuse to bend the knee. There was a time when that was no insuperable difficulty. The cause was in their own worldly nature, which He, by disappointing, had infuriated. They were mad because they thought He could break the Roman yoke for them, but would not. The priests thought they had got their revenge on Jesus for refusing to trample down the Romans. But when the cross was lifted, to their amazement, the truths they had tried to kill stood written over it, and the Crucified One was proclaimed their King! The wretched Pilate little knew that he had thus written one of the grandest truths. Appearances did seem to be against such a fact; yet, for God to be manifest in one place is no greater stoop of condescension than to be manifest in the other; and only our vulgar ideas of the majestic make us feel it to be a greater mystery there than anywhere else. The mystery was that He should appear as man anywhere. V. THE NOTICE placed over the head of Jesus "was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin." In the East, in the old time, when a government issued a notice intended to be read by the different nations of a large empire, it was the custom to write it on a tablet in the different languages of that empire, so that if men speaking these different languages would be able to read the inscription. Like the Rosetta Stone in the British Museum, showing one inscription in three dialects; like the inscribed rocks at Behistan, recording the fame of Darius Hystaspes in three forms of arrow-headed writing, so as to be understood by Assyrian, Median, and Persian readers—the inscription on the cross was written in three languages, and these were the three keys to unlock all the languages living in the world. So, without knowing what he was doing, Pilate thus began the publication of Christ to all the world; and all that evangelists at home and abroad have to do is to do by the Holy Ghost, and do thoroughly, what he began to do. Let the real meaning of what he wrote in these everlasting letters be brought out; and let all people in all languages read it or hear it, and Christ's missionary law will be fulfilled. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) **In Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.**—I. THESE LANGUAGES REPRESENT IN THEIR STRUCTURE THREE ENTIRELY UNLIKE TYPES OF CHARACTER. 1. The Hebrew has grandeur, but no grace. 2. The Greek is spoken beauty, yet fit more for nymphs than angels. 3. The Latin is the language of command, resolute purpose and decisive action, whose very study is a tonic. These three tongues were all familiar to the Jewish ear in the time of Christ; the Hebrew as still the language of worship, the Greek as the language of educated men, the Latin as the official language of the Roman Government. II. THESE LANGUAGES CORRESPOND TO THE FORMS OF CULTURE which were grouped together in every land; for the Hebrews had long been a migratory people; the Greeks were the preceptors of the world; while Roman soldiers and officials swarmed in all parts of the empire. 1. The Hebrews were pre-eminently a religious people. Even their idolatry was in sad earnest, and from the time of the Captivity their zeal for God and the law has no parallel. Their first temple, long anterior to Greek art, was the most magnificent edifice in the world, and their apparatus of worship the most organized and majestic that the world has known. Nor was Judaism in its earlier days a mere ritual—witness the psalms and prophets. But in the time of Christ it had lapsed into a punctilious formalism. 2. The Greek culture was distinguished by the sovereignty of beauty. It gave transcendent grace and charm to daily life. But it lacked the religious element; and the reverence of the worshipper who gave credence to the myths embodied in its art could only minister to his degradation. This culture eventually lapsed into a feeble sensualism, and Greek adventurers carried into every land with their art and philosophy, luxury, effeminacy, and the vices that follow in their train. 3. The Roman culture was that of unbending law, rigid discipline, and hardy self-control; in their better days their religion was sincere, and their standard of purity high. But their advancing knowledge soon outgrew their faith, and their religion became a nonentity to the enlightened, and a mere police force to the populace. Rude and averse to refining influences, they at first resisted the influence of Greeks, but eventually succumbed. At the Christian era moral corruption had replaced the robust virtues of the early Romans. 4. These were the effete forms of culture, whose signature was written over the cross. Each was ready to perish for lack of

the others. (1) Religion may exist alone in the individual soul; but as an element of social and national life it needs all the humanities, and can only live as a working force. (2) Art needs religion for its purity, grandeur and influence as an educational agency, and requires the element of law to blend vigour with grace. (3) Law demands a higher sanction than its own, and requires that its sternness be relieved by the humanizing influence of art. III. JESUS COMBINES IN HIS PERSON THESE THREE FORMS OF CULTURE. 1. He is emphatically King of the Jews; for the intensity of the religious life is betrayed in His every utterance. 2. He is more than Grecian in the grace, amenity, and sweetness of His Spirit. 3. He is more than Roman in the perfectness with which He is the incarnate law of God, and alone finishes the work God gave Him to do. IV. THESE ELEMENTS ARE BLENDED IN THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER WORTHY OF THE NAME. 1. It has the fervent religiousness of the Hebrew psalmists and Jews, only with less of the Sinai than of the Zion type. 2. However destitute of the wonted means of culture, it takes in a culture of its own, so that the grace of God assumes forms which man can recognize as graceful. 3. It is also a law-abiding Spirit, submitting not as to a hard yoke, but as to a loving service. V. WE HAVE IN THE THREEFOLD CAPTION OF THE CROSS OUR OWN DIRECTORY OF DUTY. 1. Religion, the inmost consecration of the soul to God, is the main element. 2. But religion is a power which should diffuse itself; and this it can only do by alliance with whatever adorns, sweetens and elevates the life of man. There has been a religiousness destitute of grace, and even repulsive; but if those who seek to be Christians would only prize and cultivate the beauty of holiness, they would be much more efficiently missionaries for the faith. 3. We need equally the Roman element of law to make us Christians indeed. A thoroughly obedient life, pervaded by the spirit of service, is the result of nurture in the school of Christ. (*A. P. Peabody, D.D.*)

Ver. 22. **Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.**—*The ineffaceable record*:—Men often speak wiser than they know. During Christ's trial Pilate had made for himself a record of ineffaceable infamy. We, too, are making up a record irreversible, ineffaceable. I. WE ARE WRITING UPON THE TABLETS OF OUR OWN SOULS. The fossiliferous rocks bear traces of rain-drops and foot-prints of birds made long ago, and destined to last to the end of time. More sensitive and susceptible is the human soul, upon which every thought, feeling, volition, action makes an impression, and the sum of these impressions makes character. The solemn thing about these impressions is that they are ineradicable. What we have written once we have written for ever. The impressions may have faded out in the long lapse of years, and yet little things—a name, a face, a strain of song—will bring up the buried past and make us live it over again. We never quite forget, and the severest torture of the damned will be that which comes from memory. II. WE ARE WRITING, TOO, UPON THE TABLETS OF OTHER HUMAN SOULS. It may be on the tender susceptibility of a little child, every unkind act or reproach makes a wound which will leave an ugly scar that will be carried to the grave. The like is true of the tender tracery of love. An old preacher long ago had among his hearers a fair-haired boy whom he tenderly loved, and for whose salvation he longed. The preacher went to heaven; the boy found a home far away in this Western world. One day, with his hands on the plough, that boy, now a man of sixty years, paused in the furrow, and as he paused there came to him the echo of the voice of that preacher to whom he had listened in early youth. And so let the patient mother, whose love seems lost upon her wayward boy, take heart and hope. III. AND SO WE ARE WRITING ON THE TABLETS OF ETERNITY AS WELL. Every man is an author, and the book he is writing is his autobiography. Authors commonly have a chance to revise what they write; but of this life record there shall be no revision. And this is the book that shall be opened, and out of this the dead shall be judged. We come to-day (last day in the year) to the close of another chapter of this book. We cannot revise it, but we may review it. In the review it would possibly appear that it resembles many a copy-book whose opening lines give evidences of painstaking, but whose later writing is sadly blurred. Let us humbly hope that some deeds of love have been recorded and some words of cheer for struggling souls set opposite our names. Yet how little the record shows, we fear, of holy endeavour and heroic sacrifice. But not a sentence can we efface, for what we have written we have written. And yet there is a ray of hope and a voice of comfort for those who mourn over their miserable record. A poor wretch, burdened with a sense of sin, dreamed that the demon of darkness held up before him all the long, black catalogue of his crimes. The

devil thought to drive him to despair, but while he looked and trembled, lo! One appeared who was like unto the Son of Man, and he looked and saw that His hands were pierced, and from those precious hands some drops of blood were trickling. The hands were laid upon the dreadful page, and with His blood He wiped it out. This is our consolation and our hope. And, again, there is another hope. It is the Book of Life, and in it are recorded all the names of God's saints. Let us humbly rejoice that our names are written there. (*P. S. Henson, D.D.*) *Life an inscription on a cross*:—I. MAN'S LIFE IS AN INSCRIPTION ON A CROSS. 1. It is evident that to Pilate the hour had come when he must reveal the spirit of his life by one great act of decision, and that decision was before the Cross. In that tremendous moment when Christ stood at his bar, the influences of two great worlds appealed to his soul—the everlasting world of Truth—Right—God; and the world of self-interest and wrong. He might crucify self or Christ; but whichever course he might adopt, he must announce his life-purpose for the world to read. By deciding for the worldly, he wrote the inscription, "I crucify Christ—truth—conscience; and enthrone self and the world in my soul," 2. When a man chooses anything before Christ, he virtually crucifies Christ. To choose anything in preference to Christ's truth is to crucify that truth. Christ asks for the absolute surrender of man's heart in the name of eternal love; to refuse this surrender is to trample on that love, and to scorn its appeals. There is no middle ground. "He that is not with Me, is against Me." Therefore, whenever Christ is felt claiming man, and the claim is passed by, the man stands in the position of Pilate of old. (1) The man of the world has his hour when, at the door of his heart, stands the Christ summoning him once more to yield. At the same moment comes the hissing voice of the tempter, "Take thine ease a little longer; hear Christ to-morrow;" and the soul, like Pilate, leaves the judgment-throne, and yields to the lying voice. Now, go within that man's heart: Do you not see a cross standing there in the gloom, while a pale hand is writing over it, in letters of the spirit-world, this title, "This is Jesus—I crucify the King"? (2) There comes a day in the history of the young soul when he feels that he has left childhood behind, and is girding himself for the battle of life, then often the Man of Nazareth approaches that soul, saying, "For thee I died; I will give thee glory if thou wilt take up thy cross and follow Me:" and at the same moment come the three mocking spirits of the world—pleasure, wealth, fame—saying, "Follow me." The choice is made, the struggle ended! Enter that soul, and gaze on the newly-erected cross, and read the letters of fire, "I crucify Christ, the King of men; I will not crucify myself:" and the inscription of life has begun. II. THAT INSCRIPTION IS WRITTEN IRREVOCABLY: "What I have written I have written." Pilate felt that the deed was done—Jesus crucified; his own struggle miserably ended, the past was beyond his recall. The inscription of man's life is written on two tablets. 1. The tablet of the eternal past. (1) Every deed done is done for ever. When a man has written his life-title on the cross, he may weep oceans of tears, but no human tears can wash it away. (2) The past, moreover, is a living power in the present, and it gradually forms the unchangeable character. Pilate found out that. It would have been immeasurably harder for him to change afterwards. You say the past has perished, but you forget that the present is filled with its living and active results. You see the snow covering the mountains; and you may feel that you are looking on the records of a dead past. There it lies cold—motionless. But the spring sun shines; and, in the form of a desolating avalanche, that dead past starts into a living power in the present. So in life, the sins of the past are not dead and gone; they have helped to make us what we are; and let the opportunity arise, let temptation come, and by our acts in the living present, they will terribly assert their power. Crucify self, and the cross becomes easier every day. Crucify truth, and every day you will find it harder to take the cross down. 2. The tablet of the immortal memory. We can forget nothing. Memory may sleep, but it cannot perish. Within the soul is the everlasting picture of all our life; and it only needs the light of conscience to waken it into awful brilliancy. III. THAT INSCRIPTION IS READ BY GOD. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*)

Vers. 23,24. **Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments.** —*One event with many revelations*:—I. The SPOLIATION OF DEATH. Christ is crucified. Death has completed its work. What had it done? 1. It had not destroyed His existence. He had gone in His full personality, and in the plenitude of His powers to His God and ours. 2. It had not destroyed His character. Death cannot rob us of this. It is the only property we can carry out of this world. What

then does it take from us? (1) Our material frames. Here was Christ's body torn from Him—the body through which He looked out at the universe, through which He received His sensations, by which He delivered His sublime doctrines and wrought His marvellous deeds. A precious thing is the body, and yet death takes it from every man, however much he may appreciate it. (2) Our material property. The garments of Christ were His only earthly property, but of them He was stripped. No doubt He valued them, not merely on account of their utility, but on account of those hands of love that had woven and presented them. Such is the spoliation of death. "We brought nothing into the world," &c.; "Naked came we," &c. All of the earth which men struggle for and gain they must lose. II. THE DESECRATIONS OF AVARICE—gambling over the garments of the Son of God. If aught of this earth were sacred, these were; yet avarice seizes them, gambles over them, and turns them to its sordid ends. Avarice has ever traded in the sacred, and now more than ever. It not only trades in corn, manufactures, &c., but in philanthropic and religious institutions. Preaching has become a trade; temples, houses of merchandise; charitable societies, organs of worldly greed. III. THE CULMINATION OF WICKEDNESS. Where can you see—1. Baser ingratitude than in putting to death One who "went about doing good"? 2. More outrageous injustice than in torturing One who was exquisitely tender and overflowing with mercy? Truly the Crucifixion is the culmination of sin! And yet it is marvellous that the most consummate production of human wickedness should be made by God the instrument by which to banish it from the world. Thus sin frustrates its own purpose. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **Now the coat was without seam.**—More exactly the *tunic*, or undergarment. It reached from the neck to the feet, while the outer "garment" was a square rug thrown round the body. Ordinarily the tunic consisted of two pieces connected at the shoulder by clasps; but that worn by Jesus was made in one piece. This seems to have been the rule with the priestly tunic. (*Archdn. Watkins.*) *Legend of the Holy Coat:*—This relic is alleged to have been discovered in the fourth century by Helena, the mother of Constantine, and by her deposited at Trevés, at that time the capital of Belgic Gaul and residence of the later Roman emperors. Concealed in a crypt from the Normans in the ninth century, it was rediscovered in 1196, and then exhibited, and not exhibited again till 1512, when Leo X. appointed it to be shown once every seven years. The Reformation and wars prevented the observance for some time, but the celebration was attended in 1810 by a concourse of 227,000 persons, and by a larger number in 1844, when Archbishop Arnoldi announced a centenary. Not only were miraculous cures asserted to have been wrought by this relic, but this celebration is memorable for the reaction which it produced, leading to the secession of Johann Rouge and the German Catholics from the Church of Rome. The dimensions given on an engraving, published at Trevés in 1844, are, from the extremity of each sleeve, 5 feet 5 inches; length from collar to lowermost edge, 5 feet 2 inches. In parts it is tender or threadbare; and some stains upon it are reported to be those of the Redeemer's blood. It is a loose garment of coarse material, dark brown in colour, probably the result of age, and entirely without seam or decoration. (*Biblical Museum.*) **Let us not rend it.**—Bengel observes that we never read of our Lord "rending" His own garments in desperate sorrow, like Job, Jacob, Joshua, Caleb, Jepthah, Hezekiah, Mordecai, Ezra, Paul, and Barnabas (see Gen. xxxvii. 29; Numb. xiv. 6; Judges xi. 35; 2 Kings xix. 1; Esther iv. 1; Job i. 20; Acts xiv. 14). (*Ep. Ryle.*)

Vers. 25-27. **Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother.**—*Manifold revelation of love:*—We have here a revelation in love of—I. MORAL HEROISM—the presence of the woman and John. Scarcely could they have placed themselves in a more perilous position. Love is the soul of courage. There is no power for magnanimous endurance and fearless achievements equal to womanly affection. Such love you can trust. It clings to its object as ivy to the castle: holds on to it midst the scorchings of summer and the blastings of winter; survives even the ruin of its object, and spreads a beauty over its grave. II. PARENTAL DISTRESS. 1. What must have been the feelings of Mary. Now was fulfilled the prophecy, "a sword shall pierce thy soul also." There are no trials more poignant than those of a mother in the death throes of her child. Rachels, the world over, weep for their children and refuse to be comforted. 2. But there are circumstances which sometimes mitigate the distress when death occurs in unconscious infancy, or when a child is one of a large number, or when death occurs in maturity among friends.

Mary's Son was in the prime of life, and died among malignant foes, and at their hands: and moreover was perhaps her only Son, and she probably a widow. III. FILIAL COMPASSION. "Woman, behold thy Son"—a gleam of unearthly sunshine. 1. No sufferings, however great, can quench love. Christ's sufferings surpassed all conception, yet they did not drown the memory of His mother. He seemed to forget His agonies in her tears. Children learn a lesson from this! Plead no personal inconvenience as a reason for neglecting your parents. 2. No engagements, however vast, can justify the neglect of domestic duties. How vast were Christ's engagements! Here was a crisis in the history of the universe—yet Christ attended to the needs of His aged mother. Let none plead—statesmen, ministers, or reformers—their engagements as a justification for neglecting home duties. 3. No legacy, however precious, is equal to the Legacy of Love. Christ could have made His mother the mistress of an empire; but He bequeathed her what was better—the affection of a noble soul. What is equal to this? 4. No argument, however plausible, can justify us in regarding Mary as an object of worship. The mothers of great men are to be held in high veneration. Albeit, ought we to regard this poor desolate woman whom Jesus commended to the care of John as Queen of Heaven! IV. CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE. "From that hour," &c. Tradition says that John never forsook his trust, and remained in Palestine till the mother of his Lord was dead. His obedience was prompt and full. There are only three admissible reasons supposable for not attending at once and fully to Christ's commands. 1. If the command is inconsistent with the eternal principles of right. 2. If the difficulties are such that only time can remove them. 3. If there is ground to suppose that help not now obtainable will be granted in the future. Such reasons, though admissible, do not exist, and therefore, like John, we should at once obey. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The cross of Jesus*:—I purpose to consider the text with reference to—I. THE INDIVIDUALS spoken of in it. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all take particular notice of the women who ministered unto Jesus, and followed Him to Calvary, but St. John is the only one who mentions three of them by name. He does so, perhaps, as writing subsequently to the others, and as having himself stood with the Marys by the cross and observed them there. They were, moreover, persons peculiarly characterized, and therefore also worthy to be specifically mentioned. Mary, the mother of Jesus, would naturally feel a deep and solemn interest in all that befell her Divine Son. It is not determined in the original whether the second Mary was the wife, the mother, or the daughter of Cleophas: but it is generally believed she was his wife, and that he was also called Alpheus, and therefore the mother of James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas (Matt. xii. 46; Mark vi. 3). Be this, however, as it may, she was ardently and devoutly attached to her Lord. The other Mary, Magdalene, was a woman of Magdala, a large and populous town, near the lake Tiberias, in Galilee, and out of her Jesus cast seven devils. "There," might Mary the mother of Jesus say, "dies my Son." "There," might the wife of Cleophas say, "dies my Friend." "There," might the Magdalene say, "dies my Saviour." II. OURSELVES. And first observe, that the cross, which the Marys beheld with their bodily eyes, we must behold by faith. Others' personal witness does not supersede the necessity of our belief. 1. Would we have our sins forgiven? Let us stand by the cross of Jesus. Though by "wicked hands He was crucified and slain," yet in His death was the meritorious means of our forgiveness. 2. Would we have our iniquities subdued? Let us stand by the cross of Jesus. There is with Him "a power whereby He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." Our will, our affections, our memory, and imagination, He can bring into sweet and entire subserviency to the law of the Spirit of Life. 3. Would we be softened? Let us stand by the cross of Jesus. How were the pious sensibilities of the Marys moved as they stood and mourned for Him! When we can most feelingly enter into the condescending kindness, and the dying love of Christ, then shall we ourselves be most truly kind and conciliating. 4. Would we preserve serenity and peacefulness of spirit? Let us stand by the cross of Jesus. Nothing will so effectually quell mental strife as meditation on the death of Christ. Wild may be the tumult of conflicting opinions, and contrariety may pervade all human schemes and devisings; but, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace," &c. 5. Would we be crucified unto the world? Let us stand by the cross of Jesus. What was the world, either in its prosperous or adverse circumstances, to the Marys. When any feel it to be hard to give up some carnal pleasure or worldly advantage, let them inquire whether they recollect their Saviour's cross? 6. And as Jesus our Lord "endured the cross, despising the shame,"

would we take up our daily cross with cheerfulness? Let us stand by the cross of Jesus. Let us quell every complaining of our heart with the question, "Did not Jesus suffer?" "Therefore let us both labour and suffer reproach;" and "esteem," like Moses, "the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt," or all the wealth of worlds. 7. Would we truly love the Lord and Saviour of our souls? Let us stand by His cross. Boundless is the love we owe Him. 8. Would we descend ourselves into the grave resignedly? Let us stand by the cross of Jesus. If we go down into Hades from Calvary, we need entertain no distressing fear: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (*W. Mudge, B.A.*) *Nearness to the cross*:—I. THE SITUATION OF THE MOTHER. I admire in her the efficacy of Divine grace. She is able to stand near the cross; she does not faint away. Here are no outrageous exclamations, no bitter complaints flung at heaven. She feels as a mother, but endures as a Christian. The people of God know not what they can bear till they are tried: When the "time of need" comes, then comes sufficient "grace to help." I shall never despair of the support of a Christian, in any situation, after beholding Mary here. Ye bereaved mothers, remember, religion allows you to feel, but forbids you to faint. Think of Mary, for who can adequately imagine her anguish! To see her Son enduring such a death! And such a Son! And to crown all she was now a widow. II. THE ADDRESS OF THE SAVIOUR. He speaks in a manner suited to her trying circumstances. Though I die, there is one who will discharge the filial office. Then saith He to the disciple—"Behold thy mother! Receive her—not as a pauper. Note—1. The indigence of our Lord. Many talk of poverty, but He was poor. When He came to die, all He had to bequeath was His wearing-apparel; and even this never came to His mother. What becomes then of riches? "Foxes have holes," &c.—yet He was "the brightness of the Father's glory." But, alas! all this will not keep numbers from thinking money the essence of all excellency. 2. An instance of the Divine goodness, which ought to encourage the poor and needy. When one comfort is withdrawn, another is furnished. When Jesus is removed, John is raised up. Let those who are dying, and have nothing to leave, hear God saying, "Leave thy fatherless children," &c. 3. We should endeavour to be useful, not only living, but dying. Christ dies as He had lived—"doing good!" Dr. Rivet said, in his last illness, "Let all who come to inquire after my welfare be allowed to see me: I ought to be an example in death as well as in life." 4. A lesson of filial piety. Children are under an obligation to succour their parents, not out of charity, but in common justice. David, when wandering from place to place, seemed regardless of himself, if he could provide for his father and mother; and David's Son and Lord, even in the agony of crucifixion, commends His poor mother to the beloved disciple. Why did He this? Could not He, who could feed a whole multitude, have furnished means for His destitute mother? The answer is that He does not needlessly work miracles. He generally fulfils His kind designs in the established course of things. The poor are as much consigned by Providence to the care of the affluent as Mary was charged upon John. III. THE OBEDIENCE OF THE DISCIPLE. John does not stand weighing things: "Can I afford the expense, trouble, reproach and suspicion?" True obedience is prompt, and will lead us to "do all things without murmuring and disputing." This is peculiarly the case with regard to charity. While we stop to investigate, and take great pains not to be deceived, the opportunity is gone. Therefore, says Solomon, "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due," &c. (*W. Jay.*) *Silences at the cross*:—Is it not a striking fact that our Lord was allowed to die under such conditions of cruelty and wrong-doing without a single protest, so far as we can find from the record, from the lips of an apostle, disciple, or well-wisher? This is a fact which we ought honestly to consider. Catching a new inspiration, the apostles became eloquent in the proclamation of that Cross whose mystery, while it was uplifted, had silenced them. Let us consider—I. The silence of some IN THE PRESENCE OF A STRANGE AND PAINFUL SURPRISE, In order to understand this better, let us recall some of our Lord's preceding utterances to His disciples: See how repeatedly He discourages the possible suggestion of resistance. He had also said, "No man taketh it [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." He further intimated, when danger seemed to threaten Him prematurely, that there were twelve hours in the day, and that His hour had not yet come. Throughout it was not resistance, but passive endurance, that Christ taught. II. The silence of the majority of the disciples arose also from FEAR OF THE APPARENT TRIUMPH OF EVIL, AND THE SUCCESSFUL CONSPIRACY OF WICKED MEN. Their fears weakened

their grasp of Christ, and when that was done there was nothing left for them but flight. Not an apostle's voice was heard at the cross. They alone of all men were those who had nothing to say! In the face of that silence the question comes to us, "How could these men ever speak again in the name of that Christ?" And with what a high sense of privilege the commission came to those who had so recently been silent when they might have spoken—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"! It came to them as the restoration of a forfeited right ever to speak again for Jesus, since that gift had been neglected in the supreme moment of need. III. The silence of HELPLESSNESS IN THE PRESENCE OF TYRANNICAL FORCE—a silence that would largely pertain to the women. IV. The silence of LOVE IN THE PRESENCE OF INSCRUTABLE MYSTERY. This would above all apply to Mary. The cries of blasphemy which now rent the air, and pierced her ears, but ill accorded with the harmonies of the angels' song which still lingered in her memory. There are times when our only safety is to be quiet, to bear passively the burden of mystery, and to look conflicting providences in the face and answer them nothing. V. The silence of INTENSE GRIEF THAT COULD ONLY SPEAK—if it spoke at all—in tears, since words were too weak. VI. The silence of FAITH THAT COULD WAIT FOR THE SOLUTION. I believe that Mary and John and the woman at the cross had that faith in a great measure. There might have been other obscure disciples in the crowd who had it. I wonder sometimes that some of the deaf and dumb to whom Christ had given speech and hearing did not use their new-born speech on this occasion; but it may be that in that throng, as well as in the smaller group near the cross, there was at least one here and there who could look the mystery in the face and say, "I cannot solve it, but I will wait. He that believeth shall not make haste." Even at the cross of Christ, and among that tumultuous throng, there was a faith to be found in solitary hearts that could leave all with the Crucified One. "I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it up again?" To some at least who had heard those words, the suggestion would come, "What if this be after all but the expression of His power? What if the Cross be but the Gospel in paradox?" Conclusion: While, therefore, there is much in the silences at the cross of Christ that fills us with humiliation and shame, we will not indiscriminately condemn all the reticence of that hour. There are times in every true life when silence is the expression of the mightest faith. One man speaks and ejaculates, yet only reveals hysterical weakness; the other man waits, is calm, and utters not a word, because he is strong enough to be quiet. The Cross of Jesus Christ is too sacred, too sublime a thing for us to talk of until we know something about it. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." If you do not know that, the best thing you can do is to be quiet, and look at that Cross in silence. Do not talk flippantly, much less scornfully, about that in which you have no share. In the presence of His Cross the world is now silent for very shame, but we who have trusted in Him are in its presence filled with a joy which shall sustain us in all sorrow, and find its consummation in the rapture of that eternal world, where Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, and where we shall face to face behold Him who has washed us from our sins in His own blood. (*David Davies.*) *Nearness to the cross*:—1. Many and dissimilar were the groups gathered round the cross. Some were drawn by hatred, some by curiosity, some by the duties of their office, these Marys by love. 2. Their position suggests the topic of spiritual nearness. All true piety begins in the soul's coming to the Cross. Bunyan was right in keeping the burden on the back of the Pilgrim till he had a sight of the Crucified. But when the soul has gained that position, then begins the conflict of opposing forces. On the one side the Cross with its mighty magnetism; on the other the world with all its witcheries. But the importance of nearness to the Cross is seen if we regard it as the place in which to see—I. OURSELVES. No one has seen himself till he has looked at himself in the light of the Cross. In that light sin is seen in its true colours—as God estimates it. II. THE WORLD. The man of science has his position and outlook, and the statesman his. But only here is the true view. Here we see that it is a world for which Christ died and to every soul of which redemption is offered. It was this outlook that moved the great heart of Paul to heroic sacrifice and endeavour. The world had but one aspect to Him. Christ had died for it. This was the outlook of Judson and other devoted missionaries. Talk of philanthropy—there is none save that which is kindled at the foot of the cross! III. THE CHARACTER OF GOD. The heavens declare His glory. God has never been

without His witnesses if man would listen. But to fallen man another revelation was necessary, and that revelation just suited to man's deepest need was made by the Cross. It is there we learn how God loved a sin-blasted world. (*W. Lamson, D.D.*) **The disciple standing by whom He loved.**—*The beloved disciple*:—Though the rest of the disciples forsook Christ and fled, yet John followed Him into the high priest's palace, and was an afflicted spectator of His sufferings upon the cross. This may be ascribed in part to the greatness of his courage, and in part to the strength of his affection. John himself is the narrator of this event; and such was his humility that he does not mention his own name. This resembles the conduct of Paul (2 Cor. xii.). In this way do the sacred writers love to conceal themselves when speaking of their own attainments or enjoyments. I. THE CHARACTER OF JOHN. 1. He is called a disciple. (1) This implies that he was teachable. As Christ is qualified to give instruction, so His disciples are prepared to receive it. God has opened their ears, that they are capable of spiritual instruction; and their understandings, that they are capable of spiritual discernment. They "receive with meekness the ingrafted Word" (Psa. xxv. 9). (2) He was not only apt to learn, but was actually taught, like the noble Bereans, who "received the Word with all readiness of mind." If they are asked, "Will ye also go away?" their answer will be, "Lord, to whom should we go?" They have learnt the evil nature of sin; of their own weakness; the world, and its insufficiency; the necessity of a Saviour, and the suitableness of Christ; and "the grace of God teaches them, that denying ungodliness," &c. Such a disciple was the beloved John. 2. He was "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Jesus loved all the disciples, and considered in His supreme character, He loved them all alike; all the members are alike necessary to the body, and as such are equally beloved. But in the peculiar affection which Christ bare to John, we may remark—(1) That this respects His human nature. Christ as a man had all the sinless affections of that nature which He assumed. Now this disciple being possessed of amiable qualities, it is probable, in a more eminent degree than the rest, Jesus loved him as a friend, as well as a disciple. (2) That it respects love, not as inherent, but as manifested. If Christ made a difference between one disciple and another in His treatment of them, it is no more than what He continues to do. One is kept, as it were, at a distance, while another is laid in the bosom. All are alike justified by His righteousness, but not equally comforted by His Spirit. (3) The words of our text being those of the beloved disciple, may denote the high sense he had of the favour of our Lord towards him. It seems natural for a gracious person to think that the love of Christ has been more freely and eminently bestowed on him than on any other, as feeling himself more unworthy of it. Thus Paul says, "And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant," &c., as if it had exceeded every former example of mercy. John had been distinguished, and was amazed that it should be so. The lower opinion he had of himself, the more exalted thoughts he had of Christ's goodness towards him. II. THE SITUATION OF JOHN. He "stood by the cross." 1. That he might attentively observe the important transactions of that solemn season upon which so much depended. He might well think that so extraordinary a Person would finish His course in an extraordinary way; and he was not mistaken. 2. That he might show his attachment to Christ, and his faith and confidence in Him. He had been told, that if any one would be Christ's disciple, he must hate father and mother, &c.: from these terms in this trying season he did not draw back. As the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, so was his soul knit to his indulgent and now suffering Saviour. 3. That he might perform any friendly office, and afford all the assistance in his power. Though he could not prevent the sufferings of his Lord, yet his standing by the cross would tend a little to mitigate them. When Paul made his appearance before Nero, he complained that "no man stood by him" (2 Tim. iv. 16). David also seemed to take it hard that Mephibosheth went not with him when he left Jerusalem on account of the rebellion of Absalom. No blame, however, lay upon John in this respect. He did more than the rest; and though he could not drink of his bitter cup, yet he would sympathise with Christ. 4. That he might receive of Him His last instructions, or at least, learn of Him how to die. As there had been such an endearing friendship between them, he might think that the dying Saviour would have something to say to him in particular, and in this he was not disappointed. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) **Woman, behold thy Son.**—*The sympathy of Christ*:—Among the friends who were gathered round the cross there is one whose presence does not surprise us—the beloved disciple. But who beside? Not Peter "the rock," or

Thomas once ready to die with Him. A few trembling women who had ministered to Him in life and would not forsake Him in death. Amongst these was His mother who, thirty-three years before, had pressed Him to her bosom a helpless babe, and who heard about that sword which now pierced her soul. Note here—I. THE SELF-FORGETFULNESS OF CHRIST'S LOVE. 1. Try to think of what He was suffering—the anguish and shame of the most lingering and bitter of deaths. But bodily torture was His least agony. The world's sin in its most awful form was there to trouble His last moments—the bitter taunts, &c. But who shall venture to imagine His thoughts as He hung a sacrifice for sin? Is it not wonderful that men should here pretend to explain and analyse. You might as well hope to fathom the sea or compass it. It is better to bow our heads in faith and confess that the Atonement far exceeds our poor logic, and to gratefully accept it. Surely if sorrow be a sacred thing, that of the Divine Sufferer must be far above our sympathy, as above our comprehension. 2. In that awful hour He was alone, but its loneliness did not render His suffering selfish. All His thoughts were for others. Ere He reached the cross He said, "Daughters of Jerusalem," &c.: when nailed to it His first words are, "Father, forgive them," and His next those of kingly grace to the robber. And now His words are the tender utterance of human love. Jesus forgot the greatest grief that ever fell on human heart that He might minister to the grief of others. 3. Have we learnt this lesson? It is a hard and costly one. In our sorrows we expect sympathy, but have we ever sought their sweetest, holiest alleviation in ministering to others. Learn at the foot of the cross, that whether in sorrow or joy, no Christian man liveth unto himself. II. HIS FILIAL TENDERNESS. 1. All through His life He had seemed to stand apart from the ties of relationship. He was never only the Son, the Brother, He was always more. His first recorded act was submission to His parents, but even then with a consciousness of a higher relationship. But no sooner does He enter on His public ministry than He refuses to recognize the tie, "What have I to do with thee?" "Yea, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." Behold my mother and my brethren." Such conduct is evidence enough to refute the Roman view, and is studiously so framed as if by anticipation to condemn it. He would have us see, too, that He thought far more of spiritual than natural relationship, and so He bids us to hate father, mother, &c. 2. Yet now, upon the cross, He consecrates anew the love of parents and children, and ratifies with His blood the commandment, "Honour thy father," &c. What a depth of tenderness does this reveal! He gave His mother His last solemn blessing, and bequeathed to her His best earthly legacy. She could be no more His mother, but He gave her another son, who of all His disciples was most like Himself. Jesus could thus discharge the debt of human love in the hour of His deepest passion. He did not say "It is finished" till He had said, "Woman, behold thy Son." 3. How is it with us, who so often suffer our work for God to be a pretence for the neglect of home duties? He who gave the first table of the law gave the second. Whatever other duty God has given us, it can never excuse the parent in neglecting the child, or *vice versâ*. III. THE WISE THOUGHTFULNESS OF OUR SAVIOUR'S LOVE. 1. He calls her not mother: He never had. He does not acknowledge the parental right, even while He discharges the filial duty. But He does more. He teaches His mother the same lesson as when He said, "I will not leave you orphans." He will not leave her childless. He can no more be to her a Son, but she shall have another son. If on earth He refused to call her mother, in heaven the relationship must be at an end for ever. In the selection of John we see wise thoughtfulness. He in a worldly sense could best bear the burden, being in easy circumstances. But it was not only for her earthly wants that Jesus provided. There He might have left her to her natural guardians. But He gave her a heart that could best understand her own. It is not always our relations who understand us best. A friend may be more to you than brother or sister, or father or mother. James, with his common-sense, practical view of religion, would probably be unable to sympathize with the deeper thoughts of her who loved to keep and ponder the mysteries of heaven. For her children after the flesh, she had now a son after the Spirit, St. John, the man of virgin soul, as the early Church loved to call him, for her of virgin mind the best friend. And the friendship was as abiding as it was holy. The friendships of the world are too often hollow, brittle, delusive. Friendships made beneath the Cross of Jesus are the truest and best. Death cannot destroy them. 2. Have we learned this? There is something better and truer than politeness, or even kindness. Politeness is a thing of the day, and changes with the changing customs of society. Kindness may be a matter of mere

feeling, is often an evidence of weakness, and only touches the surface of other men's characters. And both may be only forms of selfishness. But wise, thoughtful love can only be learned at the foot of Christ's Cross. (*Bp. Perrowne.*) *The bequest of Jesus*:—Here we see—1. The fulfilment of the promise: "Them that honour Me, I will honour." John honoured Christ most emphatically. Consequently, Jesus applied to him the very name He had, "Son," and made him the guardian of the Virgin in His place. 2. The disinterestedness of Christ. Pain and weakness often make people peevish and irritable. Jesus was anxious about others, in spite of agony indescribable. To the very last it was true that He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." 3. In one sense, the words, "Behold thy mother," show how intensely human Jesus was. Of whom should a dying son think but of his mother? 4. What shall be said of Mary as she stands at the cross? Surely, if she were as great and as powerful as Popery teaches, Christ would not have committed her to the care of John. He would rather have commended John to her. *Stabat Mater*—the mother stands by the cross. What an impressive spectacle! She and three other women are there; John is the only man. Four women to one man—quite prophetic of Christianity's future. Behold Mary's fortitude! Despite all the horrors, we see her stand, not faint. Mary avowed herself Christ's disciple when disciples were few and enemies were many. May we do the same. The text delivers three messages. I. ATTEND DILIGENTLY TO SECULAR DUTIES. Jesus was expiring as a martyr. But was that all? Nay. He was now offering Himself as a sacrifice for us. Yet, mark! in the midst of all He thinks of His mother, and commends her to the care of His friend. This is very significant. Preaching, singing, &c., are a small part of religion. They are chiefly means to an end—holy conduct in ordinary life. The earth has two motions: she turns on her axis, and she travels round the sun. Can the one be made a substitute for the other? We are to revolve round the Sun of Righteousness, and also on the axis of common, daily duty. Jesus Christ did not say much about theology. He taught that holiness finds itself at home anywhere. Why did He talk about fish, loaves, candles, salt, silver, &c.? To show that, save sin, "nothing is common nor unclean." Dr. Arnold said, respecting literature, that what we want is not more books on religion, but more books written in a religious spirit. A distinguished ecclesiastic, whose overwrought brain urgently needed relaxation, was once engaged in a game of chess. His companion suddenly asked, "If Christ were to come here now, what would you do?" He replied, "I would finish the game; I began it to the glory of God." A humble Christian was visited once by his pastor when he was occupied with his ordinary craft at the tan works. Offering an apology to the minister, the latter cut it short by saying, "My friend, God grant that I may so be found when the Lord shall come—found doing my duty as you are." The New Testament abounds in exhortations and encouragements to the most commonplace obligations. Husbands love your wives, &c. The world cares little for many of our theological debates. But one thing it never fails to understand and to value, namely, goodness! Let the poor and the suffering find in us ready sympathy and succour; then will men exclaim, "No man can do these works that thou dost, except God be with him." II. TRUST THE APPOINTMENTS OF PROVIDENCE. Why did Jesus say to John, "Behold thy mother"? It seems strange that He passed over her own sons. Yes, and only seems. First, Mary's sons rejected Jesus. "Neither did His brethren believe on Him." They were out of sympathy, spiritually, both with Christ and Mary, whereas John was, heart and mind, devoted to Him. Secondly, John was in a better social position than the other apostles, and than the Lord's mother. We see, then, that what looks strange was really very wise and kind. All God's dealings are the same. If He was good at the cross, He must be good here and now. We sorely need this faith. There is much in our experience which is painfully mysterious. Why is might so often allowed to conquer right? Why do the innocent suffer for the guilty, &c.? We fully sympathize with the ancient writer who said: "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me." Is there rest anywhere? There is. "At the feet of Jesus." Sit there. He will not remove all our perplexities. Nevertheless, be assured of this: Christ tells enough to console us, to take off the edge of our difficulties, and to render us trustful. He reveals a God so good that, if we take Christ at His word, we may be perfectly satisfied that somehow all shall yet be well. "Have faith in God," and thus "return unto thy rest, O, my soul." III. GIVE PROFOUND HEED TO THE COUNSELS OF THE DYING. John did so. The advice of the expiring is almost invariably right and good. "Fools men may live, but fools

they cannot die." The dying tell us—1. That earthly possessions cannot satisfy us in death. Philip II. of Spain cried, "O, would God I had never reigned! O that I had lived alone with God! What doth all my glory profit, but that I have so much the more torment in death?" Albert the Good said, "I am surrounded with wealth and rank, but if I trusted only to them, I should be a miserable man." Salmasius declared, "I have lost a world of time. Oh, sirs! mind the world less and God more." Bunsen exclaimed, "My riches and experience is having known Jesus Christ. All the rest is nothing." 2. That Christ, not themselves, is the ground of their hope. Archbishop Whately, a distinguished scholar, thinker, philanthropist, replied to a friend who said to him, "You are dying as you lived, great to the last." "I am dying, as I lived, in the faith of Jesus." Another remarked, "What a blessing that your glorious intellect is unimpaired." "Do not call intellect glorious," answered Whately; "there is nothing glorious out of Christ." A third observed, "The great fortitude of your character now supports you." "He said, "No, it is not my fortitude that supports me, but my faith in Christ." May such simple but sufficient trust be ours! (*T. R. Stevenson.*) *The legacy*:—Notice—I. THE STATION OF MARY. This suggests thought of—1. Her great love. A bird cleaves the storm to reach its nest; a mother walks through levelled lances to clasp her child. 2. Her great anguish. Once she had felt the most exquisite happiness that a mother could know. 3. Her strength. "She stood." Here are no violences, no hysterics. Such strength to stand was not from nature. Her nature was timid and retiring. Once, at one word from Jesus that sounded like a check, she vanished for a long time out of the story (chap. ii. 4). We see the efficacy of Divine grace. Look around, and you may find many illustrations of this. There is a woman who stands dumb beside her young husband's grave; there is another who stands in tender agony over an empty cradle; there is another who night after night stands listening for the tipsy stumble of a thing that was once a man. Poor heart! she must make what she can of life. It is a real cross, and strength to stand by it must be of the kind that Mary had. Such strength is never given for fancy crosses. 4. Her public profession of faith. It was grand to see Luther take his station in the face of a frowning world; it was grander to see Mary take her station at the cross. It would have been much for man to do; it was more for the shrinking, tremulous delicacy of woman. It is easy to stand by Jesus when others stand. II. THE SAYING OF JESUS. Note—1. His tender considerateness. Suffering is proverbially selfish. While Jesus is Himself one flame of pain, His first cry is for the crucifiers; His second to sinful humanity; His third of love to His own. 2. Jesus providing for His own, and thus setting us an example. In treating John as if he were of nearer kin to Mary than her natural relatives were, He reminds us of the life which binds together all who are one in Him. He leaves His people one to another. 3. The Saviour's poverty. He made no will but this in relation to what He had in this life, and only the name of John was in it. Looking at the things of this world, the "I am," not the "I have," is the standard of His valuation. His own choice was the poor man's lot (2 Cor. viii. 9). Silver and gold are not named among the things that come to us through the death of Christ. But if we are not down in His will for earthly property, we shall, through His Cross, have "the true riches." 4. The sentiments due to the Virgin Mary. Although they are not given in the form of law, they have the force of law. The offer of worship to Mary, on the ground that she is the mother of Jesus, is forbidden by this text. (1) Attention is called to the text because it is one of the seven memorable sayings on the cross; on account of its publicity, for nothing ever can be so public as the cross; as the last of three recorded sayings spoken to Mary by our Lord in the course of His ministry. Look at this one in the light of the preceding two. In the first (Luke ii. 41–50) we trace no regret or excuse; and the plain point of His language being that into the affairs of His Father in heaven, He repudiates her intrusion. In the second (chap. ii. 3, 4), with an air the most imperative, He gives an indication that in His own high province she, as His mother, has no authority. Here, again, soften the word as you may from seeming hardness, it is remarkable that, in these three instances, He calls her, not "Mother," but "Woman." (2) You have heard His final words to her: what were His final words to John? "Behold the mother of God? the queen of heaven? the mediatrix?" Was John to make a shrine for her? No, but to make a home for her. The grandest honour a woman could have was that of being the medium through whom the Saviour came into the world. Yet I cannot forget that once, when a woman used words to that effect, He said, "Yea, rather,

blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." Surely it must have put great constraint upon His loving heart to accost her in words so studied, so cautious. I can only account for them on the principle that in His foreknowledge He saw what a handle would be made of even the most ordinary epithet of honour and affection applied by Him to her, and was resolved to leave no datum, no vestige, no shadow of a shadow of excuse for Mariolatry. After all this, millions who wear the Christian name still worship Mary as a goddess. Poor woman! If a sword could pierce the heart of Mary in heaven, it would be this. III. THE OBEDIENCE OF THE DISCIPLE. What Christ told him to do he did at once. What He tells you to do do it at once. Take your orders from Mary herself; she refers you to Him, and says, "Whatsoever He saith to you, do it." *He* is our Lawgiver. Why wait? (*C. Stanford.*) *Regard for a parent*:—A young man who was anxious to devote himself to the work of the ministry among the heathen, and had been recommended to the London Missionary Society, on undergoing the usual examination, stated that he had one difficulty: he had an aged mother entirely dependent upon an elder brother and himself for support; and in case of his brother's death, he should wish to be at liberty to return home, if his mother were still living, to soothe her pathway to the grave. Scarcely had he made this frank statement, when the harsh voice of a cast-iron committee-man exclaimed, "If you love your mother more than the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not do for us!" Abashed and confounded, the young man was silent. Some murmurs escaped the committee, and he was requested to withdraw for a while, that his proposal might be duly considered. On his being again sent for, Dr. Waugh, the venerable chairman, told him, with unaffected kindness, that the committee did not feel authorized to accept of his services for a period which might be so short and uncertain, but immediately added: "We think none the worse of you, my good lad, for your dutiful regard for your aged parent. You are acting in conformity to the example of Him whose gospel you wished to proclaim among the heathen, who, as He hung upon the cross, in dying agonies, beholding His mother and the beloved disciple standing by, said to the one, 'Woman, behold thy son!' and to St. John, 'Behold thy mother!'" (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*)

Vers. 28, 29. **After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.**—*A word from the cross*:—1. Our Lord's seven words from the cross, have in all ages been very dear to the Church. There is nothing strange in this. Had it been but some earthly monarch, great, wise and good, would not his latest words, or words uttered at some notable crisis, be accounted a precious legacy? But what king, what moment like this? 2. That the words should be thus exactly seven, the sacred and mystical number is not without its significance. No evangelist records them all; every evangelist some. St. John alone records the briefest of them all; only one word in the original. It is the only utterance which contains any allusion to Christ's bodily anguish. He has from His cross a word of intercession on behalf of His enemies; a word of grace for an enemy turned into a friend; a word of tender and thoughtful love for His mother; a word of triumph as He contemplates the near consummation of His work; a word of affiance on His Father and God; yes, too, and His soul's agony has claimed one mysterious utterance for itself. 3. And even this word was not wrung out from Him by any overpowering necessity. He would not have spoken it, if He had not known that this was one of the things which were foretold concerning Him. The Scriptures referred to are no doubt Psalms xxii. and lxix. 4. Physicians assure us that all the worst which we could imagine would be but a feeble and remote approach to His sufferings from thirst. Consider all which during the last few hours He had gone through. There is no suffering comparable to that of an unassuaged thirst, such as everything here was caculated to arouse. Those who have wandered over a fresh battlefield inform us that the one cry of the sufferers there is for water; all other agony being forgotten in this. The cry for water swallows up every other cry. I. WHAT A LESSON OF COMFORT DOES THIS UTTERANCE CONTAIN! We want a Saviour, at least in our times of trial and suffering, not Himself untouched with the same, who can have a fellow-feeling with those who suffer, in that He Himself has suffered first. And such a Saviour we are assured that we have. He was God; yet He did not take refuge in His divinity when the stress of the trial grew sharp and strong. There was no make believe in the matter. As He had known slighter accesses of this human infirmity, when, for instance, at Jacob's well, so now He endured the fiercest access of it. He who

avoided not this, we may be sure, avoided none of the weaknesses and woes of our fallen humanity. II. WHAT A CONSTANTLY RECURRING TEMPTATION BESETS EVERY ONE OF US IN THE NECESSARY REFRESHMENT AND REPARATION OF THE DAILY WASTE OF THE BODY. How easily we come to attach too much importance to what we shall eat and what we shall drink; and, though guilty, it may be, of no excess in the eyes of others, yet to burden and clog the spirit through over-much allowing and indulging the flesh! How easily in this way our table may become a snare to us. It is not for nothing that our warning examples of those who sinned, seduced by temptations of appetite, are scattered through all the Scripture. The first sin of all was a sin of this character. It is for a mess of pottage that Esau sells his birthright. No sins of the children of Israel in the wilderness are so frequent as these. Surely, if we would overcome these, the power to do this must be found, where all other power is to be found, in the Cross of Christ. And we need this help. The whole mechanism of social life is at this day, for the higher classes of society, so finished and elaborate, that they are very little trained or disciplined to meet small annoyances, disappointments, and defeats of appetite. Great danger, therefore, there is that those, who would perhaps have borne some great trial bravely, should be immoderately disturbed by these small ones. But how will the Cross of Christ put to silence these petty discontents. III. CONSIDER WHO IT WAS WHO SPAKE THOSE WORDS. We have seen in them the evidence that He was Man, but He was also God. Surely when we would stir up these cold hearts of ours to love Him better and to serve Him more, it is well that we should bring this before our mind, that He had been in the form of God from eternity, who had now made Himself so poor for us that He was content to ask and to receive a boon from one of the unworthiest of His creatures. He who exclaimed now, "I thirst," was the same who had made the sea and the dry land, who held the ocean in the hollow of His hand. All streams and fountains, all wells and waterbrooks, and the rivers that run among the hills, were His, who now thirsted as probably no other child of man ever had. IV. AND WHEREFORE DOES HE THIRST? That our portion may not be with Him who, tormented in that flame, craved in vain a drop of water for His burning tongue; that we may receive of Him that gift of the water of life which shall cause us never to thirst any more; that He may lead us at last to that pure river of the water of life, &c.; that He might see us thirsting after God. When He sees this in us, then He beholds the fruit of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied. (*Abp. Trench.*) *The shortest of the seven cries*:—We shall look upon these words as—I. THE ENSIGN OF CHRIST'S TRUE HUMANITY. Angels cannot thirst. A phantom, as some have called him, could not suffer in this fashion. Thirst is a common-place misery, such as may happen to peasants or beggars; it is no royal grief; Jesus is brother to the poorest. Our Lord, however, endured thirst to an extreme degree, for it was the thirst of death, and more the thirst of one whose death was "for every man." Believing this—1. Let us tenderly feel how very near akin to us our Lord has become. You have been parched with fever as He was, and gasped out, "I thirst." Your path runs hard by that of your Master. Next time your fevered lips thus murmur, you may say, "Those are sacred words, for my Lord spake in that fashion." While we admire His condescension let our thoughts turn with delight to His sure sympathy. 2. Let us cultivate the spirit of resignation, for we may well rejoice to carry a cross which His shoulders have borne before us. If our Master said, "I thirst," do we expect every day to drink of streams from Lebanon? Shall the servant be above his Master? &c. 3. Let us resolve to shun no denials, but rather court them that we may be conformed to His image. May we not be half ashamed of our pleasures when He says, "I thirst?" II. THE TOKEN OF HIS SUFFERING SUBSTITUTION. 1. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" points to the anguish of His soul; "I thirst" expresses the torture of His body; and they were both needful. The pangs that are due to law are of both kinds, touching both heart and flesh. 2. The present effect of sin is thirst, dissatisfaction. Now Christ standing in the stead of the ungodly suffers thirst as a type of His enduring the result of sin. More solemn still is the reflection that thirst will also be the eternal result of sin. "Father Abraham, send Lazarus," &c. 3. He had no sooner said "I thirst," and sipped the vinegar, than He shouted, "It is finished;" and all was over; and our great Deliverer's thirst was the sign of His having smitten the last foe. III. A TYPE OF MAN'S TREATMENT OF HIS LORD. 1. It was a confirmation of the Scripture testimony with regard to man's natural enmity to God. According to modern thought man is a very fine and noble creature, struggling to become better. But such is not the Scripture estimate. At

the first there was no room for Him at the inn, and at the last there was no water for Him to drink; but when He thirsted they gave Him vinegar. Manhood, left to itself, rejects, crucifies, and mocks the Christ of God. 2. Have we not often given Him vinegar to drink? Did we not do so years ago before we knew Him? We gave Him our tears and then grieved Him with our sins. Nor does the grief end here, for our best works, feelings, prayers, have been tart and sour with sin. IV. THE MYSTICAL EXPRESSION OF THE DESIRE OF HIS HEART. 1. His heart was thirsting to save men. This thirst had been on Him early. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" "I have a baptism to be baptized with," &c., and when on the cross the work was almost done His thirst could not be assuaged till He could say, "It is finished." 2. He thirsts after the love of His people. Call to mind His complaint in Isaiah v, "It brought forth wild grapes"—vinegar. According to the sacred canticle of love (Solomon's Song v.), we learn that when He drank in those olden times it was in the garden of His Church that He was refreshed. 3. He thirsts for communion with His people, not because you can do Him good, but because He can do you good. He thirsts to bless you and to receive your grateful love in return. V. THE PATTERN OF OUR DEATH WITH HIM. Know ye not that ye are crucified together with Christ? Well, then, what means this cry, "I thirst," but this, that we should thirst too—1. After Christ. Certain philosophers have said that they love the pursuit of truth even better than the knowledge of truth. I differ from them, but, next to the actual enjoyment of my Lord's presence, I love to hunger and to thirst after Him. 2. For the souls of our fellow-men. Thirst to have your children, your workpeople, your class, saved. 3. As for yourselves, thirst after perfection. Hunger and thirst after righteousness, for you shall be filled. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The fifth word from the cross*:—Wrung from Christ by the most agonizing of pains. Teaches us that Christ was no stoic. Psa. xxii. 15, fulfilled. Not bodily thirst only. The soul sympathized with the body, and through it betrayed its deepest wants. These words—I. Betray AN IRREPRESSIBLE LONGING FOR HUMAN SYMPATHY. Learn this from Psa. lxix. 20. The sympathy of Peter rejected because mistimed; that of the daughters of Jerusalem because misdirected. Here, and in Gethsemane, Christ, as a true Man, felt the want of it. II. Reveal THE DEPTH OF THAT HUMILIATION TO WHICH CHRIST DESCENDED IN ACCOMPLISHING HUMAN REDEMPTION. All the resources of the universe were at His disposal. Had He not miraculously fed the multitude, &c., and proclaimed, "If any man thirst," &c. That the Son of the Highest should stoop to ask aid from His executioners proves the voluntariness and greatness of His humiliation. III. Form THE CLIMAX TO THE PRECEDING CRY OF DISTRESS. "My God, My God," &c. Not the Father's approval, but the consciousness of it, obscured for a moment. Christ longed to hear the familiar words of approval, "This is My beloved Son." Two dense clouds intervened. 1. Combined hosts of darkness. 2. Accumulated load of human guilt (Psa. lxix. 1–3). IV. Express THE SAVIOUR'S YEARNING FOR HUMAN PENITENCE AND LOVE. He looked upon the multitude, but found no sign of relenting. When He sat on the well He said, "Give Me to drink," and meant, "Give Me thy heart"—so here. (*W. Forsyth, M.A.*) *The thirst of Christ*:—Considered in its—I. PHYSICAL ASPECT. 1. Its producing cause—bodily pain and exhaustion. 2. Its significance—that Christ was very Man. II. SPIRITUAL ASPECT. 1. Its objects. Christ thirsted for—(1) The love of men. (2) The salvation of men. (3) Reunion with His Father. III. PROPHETIC ASPECT. 1. Its expression and import—"that the Scripture might be fulfilled." 2. Its significance—that Christ was very God. IV. PRACTICAL ASPECT. It teaches us—1. To bear suffering with patience and submission. 2. That patience in suffering is quite distinct from stoical endurance. 3. To abstain from fleshly lusts. 4. The blackness of human ingratitude. 5. The unselfishness of Divine love. 6. For what man should thirst. (1) For reconciliation to God through Christ, by quenching the thirst of His dear Son in accepting His offered salvation, and turning to Him with love, sorrow, and repentance. (2) For the communion of Christ's body and blood in the perpetual memorial of His precious death. (*Thirty Thousand Thoughts.*) **Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar.**—This vessel of the ordinary sour wine drunk by the Roman soldiers was placed near in order to be given to those who were crucified. Thirst was always an accompaniment of death by crucifixion, and that the vessel of wine was prepared for this purpose is probable by the mention of the sponge and the hyssop. This latter detail is peculiar to John. Bochart thinks that the hyssop was marjoram, or some plant like it, and he is borne out by ancient tradition. The stalks from a

foot to a foot and a half high would be sufficient to reach to the cross. (*Archdeacon Watkins.*)

Ver. 30. **When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar.**—*Christ drinking the vinegar*:—He wished to die sober, so He refused the wine, intended to deaden pain; but the vinegar was an insult. He took it, nevertheless. In some lives the saccharine seems to predominate. Life is sunshine on a bank of flowers. But in others there are not so many sugars as acids. A man who is always well cannot sympathize with the sick. But the fact that Christ took the vinegar makes Him able to sympathize with those whose cup is filled with the sharp acids of this life. There is the sourness of—I. BETRAYAL. Christ was hurt by the treachery of Judas. There was one friend on whom you put especial stress. After he turned upon you. You were stung, and the wound will never be healed. I commend you to the sympathy of a betrayed Christ, whose friend sold Him for less than twenty dollars. II. PAIN. Some have not had a well day for years, but you never had worse pains than Christ. All the pains of all the ages were compressed into His sour cup; He can therefore feel for you. III. POVERTY. Well, you are in glorious company. Christ owned not the house in which He stopped, the colt on which He rode, the boat in which He sailed. He had to perform a miracle to pay a tax. IV. BEREAVEMENT. Jesus knows all about that. He had only a few friends, and when He lost one it brought tears to His eyes. V. THE DEATH HOUR. Christ knows what it is to leave this beautiful world. He died physicianless and in agony. Application: 1. To all those to whom life has been an acerbity, I preach the omnipotent sympathy of Christ. Do not carry your ills alone. When you have any trouble, take it to Jesus, knowing that for our sakes He took the vinegar. 2. My utterance is almost choked at the thought that people refuse this Divine sympathy, and drink their own vinegar. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) **He said, It is finished.**—*The sixth cry from the cross*:—I. THE SAVIOUR'S COURSE ON EARTH WAS FINISHED. His life—1. As the Incarnate Son of God. 2. Of poverty and toil. 3. Of weariness, hunger, and temptation. 4. Of holy obedience and usefulness. 5. Of grief and pain. II. ALL THAT GOD IN HIS GRACE HAD MADE KNOWN BEFORE WAS FULFILLED. 1. The promises beginning with that at the Fall. 2. The covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Israel. 3. The prophecies. 4. The types. III. THE WORK OF MAN'S REDEMPTION WAS COMPLETED. 1. Every obstacle was removed, symbolized by the rending of the veil. 2. The way of mercy was opened. IV. THIS CRY COMPREHENDS THE FUTURE, AS WELL AS THE PAST. As the oak is contained in the acorn, as the fruit is wrapped up in the blossom, so the fruits of Christ's redeeming work were contained in the death of the cross. (*W. T. Bull, B.A.*) *The sixth excellent saying of Christ upon the cross*:—1. It is but one word in the original; but in that one word is contained the sum of all joy, the very spirit of all Divine consolation. The ancient Greeks reckoned it their excellency to speak much in a little, to give a sea of matter in a drop of language. What they only sought is here found. 2. According to the principal scope of the place we observe that Jesus Christ hath perfected and completely finished the great work of redemption, committed to Him by God the Father. To this great truth the Apostle gives a full testimony (Heb. x. 14). And to the same purpose Christ speaks (chap. xvii. 4). I. WHAT WAS THE WORK WHICH CHRIST FINISHED BY HIS DEATH? The fulfilling the whole law of God in our room and for our redemption, as a Surety for us. The law is a glorious thing; the holiness of God is engraven upon every part of it. It cursed every one that continued not in all things contained therein (Gal. iii. 10). Two things, therefore, were required in him that should perfectly fulfil it, and both found only in our Surety. 1. A subjective perfection. Perfect working always follows a perfect being. That He might therefore finish this great work, lo! in what shining and perfect holiness was He produced! (Luke i. 35; Heb. vii. 26). So that the law could have no exception against His person. 2. An effective perfection, or a perfection of working and obeying. This Christ had (Matt. iii. 15). He did all that was required to be done, and suffered all that was requisite to be suffered. And this work, finished by our Lord Jesus Christ, was—(1) A necessary work. (*a*) On the Father's account. I do not mean that God was under any necessity, from His nature, of redeeming us this, or any other, way. But when God had once decreed to redeem sinners by Jesus Christ, then it became necessary that the counsel of God should be fulfilled (Acts iv. 28). (*b*) With respect to Christ upon the account of that previous compact that was betwixt the Father and Him about it (Luke xxii. 22; John ix. 3). (*c*) Upon our account; for, had not

Christ finished this work, sin had quickly finished all our lives, comforts, and hopes (chap. iii. 14, 15). (2) Exceeding difficult. It cost many a cry and tear before Christ could say, "It is finished." All the angels in heaven were not able, by their united strength, to lift that burden which Christ bore upon His shoulders —yea, and bore away. But how heavy this was may in part appear by the agony in the garden and the bitter cries upon the cross. (3) Most precious. Justification, sanctification, adoption, &c., in this life flow from it, besides the happiness and glory of the life to come. II. How and in what manner Jesus Christ finished this glorious work. 1. Obediently (Phil. ii. 8; Isa. l. 5). 2. Freely (John x. 17, 18; Psa. xl.). 3. Diligently (Acts x. 38; John iv. 30, 31). 4. Fully. Whatever the law demanded is perfectly paid; whatever a sinner needs is perfectly obtained. III. What evidence we have that Christ hath so finished redemption-work. 1. The infinite efficacy of the blood and obedience of Christ. 2. The discharge God the Father gave Him when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand. If Christ, the sinner's Surety, be, as such, discharged by God the Creditor, then the debt is fully paid (Heb. x. 12–14). 3. The blessed effects of it upon all that believe in Him. Their consciences are now rationally pacified, and their souls at death actually received into glory. IV. Inferences. Hath Christ perfected all His work for us? Then—1. How sweet a relief is this to us that believe in Him, against all the defects and imperfections of all the works of God that are wrought by us. 2. How dangerous and dishonourable a thing is it to join anything of our own to the righteousness of Christ in point of justification before God. 3. There can be no doubt but He will also finish His work in us (Phil. i. 6; Heb. xii. 2). 4. How excellent and comfortable beyond all compare is the method and way of faith! 5. How necessary is a laborious life to all that call themselves Christians (Phil. ii. 12)! Imitate thy Pattern. (1) Christ began early to work for God. (2) As Christ began betime, so He followed His work close (chap. iv. 31, 32; Mark iii. 21). (3) Christ often thought upon the shortness of His time, and wrought hard because He knew His working-time would be but little (chap. ix. 4). (*J. Flavel.*) *Christ's work completed on the cross*:—These words, whether we consider their import or the moment of their utterance, are memorable. No fiat of Godhead had ever equalled this. It comprised in it all others, whether past or future. The expression—I. Marks the accomplishment of prophetic Scripture. "Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished." The general series of prophecies to which the Evangelist refers, supply a body of evidence perfectly irresistible in favour of His Messiahship. Can it be doubtful whether the very expressions contained in Psa. xxii. and lxix. relate to the phenomena of the Crucifixion? The particulars cannot apply to any other kind of death besides. But the impression is yet more full when we regard the whole complexion of prophetic testimony, marking their perfect agreement with the character and temper of the Sufferer. How truly does the drawing set forth the great living Original! What, then, is the inference, but that heaven's hand guided the pencil, and mixed and applied the colours? Mere nature could not furnish such a combination; nor could the same class of circumstances ever again exactly meet. Nor does the bee, by the force of instinct, working out heaven's art, or the bird building its nest, or any natural agent performing works beyond the power of reason and the art of man, show the all-presiding intellect and will of Providence more truly than did the agents, whether human or satanic, show the presence of the all-controlling mind in this instance. They did the will of God when doing their own. II. Relates to the entire course of His mediatorial service. 1. Admitting that our Lord came to fulfil these Scriptures, why do such Scriptures exist? Certain fore-announcements were not put into the record for their own sake, or merely in anticipation of certain events to meet in the history of one illustrious person. They might authenticate a character, but not let us into the reason and end of that character. When our Lord therefore cried, "It is finished," He must have looked back on the entire career of His mediatorial service, comparing it with that programme which He brought with Him to earth. 2. What was the true character of our Lord's obedience? His human and Divine natures make up but one Person, in all the acts of obedience He performed, beginning with His descent from heaven, and ending with His death upon the cross. The assumption of a lower nature might, and did, give a specific character to His obedience; but it was the presence of the higher nature that gave it majesty, merit, glory. Hence He came Divinely furnished for His great work. And what a career was that on which our Saviour upon the cross looked back, surveying the whole as with one glance;

and, marking its faultless perfection as He had done the work of His hands on the sixth day of creation, could say, "It is finished!" No actions of creatures, no agencies even of God, as God alone, ever partook of the same characters as His. 3. There was sovereignty as well as submission. It was a voice as supremely royal, though uttered from the head crowned with thorns, and surmounted by a mocking title, as that heard in the Apocalypse from the throne of the Lamb, saying, "It is done." III. APPLIES TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE GREAT DESIGNS OF THIS DIVINE OBEDIENCE, IN THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD. It has especial respect to His preceding endeavours, whether in body or mind, whether in anticipation or in actual suffering. The great body of Scripture testimony gives marked pre-eminency to the sufferings of Christ. The first intimations of deliverance gave promise of a terrific, though decisive, struggle between the father of evil and his superhuman antagonist. The typical system, from that hour to the moment in which our Lord yielded up the ghost, prolonged the same strain of doctrine, exhibited the same sign. The whole history, from Moses to Christ, is one prolonged testimony, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. One mind is thus seen presiding over the religion of the world from the beginning. One grand principle is brought out and upheld, like its Author, without variableness or shadow of turning. The doctrine of sacrifice was the substance of faith, and the great channel of grace to the world. It was a type of the act of God, by which the covenant was finally to be ratified by the offering of Christ. Hence the atoning nature of the Messiah's sufferings was set forth by the prophets, especially by Isaiah and Daniel, provisionally at least, though not actually, agreeably to John's exclamation, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." The hour, therefore, that had arrived, showing the Lord upon the cross, was consummatory of the mighty, all-restoring plan. In that most momentous hour, every perfection of the Divine nature was glorified in Him who ordained and in Him who offered the satisfaction of the cross for the sins of the world. No further act was needed, no repetition possible; the offer could never be supplemented. IV. DENOTED THE FULFILMENT OF THE CONDITIONS OF HIS MEDIATORIAL EXALTATION. It was expressive of the termination of His descending course, the sepulchre being only an adjunct of His Cross Everything antecedent to this was preparatory only; this was consummating. From this hour all our Lord's after glory sprang, as the harvest from the seed, to which He so beautifully likens it. 1. The first glory in order—the Resurrection—was a testimony to the truth of the text. Else how could He have destroyed death in His own Person, had not His work upon the cross been complete, had He not in that hour finished the transgression, the visible standing penalty of which was death? But the Resurrection was the proof of this fact, and that Satan had been dethroned, and the curse no longer dominant over the race. 2. His return to His own glory followed. He took possession of the throne of the universe, to display His victory, and to evince how every scheme of creature malice and opposition had not merely been frustrated, but made to advance His glory to its fulness. Then was man in Him crowned with glory and honour, and in Him advanced to personal fellowship and oneness with God. 3. But His supreme prerogative, as Mediator, was to send forth the Spirit. This was a glory far greater than the government of all things made; and as truly as the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, so did the Son send the Spirit to illumine and sanctify the world; and hence, as Christ came not to do His own will, nor to glorify Himself, so neither did the Spirit come to do His own will, or to bear testimony to Himself. V. IMPLIED THE PROVISIONAL COMPLETENESS OF HIS ATONING REIGN. He is emphatically "the Lamb in the midst of the throne." All the doctrines, institutions, and powers of His religion flow from the sovereignty of His Cross. The only satisfying reasons for the abolition of Judaism arise hence —a fact which the rending of the veil at the moment of His death testified. The full reign of evangelical grace took date from the advent of the Spirit. Then was His truth perfectly revealed, the gifts received for man richly poured from heaven upon man, that the Lord God might dwell among them. His servants were empowered to give testimony for Him in all nations, to form the Church on His own model, to offer mercy to all men. It is as impossible there should be a fresh and more perfect administration, as that there should be a more perfect sacrifice for sin than the one He has offered. His salvation is immutably treasured up in His truth, and dispensed to faith in His Cross, which is "the power of God and the wisdom of God." VI. THIS ONE EVENT INCLUDED AND BETOKENED EVERY OTHER. It was our whole redemption, from which every event, whether past or future,

stood in the relation of an effect to its cause. It sealed redemption to all who had previously lived and died in the faith of this great event. It placed in our Lord's hands the keys of the unseen world. That hour, in its fullest sense, was entirely His own; thenceforth were all ministries His; adverse principalities and powers were spoiled; judgment was passed in heaven against the usurper; and our Lord was enthroned to carry out that judgment to its ultimate issue—expulsion and final punishment. (*G. Steward.*) *The end of Christ's coming*:—What was finished? What are we to suppose that our blessed Lord meant when He spake that word? To finish, you know, is to bring to an end; and there are two ways in which things may be brought to an end or finished. A work is said to be finished when it is completed or brought to perfection. Thus in the Book of Exodus we read that "all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation was finished"; and again, in the First Book of Kings, that "Solomon built the house of the Lord, and finished it"; and again, in the Book of Ezra, that the elders of the Jews rebuilt the house of the Lord, "and finished it." In these passages, you will easily see, "finishing" means completing; and in like manner the account of the Creation in the Book of Genesis is wound up with these words: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." On the other hand, a thing may come to an end by being destroyed; and then also it is sometimes said to be finished. When Daniel is interpreting the writing on the wall to King Belshazzar, he says that the interpretation of the first word, "Mene," is "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it." So, too, Gabriel tells Daniel that "seventy weeks are determined upon the Jews, and upon the holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins. Again the word is often used to signify merely that something is brought to an end, without regard to the nature of that end. As we read in St. Matthew: "When Jesus had finished all these sayings"; "When Jesus had finished all these parables." Thus St. Paul, in his Letter to Timothy, says, "The time of my departure is at hand; I have finished my course." Now, in which of these senses are we to conceive that our Lord on the cross said, "It is finished"? What was finished at that moment? what was brought to an end, and to what manner of end? When we look at these words along with those which come immediately after them, the first sense in which we are led to understand the word "finished" is much like that which it bears in the passage just quoted from St. Paul. So, and more completely, was our Lord's earthly course then finished—so entirely finished, that but a moment afterward "He bowed His head and gave up the ghost." The end of life—of every life, whatever notion we may be wont to form of that which is to come after—is an awful moment. It is an awful moment even in the eyes of ignorant savages. The eye no longer sees; the limbs no longer move; the heart ceases to beat; all speech, thought, feeling, are extinguished at once; and from that moment the body, the only part of the man that we see or know any more of, begins to moulder and crumble into dust. Moreover, while we are torn away from everything that we have been accustomed to love and prize and seek, we go we know not whither. Faith alone, enlightened by revelation, enables us to feel an assurance that death is not annihilation, but a change from one state of being to another. What this new state of being, however, may be, with what facilities we may be gifted in it, what we may have to do in it, whom we shall find in it, we can frame no conception or imagination. Therefore a man must be very thoughtless and heartless who could hear any one say that his life was finished without being moved thereby to something of compassion for him who is departing, and with something of awe at witnessing this evidence and proof of the destiny which awaits himself and all mankind. But when we call to mind all that had gone before—when we think ourselves of all that Jesus had to endure, of the cruel indignities that were heaped upon His innocent head, we may understand the exclamation, "It is finished," in a further sense, as declaring that now at length His sufferings were come to an end, that His soul was about to flee away and be at rest, and that He should no longer feel wounds from the smiting, or the still more painful scoffing of His persecutors. When we look at them in this light, the words "It is finished" acquire something of a consolatory character. Even after a long and grievous illness, we at times see persons looking forward almost wishfully to the moment that is to put an end to their pangs and release their souls from the house of torment. In a still higher degree was it a joyful moment to the martyrs, when they felt that their spirits were on the point of taking flight from their earthly tabernacles; and stories are told of those who, from the midst of the flames, cried to the bystanders to pile up more fire around them, and thus to hasten the moment

when their torments would be finished. Such, or akin to these, would be the feelings with which we should hear the words "It is finished" from the lips of a common man in a like situation; and such would be the meaning we should attach to them. But, as uttered by our Saviour on the cross, those words have a far wider and deeper meaning. For as His life was totally unlike that of all other men, so was His death. He did not live for Himself, or to Himself, nor as one of many; nor did He die so. Therefore that which He declared to be finished, when He was about to give up the ghost, must have been the great work, to work which He came into the world, and which was wrought by Him and in Him for all mankind. It must have been the work which, when sacrifices and burnt-offerings, and all things else, were found unavailing to reconcile man to God, He said that He came to do, and that He was content to do it with His whole heart. Already, in our Lord's divine prayer, as recorded in the seventeenth chapter of our Gospel, He had said, when He besought His Father to glorify Him, "I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." He had then finished everything that He came to do. He had finished the doctrine which He came to teach, so far as for the present He purposed to make it known. He had finished and completed the example, which He came to set before men, of a life entirely at one with God, of a life spent throughout in doing the will of God, of a life in which no motion of any other will than the will of God was ever allowed to arise in the soul, of a life which had never been sullied or disturbed by a single sinful or selfish act or word or thought. All that He came to do by action had already been finished. But His greatest trial was still awaiting Him. His work was still incomplete. The hour of the power of darkness, as He Himself calls it (Luke xxii. 53), was still to come. His great work was to be completed and made perfect, as every truly great work must be, by suffering. All this, then—the whole work of the redemption of mankind, the whole work which from the beginning He had taken upon Himself—does our Lord in the text declare to be finished. Even as we read that, on the seventh day, when the heavens and the earth, and all their hosts, were finished, God rested from all the work that He had made, in like manner our Saviour on the cross, having brought down heaven in all its perfection to earth, and manifested the fulness of the Godhead in the form of a Man—having thus finished this His great work—was about to enter into His rest. As God's work was the work of creating the world, and His rest was the rest of governing and guarding and upholding the world which He had created, so our Saviour's work was that of renewing man's nature, and of laying the foundations of His Church —of laying down Himself, His own Incarnate Diety and Divine Humanity, to be its chief Cornerstone; and His rest was that of watching over and directing and strengthening and sanctifying His Church and all its members. The work which was then declared to be finished was the greatest work ever wrought upon earth—a work which none but God could work, which the wisdom of God came down from heaven and dwelt upon earth in the form of a man to work, a work in which all the generations of mankind are more or less interested, and through the power of which alone can any man escape death, can any inherit everlasting life. You may feel a trustful assurance that, as Christ at that hour finished His work for you, at the cost of such bitter suffering and humiliation, so He will assuredly be ready to finish His work in you, and to enable you to finish the work which He has set you to do. For although the great work which Christ came to work was finished once for all on this day, it was not finished as when we finish a work, and leave it to itself, and turn to something else. It was wrought, even as the work of the Creation was, in order that it might be the teeming parent of countless works of the same kind, the first in an endless chain that should girdle the earth and stretch through all ages. While in one sense it was an end, in another it was a beginning—an end of the warfare and struggle which had been desolating the earth hopelessly ever since the Fall, and a beginning of the peace in which the victory won on that day was to receive its everlasting consummation. He conquered sin and Satan for us, in order that He might conquer them in us, and that we might conquer them for Him, through His love constraining, and His strength enabling us. Yes, my brethren, every one who sets himself to fight against his enemies in the way in which Jesus fought against them—by patience, by meekness, by silent endurance, by humility, by faith, by holiness, by love—shall assuredly conquer them; and every one who seeks this armour earnestly and diligently from Him, from His example, from His word, from His Spirit, shall obtain it. We know that the work has been finished, and by whom. We know who is for us; who,

then, can be against us? When thus considered, our Saviour's word is a source of the greatest comfort and encouragement to the believer, who desires to die the death and to live the life of Christ, and to have Christ formed in his heart. But to him who chooses to abide in sin, and who refuses to accept the mercy and grace of Christ's atoning sacrifice, this same word, if he would but attend to it, would bring a most awful warning. For it declares that everything which could be done for his redemption has been finished, that God has done His utmost, that His mercy is exhausted, that there is no second Saviour, no new way of salvation for him; and that, if he persists in slighting the proffered mercy, nothing can remain for him but to lie weltering and rotting in his sins, dashed to and fro by the restless waves of remorse and despair. "It is finished." Was it the last expiring cry of Hope and of Peace, of Righteousness and of Truth? Did it declare that the strife of God with man; that His efforts to save man, to teach him, to guide him, to restore him, were come to an end; that He was now forsaking the world, and giving it over to the powers of Evil? Thoughts of this kind, we may suppose, must have rushed upon those who loved the Lord, who had lived under the shelter of His wings, and who had set all their hopes upon Him for themselves, for the restoration of Israel, and for the establishment of righteousness and truth, when they heard the awful word "It is finished"; more especially if they meditated on it in connection with that terrible exclamation just before—His cry to the God who had forsaken Him. Looking at the immediate aspect of things, they could see nothing else than despair, the destruction of good, the triumph of evil. Yet how wide were these thoughts from the truth! how totally opposite to it! If they could have cast their eyes forward through forty hours, they would have seen that the hour of the power of darkness was also the hour when darkness was to be conquered for ever. Even in the darkest hour, the light is preparing to burst forth; nor, when it comes, can the darkness stand against it. The mourners shall be comforted. The hungry shall be filled. The meek shall inherit the earth. The dominion of the earth shall be with the kingdom of heaven, not with the kingdom of hell. On the other hand, the enemies, the murderers of Jesus, when they heard that same word, "It is finished," would interpret it according to the lusts of their hearts. They would exult in the thought that their work was now accomplished, that they had gained a decisive victory over Him before whose word their unrighteous power had seemed to totter, and that they might hold their revels over His downfall. Their master, too—the prince of this world—did he not deem that his empire over the earth was now established for ever? Yet this also was a vain delusion, which in forty hours was scattered to the winds. For the Second Adam had not been overcome. On the contrary, He had overcome sin, wherefore death had no power over Him. It was sin that had been overcome—sin in all its forms, with all its snares and weapons; and before Him who overcomes sin, death brightens into eternal life. Such was the real state of things then; and such it will ever be. Evil may seem to be mighty for the moment; but it shall perish; for God is against it. In like manner we are led to conclude, from the prophetic accounts of the last times, that Evil will then abound and prevail and hold its revels over the earth, while Faith will be weak and rare. Evil will again think that the earth is its own, and that it has driven out Faith for ever. Yet again the hour shall come, when the whole race of man and all the creatures upon the earth will cry out with one universal, wailing cry, "It is finished." That end, however, will only be the beginning. The power and the glory and the victory will again be with the Lord of Hosts; and that which shall arise out of the wreck of the world will not be the kingdom of hell, but the kingdom of heaven. (*Archdn. Hare.*) *Blessedness of completed work:*—1. There have been other great works to which the words of the text might be applied. A great man undertakes some cause. He begins with the world against him, and ends with the world on his side—he has lived to see the principle to which his soul was devoted safe and beyond dispute. The writing of a history; the discovery of a new scientific method; the reformation of a religion; the consolidation of an empire; the completion of a beneficent scheme of policy; the creation of a new school of philosophy—these things have been perfected by the almost superhuman power of a single man. What singular thoughts must arise in the minds of such men at the close of life! and we should like to think of them as offering up their work to God, saying, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." 2. But these examples are above the level of ordinary humanity. Most of us would like to have done something before we grow old and die, but the thought may arise in our minds of the shortness and uncer-

tainty of life. I would rather consider this subject from the point of view of the comparative certainty of human life. The probable duration of our lives may be easily calculated, and is the basis of various dealings between man and man. We have not so long to live at thirty as we have at twenty, or at sixty as we have at fifty. Time becomes more and more valuable to us, and we fear that the night may overtake us sooner than we supposed. And as a man gets on in life, the feeling that his time is short should quicken him in the service of God. Every one has felt the satisfaction of having done something. To have carried through some business which we were disposed to put off; to have paid a debt; to have written a book; even to have answered a letter, will be a considerable pleasure to us. There is a peace of mind to a man when he is dying in knowing that he has set his life in order, and left none of the common duties of life unfulfilled. We like to have done something, not to be always about to do something. In order to a completed life—I. THE PLAN MUST BE ADAPTED TO OUR CHARACTERS AND CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. There is a sense in which people cannot go against their own natures; they must supplement rather than extirpate their original qualities. This is what we mean by a man feeling his own deficiencies. Until he knows himself as he is in his own weakness and in his strength, he will be always making mistakes. And, therefore, in fixing on a plan of life a man must consider his own character, and limit himself by that. There are some things which he can do easily, some which he can do with an effort, others which he flatters himself he can do, but which he cannot do at all. For example, he may fancy that he will be a great speaker when he has nothing to say, or a great poet when he has no sense either of language or of metre. The art is to start from what he is that he may become something more, to be equal to the present while attempting things beyond. 2. And he must not dissipate himself by trying to do too many things. One work, or one kind of work, is enough for the life of most men; he is not good for much who is good for everything—for everything but his own occupation. One man has no definite idea of what he is going to learn, or of what he knows. Another has at once presented to his mind an outline of what he means to learn; he divides the whole into parts; he makes every part throw light on every other; he examines himself to see whether he has his facts really under control; he has a hold of his subject, and is able to say of it that he knows and can use his knowledge. 3. Then, again, there are mistakes that men make in a life of study as in other things. They go on reading and never writing, until their acquisitions have become altogether out of proportion to their power of using them, or their taste may be so fastidious, their love of minutiæ so great that no considerable work could ever be executed on the scale or with the perfection which they proposed. 4. But few of us are students, and there are works of the most different kind which have to be performed often in silence by women as well as men, by the old as well as by the young. There is the care of the household or of the business. Besides the engagements of society and the blessings of family life, let us make some other interest, if we can, which may bind our days together with a golden thread, and survive the changes which the lapse of years is making. To such works we should give not only the chance thoughts, or moments, or feelings—we should look forward a little and scheme for the good of others, and not merely for own narrow or selfish purposes. Then again there may be works of the most private sort—of duty and affection. It brings a man great peace at the last to have fulfilled all these trusts, not to have the words "Too late" ringing in his ears. There are many lifelong works of this kind among the poor. Many of us must have known of servants who have devoted themselves to the bringing up of a family. They, too, have finished the work which was given to them, and have gone home and taken their wages. II. WE MUST THINK OF THIS WORK AS THE WORK OF GOD UPON EARTH, in which we are allowed to bear a part. It wonderfully clears a man's head and simplifies his life when he has learned to rest, not on himself, but on God. He is not divided between this world and another, or trying to make the best of both; he has one single question which he puts to himself, one aim which he is seeking to fulfil—the will of God. He does not care about the compliments of friends or the applause of the world. This is the ideal which the Apostle holds before us when he speaks of offering up his work to God, of presenting the body "a living sacrifice," &c. Like Christ we have a work to do which we cannot transfer to Him, but in which the thought of Him, the great Example of mankind, may be always present with us. Conclusion: There must be some broken as well as perfect lives, which, owing to accident, or illness, or early death, could never be framed into any perfect whole. There have been men of

genius cut off before their time—statesmen having the promise of a great future; and there is hardly any family in which the touching question is not sometimes asked, What would he or she have been if living now? Yes; we acknowledge that there are pieces of lives which have been begun in this world to be completed in another state of being. And some of them have been like fragments of ancient art, which we prize, not for their completeness, but for their quality, and because they serve to give us a type of something which we could hardly see anywhere upon earth. Such lives we must judge, not by what the persons said, or wrote, or did, but by what they were. God does not measure men's lives wholly by the amount of work which they are able to accomplish in them; He who gave the power of work may also withhold the power; and some of these broken lives may have a value in His sight which no bustle or activity or ordinary goodness can attain. There have been persons confined to a bed of sickness who yet may be said to have lived an almost perfect life. Such persons afford examples to us of a work which at any moment is acceptable to God. (*Prof. Jowett.*) *The one success in life:*—How seldom can one coming to die say of anything but life itself, that "It is finished?" Our projects overlap our days, and are either never accomplished, or left to others to complete. Most will then say with Job, "My days are past," &c. But Jesus was accustomed to measure life's meaning only by its results. "My meat is to do the will of Him," &c. When, therefore, He cried, "It is finished," it must have referred to the accomplishment of that for which His life was given Him. What was the deathless purpose which absorbed the life of Jesus? I. To SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING, AND TO REMOVE ITS OCCASION. 1. He seemed to gather into His own sensitive heart all the pangs which He witnessed in others. "Surely He hath borne our griefs," &c. 2. As a practical experience of those who accept the ministry of Christ and His cross, the evil of suffering is gone; it is transformed into an agency of blessing. "In all these things we are more than conquerors." II. To SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF DEATH, AND TO REMOVE ITS OCCASION. 1. He wept over Lazarus. Why, when He knew that in a moment Lazarus was to be restored to life? Because Lazarus represented all the dead for whom resurrection was not a possibility until after His own death should allow him to enter and vanquish the power of death in its own realm. 2. Since then, believers in Jesus triumph over the grave, being able to say, "This is life eternal." III. To SOLVE THE PROBLEM AND TO BREAK THE POWER OF SIN. 1. The occasion of both suffering and death. Jesus always associated sin with sorrow and death. When He healed, it was in connection with some revelation of Himself as the sin-bearer. "Thy sins be forgiven thee" was in His mind equivalent to "Take up thy bed and walk." When He cried, "It is finished," He esteemed sin as a "broken bold" upon mankind. "When he shall make his soul an offering," &c. 2. Since then, believers can experience what they confess, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God," &c. The life of Jesus only was a complete one, except as our lives are "hid in His." (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *It is finished:*—What was finished? On the heaven side, no man can answer; on the earth side, we can perhaps reach some particulars. I. THE PERSONAL SUFFERING OF JESUS. He was now dying. We cannot pretend to define the anguish of Christ, we must be content with noting three degrees in the apparent growth of His experience. 1. Jesus had a measure of inexplicable dread as He neared His death. He kept talking about an "hour," and seemed filled with solicitude concerning it. This feeling reached its supreme height in Gethsemane. 2. Soon, however, He righted up into a fine sense of tranquility, and we hear Him saying that He was quite willing to drink the cup which His Father was giving Him; and from that time forward we hear no more of His shrinking away as if from pain. 3. And here, in this explosive utterance, He has touched the supreme degree of His satisfaction; and this cry is an outburst of self-congratulation that His terrible cup has been entirely drained. And so He sends out before an anxious universe this "loud voice" like a bulletin from a field of battle. He is all through the charge, right, safe, at rest. II. THE EARTHLY ERRAND OF JESUS CHRIST. 1. He had met man's desperate need as a transgressor. 2. He had satisfied the law's demand in God's government. 3. He had answered every scriptural type with an antitype. 4. He had fulfilled every ancient prophecy concerning Himself. 5. Thus, in one word, Christ exhaustively discharged that entire former dispensation in a new one. III. HIS OFFICIAL CONFLICT WITH SATAN. For this purpose He had been manifested (1 John iii. 8). 1. He was the "last Adam" in order that He might take up the defeat in the Garden of Eden and reverse it into a victory (Rom. v. 14). 2. This was the reason why He was made

to endure the open attacks of the same adversary. He "was led up . . . into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." Jesus must submit Himself to a like condition of exposure, yet He must conquer in the fight (Heb. ii. 18). 3. He had been anticipating this renewed trial for a long time. Hence He kept giving those mysterious hints of a "prince of this world." 4. At last, when He uttered this cry, He knew He had conquered His foe (Col. ii. 15). When a shout of victory like this came forth from the cross, who shall attempt to picture the unutterable dismay it must have sent into the shadows of Hades? IV. THE GOSPEL MESSAGE. One more word to His Father—just a decorous salutation at coming; then there remained only a human body on the tree. 1. For believers, then, here is ground for confidence unwavering (Heb. x. 12–14). 2. For backsliders there is also a lesson here (Heb. xi. 4–6). 3. For all others, here is invitation free and full. Is anything more needed? "All things are now ready." Why does any one wait? "It is finished"—what can be wished for more? (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *It is finished*:—I. THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE JEWISH RACE HAD GONE. The offer to them was completed. Their response to it was now final. There they were gathered, the two typical groups: those who had received Him for life, and those who had received Him for death. His blood was upon both; but upon the one to the cleansing of sin; upon the other to the making indelible its stain. "His blood be on us and on our children." II. PILATE'S OPPORTUNITY WAS OVER. When he had written that title and had had it placed upon the cross, saying, "What I have written, I have written," his position was finally taken. III. THE MERELY HUMAN RELATIONS OF JESUS WERE FINALLY ADJUSTED (vers. 26, 27). And the final adjustment of His relations with us, and so of our social relations with each other, is at the cross. To Mary He says, "Another shall fill My place. Fill thou to the one I choose, as far as possible, the relation thou hast occupied to Me." To John He says, "Be such a son as I have been." Should we not see a consecration of all these ties of earth if we could come often beneath the cross and listen to the Saviour's last bequest? He has entrusted us to each other as with His dying breath, as with the seal of His blood. IV. ALL THE PROPHECIES POINTING TO THE CROSS WERE NOW ACCOMPLISHED. The scrupulousness with which prophecies concerning our Saviour were accomplished is most notable in the two periods of His infancy and His sacrifice. Two references only to prophecy occur in the other three gospels. In Mark (xv. 28) the language of Isaiah (liii. 12) is recalled. In Matthew (xxvii. 35) is a reference to the Psalm (xxii. 18). John makes four definite citations (chap. xix. 24, 28, 36, 37). V. THE MEDIATION OF CHRIST WAS COMPLETED. He had come to mediate between God and men. For this He was both God and Man. What was between them He must take away. He must bring them together, or they were to remain separated forever. This He did perfectly, and what He did has only to be received in penitence and trust, and salvation is assured. Conclusion: Perhaps the noblest building in the world is the Cathedral of Cologne. It was designed on the most magnificent scale, so costly and vast that after the lapse of five centuries it was still unfinished. At last it was resolved to make a great effort to complete it. It was resumed as a national work. The most competent architects were obtained, the most skilled workmen in great numbers were employed, and, at last, the crowning stone was laid in the presence of a vast assemblage gathered from all Europe, and from America, with the most august ceremonies. A shout broke from that vast concourse, as the surmounting cross was secured in its lofty place, whose burden was, It is finished. I stood before that pile, that crowning triumph of architecture, with emotions of awe and wonder. I thought of the centuries of the building, in which generations of builders had toiled and passed and left it incomplete. I saw the cross everywhere wrought into the walls and ornaments, and lying outspread in the majestic outline of stone, upon that ancient square, where once had stood a heathen temple. How grand a response, I thought, to the cross of my Redeemer. It seemed some worthy rejoinder to the cry of Calvary. But there is a response grander far than the cathedral builders have given Him, the response of the lowliest sinner, coming to the Cross for pardon, opening his heart for the finished work to be wrought within him. It requires no costly offering for this, no pile of masonry, no generations of builders, and centuries, to make it complete. Now, without the delay of a minute, it may be made complete in you, because Jesus finished the great provision. It is complete. He who receives it at once is completely saved. (*Monday Club Sermons.*) *It is finished*:—I. IT, not this and that: all that lays the foundation of a new, eternal world of God. II. IT IS, not is being (Heb. x. 14). III. FINISHED. 1. As a spiritual act. 2. As a mortal suffering.

3. As a triumph of Christ. 4. As the salvation of God. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *It is finished:*—Let us consider—I. THE PERSON OF THE DYING SUFFERER. 1. He was God. 2. He was Man. 3. He was a Person in whom the Divine and human natures were united. 4. He was the Surety of sinners. II. THE MEANING OF HIS LAST WORD. 1. The predictions of ancient prophets concerning the work and sufferings of the Messiah were now accomplished. 2. The purposes and designs of the ceremonial law were answered. 3. The righteousness of the law was fulfilled. 4. The great end of legal sacrifices was completed. 5. The whole of the work which the Father had given Him to do was finished. III. THE MANNER IN WHICH THESE WORDS WERE UTTERED. Matthew and Mark inform us, that "He cried with a loud voice;" and the same is recorded by Luke, who also adds that He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My Spirit;" but John mentions a word unnoticed by the other evangelists—"It is finished!" The manner of the Saviour uttering this exclamation did not so much consist in the sound of the voice or the strength of the expression, as in the important signification it conveyed. 1. It was a declaration of an important truth. 2. It was the signal of victory. 3. It was not the cry of the languishing or the wounded, or the dying man, but the triumphant shout of an Almighty Conqueror, "He spoiled principalities and powers" on the cross. (*W. Thorpe.*) *It is finished:*—I. Let us hear the text and UNDERSTAND IT. The Saviour meant—1. That all the types, promises, and prophecies were now fully accomplished in Him. The whole Book, from the first to the last, was finished in Him. There is not a single jewel of promise, from the first emerald which fell on the threshold of Eden, to that last sapphire-stone of Malachi, which was not set in the breast-plate of the true High Priest. Nay, there is not a type, from the red heifer down to the turtle-dove, from the hyssop up to Solomon's temple, which was not fulfilled in Him; not a prophecy, whether spoken on Chebar's banks or on the shores of Jordan; not a dream of wise men, whether they had received it in Babylon, or in Judæa, which was not now fully wrought out in Christ. And what a wonderful thing it is, that a mass of promises, apparantly so heterogenous, should all be accomplished in one person! Take away Christ from it and the Old Testament becomes an insoluble problem. 2. All the typical sacrifices of the old Jewish law, were now abolished as well as explained. Imagine for a minute the saints in heaven looking down on what was done on earth. From the times of Noah, they see altars smoking, recognitions of the fact that man is guilty, and the spirits before the throne say, "Lord, when will sacrifices finish?—when will blood no more be shed?" The offerings soon increase. Aaron and the Levites every morning and evening offer a lamb, while great sacrifices are offered on special occasions. And all the while the saints are crying, "O Lord, how long?—when shall the sacrifice cease?" David offers hecatombs, and Solomon and Hezekiah and the spirits of the just say, "Will it never be complete?" But lo, He comes who is to close the line of priests! Not now with linen ephod, &c., but His cross His altar, His body and His soul the victim, and cries, "It is finished!"—that for which ye looked so long is fully achieved and perfected for ever. 3. His perfect obedience was finished. It was necessary, in order that man might be saved, that the law of God should be kept, for no man can see God's face except he be perfect in righteousness. Christ undertook to keep God's law for His people, to obey its every mandate, and preserve its every statute intact. It needed nothing to complete the perfect virtue of life but the entire obedience of death. Our perfect Substitute put the last stroke upon His work by dying. Christ the Creator, who finished creation, has perfected redemption. God can ask no more. The law has received all it claims. 4. The satisfaction which He rendered to the justice of God was finished. The debt was now, to the last farthing, all discharged. The atonement and propitiation were made once for all, and for ever, by the one offering made in Jesu's body on the tree. 5. Victory over the powers of darkness. (1) Sin nailed Him to the cross; but in that deed Christ nailed sin also to the tree. (2) Next came Satan. Not long was the struggle; He who is the Son of God as well as the Son of Mary, having despoiled him of his armour, having quenched his fiery darts, and broken his head, He cried, "It is finished." (3) Death had come against Him, as Christmas Evans puts it, with his fiery dart, which he struck right through the Saviour, till the point fixed in the cross, and when he tried to pull it out again, he left the sting behind. What could he do more? II. Let us hear and WONDER. Let us perceive what mighty things were secured by these words. 1. Thus He ratified the covenant. That covenant was signed and sealed before, but when the blood of Christ sprinkled it it could never be reversed, nor could one of its stipulations fail. 2. His Father was honoured, and Divine justice fully was displayed. He

would, as a God of love, and now He could as a God of justice, bless poor sinners. 3. He Himself was glorified. He had honour as God, but as man He was despised and rejected; now as God and Man Christ was made to sit down for ever on His Father's throne, crowned with honour and majesty. 4. The words had effect on heaven. Before, the saints had been saved, as it were, on credit. But Christ said, "It is finished," and oath, and covenant, and blood set fast the dwelling-place of the redeemed, made their mansions safely and eternally their own, and bade their feet stand immoveably upon the rock. 5. The words took effect on hell. Lost souls mourned that day, for if Christ Himself, the Substitute, could not be permitted to go free till He had finished all His punishment, then they can never be free. III. Let us hear and PERISH IT. 1. To those who are torturing themselves, thinking through mortification to offer satisfaction. Yonder Hindoo is about to throw himself down upon the spikes. Stay, poor man! wherefore wouldst thou bleed, for "It is finished"! 2. To the benighted votaries of Rome, when ye see the priests, offering every day the pretended sacrifice of the mass. "Cease, false priest, false worshipper, for 'It is finished!'" 3. To the foolish who call themselves Protestants, but who think by their gifts, prayers, vows, church-goings, &c., to make themselves fit for God; and say to them, "Stop!" Why improve on what is finished? 4. To all poor despairing souls. Ye find them on their knees, crying, "O God, what can I do to make recompense for my offences?" Tell them, "It is finished;" the recompense is made already. 5. To professed Christians in doubts and fears. We have thousands that really are converted, who do not know that "It is finished." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *It is finished*:—1. As the evangel of Christ. 2. As the confession of the Church. 3. As the jubilation of the believing heart. 4. As an excitation to every work of faith. 5. As a prophecy of the last day. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *It is finished*:—"The words of dying men," says the great dramatist, "enforce attention." How much more the words of the dying God-Man. Note—I. THE LIGHT CAST BY THIS UTTERANCE ON CHRIST'S WORK ITSELF. It exhibits to us—1. A great work. It is not of any ordinary or trifling act that we use this stately phrase; it belongs to what we regard as an achievement to get off our hands. And never was it more worthily applied than to the work of redemption. What is great, if that is not? The Hebrew equivalent of this expression, and which concludes Psa. xxii. (from which probably our Lord took it), is the same as we have in Gen. ii. 3. That voice from the cross marked the termination of a work far greater in its nature and issues than the work of Creation. It made known the manifold wisdom of God in a way which no creative acts could do. It unfolded the very heart of God, and revealed Him to be Love as well as Light. 2. A difficult work. A work may be great and yet not difficult—the Creation, *e.g.*—"He spake and it was done." But who can imagine the feeling of infinite relief represented by "It is finished." Christ's human nature quailed before it. "Father, if it be possible," &c. But now that the last drop has passed His lips; now that the justice of God is satisfied, He gives vent to the relief felt in these words. 3. A definite work. He knew when it was done. It had a beginning, certain well-marked stages, and an unmistakeable termination. He often spoke of it as something prescribed. "The work Thou gavest Me to do." The same is implied in His Messiahship. Ambassadors have always definite instructions. This view is needed in these days of theological vagueness when Divine mercy is panegyrized, but no positive statements forthcoming as to how a sinner is to be accepted of God. We are twitted with our theology being hard and dry, but when solid footing is wanted these qualities are preferable to quicksands and quagmires. The Saviour's work was definite in its nature, objects, and results. 4. A perfect work. A definite goal was reached, and all up to that point was perfect, and could never again be reopened or improved. And the Scripture leaves us in no ignorance of what was perfected—the Atonement (Heb. x. 10, 14). II. THE RESPECTS IN WHICH CHRIST'S WORK WAS THEN FINISHED. 1. That it was finished in every view of it was manifestly not the case; for it is still in progress, and will not be absolutely finished till "the days of the voice of the seventh angel" (Rev. x. 7). 2. As a whole it was finished as a battle is finished. After the conflict at Gravelotte had raged for twelve hours, Moltke rode up to the King of Prussia and quietly said, "The battle is finished." He meant that the key of the position was wrested from the enemy, and that it was only a matter of time for his dispositions to close the struggle. So here the contest was raging fiercer than ever, and still rages: but Christ won the key of the position, and virtually secured everything. 3. In certain details it was absolutely finished. The typical system was abolished, animal sacrifices had accomplished their mission, and pro-

phecy was fulfilled. III. SOME OF THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS WHICH THE FINISHING OF CHRIST'S WORK SHOULD HAVE UPON US. 1. It ought to annihilate all disposition to self-righteousness. The natural man has no pleasure in contemplating Christ's work as finished. He must first be made to feel himself a helpless, worthless, perishing sinner, and then a work requiring no contributions of his will exactly suit his case. 2. We should see in it a ground of immediate peace and joy—as it was to the early disciples (Acts ii. 46, 47; viii. 39; xvi. 34). Jesus has done all that you need for your acceptance: nothing remains for you but to accept it, and take the comfort of it. 3. We see the pledge that Christ's work will be complete in all His people. Conclusion: This pillar of light has a frowning aspect for unbelievers. Christ's enemies were terribly frightened when He said, "It is finished." The earth quaked, &c., and the onlookers smote upon their breasts and fled, fancying that all was finished. They were mistaken, of course, but a day is coming when it will be no mistake. It will then be finished for the ungodly; finished with prayer, mercy, pleasures of sin, everything except the wrath of God, and that will be for ever. (*James Moir, M.A.*) *It is finished:*—I. IN WHAT SENSE. 1. Prophecy was fulfilled. 2. The substance of the types was accomplished. 3. All was finished that was necessary to make Him a fit pattern for us. 4. All was done which God required as an expiation of sin. II. THE EVIDENCES. 1. The dignity of the Person finishing. 2. The greatness of the work. 3. God's approbation of Him and it. III. THE COMFORT. 1. It answers the grand scruple which is at the bottom of all our fears (Micah vi. 6, 7). 2. God can now require no satisfaction from us (Isa. liii. 5). 3. It affords the strongest motive to duty and gives to duty its sweetest pleasure. 4. It encourages us to look for great things from God in this life and the next. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *It is finished:*—I. A PROPHETIC WORD—all Scripture fulfilled. II. A HIGH PRIESTLY WORD—the expiatory sacrifice completed. III. A KINGLY WORD—the kingdom of heaven founded. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *It is finished:*—The significance of these words as regards—I. CHRIST PERSONALLY. They indicated—1. That His passion was accomplished. 2. That the Father's will had been perfected in the Son. II. THE POWERS OF DARKNESS. They indicated that Christ's absolute sovereignty was established over Satan, death, and hell. III. MANKIND. They indicated that the debt of sin was cancelled and man's atonement made. Conclusion: The saying teaches us—1. To realize in the apparent failure of His mission the true dignity of Christ. 2. The necessity of individual co-operation with Divine grace. 3. To offer ourselves to God in living consecration. 4. To be faithful unto death. (*Thirty Thousand Thoughts.*) *It is finished:*—It is interesting to see the first outlines and drawings, the rough sketches which some of the great painters have left of their great pictures; but what are these compared with the completed masterpieces when the shade and colour have been put in and the final touch has been added! It is interesting to see the block of rough marble that has received the first strokes of the chisel, but how is this surpassed when the statue is finished and appears to breathe with life! And the pleasure of the beholder is eclipsed by that of the artist. When Palissy, after years of toil and experiment, amidst privation and reproach, at last mastered the secret, and found that his jars came out of the fire covered with the beautiful white enamel, what an intense relief he must have felt when he discovered the long-lost art! When one has undergone a painful operation and it proves successful, with what intense relief does the sufferer whisper, "Thank God! it is over now." So in this word on the cross there seems to breathe an intense relief and joy that the work which the Father had given Him was finished. (*W. T. Bull, M.A.*) *Finished* means more than "ended." Five times in the course of the evangelic record Christ is said to have used the word now in question. In four instances out of the five our translators have rendered it "accomplished." We must certainly take it as conveying the idea, not simply of ending, but of ending to perfection. Some interpreters understand Christ to speak only of His life. It would, however, be little for any one of us to say in the last hour, "Life is ended"—the question will be, Is it finished? When a certain graceful queen of fashion was dying, she said, "Oh, my God, it is over! I have come to the end of it—the end—the end! To have only one life—and to have done with it—and to lie here! To have lived and loved, and triumphed, and to know that it is over! One may defy everything else, but not this!" While the listener to these words sat, not once moving her eyes from the face of her who was speaking, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," that face changed into a mere mask of stone on the pillow, gazing at her with fixed stare. Oh the difference between one who could only say, "I have ended my

course," and one who could say, "I have finished it" (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8). When a poet, long the pride of Germany, was writing his last work, death stopped him in the midst of it, and the unfinished manuscript was placed upon the coffin as it was carried to the grave; touching type of what might be done at every funeral! Our lives on earth are broken fragments of existence, crowded with the beginnings of things. Unfinished pictures in the studio, unfinished plans on the anvil of thought, unfinished papers on the desk, unfinished houses in the street, unfinished settlements of affairs; and the beginners of these taken away, all remind us of the difference between us and our Master. His purposes are never "broken off." In creation, though various checks, blights, and frosts are permitted, as far as His creative processes are concerned, you find that even in the smallest thing nothing is left unfinished; you meet with no unfinished insect, no unfinished flower, no unfinished "medallions of creation." "All His work is perfect;" and everything, from the shell on the shore to the star in the sky, is what He meant it to be. No one can say of Jesus Christ, in any department of His operations, that He only half does, or only almost does. What He does, He finishes. No one shall point to the cross and say of "the Man, Christ Jesus," "This Man began to build, and was not able to finish." What He did then, He did thoroughly; and it was with truth most exact and absolute that He said, "It is finished!" (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Christ proclaiming His finished work*:—Looking at it—I. IN CONNECTION WITH HIMSELF, we may notice—1. The wonderful composure it indicates. Dying men have often spoken composedly, but this has generally been when they have had no intense bodily suffering to distract them, and all quiet within their souls. But Jesus is dying in a storm. His bodily frame is sinking with agony, and as for His soul, none but Himself can form an idea of the waves and the billows that are going over it. Yet where are His thoughts? He is described in the verses preceding as calmly reviewing the predictions concerning Him, and finding one of them yet unfulfilled, providing for the fulfilment of it. What an honour is here put on Holy Scripture! And this mental composure appears yet more wonderful, when we contrast it with the agitation He manifested only a few hours before in the apprehension of His sufferings in Gethsemane. One of the most wonderful things attending His sufferings, is the amazing power of suffering He discovered under them. And where did this power come from? From His Father. And for what end? To enable Him to bear the weight of misery now laid on Him; but also that His Father might show forth in Him the boundless power of His strengthening grace. And this strength has never been withdrawn from Him. He calls it His grace, and He delights in sending it forth to the weak and suffering. He who bore with calmness the misery of the cross could bear up a whole miserable world would that world but cast itself on Him. 2. The language is that of joy also. Here is—(1) Great suffering over. The strength given to our Lord on the cross did not render Him insensible of the burden He bore there. This is not the nature of Divine grace. It enables the soul to endure suffering, but it adds to, rather than diminishes, its sensibility under it. His joy is like that you may have witnessed when the long tried Christian has been told on the bed of sickness that the hour of His release is come. (2) A great evil removed. Our Lord's sufferings were to expiate once for ever the transgressions of His people. When, therefore, Jesus sees this accomplished by Himself; we cannot wonder that even in a dying moment joy springs up in Him that must have utterance. It is like the joy a father feels who, after years of toil, has just paid down the sum that is to ransom his captive children; or like the joy of another father who has plunged into a raging sea to save his child. (3) A great work accomplished. Our Lord had not only to expiate sin for His people, He had to work out for them a complete righteousness in which they are to appear at the last before the bar of God. 3. But here is triumph also. Picture to yourselves a general maintaining an important post. He cannot move to drive away his foe, but there he is obliged to remain and sustain all his reiterated attacks. And these are renewed so often and so fiercely, that they become at last exceedingly trying to him. "I can never be beaten," he says. "My troops will never yield. But oh, that the hour were come, when I might put forth my strength, and by one blow crush that enemy." The hour does come, he strikes the blow; and as he sees his astonished foes fleeing before him, with what a mixture of joy and triumph can we imagine him shouting, "It is over; I have finished it!" There is a picture of Jesus as He is described in this text. II. AS ADDRESSING HIS FATHER IN IT. In this light the exclamation before us takes the character of a faithful servant's language, claiming from a faithful master his well-earned recompense. The blessed Jesus is often

spoken of in Scripture as His Father's servant. He seemed to take pleasure in speaking so of Himself. Now, then, when the appointed work is done, the final victory won, all the glorious purposes for which He left the heavens performed, we see Him looking up to His Father with an appeal to His Father's faithfulness and munificence. His resurrection, heavenly exaltation and joy, the diffusion and triumphs of His gospel, the salvation of His Church, the establishment of His kingdom, all enter His thoughts, and in one word He reminds His Father that they must be His, for He has paid the price of them. "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me." III. But there is a third party concerned in this text—OURSELVES. He muttered it in man's hearing; His Holy Spirit has recorded it in His Word. We may be sure, therefore, that He intended it for man. It speaks to us the language of—1. Joyful congratulation. Angels came down from heaven to bid the earth rejoice when this Saviour began His work on it; He seems to have uttered this cry to congratulate His Church again now He has completed it. "And has He left nothing for us to do?" Yes, but only to seek, accept, and enjoy the salvation He has completed. 2. Of invitation. What is your soul's desire? "I want pardon," you say. "It is finished," this sentence says, and all you have to do is to go and say, "Lord, give it me." And do you want a perfect righteousness in which you may stand with humble fearlessness before a holy God? "It is finished," this dying Saviour says again. Or is it the grace of a Holy Spirit that you want to teach you, to comfort you, to strengthen you, to sanctify and guide you? Again the same voice says, "It is finished." (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *Christ's finished work*:—There never existed but one Being who in truth could affirm of His work—"It is finished!" Incompleteness and defect trace the most vast, elaborate and accomplished products of human genius and power. Let us consider these words as—I. THE CRY OF A SUFFERER. Contemplate—1. His Divine dignity. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd and against the man that is my fellow," &c. Upon the doctrine of Christ's Deity reposes the fabric of the atonement. 2. The expiatory and vicarious character of His sufferings. "He was wounded for our transgressions," &c. 3. These sufferings were unparalleled and intense. That is a sublime sentence on the liturgy of the Greek Church—"Thine unknown agonies." (1) There was the physical element. (2) There was mental agony, and what He endured in His mind who can conceive? (3) But the soul-suffering was more intense than all. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The billows of God's wrath began now to penetrate His nature. When a vessel coursing its way over the ocean is arrested by a storm, as long as his gallant bark ploughs its way, and keeps its course, the mariner treads its deck undaunted by fear, confident in its strength and firmness. But let the cry be heard, "A leak! the waters are coming in!" And in a moment despair enters, and the hearts of the stern sons of the sea die within them. That was the moment of our Lord's unknown agony, when He could exclain, "Save Me, O God, for the waters are come into My soul." In what else can we resolve all this mystery of agony but in the "love of Christ which passeth knowledge." Oh mystery of suffering! Oh deeper mystery of love! 4. But these sufferings now are over. Rejoice, then, that the tempest will no more beat around him, and all the sorrow, through which He leads you home to Himself, hath not one drop of the curse to embitter it. He took your cup of grief and of the curse, drank it to its dregs, then filled it with His love, and gave it back for you to drink, and to drink for ever. II. THE LANGUAGE OF A SAVIOUR. Those words speak hope to the hopeless, pardon to the guilty, acceptance to the lost. He had finished all that justice asked, that the law demanded; and opened the bright pathway for the sinner to retrace his steps back to God, and once more feel the warm embrace of his Father's forgiving love. III. THE SHOUT OF A CONQUEROR. Christ was a man of war, our glorious Joshua was He. He met His foes on the battle field, confronted all His enemies, and on the cross He destroyed—He divested death of its sting, triumphed over Satan, the grave, and hell. Conclusion: 1. What a spring of comfort is here for the true believer amid his innumerable failures, flaws, and imperfections. What service do you perform, what duty do you discharge, of which you can say, "It is finished?" But "Ye are complete in Him." God beholds you in Christ, "wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved." 2. If Christ's atoning work is finished, what folly and sin to attempt to supplement it! Away with your tears, confessions, duties, charities, even your repentance and faith, if these things dare to take their place side by side with the finished work of Christ. 3. Let me warn you of the utter worthlessness and fallacy of all grounds

of faith, and of all human hope that comes in conflict with the finished work of Christ. 4. Beware of the errors of the day, the tendency of which is to veil the light and glory of Christ's finished work, and to mislead, misguide, and misdirect souls on their way to the judgment seat. (*O. Winslow, D.D.*) *Finished work*:—It was the labour of Mr. Charles', of Balas, lifetime to procure a complete and correct Welsh Bible. His toil was very great, and wholly unremunerative. He often expressed a strong wish that his life might be spared till the work was done, and then, he used to say, "I shall willingly lay down my head and die." He lived to see it completed; and he expressed himself very thankful to the Lord for having graciously spared him, and the last words ever written by him, as it is supposed, were these, with reference to his great work, "It is now finished." *Finishing of work*:—In the year 735 there stood on the south bank of the Tyne, near the retired hamlet of Jarrow, a small monastery. On the evening of the 26th of May a stillness, unusual even in that peaceful sanctuary, reigned throughout the building. The monks moved along the corridors with silent tread and solemn faces, ever and anon addressing each other in low, anxious whispers. On an humble pallet in one of the little cells lay an aged monk. His body was wasted almost to a skeleton. The sunken eyes and hollow cheeks, and quick-drawn, gasping breath told but too plainly that death was near. Beside the bed sat a scribe. A book was before him, and a pen in his hand. He had just raised the pen from the page, and as he held it ready, he looked with an expression of deepest anxiety, mingled with grief, on the face of the dying man. "Now, father," he said, "there remains only one chapter; but you speak with difficulty, the exertion is too great." "It is easy," replied the monk, in feeble accents. "Take your pen; write —write as fast as you can." Sentence after sentence flowed from the tremulous lips, and was committed to writing. There was a pause. Nature seemed exhausted. "Father," said the scribe, with anxious tenderness, "only one sentence is now wanting—only one." In faltering accents that sentence too was repeated. "It is finished," said the scribe. "It is finished," repeated the dying saint. "Lift up my head; higher yet; let me sit in my cell. Let me sit in the spot where I have been accustomed to pray. And now, Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." Thus died the venerable Bede; and thus was completed the first vernacular translation of a portion of God's Word in this country. (*Clerical Anecdotes.*) *In what sense these words refer to the prophecies*:—All the Scripture prophecies which spoke of Christ's death and sufferings were now accomplished, as —1. That He should make His entrance into Jerusalem upon an ass in humility (Zech. ix. 9, *cf.* Matt. xxi. 4, 5). 2. That He should be betrayed by one of His familiars, His own disciple (Psa. lv. 12, 13; xli. 9, *cf.* Matt. xxvi, 23, 47). 3. That He should be sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zech. xi. 12, *cf.* Matt. xxvi. 15). 4. That with this price there should afterwards be bought a field of potsherds (Zech. xi. 13, *cf.* Matt. xxvii. 7). 5. That being apprehended, He should be most barbarously entreated (Isa. l. 6, *cf.* Matt. xxvi. 67). 6. That they would wound His body with scourges before they put Him to death (Isa. liii. 5, *cf.* Matt. xxvii. 26). 7. That He should be put to death (Dan. ix. 26). 8. That His death should be that of the cross (Psa. xxii. 16; Zech. xii. 10, *cf.* Luke xxiii. 33). 9. That He was crucified between two malefactors was according to Isa. liii. 12 (*cf.* Luke xxii. 37). 10. That He was to pray for His enemies (Isa. liii. 12, *cf.* Luke xxiii. 24). 11. That He should have vinegar to drink (Psa. lxix. 21, *cf.* John xix. 30). 12. That they should divide His apparel, and cast lots for His upper garment (Psa. xxii. 18, *cf.* Matt. xxvii. 35). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Christ finishing the types and prophecies*:—I will give the Old Testament to any wise man living and say, Go home and construct in your imagination an ideal character who shall exactly fit all that which is herein foreshadowed. Remember, he must be a prophet like unto Moses, and yet a champion like unto Joshua; he must be an Aaron and a Melchisedec; he must be both David and Solomon, Noah and Jonah, Judah and Joseph. Nay, he must not only be the lamb that was slain and the scapegoat that was not slain, the turtle dove and the priest that slew the bird, but he must be the altar, tabernacle, mercy-seat, and shewbread. Nay, to puzzle this wise man further, we remind him of prophecies so apparently contradictory that one would think they could never meet in one man. Such as these, "All men shall fall down before Him," &c., and "He is despised," &c. He must begin by showing a man born of a virgin mother, He must be a man without spot or blemish, but one upon whom the Lord doth lay the iniquities of us all. He must be a glorious One, a Son of David, yet a root out of a dry ground. Now if the greatest intellects could set

themselves to invent another key to the types and prophecies they could not do it. These wondrous hieroglyphics must be left unexplained till one comes forward and proclaims, "the Cross of Christ and the Son of God incarnate." Then the whole is clear, so that he who runs may read, and a child may understand. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **And He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.**—*The death of Christ*:—I. WHEN. Not till all was perfected. 1. Why? (1) Love to His Father (chap. xviii. 11). (2) Love to the Church (Eph. v. 25, 26; Rev. i. 5, 6; Eph. v. 27). (3) Respect to the glory set before Him (Heb. xii. 2). 2. The lessons this teaches. (1) Confidence in the benefit purchased. (*a*) The wrath of God is appeased (Rom. v. 9). (*b*) The law is satisfied (Gal. iv. 4, 5). (*c*) Satan is vanquished (chap. xii. 31). (*d*) Guilt is removed (Eph. i. 7). (*e*) Sin is subdued (Rom. vi. 6). (*f*) Death is unstinged (1 Cor. xv. 55–57). (*g*) The curse is removed (Gal. iii. 13). (2) Perseverance in duty that when we come to die we may be able to say John xvii. 4; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. (3) Comfort in death. It finishes all our labours and sorrows, as Christ shows when He gave up the ghost (Isa. lvii. 2). II. How? 1. Freely and willingly. He first bowed His head in resignation, or as beckoning death to come and do its office, and then yielded up the ghost. Wicked men, because they die against their wills, their souls may be said to be taken away (Luke xii. 20; Job xxvii. 8). In Christ's death, while there was much of violence, there was no coercion. 2. Why Christ was so willing to die. (1) Out of obedience to the Father (Luke xxii. 37, xxiv. 46; John x. 18). (2) Out of love to us (Matt. xx. 28). (3) To finish His labours. Death was Christ's last enemy. (4) To complete His triumph (Heb. ii. 14; Col. ii. 15). (5) To enter into His glory. III. THEIR USES. 1. To commend the love of Christ to us. 2. To comfort humbled sinners. Take Christ as freely as He offers Himself. He resigned Himself to death, and will you not resign yourselves by faith? 3. Learn to imitate Christ. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The death of Christ*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. What is death? The dissolution of soul and body; departure from this world. 2. Christ experienced the usual accidents of death. His soul left His body and entered Hades; His body became inanimate. 3. But it is not the death of a man, but of a Divine Person—of the Lord of Glory, of the Son of God, of God. The Divine nature as little affected as the human soul. To this is due its infinite value and efficacy. II. ITS DESIGN. In general the redemption of man, including deliverance from condemnation and restoration to the favour and image of God. This it effects—1. By being a satisfaction to justice, a propitiation. 2. And hence He becomes our ransom by delivering us from the law and from Satan. 3. Presents us righteous before God. 4. Secures the gift of the Holy Ghost. 5. Secures access to God, and with His favour all the blessings of the covenant of grace. III. ITS RELATION TO US. 1. It is our death, because it was the death of our Representative, endured in our place. 2. Hence it is also our death effectively as well as legally. It involves a death to the law, to sin, to the world. 3. It becomes a source of life; the motive for avoiding sin; the reason why we should live to God; the ground and source of our joy. IV. ITS RELATION TO THE UNIVERSE. 1. The great means of exhibiting the manifold wisdom, *i.e.*, the perfections of God—to good and fallen angels, to lost men. 2. Hence to sustain the authority of God. 3. To promote the holiness and happiness of the kingdom of God. V. INFERENCES. The death of Christ should be—1. The constant theme of our meditations. 2. The ground of gratitude and devotion. 3. The means whereby we should endeavour to convert the world. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The death of Christ*:—The death of Socrates, peacefully philosophising among friends, appears the most agreeable that one could wish: that of Jesus, expiring in agonies, abused, insulted, and accursed by a whole nation, is the most horrible that one could fear. Socrates, indeed, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed the weeping executioner who administered it; but Jesus, amidst excruciating tortures, prayed for His merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. (*J. J. Rousseau.*)

Vers. 31–37. **The Jews therefore because it was the preparation.**—*Profanity of fanaticism*:—They must make ready for keeping holy the Sabbath while their hands are red with the murder of the Son of God. A stroke of that Jewish hypocrisy which strains at gnats and swallows camels similar to chap. xviii. 28. These men considered themselves strictly bound to observe every jot and tittle of an outward ordinance, but never scrupled to violate the most weighty precepts of the moral law. They made no conscience of murdering an innocent Person, and yet could not think of letting His dead body hang upon the cross upon the Sabbath

day. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The dead Christ*:—I. THE SIGHTS JOHN BEHELD (vers. 32–35). 1. The breaking of the robbers' legs. How and why this came to pass the Evangelist explains; also how and why the operation was omitted in the case of Christ. 2. The piercing of the Saviour's side. Not a slight scratch, but a strong thrust of a soldier's lance, given to render assurance of Christ's death doubly sure. 3. The streaming of blood and water from the wound—unusual, if not directly miraculous. As Christ's body saw no corruption the change upon it which should culminate in a resurrection had begun. The water and the blood were an indication of the presence of that new life which was to issue in the transformation of what was earthly and corporeal into that which is heavenly and spiritual. II. THE REFLECTIONS JOHN MADE (vers. 36, 37; 1 John v. 6). 1. That Christ was the true Paschal Lamb. He arrived at this conclusion by observing the coincidence between the not breaking of Christ's legs and the ancient paschal ordinance (Exod. xii. 46). At the time perhaps it escaped his notice, but reflecting on it afterwards he saw in that seemingly accidental, but really providential, circumstance, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." 2. That Israel would one day be converted to Christ. John remembered Zech. xii. 10. Since the first part of the prophecy was undeniably fulfilled, he knew the other would be, and he had not long to wait. Within two months many of Christ's murderers were crying, "What shall we do?" (Acts ii. 37). And the day will come when all shall cry it (Rom. xi. 25, 26; 2 Cor. iii. 16). 3. That Christ crucified was an all-sufficient Saviour for men. This was suggested, if not then, afterwards, by streaming forth of blood and water, to cleanse and regenerate (1 John v. 6). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *A fragment of a wonderful history*:—I. THE IMMORALITY OF TECHNICAL SAINTHOOD. The Jews here were in a conventional and ceremonial sense great saints, and felt themselves such; albeit they were destitute of genuine morality, and in heart disregarded every precept of the decalogue. It has ever been so. There is a pietism which eats out the heart of humanity, and turns men into bigots and persecutors. II. THE SERVILITY OF STATE HIRELINGS. The soldiers who crucified and pierced Christ had sold themselves to the state, and surrendered their whole individuality to their employers. The spirit of manhood was extinct; they had become machines to murder and kill. This is the curse of nations. In proportion to the servile spirit of a people is the strength of tyranny. Sycophancy paralyses patriotism. This is not unknown even in England. III. THE CERTITUDE OF THE GREATEST FACT. 1. The greatest fact in history is the death of Christ. To it all past events pointed, and from it all future have their rise and take their date. It created moral influences which deepen every day. 2. The most competent witness of the fact was John. No one was—(1) More intellectually competent. No one was so much with Christ, and so intimately acquainted with Him. (2) More morally competent. He was incorruptibly honest and incontrovertibly disinterested. IV. THE PHILOSOPHY OF EVANGELICAL PENITENCE (ver. 37). He who looks with the eye of faith on the cross as the demonstration of human wickedness and the expression of God's compassion for sinners, is in a way to have his heart broken with contrition for sin. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 32, 33. **Then came the soldiers and broke the legs.**—By no mode of judicial death has "man's inhumanity to man" been more shown than by crucifixion. It was a slow death by exhaustion and starvation. These processes were so slow, that when the crucified person was in ordinary health and vigour, invariably he survived the first twenty-four hours, lived generally over the second, occasionally even into the fifth or sixth day. "I was told," says Captain Clapperton, speaking of the punishments in the Soudan, "that wretches on the cross generally linger three days before death puts an end to their sufferings." In old times, at nightfall, when the crowd had gone home, and each head had found its soft pillow, the soldiers lighted their lanterns and waited. Through the frost of the night, through the fire of the day, then through another night and day, the man on the cross would be dying slowly, until the savage watchers, out of patience, would sometimes, not indeed for his sake, but for their own, by blow of mace or mallet, break his limbs; and the shock of this would shake out the last quivering spark of life. In this instance, besides the impatience of the soldiers, there was that of the people. Next day would be the Sabbath of the Passover, regarded as the great Sabbath of the year. According to their standard, it would have been desecration of this day if they had allowed a man to die on it by hanging on a tree. A deputation, therefore, waited on the governor, with an entreaty that the men who were on the crosses

might be despatched at once, and their bodies taken away. He acceded to this; the order was forwarded to the soldiers; in carrying out this order they broke the legs, first of the malefactor on the one side, next of him on the other side of the central cross; but when they came to that they found that Jesus was dead already. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*)

Ver. 34. **One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side.**—*The piercing of Christ's side*:—I. IT WAS AN ACT OF INSULT AND INDIGNITY TO HIS PERSON. To this, indeed, He was no stranger. In the hall of Pilate, and on the cross He encountered indignities of the cruellest kind. But, beyond the moment of death, the malice of His enemies pursued Him. We cannot behold the body, which the Holy Spirit had prepared, thus mangled, without the deepest sorrow and humiliation. We could not see the body of a convicted malefactor thus insulted without the deepest pity. "He was wounded for our transgressions." Let us look to Him whom we pierced, and mourn because of Him. And let the believing contemplation of the wounds of Jesus teach us submission under the varied ills and sorrows of our own earthly lot. II. IT ASCERTAINS, AND PLACES BEYOND QUESTION, THE REALITY OF HIS DEATH. On this some of the most important truths depend. 1. If He had not actually expired, there would have been no sacrifice at all. The true nature of a sacrifice is the actual dying of the victim. If, therefore, the death of Jesus were not put beyond all question, His doctrine might enlighten, and His example direct us, but we should have no assurance that an actual and efficient atonement had been made for sin. 2. The reality of our Lord's death is essential to the confirmation of the hopes which are founded on His resurrection. If we could not show that death had actually taken place, "our preaching would be vain, your faith would be vain, and you would be yet in your sins." The piercing of His side put His death beyond question. Believing that He "both died, and rose, and revived," we look up to Him with sacred satisfaction and joy, and adore Him as "Lord both of the dead and of the living." III. IT WAS THE FULFILMENT OF ANCIENT PROPHECIES. 1. With respect to the first of these, it is obvious, that it is the prescription in reference to the Paschal Lamb that is pointed to. The executioner breaks the legs first of the one malefactor, and then of the other; but why does he stop short? Nobody interferes to arrest the fatal blow. But had it fallen the pretensions of Jesus to be the antitype of the Paschal Lamb, and consequently the Messiah of Israel, would have been for ever annulled. While, therefore, the executioner proceeds to do his work, an invisible Power interposed to restrain him. The honour of God's Son was at stake—the comfort of the Church was in peril—the mission of Jesus must be established by the fulfilment of prophecy. 2. Nor is the piercing of His side a less remarkable fulfilment. In the accomplishing of the one, the soldier abstains from doing to Jesus what he had done to the others, and what he had been told to do to all; while, in accomplishing the other prophecy, another soldier does to him what he did not do to the others, and what he was not told to do. And by this opposite conduct of two Roman soldiers were two memorable predictions of God's Word accomplished. IV. IT WAS AN EMBLEM OF THE EXPIATORY AND PURIFYING VIRTUE OF HIS SACRIFICE. The piercing of his Master's side, and the issuing of blood and water from the wound, made a deep and abiding impression on the mind of John, and we find him recurring to it in his first Epistle (ver. 6). "This is He who came by water and blood." In all languages water has been employed as an emblem of moral cleansing, while the universal prevalence of sacrifice has made blood the proper symbol of expiation. (*J. Johnston.*) *The piercing of Christ's side*:—I. THE OCCASION. The scrupulosity of the Jews, which teaches us—1. That superstition is fuller of ceremony than of mercy. 2. That the worst of men are usually very solicitous about external worship. 3. That malefactors are not to be taken out of the hands of justice, and left to the malice of the executioner or the fury of the multitude. They had to ask leave of Pilate for the additional punishment. 4. That when a man once gives himself up to please men there is no end to his compliance. Pilate who began by consenting to scourge Christ ends by signing an order for the breaking of His legs. 5. That Christ was willing to die for us, hence He died before the usual time. Had His legs been broken His death would have seemed the effect of violence rather than His own resignation (chap. x. 18). II. THE CIRCUMSTANCE. 1. As an act of Christ's love and condescension, that He would expose His body to the malice and violence of wicked men. He might have dried up the soldier's arm as He did Jeroboams; but by this stroke Christ would have His heart opened to show how full of love He is to sinners. As at the beginning Adam's

side was opened and Eve was taken out of it; so is the Church out of Christ's side. In this circumstance there is—(1) Hope for all wounded sinners. It is said of those converts (Acts ii. 37) that "they were pricked to their hearts." Christ's heart is wounded that they might be healed. This is the cleft of the rock in which guilty men may find refuge when wrath makes inquisition for sinners. (2) Matter of thankfulness. Soldiers to endear themselves to their country are wont to show their scars received in public service: so Christ (chap. xx. 27). In the sacrament these things are presented to faith. 2. As a certain pledge of Christ's death. The flowing of blood and water shows that the pericardium was pierced. So His enemies could not say that He was half dead, and that His resurrection was but a reviving out of a swoon. Upon this is based the Resurrection and all its benefits, and the fulness of the expiation which Christ offered to justice. 3. As a Divine necessity. Christ was to die—(1) As a Surety. We deserved death, but our Surety was to pay our debt. This Christ did (1 Pet. iii. 18; 1 Tim. ii. 6). (2) As a Testator or Maker of the New Testament. We could never have had the benefit of the Covenant if Christ had not died (Heb. ix. 16). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) **Forthwith came there out blood and water.**—*Blood and water*:—In the water and the blood are represented the most essential elements of salvation. The water has a remote reference to baptism, but it chiefly symbolizes the moral purifying power of the word of Christ. The blood points out the ransom paid for our guilt, as well as the atoning sacrifice. The blood flowed separately from the water; justification must not be mingled with, much less substituted for, personal amendment. (*F. Krummacher.*) *The physical cause of the death of Christ*:—Since Dr. Stroud published his work on "The Physical Causes of Christ's Death," we have met with no doubt expressed as to the death of Christ having immediately resulted from rupture of the heart. "Joy, or grief, or anger, suddenly or intensely excited, have often been known to produce this effect. The heart, which the universal language of mankind has spoken of as peculiarly affected by the play of the passions, has been found in such cases to have been rent or torn by the violence of its own action. The blood issuing from the fissure thus created has filled the pericardium, or sac, by which the heart is enclosed, and by its pressure has stopped the action of the heart" (Dr. Hanna). Common sorrow can, in its sudden extremity, break hearts; why may not that sorrow, deep beyond all other sorrows, have broken His? We believe it did. Now, when blood escapes from its vessels, within a short time it coagulates, its watery part separating from the rest; and there would be, so science tells us, within an hour or two after death such a flow of blood and water from a piercing as that which John saw. The late Sir James Simpson has said on this matter: "It has always appeared, to my medical mind at least, that this mode by which death was produced in the human body of Christ intensifies all our thoughts and ideas regarding the immensity of the astounding sacrifice which He made for our sinful race on the cross. Nothing can possibly be more striking and startling than the appalling and terrific passiveness with which God as man submitted, for our sakes, His incarnate body to all the horrors and tortures of the Crucifixion. But our wonderment at the stupendous sacrifice only increases when we reflect that, whilst enduring for our sins the most cruel and agonizing form of corporeal death, He was ultimately slain, not by the effects of the anguish of His corporeal frame, but by the effects of the mightier anguish of His mind; the fleshly walls of His heart, like the veil, as it were, in the Temple of His human body, becoming rent and riven, as for us He poured out His soul unto death. 'The travail of His soul' in that awful hour thus standing out as unspeakably bitterer and more dreadful than the travail of His body." (*C. Stanford, D.D.*)

Ver. 35. **And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true.**—*The Gospel witness*:—I. THE SIGHT—the whole crucifixion, but especially what constituted its essence as an evangelical fact, viz., the issue of blood and water, an emphatic testimony to the Redeemer's death. This is one of the most important texts of the Bible. If no one saw Christ die, how can we be sure that He did die; and unless we are sure of His death we are left in uncertainty as to His atonement and resurrection, and consequently as to our salvation and futurity. John saw a sight—1. Most wonderful. Great is the mystery of godliness all through—nowhere more than here. That God should become incarnate is inexplicable, no less so that being incarnate He should die. Learn here—(1) The limits of human reason. (2) The very manhood of Christ. 2. Most painful—to all whose feelings are not utterly brutalized. The death-bed of an ordinary friend, or even a stranger, under

the best circumstances, is sufficiently painful; but what must such a man as John have felt as he saw such a Friend nailed to the cruel tree? Learn here—(1) The inhumanity of man. (2) The feelings with which we should contemplate Christ crucified. 3. Most beneficent. Such a mysterious scene enacted, and such dreadful sufferings endured voluntarily, must have been for some adequate purpose. Martyrdom for truth falls far short of it. The only adequate motive is John iii. 16; 1 John ii. 2. God incarnate was crucified to save a world. II. THE TRUE RECORD. 1. Such an event actually took place. (1) John could not have been mistaken; if the senses were deceptive here, when all was so striking, then they are trustworthy nowhere. (2) John was not a madman—his Gospel and Epistles are a sufficient proof of that. (3) John was not a deceiver; he suffered the loss of all things, and imperilled his life for the sheer sake of recording what he saw. 2. What took place John was bound to record. (1) Not simply as an important historical fact, although he had responsibilities here. (2) But as a display of Divine mercy, and the sole means of human salvation. "Woe is me," he might have said, "if I write not the gospel." 3. This record he knew to be true. Because—(1) He saw what he recorded. (2) He knew that he was a truthful man. (3) Reading what he had written he was sure that it was in accordance with the whole of the facts. Nothing essential was omitted; nothing false or superfluous was included. III. THE EVANGELICAL PURPOSE. 1. Not personal display. John was a deep thinker and a graphic writer; but it was the furthest from his intention to pose as a philosopher, or to excite admiration as a rhetorician. 2. Not to excite emotion. How different the narrative from the scenic and heart-harrowing descriptions in books of devotion and pulpit declamations. 3. But to create belief. Hence the record is clear, earnest, tender, and full of subtle spiritual influence. Learn the qualifications of a true Gospel witness. 1. He must have actually seen what he endeavours to describe. Theory and hearsay are worthless here. There must be clear, positive experience of Christ crucified. 2. Fidelity. He must confine himself to what he has seen—not his fancies or speculations, but what he knows of Christ's love and salvation. 3. A sense of responsibility. He has a medicine that has cured him, and can cure every one. He is wicked therefore to keep it to himself. 4. A sincere and self-abnegating motive—not to court admirers but to win believers. (*J. W. Burn.*) *The evidences of truth*:—The truth we receive from another may either derive its authority from the teacher, or reflect on him the authority it contains. As the receiver of money may argue, either that money is good because it is an honest man who pays it, or that the man is honest because he pays good money, so in the communication of truth, it may be a valid inference, either that the doctrine is true because it is a trustworthy man who teaches it, or that the man who teaches it is averacious and trustworthy because his doctrine is true. (*J. Caird, D.D.*) *Testimony dependent on the character of the witness*:—Dr. Weyland was once lecturing on the weight of evidence furnished by human testimony, and was illustrating its sufficiency for establishing the truth of miracles. "But," said one of his students, "what would you say, doctor, if I stated that as I was coming up College Street, I saw the lamp-post at the corner dance?" "I should ask you where you had been, my son," was the quiet reply.

Ver. 36. **A bone of Him shall not be broken.**—*The inviolate body of Christ*:—Why not? 1. His enemies might tear His flesh, &c., take away His life, heap upon Him every dishonour, but they could not break a bone of the body of Jesus. An attempt was made. Pilate commanded the soldiers to break the legs of the crucified. This was done to the two malefactors, but when they came to Jesus they could not break His legs. Roman soldiers were not accustomed to break the commands of their governors; but there stood what was mightier than the governor, mightier than Cæsar: a text of Scripture. 2. From the manner in which the Evangelist speaks, it is evident that there is some important lesson to learn (ver. 35). The evangelists generally are content with a simple statement, and leave it to produce upon the reader its own impression; but here, as if there were important things that must be believed, he stays, contrary to his usual manner, to asseverate. Now, what are the lessons? I. THAT CHRIST, OUR PASSOVER, IS SACRIFICED FOR US. Notice—1. A peculiarity of John. He appears as if he had gone back to the days of his youth, and the events were all passing before him. Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote as historians, but John as a witness. He saw and felt it all again. He says: "Then came the soldiers,"—and what did they do? They brake the legs of the two malefactors? That would have been Matthew's way of putting

it. But John says, "and brake the legs of the first." That is done; "and of the other that was crucified with him." That is done. "But when they came to Jesus,"—he watches them coming—"and saw"—He observed their looks—"that He was dead already;" there was the certain expression of death on the countenance of the blessed Saviour that could not be mistaken; and the soldiers were sure He was dead; and John was sure too. And so "they brake not His legs." It does not seem as an afterthought, nor as though he was hunting for an argument, but just then, while he was looking on, the law of the Passover was suggested to his mind, and he felt something like this: "There is the fulfilment of Scripture there; not a bone of Him is broken. There is the Passover slain for us." 2. There was everything to remind John of the Passover. He had eaten the Passover with Christ the night before. Friends of his from Galilee had come up to keep the Passover; before them all, Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed; it was the great paschal day. 3. And what is the lesson for us? Christ was the Paschal Lamb of the Christian Church. Through the shedding of His blood we plead for mercy; the avenging angel passes by; the wrath of God is averted; there is no demand for death; peace and joy may remain in our houses. (1) Do not reply; you are not one of the elect, and have no right to plead it. "As Moses lifted up the serpent . . . that whosoever"—is not that enough? As certainly as the Hebrew in Egypt was safe under the sign of the blood of the paschal lamb, so certainly may you repose in perfect security by pleading the precious blood of Christ your Passover, sacrificed for you. (2) But you tell me that the Egyptians could have no benefit from the paschal lamb. So far I agree; but I will venture to say, that if some Egyptian, hearing and believing the proclamation of Moses, had slain a lamb and sprinkled his door-posts with its blood, the angel of death would have respected that sign. So I say, be you who you may, only come in upon the proclamation of mercy, and lay hold on everlasting life, and you will not be disappointed. II. THAT NO DISHONOUR WHATSOEVER WAS TO BE DONE TO THE BODY OF JESUS AFTER HIS spirit had departed. 1. His life was gone, and He was no longer a consenting party. The dishonour as well as the agony He suffered was meritorious, and by it He was perfected in obedience, and was working out our salvation; but there can be nothing meritorious in any sufferings of a dead body; and therefore the body was, after death, under the guardian care of His heavenly Father; and so it was honoured in every possible way. Observe this in the narrative. What a contrast was there between the morning and the evening of that Friday! In the morning He is hung on a malefactor's cross; in the evening He is lying in the rich man's tomb. Great purposes were accomplished by the dishonour. "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again," &c. He endured the cross, and despised the shame, and showed the meekness and gentleness of His forgiving spirit when others were insulting Him. After death there could be no such object to accomplish. 2. The contrast is very remarkable; but observe how it is brought about. What was to become of the body of Jesus? It was not uncommon to leave the bodies hanging, the prey of carrion birds and ravenous beasts. But it was the great feast-time of the Jews, and it would have been a pollution to have allowed the bodies to remain there. What was to become of Jesus? There was a friend of His, a member of the Sanhedrim, who had the right to go to Pilate and ask a favour; "a disciple, but secretly, for fear of the Jews." A man afraid to avow himself a disciple before the Jews, would he avow himself a disciple before Pilate? Well, he did so. God is never at a loss for an instrument, and sometimes He employs the most unlikely. Nicodemus also was emboldened now, and so the two, and the servants, could thus reverently take down the body of Jesus, and convey it to the tomb with every possible honour. It was as if God had marked His approval of the great work which Jesus had finished. He has not long to lie in the tomb, but every honour shall be done Him while He is there. His body saw no corruption. (*R. Halley, D.D.*)

Ver. 37. **They shall look on Him whom they have pierced.**—*Looking at the pierced One*:—The text in relation—I. TO THE JEWS. 1. In relation to the past. It was the fulfilment of prophecy. Zechariah (xii. 10) had predicted what they would do. Christ honours Scripture even in His death, and makes even His enemies contribute to its fulfilment. 2. In relation to the present. (1) Some looked regretfully. They had trusted that He would have redeemed Israel. (2) Some looked remorsefully. One cannot but believe that there were misgivings in the breasts of other actors in this grim tragedy, than in those of the Centurion and

Judas. (3) But the evidence goes to show that most looked maliciously and murderously, and had no compunctions for their awful crime. 3. In relation to the future. (1) In the immediate future some looked on Jesus as set forth by Peter evidently crucified, and cried, "What shall we do?" and were saved (Acts ii.); and many more through the instrumentality of Paul. (2) In the remote future. "All Israel shall be saved," if not as a race, as penitent believers, "looking unto Jesus." II. To SINNERS GENERALLY. Inasmuch as sin was the moving cause of the Crucifixion, and the Jews were literal actors, not simply as Jews, but as wicked men, so the guilt of that crime rests upon the sinful race of men. Men look on Him whom they have pierced. 1. Now. Where Christ is known at all He is the central, all-commanding figure. All men must look, whether they like it or not. (1) Some look, and then look away—indifferent to His agonies and to the salvation they procured. Self-righteousness is sufficient, or salvation procured in that way a superfluity. "Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by?" (2) Some look and scoff. The Cross is still a stumbling-block or foolishness to infidels, or profane, or hypercritical persons. The offence of the Cross has not ceased. (3) Some look, and are softened into penitence, encouraged to believe and live. 2. Hereafter. All shall some day look again (Rev. i. 7); but the Pierced One will occupy not a Cross but a Throne, and will be seen either as a Judge, saying, "Depart ye cursed,' or as an everlasting Saviour saying, "Come ye blessed." Which will He be to you? You may learn from your present attitude. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Looking and learning*:—I. THEY AWAKEN HALLOWED SORROW. Sorrow for sin is the germ of repentance. True repentance flows from the Cross. II. THEY KINDLE ENLIVENING HOPE. Christ was pierced, not only by man, but *for* man, and by His stripes we are healed. III. THEY NERVE US TO SUBMISSION. How patiently Christ submitted. IV. THEY EXCITE US TO ZEAL. He laid down His life in His Father's work. Should we not give up our gratifications for Him? V. THEY RECONCILE US TO DEATH. It is not likely we shall die so painful a death as Christ did. But by death He conquered. Through Him we shall through death obtain a crown. (*The Homilist.*)

Vers. 38–42. **And after this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews.**—*A threefold power*:—I. THE POWER OF WORLDLINESS. Both of these men had opportunities of being convinced of Christ's Messiahship, and both were in sympathy with Him, yet neither made a public avowal of discipleship. There were perhaps, three elements of worldliness that influenced them in the matter. 1. The love of wealth. Confession of Christ meant excommunication and the spoiling of goods. Hence Christ reminded His hearers of the sacrifices they would have to make, but neither Joseph nor Nicodemus had the moral courage to make them. 2. The desire for popularity. They occupied high positions and had the honour of the populace. Had they followed Christ they would have lost both, and loving the praise of men more than of God, had not the moral strength to make the sacrifice. There are three classes of men: (1) Those who have no moral convictions—the largest class. (2) Those who have moral convictions, but not enough courage to avow them. There are many such in parliament and the pulpit. (3) Those who have moral convictions and carry them out regardless of the frowns of men. These are the heroes, reformers and saviours of the world; and also the smallest class. 3. The power of caste. They were members of the highest class of Jewish society—a class which, as a whole, was malignantly hostile to Christ. Because "none of the rulers believed on Him," these men were too weak to pronounce for Him. These three elements are as strong here as there, now as then. II. THE POWER OF THE CROSS. There was something about Christ's death which roused these men to manly exertion, and two wonders connected with the Crucifixion were calculated to produce this effect. 1. The material. The rending of the veil, the earthquake, &c., must have produced some impression on the most sceptical, much more on those in whom lurked a secret love. 2. The moral. His moral Majesty, His prayer, His last words—in all these there was a "still small," soul-penetrating voice, which must have affected these men. As they now handled the mangled frame, self-reproachful tears would fall. Thus the power of the Cross overcame, and is the only power to overcome the power of the world. III. THE POWER OF PENITENCE. Now Christ is dead their consciences are stirred to their centre. Is it not always so with those who have neglected a true friend when he is gone? 1. It forced them to a compensatory effort. Nothing too good for Him now. Conscience will sooner or later drive a man to his duty. 2. The compensatory effort came too late. Of what use was the costly embalmment

now! How often this is the case now! (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ's funeral*:—There are six remarkable particulars about this funeral. 1. The preparations that were made for it. (1) His body could not be buried till, by begging, his friends had obtained it as a favour from Pilate. (2) And when they had gotten it, they wind it in fine linen with spices. But what need of spices? His own love was perfume enough to keep it sweet in remembrance of His people to all generations. However, by this they will manifest the dear affection they have for Him. 2. The bearers—Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. None could imagine that ever they would have gone boldly to manifest their love to Christ, when dead, who were afraid to come to Him (except by night) when He was living, when those that made open confessions of Him are gone. 3. The attendants who followed the bearse—the women that followed Him out of Galilee. 4. The sepulchre. (1) It was another's. As He lived in other men's houses, so He lay in another man's tomb. (2) It was a new tomb; for had any other been laid there before Him, it might have been averred that it was some former body, and not the Lord's, that rose. 5. The disposition of the body. There is no mention made of the tears, yet we may well presume they were not wanting in plentiful expressions of their sorrow (Luke xxiii. 48). I. WHY HAD CHRIST ANY FUNERAL AT ALL, since He was to rise again? 1. To ascertain His death, else it might have been looked upon as a cheat. Now, since our eternal life is wrapt up in Christ's death, it can never be too firmly established. 2. To fulfil the types and prophecies that went before (Matt. xii. 40; Isa. liii. 9). 3. To complete His humiliation. Lower He could not be laid. 4. That He might conquer death in its own dominion; which victory furnisheth the saints with that triumphant song (1 Cor. xv. 55). II. WHAT MANNER OF FUNERAL CHRIST HAD. 1. It was very obscure and private. Here was no external pomp. Christ affected it not in His life, and it was no way suitable to the ends and manner of His death. (1) The dead body of the Lord was not brought from His own house as other men's commonly are, but from the tree. Had they not obtained this favour from Pilate, it must have been tumbled into a pit under the cross. (2) It was attended with a very poor train; a few sorrowful women. Other men are accompanied to their graves by their relations and friends. The disciples were afraid to own Him dying, and dead. (3) It was done in great haste. Time was short; they take the next sepulchre they can get, and hurry Him away that evening into it. Thus was the Prince of the kings of earth, who hath the keys of death and hell, laid into His grave. 2. Yet though men could bestow little honour upon it, the heavens bestowed several marks of honour upon it. (1) A miraculous eclipse put the heavens and earth into mourning. (2) The rending in twain of the veil showed that all ceremonies were now accomplished and abolished. (3) The opening of the graves showed the design and end of Christ's going into it. III. COROLLARIES. 1. Was Christ buried in this manner? Then a decent and mournful funeral (where it can be had) is very laudable among Christians. 2. Did Joseph and Nicodemus so boldly appear, at a time of so much danger, to beg the body and give it a funeral? Let it be for ever a caution to strong Christians not to despise or glory over the weak. 3. Hence we may be assisted in discerning the depths of Christ's humiliation for us, and see from what to what this love brought Him. 4. From this funeral of Christ results the purest and strongest consolation and encouragement to believers against the fears of death and the grave. (1) The grave received, but could not destroy, Jesus Christ; and as it fared with Christ's body personal, so it shall with Christ's body mystical (1 Cor. xv. 20). (2) As the union betwixt the body of Christ and the Divine nature was not dissolved, so the union between Christ and believers cannot be when their bodies shall be laid in their graves. (3) As Christ's body did there rest in hope, so it shall fare with the dead bodies of the saints (Psa. xvi. 9-11). (4) Christ's lying in the grave hath changed the nature of the grave, so that it is not what it was. It was once a part of the curse, but now it is no prison but a bed of rest; yea, and a perfumed bed (Isa. lvii. 2; Psa. xxiii. 4). 5. Since Christ was laid in His grave, and His people reap such privileges by it, as ever you expect rest or comfort in your graves, see that you get union with Christ now. (1) The covenant of God holds firmly with our very dust (Matt. xxii. 31, 32; Rom. xiv. 7-9). That dust is still the Lord's. (2) As God's covenant with our very bodies is indissolvable, so God's love to our very dust is inseparable (Rom. viii. 33). (3) As God's love will be with you in the grave, so God's providence shall take order when it shall be digged for you; not till you are fit to be put into it (Job v. 26; Acts xiii. 36). (4) When ever you come to your graves, you shall find the enmity of the grave slain by Christ (1 Cor. iii. 21, 22). (5) Christ keeps the keys of all the

chambers of death, and as He unlocks the door of death, when He lets you in so He will open it again for you when you awake, to let you out; He Himself wakes and watches by you while you sleep there (Rev. i. 18). (*J. Flavel.*) *The burial of Christ:*—Of all the scenes of common life, there is none so affecting and instructive as the funeral of a friend. When heroes or a beloved monarch go to their last home, thousands gather round the tomb. Shall the great Saviour and King of men have no one among us to lament His death? I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING HIS BURIAL. 1. The persons who are bearing the blessed Jesus to His tomb. And who are they? The disciples? These "all forsook Him and fled;" and now He is dead, they leave His body to be mourned over and buried by others. But though, in the hour of need, they desert us who ought to be the first to minister to our necessities, yet "the Lord will provide." 2. The time in which Jesus was interred. "The Jews' preparation day," and the people were now attending the service of the Temple; but Joseph and Nicodemus were not among them. They offered to God a more acceptable service than prayers and sacrifice; but having buried the Saviour, all their love for Him could not bring them to His tomb till the Sabbath was ended. Thus did they manifest the ardour of their affection, and at the same time admonish us to suppress the noblest feelings of our nature, rather than violate the command of God. 3. The place where the Lord was interred. (1) A garden on the very hill on which He was crucified. It was right that the place where He suffered the greatest ignominy should be the first scene of His glory. (2) His sepulchre was "hewn out in a rock." A body could not hastily be removed from such a sepulchre by a subterraneous passage, nor could the disciples enter unperceived. II. WHY WAS HE THUS BURIED? 1. That the prophecies concerning the Messiah should be fulfilled. 2. To prove the reality of His death. 3. To comfort His people in the prospect of death. III. THE EFFECTS WHICH A CONTEMPLATION OF THE SAVIOUR'S TOMB SHOULD PRODUCE ON US. 1. A penitential sorrow for all the injuries we have done Him, and all the pain we have given Him. 2. Joy that His sufferings are past and His happiness begun. 3. An earnest desire to be where He is and to behold His glory. 4. The deepest anxiety to be prepared for our own latter end. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The burial of Jesus:*—I. THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS (ver. 38). 1. By whom effected. Joseph, assisted by Nicodemus, John, and the women. (1) A native of Ramathaim in Ephraim, the birthplace of Samuel. (2) A rich man, which rendered his service a signal display of courage, a true token of inherent nobility, a striking companion-picture to the Magi at Christ's birth, and a beginning of fulfilment for Isaiah's oracle concerning His death (Isa. liii. 9). (3) A member of the Sanhedrim, though probably not present when Christ was pronounced guilty of death (*cf.* Luke xxiii. 50, with Matt. xxvi. 66; Mark xiv. 64). (4) A good man; one of the few who kept God's commandments, and waited for the consolation of Israel (Luke i. 6; i. 24). (5) A secret disciple—like others of the rulers (chap. xii. 42); *e.g.*, Nicodemus, whose faith waxed stronger as Christ's cause grew darker. 2. When attempted. After Christ's death, which happened about 3 p.m. Obtaining leave from Pilate, he would then concert with Nicodemus about purchasing the linen cloth, &c. It would then be approaching even. 3. How carried out. The Evangelist is silent; but from the performers, we may conclude, with reverence, tenderness, and tears. II. THE EMBALMMENT (ver. 39, 40). Nicodemus now steps into the foreground. 1. His person identified. The same mentioned in chap. iii. 2. His courage emphasized—in contrast with that interview. 3. His love proclaimed. With no straitened hand he carries out his heart's design. 4. His reverence recorded. Along with the others he proceeds to embalm the corpse. First they lay the body on the white winding-sheet. Next the women, it may be supposed, take the smaller cloths from Nicodemus, and, filling them with aromatic powder, wrap them around its members. After this Joseph folds around it his great white sheet, and the work is complete. III. THE INTERMENT (vers. 41, 42). 1. The place of sepulture. (1) A garden grave. In a garden death achieved its first victory. It was fitting that in a garden that victory should be reversed. (2) A strange grave. In another grave He is laid, who died for another's guilt. (3) An honourable grave. He who died on a cross between malefactors is laid in a just man's tomb. (4) A new grave. It was congruous that He who was a new Man (sinless), born in a new way (of a virgin), who had died a new death (for sin not His own), and who was to rise unto a new life (of glory and immortality) should rest in a new tomb. (5) A near grave. Close to Jerusalem as ours is to the heavenly city. 2. The funeral procession. Contrast it with that of the great, even the wicked great.

Lessons: 1. The overruling providence of God in the fulfilment of Scripture. 2. The guarantee that the sinner's debt has been paid. 3. The transformation of the grave. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus at the burial of Jesus*:—At first, it may disturb your sense of proportion to see the names of two mere men in such a connection; thinking that no name but His own should be mentioned. You care to know nothing about them, and have eyes, ears, heart for nothing but one solemnity. We shall, however, not be out of order, nor break any canon of Christian good taste by taking emphatic notice of them. I. BEFORE THE DEATH OF JESUS THESE TWO RULERS had been His secret disciples. 1. Foremost in the transaction we see Joseph. When we are told that fear kept him from avowing his discipleship, we are tempted at once to pass sentence upon him. But it may have been a fear natural to a mental sensitive plant, shrinking from every rough wind and every random touch—a fear fostered by an atmosphere of reverence, and heightened by an exquisite pain at the thought of difference between himself and other men. The companion of Joseph was Nicodemus, a man like himself in station, in wealth, and in being "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly." 2. These men were no worse than multitudes are now who pass as irreproachable. Many an undergraduate, many a man fighting his way through the earlier stages of a profession, having in his heart "some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel," holds it secretly, out of the fear inspired by his social surroundings. Many a Christian, now loud in profession, great in repute, had he lived in the days of the Incarnation would have received no nobler notice than this—"a disciple of Jesus, but secretly." How would it have been with you? How is it with you now? "Let him who is without fault among you cast the first stone." II. THE DEATH OF JESUS ROUSED THE TWO SECRET DISCIPLES TO DECLARE THEMSELVES. 1. It is remarkable that the first fact recorded in Christian history after the death of Christ is one that warns us against being merely secret disciples. Grace is not a treasure to be "hid in the earth in the midst of the tent." Faith will not stay shut up in the heart any more than a seed will stay shut up in the soil. Sometimes, indeed, a seed may be dropped in some deep furrow where the clods harden over it, until a tearing storm fetches it out into light. Sometimes a Christian may be like that seed, and a storm of trouble may be needed to reveal him. At the Crucifixion such a storm burst upon these two disciples. 2. Look at Joseph. No one had suspected a stain on this white flower of the Hebrew aristocracy; no one had dreamt of anything on this soul of honour that could fear the world or shun the daylight; and perhaps, owing to the heart's deceitfulness, he had hardly thought of it himself; but when at length the Saviour in whom he had secretly trusted was put to death, the shock woke him up. Then, with pangs of burning shame, he would say, "What a terrible coward I have been!" Besides his sorrow on this account, he must have been sorry on his own—how much he had lost! The instructions, comforts, helps that open disciples had enjoyed. Never once had he said, "Jesus, I love Thee"; never once had he heard Jesus say, "Go in peace!" 3. The heroism of faith is almost always kindled by desperate circumstances. The heroism of Joseph began in Christ's hour of darkness. When the only voice lifted up for Him all that day had been the voice of a dying thief—then it was that he openly declared himself. He had "waited for the kingdom;" and perhaps this poor man's prayer made him resolve to identify himself with the King. "Boldly" is the fit word for describing his errand to Pilate. Such a request, in later days, has cost men their lives. But the brave deed was successful. At the same time it helped to kindle similar courage in the heart of Nicodemus. They had often met in the high places of life, each knowing the other had faith in Christ that he was afraid to profess; they now met at the cross as at the altar of decision. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Joseph of Arimathea*:—In this and parallel passages we have all that is recorded about the burial of Christ. Two things of importance were secured by Joseph's interposition here. (1) Through him we obtain an official attestation of Christ's death, which was hardly to be expected at so early a stage. (2) Through him the body of our Lord was saved from further indignity. We have here the illustration of—I. THE SLOW PROCESS BY WHICH SOME ARE BROUGHT TO A KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH. 1. Joseph was one of that class to which belonged Simeon and Nathanael. After Christ's ministry began, he became a secret disciple, convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. Did not confess, but kept from complicity in the conspiracy of the rulers. Deterred by dread of singularity and love of caste. The last stage, that of open sympathy with Christ, was reached and revealed by this act. 2. There are some Christians who cannot recall the time when they did not

love and follow Christ. Others, once avowed enemies, have reached almost at a bound the position of open confessors; while others have attained only after long hesitation, and through many difficulties. II. How THE VERY EXTREMITY OF A CAUSE BRINGS FRESH ADHERENTS FROM UNEXPECTED QUARTERS. Who would have thought that members of the Sanhedrim would be the first to identify themselves? Neither the enthusiasm of the people nor the malice of the rulers sufficed to bring matters to a crisis with Joseph. But now, when Christ is dead, and, seemingly, his cause too, hesitation is changed to decision. 1. Something similar has often happened in struggles for national liberty. When things have come almost to a hopeless extremity dormant patriotism has been roused. 2. So in persecution for Christ's sake; as martyrs have laid down their lives others have taken their places. 3. So in the spiritual; so long as men only admire in Jesus the perfect character, &c., they may not be prepared to sacrifice much; but let them apprehend Him dying for sin, and they will be ready to brave all obloquy for His sake. III. How THE TRUE CHARACTER OF A MAN MAY BE MANIFESTED IN A SINGLE ACT. Joseph's intercourse with the counsellers did not reveal all that he was; only at the cross were disclosed his nobility, courage, faith. How many pass a quiet life among their fellows, who little know what spirit they are of. Revealing epochs occur in most lives. Sometimes brought about by sudden affliction, or change in circumstances, or temptation. (*M. Hutchison.*) *Joseph of Arimathea* is not mentioned in Scripture except in connection with the part which he acted in the burial of Christ; and his conduct in that transaction was so worthy of a disciple that his praise will always remain in the Churches of God. Indeed, as if Scripture had not said enough of him, legend has supplied the defect. It is fabled that he came over to England and founded the first English abbey—that of Glastonbury; and some remains of an ancient building still bear the name of the Chapel of Saint Joseph. Tradition further reports that Joseph, when resting on his journey at this place, struck his staff into the ground, which took root and became the famous Glastonbury thorn, which blossomed every Christmas, and being the frequent resort of pilgrims, brought much gain to the crafty inventors of the story. Such vanities a sounder faith has taught us to reject; and refusing the additions of men to hold fast the acknowledged truth of God. Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man, an honourable counsellor, a member of the Sanhedrim, but one who consented not to the deed of his colleagues. He was a good man and a just. He had been timorous when the rest were bold; and now he becomes bold when they yield to fear. (*J. Fawcett, M.A.*) One *Joseph* is appointed to take charge of Jesus in His infancy, and another is raised up to provide for His burial. (*W. H. Van Doren.*) *Secret discipleship*:—I. WHY MANY BELIEVERS PREFER SECRET ATTACHMENT TO OPEN DISCIPLESHIP. Possibly it is—1. The stringency of His requirements. 2. Shame at association with one of so lowly an origin, or so radical a reformer. Joseph would feel the force of these difficulties. 3. Fear of—(1) Being accounted presumptuous for attempting to lead instead of to follow. (2) Being accounted righteous overmuch. (3) Not being able to maintain consistency. They cannot trust God's grace to keep them from bringing disgrace on the Church. 4. Because of wrong ideas about Christianity. 5. Because of the inconsistency of professors. 6. Because they do not see the need of open discipleship. 7. Because there is no fervency of love to Christ. II. How FAR CHRIST RECOGNIZES SECRET DISCIPLESHIP. Let us see if we find any hint in the affirmative. 1. In the subsequent history of Joseph. We know little about him except that he gave to Christ, "who had had the death of a malefactor, the burial of a king;" but in this he seems to have had no hope in the Resurrection. No mention is made of Christ's appearance to Joseph. If the tradition that he founded Glastonbury Abbey be credited, it only shows that he had shaken off his secret discipleship. Had his secret discipleship been intentional to help Christ as Hushai helped David, or Blonde de Nesle Cœur de Lion, there might possibly be some hope of recognition. But it is an absurd idea that Christ wishes us to appear worldly, and hide our religion, to advance his course. 2. There is no suggestion of the recognition of secret discipleship in any of Christ's utterances. He claims open attachment—"Follow Me," "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me," &c. 3. In the nature of things it is improbable that Christ should recognize it. Suppose Christianity is weak, we ought to side with it because it is right. Sympathy with, and appreciation of, Christ demand it. (*F. Hastings.*) *A secret disciple*:—A native gentleman, a writer in the *Missionary News* relates, was taken seriously ill, and requested one of the Orissa missionaries to visit him.

In the course of conversation the missionary offered to lend him any book in his library that would be likely to interest and profit him. "I have a large number of books with which to instruct and exercise the intellect, but," added he, with emphasis, "When I want food for my soul I go to the Bible; there only," pointing to a copy of the English Bible which lay on the table, "I get something to warm my heart." When pressing on him the importance and necessity of making a public profession of his attachment to Christ, he said with tears, "God, who searcheth the heart, knoweth that I am a heathen but in name; that my trust, my heart, are fixed on Him to whom I offer my daily prayer, and in whose mercy alone I trust. And it is my hope and intention, by the help of God, one day to make a public avowal of this my faith." (*J. L. Nye.*)

Ver. 39. **There came also Nicodemus** (Text and chaps. iii. 1; vii. 50, 51).—*The courage-inspiring power of the cross*:—Each of these passages contains a vivid picture, and together they unfold the progressive spiritual experience of the man portrayed. In the first the night silence is broken by the footsteps of one who steals along, afraid, to the great Teacher. In the second, in the council-chamber of the supreme assembly of the nation, He interposes a trembling word of expostulation at a gross illegality, a word which brings down on its utterer a storm of indignation, but cannot be recalled; it shows that, though amongst His enemies, Nicodemus is at heart a friend of Jesus. In the third, at Calvary. Two men in the garb of rulers appear, and, braving the shame and scorn, advance, and with reverent gentleness take the Body down, and bear it away to the sepulchre. And of those—the two most courageous hearts in all Judæa at that moment—Nicodemus was one. I. THE RULER'S SECRET APPLICATION TO CHRIST. 1. There was at heart a secret longing for what only Christ could give. No one would have supposed that Nicodemus was unsatisfied; he seems to have had almost every temporal good. But He had hours of anxious wondering, seasons when His thirsty soul turned away from earth as from broken cisterns which could hold no water, and a conviction that somehow what he so much wanted this Teacher sent from God could give. How little we know what is going on in those around us! No one could have thought this of Nicodemus. 2. But the gratification of that longing was opposed by great difficulties. No soul can try to make its way to Christ without finding an enemy there to prevent it; but in the case of some—those whose circle is more or less antagonistic to Christ; whose training has led them to believe that morality is enough—who have taken a position in a contrary direction from which it is hard to recede; the difficulties are almost overwhelming. They are illustrated here. This man was "a Pharisee;" as such he had set ideas on the subject of religion, was one of the council of the LXX. and a doctor of the law. Hardly anything can be more difficult than for a man, perhaps an old man, who has prided himself on his beliefs, to come to say, "Perhaps after all I am wrong, at least I am not satisfied, teach me and let me learn;" but when one knows that he must have Christ or perish, he makes short work with these barriers. 3. When these difficulties were broken through, Christ received and taught the applicant. He might have said, "Come to Me by day, I am tired and would rest," or, "Why should I forego repose to listen to a Pharisee?" He might have upbraided him with his fear, or questioned his sincerity. Christ did none of these, "He will not break the bruised reed," &c. How full of help are the words, "The same came to Jesus by night"! Many come by day, and we see them. There are others whom we do not see, and wonder they do not come; perhaps they come to Jesus by night. All who come as he did, are welcomed as he was. II. THE RULER'S UNCONSCIOUS CONFESSION OF ATTACHMENT TO CHRIST. What was the immediate result of the interview we are left to imagine; but that is not difficult. Christ gave him instruction because He recognized in him a sincere seeker, and we cannot doubt that from that time Nicodemus was at heart a disciple of Jesus. But he makes no stand; months pass; he is in the council-chamber, the hatred of his colleagues to Christ breaks out in a storm, and then in spite of himself he lets fall a word which reveals that secretly he is on the Lord's side. But why secretly? Many here may know what it would cost to stand fearlessly forward as the humble champion of righteousness in the social circle or in public, and they find the answer there. But let me remind you that such a position—1. Is one of great injustice to Christ. If we were to judge by those whom we see come forward, we should be obliged to say that comparatively few are brought to Christ when early life is passed. I have rarely seen a man of years, and position, and learning take it for the first time; and when

then, we ask, Are such men past hope? we think of Nicodemus and believe there are many whose surrender to Christ is the secret of their own soul. Such do not reflect how unjust that secrecy is. We cannot estimate what would have been the consequence if Nicodemus had come boldly out at first; many of the rulers secretly believed, and only wanted a fearless leader. He who has deigned to receive us has a right to expect that we let men know what He has done for us. 2. Involves considerable pain to the man himself. Those months in which this Jewish councillor kept his allegiance to Christ a secret must have been months of great discomfort. He could not listen to debates from which he revolted, nor walk the streets and be regarded as one of those who were against Christ, without a guilty conscience. Let one live below what he knows God requires, and from that moment his happiness is doomed. 3. Is a position of great peril to spiritual hope. "Whoso shall confess Me," &c. Confession of Christ is indispensable to salvation because it is the necessary result of that union with Christ in which salvation consists. III. THE RULER'S OPEN AVOWAL OF DISCIPLESHIP TO CHRIST. There is a point where the real disciple must emerge from secrecy. Where is it? Where he has a vision of Jesus crucified. We lose our courage because we do not look at the cross. There are mainly three hindrances to confession of Christ, and the cross conquers them all. 1. The cross is a declaration of redemption. That meets the difficulty in uncertainty as to our position. Many a one feels that he cannot acknowledge that he is redeemed because he is not sure of it. But can he look on the Son of God in the agony of an accursed death, and then doubt whether an atonement of such worth has not satisfied the law? If such a price was paid for my redemption it is enough, I am redeemed. 2. The cross is a revelation of Divine love. That meets the difficulty to confessing Christ in coldness of heart. It is because our hearts are cold that we are "disciples secretly." What we want is hearts aglow with love to the Redeemer, and for that we may go to Calvary. 3. The cross is a manifestation of the Divine will. That destroys the difficulty to Christian confession in ignorance of what He would have us do. Lord, what is Thy will about me whom Thou hast redeemed? "Follow Me," He says; and as we look we see Jesus in the crucified One. The cross becomes the symbol of Christian life which, as His people, we dare not and cannot refuse, for "he that taketh not up his cross and cometh after Me cannot be My disciple." (*C. New.*) *The significance of the final honours:*— I. BY THIS SERVICE THE SACRED FORM OF THE CRUCIFIED WAS TAKEN OUT OF THE POWER OF HIS ENEMIES. The Romans had no respect for the sanctity of death. The common expression was, "The crows to the cross." The Jews acted on the old words, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," and carted the bodies of the executed away to the valley of Hinnom, the great abomination into which were flung things unmentionable, and past imagination, a place thought of as the symbol of hell, and as one of its three doors. When, to satisfy the Jews, orders came that the bodies of the crucified should be instantly made away with, the weeping women were in the distraction, not only of grief, but of helplessness. Just then, when their thoughts were in hopeless entanglement, and the sorrows of a lifetime condensed into one desolating burst, two strangers approached the cross, had the shaft sawn through by workmen, then laid level on the ground, took charge of the body, and set about the observance of the last solemnities. As the watchers looked on the dead weight on their hearts was lifted, the nameless terror was gone. II. BY THIS UNITED ACTION THE ROYALTY OF THE SAVIOUR WAS RECOGNIZED. In the acute moment when the two newly-revealed disciples bent over the face that was still shadowed by the crown of thorns, only the eyes of their faith could see the marks of royalty there. The text may seem to indicate that nothing more than ordinary was done at the funeral of Jesus, "as the manner of the Jews is to bury." The reference, however, is to the nature, not to the scale of the preparations. It certainly was not the manner of the Jews to use spices at a funeral on such a scale as this. Great quantities were used when it was intended to show high respect. At the funeral of Gamaliel the elder, eighty pounds of spices were burnt; and there were five hundred spice-bearers at that of King Herod; but such a large use of aromatics in honour of the dead was limited to cases of distinction like these. At the Crucifixion His kingly claims had been treated with mockery. There was mockery of His crown, of His sceptre, of His robe, of a court of ceremonial in the offer of vinegar and gall, of a herald's announcement, in the title written on His cross; and His cross was the mockery of a throne; but now, with a love which broke through all bounds of calculation, these men tried to show some sign of their loyalty, now so penitent because it was so late, and were

resolved to treat their crucified Master only as a dead king is treated. III. THE BURIAL OF JESUS IN THE PARTICULAR TOMB SELECTED WAS OVERRULED TO WORK OUT CERTAIN VITALLY IMPORTANT PURPOSES. The tomb was not a structure of masonry, like most others, but a chamber cut out of the living rock. Few could enjoy such a luxury. There are not probably five hundred in or about Jerusalem, and as that city must, in the days of its prosperity, have possessed a population of from thirty thousand to forty thousand souls, and as there must have been a population on this spot for more than three thousand years the inference will be irresistible that the possession of such a tomb must have been one of the things that marked a man of distinction. 1. This act helped to make the actual death of Christ an unquestionable fact. It was no obscure grave, affording an excuse for doubt; no tomb in Jerusalem could have been more conspicuous; no fact more public than Christ's burial in it. 2. It prepared for, and made possible, complete and unanswerable evidence of His resurrection, which was further illustrated by the grave being in a garden. 3. Crowning all the other services to the Church; there were undesignedly instrumental in fulfilling this ancient prophecy, "He made His grave with the wicked," &c., or, according to the most careful reading, "His grave was appointed with the wicked, but He was with a rich man," *i.e.*, His grave was appointed by men with the wicked—under usual circumstances, only such a grave was thought of for one who died on a cross; but He was with a rich man in His tomb after all. And why? "Because He had done no violence," &c. IV. THE ACT OF THESE MEN ILLUSTRATES THE FUNCTION OF WEALTH IN THE SERVICE OF CHRIST, and this is another practical outcome of their profession. The gospel is full of words to comfort and dignify the holy poor; but the gospel creates no class distinctions. "The Church is the poor man's church;" yes, and it is also the rich man's church; for there "the rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the Maker of them all." (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) **A mixture of myrrh and aloes.**—The mixture here mentioned was probably in the shape of powder. The two ingredients were strongly aromatic and antiseptic. The large quantity brought shows the wealth and the liberal mind of Nicodemus. It also shows his wise forethought. A dead body so torn and lacerated as that of our blessed Lord, would need an unusually large quantity of antiseptics or preservatives, to check the tendency to corruption which such a climate would cause, even at Easter. Considering also that everything must have been done with some haste, the large quantity of spices used was probably meant to compensate for the want of time to do the work slowly and carefully. "Then took they the body," &c. Here we are told the precise manner of the preparation of our Lord's body for burial. As always in that time and country, He was not put into a coffin. He was simply wrapped up in linen cloths, on which the preparation of myrrh and aloes had been laid. Thus the powder would be next to our Lord's body, and interpose between the linen and His skin. How the linen clothes were provided, we are told by St. Mark (xv. 46). Joseph, being a rich man, had no difficulty in supplying funds for this purpose. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Extremes in Christ's history:*—Twice was Jesus rich in the days of His poverty. Once immediately after His birth, when the wise men offered Him gold, &c., and now after His ignominious death, when a rich man buries Him, and a distinguished man provides spices to anoint Him. Yea! a rich Joseph has taken the place of that poor Joseph who stood by the manger. (*R. Besser, D.D.*)

VERS. 41, 42. **Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden.**—*The sepulchre in the garden:*—I. THE PLACE WHERE HE WAS CRUCIFIED. He has conferred honour upon every place where He has been. The place where He was born. There belonged no distinction to Bethlehem Ephratah before, she was little among the thousands of Judah; too little to be represented in the Sanhedrim. But the fact that He was born there has conferred upon Bethlehem undying fame. 1. It was in this place that was manifested the greatest love towards God, on one side, and the greatest love towards men, the enemies of God, on the other side. We do not say that it was here that He loved God and men most; but it was here that He manifested His love most. His love towards the Father was always like the sun, but it was here that it reached the meridian. His love towards mankind was like the sea, but it was here that it attained its spring-tide. The wave will never lift itself higher than it did at Calvary. 2. It was in this place that Jesus suffered most from those to whom He manifested His love most. 3. It was in this place that the holiness of Christ shone brightest of all places, and yet it was in this place that He was treated most like a sinner. I do not say that

it was here that He was most holy. The "Holy and Righteous" was He in all places. "That holy thing" He was when coming into the world. But it was here that His holiness shone brightest. 4. It was in this place, of all others, that He was most completely given over to the hands of His enemies, and yet it was in this place that He realized the completest victory over them. There was some intervening shelter throughout the journey that prevented His enemies attacking Him. 5. It was in this place that He was treated as the most unworthy—and yet it was here that He won the highest title to worthiness that He possesses. II. IN THE PLACE WHERE HE WAS CRUCIFIED THERE WAS A GARDEN. We invite you to visit the garden with us. 1. It belonged to an honourable councillor. Jerusalem was surrounded by gardens as well as by hills. The night before, we have Jesus in a garden in another direction from this. 2. It was a garden in sight of Calvary. The last thing that was impressed on the retina of His eyes was a garden. He saw many sad sights while He was here, but He closes His eyes upon our earth in view of a garden. Almost would we say, "Blessed art thou, O garden amongst gardens; thou hast been privileged to shed thy fragrance so as to counteract the offensive odours of the place of skulls, and to fan with thy sweet perfumes the Saviour of the world in the agonies of His death." Was it not something like a picture of what He would ultimately make the moral world to be? Since I have come to this place a garden there must be now; I will convert the world into a garden. The thorns and briars must yield to the fir and the myrtle 3. A garden with a grave in it! We scarcely expect to find a grave in a garden. But a grave is appropriate in every place in our world. There are some of you who are permitted to pursue their life journey amidst roses; I count no path too smooth for you; tread upon flowers, let perfumes be diffused with every step you take; but will you be pleased to remember one thing? There is a grave at the end of the walk. But when we consider it, a garden and a grave seem, after all, to be quite in harmony with each other. What is the garden in the time of winter but a burial-place. Where is there more life buried than there is in the garden? But yet she does not refuse to be comforted, because they are not. That great Sun will come like an archangel, with his trumpet, and with a loud call will say, "Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust," and then there will be a resurrection in power and in glory. In consequence of the garden and the grave in the text, every grave has been in a garden ever since. Before that, it was in some waste howling wilderness that the grave was, with no verdure around it, nor anything betokening life near to it. The burial of the dead is henceforward a sowing. The cemetery is a garden, and beyond the grave there awaits for us the "everlasting spring." The Great Sun of Righteousness will come to shed His beams above the burial-places of the earth so that they shall be turned into gardens. III. THE NEW GRAVE IN THE GARDEN. It is worth our while to look at this grave. There was never one like it. There have been angels in this grave. Yes, here, the life lay sleeping on the knees of Death. 1. There was great regard paid to this grave: the eye of the Eternal Purpose was upon it. The honourable owner intended it for himself. Neither he nor the workmen who prepared it had any intention but to have it ready as speedily as it was possible. But every detail was under the control of the Eternal Purpose. It was necessary to have it ready against the Passover. The substance of the Passover was to spend the Passover in it. 2. It was a borrowed grave that Jesus had. This is the only One who was in our world who had no grave. Sin has conferred on us a charter to a grave. In going to the grave He can only say, "With a great sum obtained I this freedom;" while the sinner can say, "But I was free born." We sinners are "free among the dead." Through our sin we have received the freedom of the city in the Necropolis. 3. He gave the grave back, and paid for the use of it. It was Jesus' habit to return everything that He had borrowed better than He had found it. I believe that the upper room which He borrowed to eat the Passover in with His disciples was a better room after that supper, and that the boat which He borrowed for a pulpit was a better boat after that service. And, indeed, He gave back his grave to Joseph a better grave, though second-hand, than when it was new. 4. Oh, wonderful grave! It was in this grave that the bottom of the grave was knocked out. This grave became a womb to give birth to the Heir of the resurrection of the dead. It is off this grave that we gather the flowers with which to adorn our mourning garment after our dead. This is a grave which reconciles us to our own graves. (1) There is another grave in sight of Calvary—a grave in which to bury sin. Neither Justice nor Law would have consented to its being buried anywhere else. Oh that we had this burial now! (2) That grave is

"in the place." I know not what distance there is from here to the graves in which these bodies of ours shall rest; perhaps there is a much shorter distance than many think. But however near these graves are, the grave for burying sin is nearer; it is "in the place." May our sins be buried so as never to be seen any more! (*David Roberts.*) *The garden by the cross*:—I. THE DARKEST ACT IN THE TRAGEDY OF LIFE. 1. The Crucifixion does not stand alone. It is but the culmination of all that good has suffered at the hands of evil. Christ was *the* Man of Sorrows, but He was also the Head of the great brotherhood of sorrow. There has never been an age in which the men whom God sent into the world to serve and save it, have not been pierced with its shafts and crowned with thorns. 2. It is a dark tragedy which is played out here, and the bud of it is inevitably a death. Sin has entered into the world and death by sin. There could be in such a world as this no other fate for the Son of Man but a crucifixion. 3. But there is something deeper than mere human suffering in our Lord's passion. It was emphatically the hour of the prince of darkness—his last. His victory broke his power for ever. 4. The nature of sin was never fully known till then when it slew the Lord. Then the Father gave full expression of His mind about transgression, and gave to all intelligent beings the measure to His abhorrence of it. II. BUT IN THE PLACE WHERE HE WAS CRUCIFIED THERE WAS A GARDEN. It is a startling contrast. 1. Very dear to Him during His lonely life-course were the flowers that bloomed round His feet. None of the beauty of the world He had made was hidden from Him as He passed along its pathways. 2. It is a question of deep and curious interest how far the modern intense delight in the beauty of nature was shared by the ancients, and how far it is the gift of the advent of the Lord of nature to His world. I believe that that advent has placed the whole sphere of nature in a new and closer relation to man. Here and there are exquisite passages in the classics, which reveal a delicate and cultured observation. And yet it is hardly for its own sake that nature is delighted in. The Hindoos probably come nearest to the moderns, but always there is a strong tinge of melancholy dashing the delight of the heathen heart. The Christian observation of nature is set in a new and higher key. Through Christ, Christian peoples have a delight in their world, which before Christ was hardly known to the elect spirits of our race. The Jews had much of the Christian enjoyment of natural beauty, and for the same reason: they knew the mind and heart of their King. David's psalms complete the chord struck in Deut. viii. 7–9; xi. 12. 3. Men will come to see one day that it is the Father's counsel which they are searching out when they fathom the depths of creation; it is the benignity of a Father's smile that they are taking in when they bask in the sunlight, when they watch the shadows play in the upper air upon the snow peaks, or catch at even the last rosy kiss of the daylight, as it falls down the mountain slopes on a weary world. It was right that the flowers should bloom their bravest around Calvary. 4. But still the contrast stands out sharply, and we will gather some of its suggestions. (1) Consider the impassive serenity of nature through all the struggle and anguish of life. There are times when this serenity becomes dreadful. It seems terrible that flowers should bloom when the Lord who made and rules the universe was dying the death of a slave; yet the flowers never lifted their heads more gaily in the sun than on that day. And it is ever thus. A mother who has watched night long the death struggles of her darling who in the morning has gone home, looks bitter reproach at the sun rising so calmly on her agony. The east flushes into rosy splendour, the birds carol their gayest strains, the air is musical with the hum of life, while her heart is breaking, and the night has settled over her inner world. We may blow thousands of earth's best and bravest into fragments in the storm of battle; Nature buries them calmly, and next year she reaps her richest harvests from their graves. (2) Let us thank God that it is so. The garden blooms on, the cross has vanished, while the tradition of it has become the most sacred and blessed possession of mankind. Pain and storm, strife and anguish, birth and death are for time: order, beauty, life are for eternity. The sun shines gaily on the morrow of our anguish, and we writhe under it; but the sun shines on, and we come to delight in it and to bless the constancy which brings it forth morning by morning to prophesy to us of the world where sunlight is eternal. And nature is right. She will not bewail our calamities as though they were irreparable. There is infinite solace in Christ for the most burdened sufferers. "Our light affliction," &c. Why should nature weep and moan, and stay her benign and beautiful process when she knows that the stroke which we think is crushing us is a benediction. (3) Consider of how much that garden around the

cross was symbolic in relation to man and to the Lord. "He was delivered into the hands of men." Alas! that this should mean to wounds and death. The first crime was one with the last—fratricide. His brethren they were who were raging around Him; but around and above, all was calm, nay, triumphant. The harps of heaven were swept to a more exulting strain. The great ones of the past put on their glorious forms, and pressed through the veil to meet Him. The very dead beneath the cross stirred as His footsteps pressed them, and bursting from their tombs prepared to join the train which He would lead up on high. There was joy, an awful joy, throughout the universe when that Cross was uplifted—"I, if I be lifted up," &c. Should the flowers then droop? No. "In the place . . . there was a garden;" and it spread forth all its brightness as the Lord made it His pathway to His throne. And it blooms still, and will bloom on till the death day of creation and paradise is restored. (*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) **And in the garden a new sepulchre.**—*The sepulchre in the garden:*—"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." Every event of our life, however minute and trivial, contains a purpose of God's. Then we may surely assume that every fact in the life of the Perfect Man has its significance. The circumstances of our birth exert an immense influence over us: they are ordered of God; they were yet more manifestly ordered for His beloved Son. All the circumstances of our death, which is our second birth, have their influence on us, and speak eloquently to those who come after us; and these are ordered for us, and yet more manifestly for the Son. Think you it was a matter of indifference where Christ's body was laid? We have a right then to look here for Divine thoughts, and there is one in particular. The first Adam fell from the garden into the wilderness; the Second Adam rose from the wilderness to the garden. Christ began where Adam ended, and ended where Adam began. Adam armed death with his sting; Christ has taken away the sting of death. Adam hewed the sepulchre, Christ consecrated it. Note—I. EVERYWHERE DEATH LURKS BENEATH THE BEAUTIFUL. In other words, every garden has its sepulchre. 1. The garden is the most express type of beauty. Children love flowers, as do all who retain the childlike heart. Flowers are the traditions of Paradise, and speak to us of a more perfect world and a higher blessedness. Man's career commenced and is to close in a garden. It is natural, then, for man to love the garden. 2. But in every garden there is a sepulchre. "The brightest flower soonest fades." (1) The whole world seems a huge tomb adorned outwardly with manifold forms of beauty. The rocks die slowly, crumbling through the ages to give life to herb and tree. Tree and herb feed animals, and animals man, and man is the prey of corruption. (2) Death, moreover, has a refined taste. Loveliness has a fatal attraction. What is more lovely than light? And yet when it is fairest and fullest, it slays men with a stroke. What is more glorious in beauty than the sea? Yet its bed is lined with bleached bones. The beautiful birds are infested with murderous parasites. And have we not known one in every circle whose very loveliness of body and mind, like the gorgeous colouring of the fallen leaf, was the symbol of swift decay? II. EVERYTHING, EVEN DEATH ITSELF, HAS BEEN MADE BEAUTIFUL BY CHRIST. Every sepulchre is in a garden—not in an untended desert. The grave still stands; but it stands in the open sunlight, and is adorned with flowers. The sting, the ugliness, the terror of death is sin; and this Christ has taken away. Christ has invested it with beauty in that He has taught us that it means—1. Sacrifice. "The dying of the Lord Jesus" has brought to light the vacarious element of death. The power and beauty of His death sprang from the fact that it was His submission to His Father's will. So, in a lesser degree, with death everywhere. We see mountains tending to decay, herbs and grasses consumed by beasts, &c., and till we know the meaning of Christ's death, the sight brings grief and fear. But looking from the cross we can trace this vicarious law through every province of creation and see beauty. The rocks decay, but it is that herbs may live; herbs are consumed—a sacrifice to the higher life of sheep and oxen. These also die that man may live. Earthly homes are broken up that the mansions of the Father's houses may be occupied. Civilization has its myriad victims that subsequent ages may rise to purer life. The kingdoms of the world decay that the kingdom of Christ may come. All things tend to a better time. No suffering is superfluous. Eternal wisdom marshals the progress; infinite love appoints to each its place. 2. Glorification. Christ died to live. He could not be "holden" by the power of the grave. He rose into a higher region. Apply this to the general phenomena of death, and mark the beauty with which it invests them. The rocks crumble away into soil; but that is taken up into the

higher vegetable kingdom, &c. In every case the soul of these several kingdoms passes through death into higher spheres. Mark, then, the perfect sympathy between the creation and the Christ whose it is and whom it serves. As His spirit returned to glorify His earthly frame, in the end the whole framework of creation will be restored and glorified; and those who are in Christ partake of the power of His death and Resurrection. Conclusion: We need not mourn that death is everywhere. We need not weep by the sepulchre as those who have no hope; it stands in a garden. To die is no more to venture on a lonely path; Christ has trod it before us, and will tread it with us. If the sepulchre still speaks of corruption, the garden speaks of the resurrection. Nor when those whom we love are summoned to depart should we indulge in hopeless sorrow. They have gone into the garden. Their flesh rests in hope; their spirits are in Paradise. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) *The sepulchre in the garden*:—I. SIN OBTRUDES ITSELF INTO THE FAIREST SCENES. You see around a cross a multitude come together to perform the foulest act ever perpetrated. The object of their hatred has never wronged them; but, on the contrary, has even blessed them. His character presented an assemblage of graces such as the world had never witnessed. And now He hangs on a cross in a garden! What a place for the perpetration of such a crime! A garden! where nature seems best fitted to exert a soothing influence on the angry passions! Surely nature cannot have her sanctuary violated by such an outrage. Thus the text contains a most emphatic refutation of the fancy that by giving them access to natural beauty you may restrain the wickedness, if not transform the character, of men. True, there is nothing in what is beautiful, whether in nature or art, unfavourable to religion—but very much by which religious feeling may be induced and fostered. And, certainly, they are not the worst Christians who have the most extensive and loving acquaintance with nature's works. But nevertheless the influence which these things exert depends entirely on the state of mind with which they are surveyed. They may foster and strengthen feelings which already exist; they have no power to produce feelings which are not there. They have no power to change the heart, so as to make bad men good. One of the loveliest scenes in the world is the site of Pompeii, but it would seem that God has preserved her ruins that she might testify to the nineteenth century that she resembled Sodom in the depth of her wickedness before she resembled her in the terribleness of her overthrow. Man fell in Eden—angels sinned in heaven. "In the place where He was crucified there was a garden." II. SORROW MINGLES WITH ALL EARTHLY ENJOYMENT. "In the garden a sepulchre." How emblematical of human life—in which every joy is marred by some sorrow, and the presence or the memory or the prospect of death casts its shadow over all. There is some fitness in the choice. A garden is the scene of beautiful life, where everything is fitted to minister pleasure. And to erect in such a scene the receptacle of death, might, without destroying the pleasure which the place afforded, serve as a useful monitor to remind men of the sorrows which lie so near and mingle with our joys, and of the termination which death brings to all earthly pursuits. It is a good thing, as moderating our present expectations and leading us to seek after a better inheritance, to be reminded that there is no such thing here as pleasure without drawback or alloy. Most people have a sepulchre in their garden; for have not they suffered loss here and disappointment there? But others whom they see—what sepulchre have they? Their life is all garden. It has neither desert bounding it nor sepulchre within its walls. But depend upon it you see not all. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness." Could you look beneath the surface, you would see even in that lot which seems so enviable, not a little which might excite your pity or surprise. Of Naaman the Syrian, it is said, that "he was captain of the host," &c.; but he was a leper. Of Haman we read how he told his wife and friends of his good fortune, and then add yet—"yet all this availeth me nothing so long as I see Mordecai," &c. And so there is some "but" or "yet" to the most favoured condition, no rose without its thorn, in every garden a sepulchre. III. THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST CONVERTS DEATH INTO LIFE, AND SORROW INTO JOY. It was meet that the sepulchre should be placed in a garden—1. Seeing it was to contain the body of our Lord. His presence there gave to the grave a significance which it had never possessed before. And it is meet also in the case of all who are His. I like the change from the crowded unattractive churchyard to the garden-like cemetery. I like, too, to see flowers growing around, or strewn upon the grave of the loved ones. The tomb in which Christ lies, in the person of His members, is a seed-plot of immortality, from which radiant and glorious forms shall spring; "for that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." 2. Because of the

change which the Saviour's death is to produce in the aspect of the world. Reduced by sin to a desert, physically and morally, it shall yet be covered with garden-like beauty and fertility because Christ has died. It is a sufficient pledge of its renovation that it has contained His sepulchre. Men are said to take possession of a country when they have buried their dead in it. So the Saviour will never regard with indifference the world which contains His tomb. He will return living and glorious to the place where once He lay dead and dishonoured, and the same scene which witnessed the commencement shall witness the completion of His triumph over sin and hell—over death and the grave. 3. As symbolical of how the presence of Jesus tends to change our sorrow into joy. Christ in the sepulchre transforms the receptacle of death into the source of higher life. And therefore have no sepulchre without a Saviour in it—no trouble in which you do not seek to have the presence of your Lord. A life all pleasure would neither be so desirable nor so profitable as a life whose sorrows are sanctified by fellowship with Christ. Nor should you seek, as is sometimes done, to have the sepulchre of your own fashioning, saying, "If I had only such-and-such trials, I could bear them well: I should not complain if I were only like so-and-so." No man ever yet had to choose his own trials. He who gives the garden gives the sepulchre with it; and determines at once its position and its form. All that you need is to have Christ in it. (*W. Landells, D.D.*) *Christ in a borrowed grave*:—I take it not to dishonour Christ, but to show that, as His sins were borrowed sins, so His burial was in a borrowed grave. Christ had no transgressions of His own; He took ours upon His head. He never committed a wrong, but He took all my sins, and all yours, if ye are believers. Concerning all His people, it is true He bore their griefs and carried their sorrows in His own body on the tree; therefore, as they were other's sins, so He rested in another's grave; as they were sins imputed, so that grave was only imputedly His. It was not His sepulchre; it was the tomb of Joseph. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The sepulchre in the garden*:—I. EACH MAN HAS A GARDEN. It may not be that where the outward sense is regaled with fruits and flowers and odorous airs, but a sacred enclosure of the heart. As on bleak hill-sides of splintered rock, green things and flowers here and there spring up, so there is something still bright where poverty and care exist. Very beautiful are some of these gardens, with dear friendships, the engaging interests of home, noble plans for self-culture and benevolence, generous trusts, and holy endearments, and the music and sunshine of dreams. All have their garden; BUT, guard and prize it as they may, it shall be the scene of tragedy; IT CONTAINS A SEPULCHRE. 1. The generous and aspiring youth seems to stand on the border of a land that will never lose its morning freshness; but this radiant landscape contains a tomb; the grave of glorious hopes that withered in the hot glare of an unsympathizing world. 2. In practical life there is no garden without a grave, and not merely in the case of the man who has fallen from prosperity to penury. There are tombs in the gardens of the rich, the gifted, and the great. Baffled purposes, alienated friendships, exhausted energy, the corpse of many a brave endeavour, the lost inspiration of eager manhood when the path to victorious light seemed garlanded with light—all this, and more, speaks of death. 3. But sadder still is the tomb in the garden of the affections. If anything on earth is sacred, it is home; yet the sepulchre is here; and it will not be empty long. There is a vacant place by the hearthstone. That home may be pleasant still, and the casual visitor may not think that it contains a place of burial. Yet, though the spot is sealed, it is not forgotten. The great world goes on as before. But bereaved hearts know it is there. In the garden is the sepulchre. 4. And it is well that it should be so; well that we learn our frailty, our ignorance, our sin, and be disciplined for our eternal home. For with man's sinful nature and tendencies, how fearful might be his career in transgression, and how reckless his presumption upon the forbearance of God, did he never suffer from the evil within and without him! II. THE GRAVE IN THE GARDEN IS NOT A PLACE OF EVERLASTING STILLNESS AND DECAY. The stone shall be rolled away. If you have died unto sin, and are buried with Christ in His death, you shall rejoice in the final resurrection of all that can contribute to the bliss of the soul in the eternal kingdom. There shall be no death there. There none shall bear the cross of secret trial. But how dark is your prospect if you do not believe upon His name, nor love His appearing! The sepulchre in the garden of your life is then the symbol of the death which awakens to no celestial fruition. (*H. N. Powers.*) *A sepulchre in every garden*:—You climb an eminence, and look on the underlying scene. The river flows gently through yellowing fields and woods that teem with

life. The birds fill the air with song and gladness. The fish sport and leap in the waters. Cattle roam or recline in the meadows. Man goeth forth to labour with a cheerful heart. "Unawares," you bless the earth and the great Giver of its goodliness. The eye fills with happy tears as you pronounce it "a garden which the Lord hath blessed." And then the cold shadow comes creeping on; reflection stills the song of the heart; the trace of the spoiler, for a moment forgotten, stands once more revealed. You see or remember that the insects sporting in the air are the prey of birds; the birds flutter and scream beneath the pursuing hawk; the splash in the river tells of some eager little life swallowed up quick; the flowers close and wither as you gather them; the woodcutter's axe fills the air with its resounding strokes; the sheep and oxen are led away to the slaughter; the funeral train winds along the white road, flecking it with blackness, while the passing bell reminds you that another of your flesh has seen corruption. The Skeleton Shadow broods over the entire scene, obscuring its brightness. The air grows stifling; and you feel as if suddenly immerged in the gloom of some monstrous grave. And yet you have but discovered the open secret—that death is the shadow of beauty: you have but passed through the garden into the sepulchre. So, too, with the varied human world. You think of the kindnesses and charities of home—the nobilities and patriotisms of national unity; the discoveries, utilities, refinements of civilization, and you bless God that you are a man of this clime and age. Again you are wakened from your pleasant dream. The veil is lifted from the home; you find mean anxieties, wearing toils, heartburnings, jealousies, despotisms; or where love abides, you find as its attendants sorrow and solicitude; Death has driven its chariot, armed with scythes, through the family array, leaving cruel gaps and innumerable wounds. The veil is lifted from the age, and beneath its high civilization you discern want, misery, vice, disease, war, with their kin—a terrible brotherhood, the offspring of death, doing the works of their father—preying on the foundations on which the social fabric is upreared. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) *The cemetry a garden—Christ the Gardener* (Text, and chap. xx. 15):—I. THE SEED. 1. All seed does not germinate, and seeds, in themselves, are worthless unless they are fecundated. Cut open a seed-bearing flower, and in its axis you will find a seed-pod, from which grows an elongated stem called the pistil. On the end of this pistil is a little tongue, or stigma. This, of all the parts of the flower or plant, alone has no skin. About the pistil are the stamens, on the top of which are the anthers, or pollen-bearing organs of the flower. This pollen must fall upon the stigma which thus receives the fecundating principle, and transmits it to the seeds; and so they are quickened into life. In many trees this pollen is produced not on themselves, but on other trees belonging to the same species, and it is carried to the stigma of the blossoms to be fecundated by the wind or the bees. 2. The same principle, the Gardener tells us, prevails among His plants; there must be an extra-human quality imparted to every one of His seeds before they are planted or they cannot bloom immortally. That quality was produced by that which was planted in the dust of the earth in Joseph's garden and became "the first fruits from the dead." The reason why he Son of God was incarnated, died, was buried and rose again was that He might produce this Divine—pollen (may I term it?), so that His seeds might receive that fecundating principle which quickens to an immortal life. It is scattered like the natural pollen—broadcast on the breezes, so that all who will may receive it and live again; or it is carried about by the busy bees of Christian workers. 3. But you cannot be planted, with a hope of the glorious resurrection, unless you have received this fecundating principle from Christ; otherwise you must there remain, sterile and dried, unable to rise in a new life. This is one of the fixed laws of nature. Why should we not expect the same in grace? "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live." But believing is only receiving this Divine quality from Christ, as the stigma of the seed-pod receives the pollen, to quicken and give it life. II. THE SOWING. For in the Lord's garden what we call burying is only planting; for the Apostle says, "If we be planted in the likeness of His death," &c. III. THE BLOOMING. 1. Are we to be different? Hear the Apostle, "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is," &c. Our God doeth great things which we cannot comprehend. Who can understand the change wrought under ground which gives us a plant for our seed. (1) Here we are, dried and shriveled. Sin has stripped us, yet is there great latent power for beauty, &c. (2) Here there is no sweetness about us. Such is the wonderful alchemy of nature that the seed that rots sends up a flower rich in fragrance. More wonderful is the

alchemy of grace, &c. (3) Here there is no beauty about us, we are frost-marked. The Lord will not do half-work. He will not repair, but re-create, &c. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," &c. Who can guess by looking at the shriveled seed what the flower will be? 2. Shall we, then, fear to be planted in His garden, if we shall so soon rise to such life and beauty and sweetness? Conclusion: Let us walk with the Gardener while He points out to us some of His rarer plants. He points to this bed and says, "There rests a precious seed, oh, how lovely will its blooming be! On earth it was called Bleeding Heart. It grew in great tribulation." "And what lies here in this bed, Gardener?" "You would call that, in earth's botany, a Heliotrope—the flower that ever turns toward the sun. And there lies the Lily of the Valley, &c. And there the Calla, whose roots had to be submerged in water," &c. "But," we ask, "Gardener, canst Thou care for all these? Will there be no confusion or neglect? Thy flowerbeds are so many, is there no possibility that some will be overlooked?" "Oh, no," He answers; "their names are all graven on the palms of My hands, and are written also in the Book of Life." Oh blessed truth! What flowers shall spring up from these grassy mounds! (*P. E. Kipp.*) *The decorated grave:*—Mark well this tomb. I. It is THE MOST CELEBRATED TOMB IN ALL THE AGES. Catacombs of Egypt, tomb of Napoleon, Mahal Taj of India, nothing compared with it. At the door of that mausoleum a fight took place which decides the question for all graveyards and cemeteries. Sword of lightning against sword of steel. Angel against military. That day the grave received such a shattering it can never be rebuilt. The King of Terrors retiring before the King of Grace. The Lord is risen. II. See here POST-MORTEM HONOURS IN CONTRAST WITH ANTE-MORTEM IGNOMINIES. If they could have afforded Christ such a costly sepulchre, why could not they have given Him an earthly residence? He asked bread; they gave Him a stone. Christ, like most of the world's benefactors, was appreciated better after He was dead. Poet's Corner, in Westminster Abbey, attempts to pay for the sufferings of Grub Street. Go through that corner. There is Handel. Think of the discords with which his fellow-musicians tried to destroy him. There John Dryden, who, at seventy, wrote a thousand verses at sixpence a line. There is Samuel Butler, who died in a garret. There the old blind schoolmaster, John Milton, whom Waller said, "has just issued a tedious poem on the fall of man. If the length of it be no virtue, it has none." There is poor Sheridan. If he could have only discounted that monument for a mutton-chop! Oh! do justice to the living. All the justice you do them, you must do this side of the necropolis. Gentleman's mausoleum in the suburbs of Jerusalem cannot pay for Bethlehem manger, and Calvarian cross. III. FLORAL DECORATIONS ARE APPROPRIATE FOR THE PLACE OF THE DEAD. Put them on the brow—it will suggest coronation; in their hand, it will mean victory. Christ was buried in a garden. Flowers mean resurrection. Death is sad enough anyhow. Let conservatory and arboretum contribute to its alleviation. The harebell will ring the victory. The passion-flower will express the sympathy. The daffodil will kindle its lamp and illume the darkness. The cluster of asters will be the constellation. Your little child loved flowers when she was living. Put them in her hand now that she can go forth no more to pluck them for herself, On sunshiny days take a fresh garland and put it over the still heart. Brooklyn has no grander glory than its Greenwood; but what shall we say of those country graveyards, with the vines broken down and the slabs aslant, and the mound caved in, and the grass the pasture-ground for the sexton's cattle? Were your father and mother of so little worth that you cannot afford to take care of their ashes? Some day you will want to lie down to your last slumber. You cannot expect any respect for your bones if you have no deference for the bones of your ancestry. IV. THE DIGNITY OF PRIVATE AND UNPRETENDING OBSEQUIES. Joseph was mourner, sexton, liveryman; had entire charge of every thing. Only four people at the burial of the King of the universe. Oh! let this be consolatory to those who through lack of means, or large acquaintance, have but little demonstration of grief at the graves of their loved ones. Not recognizing this idea, how many small properties are scattered, and widowhood and orphanage go forth into cold charity. That went for crape which ought to have gone for bread. V. YOU CANNOT KEEP THE DEAD DOWN. Seal of Sanhedrim, regiment of soldiers, door of rock, cannot keep Christ in the crypts. Come out and come up He must. First-fruit of them that slept. Though all the granite of the mountains were piled on us we will rise. (*T. de Witt Talmage, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XX.

VERS. 1-10. **The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene . . . unto the sepulchre.**—*The sepulchre* :—There were more common and more noble sepulchres. The common were in public burying places without the city. And through that place no current of water was to be made, cattle were not to feed there, nor wood to be gathered from thence. The more noble sepulchres were hewn out in some rock, in their own ground, with no little charge and art. You have the form of them described in these words: "He that selleth his neighbour a place of burial, and he that takes of his neighbour a place of burial, let him make the inner parts of the cave four cubits, and six cubits: and let him open within it eight sepulchres." They were not wont, say the Glosses, to bury men of the same family here and there, scatteringly, and by themselves, but altogether in one cave: where if any one sells his neighbour a place of burial, he sells him room for two caves, or hollows on both sides, and a floor in the middle. The tradition goes on. "Three sepulchres are on this side, and three on that, and two near them. And those sepulchres are four cubits long, seven high, and six broad." To those that entered into the sepulchral cave, and carried the bier, there was first a floor where they stood and set down the bier, in order to their letting it down into the sepulchre: on this and the other side there was a cave or a hollowed place, deeper than the floor by four cubits, into which they let down the corpse, divers coffins being there prepared for divers corpses. From these things may more plainly understand many matters, which are related of the sepulchre of our Saviour. The women entering into the sepulchre saw a young man sitting on the right "side": in the very floor immediately after the entrance into the sepulchre (Mark xvi. 5). "Going in they found not His body," &c. (Luke xxiv. 3). "While they bowed down their faces to the earth" (ver. 12), "Peter ran to the sepulchre, and when he had stooped down, he saw the linen clothes." That is, the women and Peter after them, standing in the floor bow down their faces, and look downward into the place, where the sepulchres themselves were, which, as we said before, was four cubits deeper than the floor. "The disciple whom Jesus loved, came first to the sepulchre; and when he had stooped down [standing on the floor, that he might look into the burying place] saw the linen clothes lie: yet went he not in. But Peter went in," &c. (chap. xx. 5); that is, from the floor he went down into the cave itself, where the rows of the graves were (in which nevertheless no corpses had been as yet laid, besides the body of Jesus:) thither also after Peter, John goes down. "But Mary weeping stood at the sepulchre without: and while she wept she stooped down to the sepulchre, and saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and another at the feet, where the body of Christ had lain" (ver. 2). She stood at the sepulchre without: that is, within the cave on the floor, but without that deeper cave, where the very graves were, or the very places for the bodies: bowing herself to look down thither, she saw two angels at the head and foot of that coffin, wherein the body of Christ had been laid. (*J. Lightfoot, D.D.*) *Mary at the sepulchre* :—I. Let us note for a little the life of this woman as a TYPE OF DEVOTION. Devotion is an old and much used word. It carries the suggestion of an altar and a gift, where with spoken vow and a solemn covenant, a thing of sacrifice, a life of service, is devoted to God's use. The thought had been familiar for centuries in the smoking altars of Israel, but Jesus takes it and makes it the supreme fact of power in the world's life by personalizing it on Golgotha, until, under the outstretched arms of the cross, devotion means sacrifice. This woman, delivered from the bondage of a sinful life, is henceforth devoted by the grace and property-right of redemption to Him who saved her, vowed to God in body, soul, and spirit as an offering, and therefore not her own. Her devotion makes her—II. COURAGEOUS, BECAUSE SELF-FORGETFUL. It was a brave thing to acknowledge fealty to this crucified Man and adherence to this hatred cause, to stand before soldier and Pharisee and hostile Jerusalem as a follower of Jesus. Nicodemus was not equal to it, Peter could not face the examination of a maid-servant in the palace yard; she never strikes her colours or forgets her Master, but by the spices she brings, the tears she sheds, the watch she keeps, and the appeals she makes, she publishes her fidelity and her creed. Such courage is possibly only in sacrifice or in service to self-abandoned souls. The soul of this woman was flooded, as Paul's was, with the love of Christ, and therefore she forgot, as he did, the danger and the risk. III. PERSISTENT. The others came and looked and

went away, but she is held to the spot by a love that knows no release in vow or vigil. We can imagine John as urging her to go with them as they leave the emptied sepulchre. The same power that makes the courage also makes the perseverance of the saints. So Robert Morrison waited in China, so Neesima laboured in Japan, both under the power of a great love. Here we have marshalled in the character of Mary Magdalene the three factors of power, all set like the giant boughs of an oak in one common trunk: a great devotion, a great courage, and a great patience, born each and all of a great deliverance and a great love; the triple need of the Church of God in this century, and in all centuries. IV. It remains to note THE REWARDS OF SUCH DEVOTION. To Mary it was the historic and physical revelation of the risen Saviour and the spiritual establishment of all her hopes here and hereafter. With reverent surmise we may believe that Jesus, as He tarried unseen in the garden, was gladdened in soul as He witnessed the sorrowful fidelity of this humble follower; aye, that her devotion wrought a kind of compulsion upon Him to speak the familiar name and reveal His triumph over death. Such was the reward of her devotion, and although the forms of revelation may have changed, still the law of such manifestations is for ever the same. They wait upon devoted souls. Devotion compels revelation as love compels love. As to Mary then, so to us now, revelations are possible; aye, and resurrection of spiritual hopes and loves, as we watch and pray beside the cross. Revelations of His character, of our opportunity and of human needs; also, revelations of unused and unsuspected powers, are waiting upon single eyes and surrendered souls, and the tears are shed beside open graves, and the sorrows which burden our hearts shall all be forgotten in the joy of His presence and the sound of His voice. (*William H. Davis.*) *The company at the sepulchre*:—We are here taught—I. THAT THOSE WHO LOVE CHRIST MOST ARE THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED MOST BENEFIT FROM HIM. 1. The first to come is Mary Magdalene. Her history is obscure. Needless obloquy has been heaped upon her memory, as if she was once an habitual sinner against the seventh commandment. Yet there is no evidence of this. But she was one out of whom the Lord had cast "seven devils" (Mark xvi. 9; Luke viii. 2), and her gratitude knew no bounds. None seem to have loved Him so much as Mary. None felt that they owed so much. 2. How is it that many do so little for the Saviour? Because of a low sense of obligation. Where sin is not felt at all, nothing is done; and where sin is little felt, little is done. The man who is deeply conscious of his own guilt, and convinced that without Christ he would sink into hell, is the man who will spend and be spent for Jesus (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). II. THAT THERE ARE WIDELY DIFFERENT TEMPERAMENTS IN DIFFERENT BELIEVERS. 1. Both Peter and John ran to the sepulchre; but John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, outran Peter; but being more reserved, retiring, deep-feeling, stooped down and looked in, but went no further. Peter, more impulsive, fervent, and forward, cannot be content without going in. Both were deeply attached to our Lord, yet each behaves in his own characteristic fashion. 2. Let us learn, then, to make allowances for wide varieties in believers. Let us not judge harshly, because they do not see or feel things exactly as we do. The flowers in the Lord's garden are not all of one colour and one scent, though they are all planted by one Spirit. The Church has a place for all, and a work for all. III. THAT THERE MAY BE MUCH IGNORANCE EVEN IN TRUE BELIEVERS. 1. Even John and Peter "as yet knew not the Scripture," &c. How wonderful this seems! For three long years Christ had staked the truth of His Messiahship on His rising from the dead, and yet they had never taken in His meaning. We little realize the power over the mind which is exercised by wrong teaching in childhood, and by early prejudices. Surely the minister has little right to complain of ignorance among his hearers, when he marks that of Peter and John, under the teaching of Christ Himself. 2. We must remember that true grace, and not head knowledge, is the one thing needful. Some things indeed we must know—our sinfulness, Christ as a Saviour, the necessity of repentance and faith, &c. But he that knows these things may in other respects be a very ignorant man. Let us always seek knowledge; but let us not despair because our knowledge is imperfect, and, above all, let us make sure that, like Peter and John, we have grace and right hearts. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The disciples at the sepulchre*:—I. THE DIFFICULTIES WE ANTICIPATE ARE OFTEN REMOVED THE MOMENT WE APPROACH THEM IN A SPIRIT OF AFFECTIONATE FAITH (ver. 1). Mark gives the names of others, and tells us that these women came with the purpose of paying Jesus the last honours they could bring. But on the way they had wondered with some degree of apprehension how they were going to roll away

the stone. And now, laden in body and worried in mind, the first thing they saw was that some one had taken away the obstacle. It is not a mere figure of speech which has made this the common form of expression for the intervention of God's care in the exigencies of His children. No matter what is our fear, Divine wisdom always goes before us as we are trying to walk in the path of difficult duty. The whole world has learned to talk, as Paul, about "a door opened." And he is the best Christian who lives in the expectation that Omnipotence will honour faith. II. HOW EASY IT IS FOR BEREAVED BELIEVERS TO MISINTERPRET PROVIDENCES WHICH GIVE US MOURNFUL SURPRISES (ver. 2). Mary was full of the tenderest, but the lowest, sort of zeal for Jesus. She wanted to have His presence again. How apt we are, when our dear ones are dead, to dwell upon the fact of our loneliness. We lose much that is comforting when we suffer ourselves to think, not about our dead friend, but about ourselves so wounded and sore at his death. III. INQUIRY INTO THE REAL FACTS IN THE CASE IS ALWAYS THE SWIFT CORRECTIVE OF OUR FOOLISH MISTAKES, WHEN WE GROW PETULANT OVER OUR TRIALS (ver. 3). We often magnify our afflictions, and so fall to reproaching God for His harsh dealing. It would be better to count up our mercies, and prayerfully seek to be just in our estimate of pain, and of the teaching the pain brings. IV. THE SADNESS OF A MERE MEMORY OF SIN (ver. 4). For surely we do not imagine that this was a physical trial of fleetness between those two alert and active men. The hours which Peter had spent since the denial must have been frightfully borne down the usually exuberant spirits of this man. The remembrance of his ill-desert may have imperceptibly weighed upon him, and rendered his steps reluctant. Perhaps he even felt some fear. It is just this which is the most serious result of every wicked act. It hurts your after strength for good. V. THERE IS A PROPER LIMIT IN ALL INVESTIGATION WHEN MEN APPROACH DIVINE MYSTERIES (ver. 5). It is not likely that any artist has ever dared to attempt the delineation of this scene. Only a chastened imagination can seem to see it; no pencil could transfer a spectacle like this to canvas. If there had been more of this restraint, it would have enabled Christian hearts to rest in a deeper peace of believing. It has always been the reckless speculations of a reinless intellect which have confused devout minds that meant to be humble. I think the picture of John impresses us as one of the best incidents of his life. VI. DIFFERENT MANIFESTATIONS OF PIETY AND PERSONALITY (vers. 6, 7). These two disciples, running for the quickest sight of the sepulchre, seems almost like a foot-race of mere spiritual attributes. It is faith and love trying to distance each other in attaining a nearness to Jesus. Faith may be more moderate, and love more agile; but love proves sometimes a hesitating grace, and often faith is over-bold. Love may be more delightful in its exercises, more enthusiastic, and more fervid; but faith has more penetrating power, and more courageous confidence and force. The contrast in the case is instructive as showing how believers can differ and still agree. VII. THE POWER OF AN UNINTENDED AND EVEN UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE (ver. 8). Peter leads John along in all this history. All the world over Simons are rushing ahead, and Johns are following; and neither seems to detect the force which moves the one after the other. Minute circumstances, trivial swayings and swervings of personal history, fix a whole career. And character is moulded, souls are lost or saved, hearts are broken or changed, nobody knows just how. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Jesus risen*:—Note—I. THE ORIGIN AND OBLIGATION OF THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH. The first day of Creation week was marked by the command, "Let there be light"—the first day of the Resurrection week, by the lifting up out of the darkness of death of the true Light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. It is indeed Sun-day! What reasons justify the change from the Jewish Sabbath? 1. The first day marks the central fact upon which all our hopes hinge. For if Christ rose not, then is our faith vain. 2. On the first day the risen Lord appeared on five distinct occasions. On the next first day, there being no appearance in the interval, as though to give special prominence to the time, Jesus appeared to the eleven. 3. On the first day occurred the Pentecostal effusion, the inauguration of the Christian dispensation. 4. In Acts xx. 7, the first day was the day for preaching and the observance of the Lord's Supper. 5. In 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, Paul directs the collections for the saints to be raised upon the first day of the week, that evidently being the day of public assembling for worship. 6. So also the language of John (Rev. i. 10), in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, indicates both the fact of that day being generally recognized throughout the Church, and that it was one for special spiritual devotions and exercises upon the apostles' part. 7. The universal and unanimous consent and practice of the primitive Church and of the

Church catholic show that the hallowed observance of the first day was an undisputed duty. II. THE DIVINE DIGNITY, REPOSE, ORDER, THAT MARK THE RESURRECTION. 1. The fact that the grave-clothes were removed from the body of Christ must have seemed exceedingly strange. Would thieves have paused to do such a thing? And why should they have done so? If these were the first reflections of the disciples, they soon had occasion to reason differently. (1) "Order is nature's first law," and the God of nature in this act of triumph over the mightiest force in nature showed His regard for that law. The facts show the God-like repose of the Divine Victor. (2) This perfect order of life gathers around the souls who by faith enter into Christ. The peacefulness of the vacant sepulchre echoes the living voice of Jesus, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." Men of science tell us that the progress of a hurricane is in circles or spirals. The great storm that swings over its terrible circumference of destruction moves around a centre of perfect calm; the sailor caught in the fury of the tornado might reach a place where the air hangs still and the sea lies placid by pushing the prow of his ship straight toward the very centre of the storm. So in the tempests of life there is a centre of calm—the heart of Christ! The same truth came to the apostles on the Sea of Tiberias. 2. But it is the Saviour in the midst of the grave that we see, a Divine repose upon Himself, and by His own touch composing the disorder of death. (1) To the mere natural eye the grave is the apothosis of confusion and disorganization. The living human frame is the most perfect of organisms; but death is its grim disorganizer. At his touch the mysterious principle that gives vitality and harmony to the structure vanishes, and the delicate machinery falls into incoherent particles. (2) But the eye of faith penetrates the surface. There is One who "giveth beauty for ashes;" and Him we see standing within the open tomb fulfilling His word. The dead are in the realm of Him who has wrought order out of confusion, life and loveliness out of chaos. We have observed the deep interest that children take—and older people, too—in the ending of any work or story. How will it turn out? The interest deepens toward the close, which solves all that. It should be so, with this brief life, so like a tale that is told. The interest may not drop off as it nears its end. To the believing soul rather it deepens. What shall the ending be? Not that—the covered-up coffin, the green mound, the white marble. Not night, confusion, and eternal sleep. Beyond all that is the land of endless day, of order, law, life, beauty, and love. The door of the sepulchre has been opened, the stone rolled away, and we are given to see what glory and beauty lie beyond. 3. Moreover, the lesson touches the very outer wrapping of our immortal part—the body. It may indeed be that the very dust shall not be gathered together again. But in some wise a body of our identity shall rise again. The grip of dissolution cannot hold for ever the dust that God has redeemed for Himself. III. THE INFINITE REACHES OF DIVINE CARE. 1. The folded cerements tell us of the minuteness with which the Lord of providence looks after the spiritual wants of His children. The very hairs of the head are all numbered. The life of the world uncovered by the microscope shows the same regard by the Creator for the minutest details. 2. But as the context shows, the Master considered how He might convince the disciples; and He so disposed those cast-off cerements as to bear witness to them of the Resurrection. And this John "believed." But it was not of that one disciple alone that Jesus then thought. We too, we all, were in His Divine mind. We shared with Him the dying shame—"crucified together with Christ." We share with Him the rising glory—"ye are risen with Christ." 3. Those linen bands had been gently wrapped around the sacred body by tender hands. Were not that love and office of love recognized and honoured by the decent, almost reverent, treatment of the instruments with which love had wrought her duty? Those cerements were holy things—not simply because they had touched the body of Jesus, but because they were the symbols of a love that was faithful to Him in death. (*H. C. McCook, D.D.*) *Christ risen*:—I. THE EARLY VISIT. During the seventh day Love obeyed the sabbath law. The graves of loved ones are stumbling-blocks if they call from worship of the living God at the appointed time. But at last love was free to act. Early on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene, probably with other women, hastened to the sepulchre. Her surprise that the stone was rolled away was preliminary to a dreadful fear. "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." She had no thought of His resurrection. And does not the feverish anxiety of this age lest some hostile hand should sweep Christianity from the world reveal Mary's dim conception of the power and majesty of Jesus? II. THE

EXAMINATION AND TESTIMONY OF THE TOMB. Brushing the dew from the garden shrubs and anticipating the early sunbeams, these intensely earnest men approach the sepulchre. Contrary to what we should expect, the contemplative John outruns the fiery Peter. But as John arrives before the door of the silent chamber, he does not enter. With all his physical energy, reason rules his feet. His zeal, his youthful strength, are crowned with reverence for what is Divine. Reverence too seldom accompanies activity. The opposite is seen in Peter, who is bold, ardent, impatient of delay. He makes no pause, but immediately enters the holy place. His lack of awe in entering is pardonable, because of the service he did while there for all mankind. Careful inspection could not be more emphatically indicated. They mentally photographed the interior. John marked the linen cloths lying, with no body enwrapped. The order is, first, data; second, a theory which shall include all the given facts. III. THE NEW FAITH. The men saw that the body had not been removed by stealth or in haste,—that, in fact, it had not been removed at all. For why should a lifeless body be stripped of its grave-clothes if either foe or friend were removing it? It was a critical moment. The Holy Spirit was showing them the things of Christ. John says he saw and believed, speaking only of himself, because belief is a personal matter. Peter may have believed as strongly as he, but to say "I believe" as John practically does, is more convincing than to tell what others believe. "I saw and believed," is the goal to which John's entire Gospel is intended to lead. In it he tells how men saw Jesus and believed in Him. In this conclusion Peter was probably behind John, though he entered the sepulchre first, and was most active in inspecting its interior. Cautious, reflecting minds like John's are the spiritual leaders of the Church. Activity and push are not all that Christ's cause needs. As Peter unconsciously influenced John to enter the tomb, so when there Peter needed John's penetration as an aid to faith. At this point John adds: "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead." This confutes for ever the theory that Peter and John saw what their minds, full of vagaries and fancies, were prepared to see. They would await His own procedure; and so they "went away again unto their own home." How fortunate that the first place to which the news was carried was "home"! Where does the Resurrection mean so much as there? Where else do so many flowers of hope and trust blossom about the thought of the Resurrection? Only the doctrine of the Resurrection will satisfy the yearnings of husband and wife, of father, mother, children, for light concerning the dead. IV. THE APPARITION OF THE ANGELS. Yet, looking into the sepulchre, Mary saw in her dire need what Peter and John did not see—two angels, at appointed places, where Jesus had lain. The dispensation of Divine light is different to different minds. The two apostles did not need the angelic appearance; they gained their comfort by an act of direct faith. Mary received hers piecemeal, through a more striking and mysterious but less direct ministry. The Lord adapts Himself to the strength of one and to the weakness of another, yet leaves heavenly influences behind Him everywhere. Hark, the angels speak! "Why weepest thou?" Angels are sympathetic, but sympathy alone is not sufficient for such an hour. How little angelic sympathy seemed to do now! Men need not wonder if their words do not avail for comfort in bereavement. "Why weepest thou?" this time spoken by the Lord Himself. Oh fellow-man, gazing at the sepulchre of buried friends, with no spiritual hunger and with no insight into the facts which Jesus' tomb presents, you cannot but weep! But if faith leads you to look within Christ's sepulchre and to view the subject of death according to God's thought of it, "Why weepest thou?" V. THE MANIFESTATION OF JESUS TO MARY. Deep feeling of bereavement excludes from Mary's mind for the time every other thought and perception. Her nature, so large and deep that once seven demons could use it, which just now felt a sevenfold sorrow, overflows with joy sevenfold great. In her ignorance and stony grief she had turned her back upon the Lord; now, in the light of His glorious life, she throws herself at His feet. VI. THE NEW INSTRUCTION. In refusing this, Jesus assumes a new relation. "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father." As if He had said: Do not rest your new faith upon My corporeal life, but upon that life which will soon be consummated with My Father. There I shall receive your love and we will resume our fellowship. Here is a lesson for all. When faith has won victory on its own high ground, why should we crave the lower testimony of the senses and a smaller promise? Mary had already made a good beginning in faith, and therefore Christ would not allow her to touch Him physically. He says by His prohibition: Having taken a few steps by faith, walk no more by sight. One touch

through the Holy Ghost is worth far more than any bodily presence. Christ's new way of meeting His disciples only makes them nearer and dearer to Him than before. He calls them "My brethren"—a term of higher honour than He had used hitherto. It promises the same sonship to God as His, and the same fatherhood in God that He enjoyed. Henceforth they are brethren of Death's Conqueror and sons of Christ's Father and Christ's God. Life and revelation can rise no higher. A new command secures the publication of this message: Go to My brethren and tell them I am risen. An empty mind will doubt; aimless feet will wander. What the Lord has spoken to us is reassurance that we have seen Him. (*History, Prophecy, and Gospel.*) *He is not here: He is risen:*—I. THE FIRST WITNESS—Mary of Magdala (ver. 1-3). 1. Her qualifications. A Galilean woman who had—(1) Enjoyed a rich experience of Christ's healing power (Luke viii. 2; Mark xvi. 2). (2) Spent many months in His society (Matt. xxvii. 55). (3) Witnessed His crucifixion, taken part in His burial, and passed some part of the night sitting over against the sepulchre (Matt. xxvii. 56–61; Mark xv. 40–47). (4) And thus was not likely to be mistaken. 2. Her deposition. (1) That she went to the sepulchre on the morning of the first day of the week—not alone (ver. 2), but accompanied by Mary, &c. (Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 1: Luke xxiv. 10). On the way they talked about the difficulty of removing the stone; their intention being to complete the work of embalming. (2) That on approaching the tomb she observed the stone rolled away, but did not proceed further, so she saw neither the angel without (Matt. xxxviii. 2), nor the young man within (Mark xvi. 5), the two in shining garments (Luke xxiv. 4) whom her companions beheld. (3) That the instant she saw the stone rolled away she believed the tomb to be empty, thinking probably that the body had been removed by friends or foes; it is not evident that she believed as yet that Christ was risen. (4) That having arrived at this conclusion she fled to Simon and John. II. THE SECOND WITNESS—Simon Peter. 1. His recommendations. (1) A man, and therefore less likely than Mary to be the sport of feelings or imagination. (2) Of mature judgment—the mercurial temperament of youth being sobered in the man of forty. (3) A disciple who had enjoyed Christ's friendship for at least two years. 2. His declaration. (1) That on learning Mary's news, he started with John for the sepulchre; that John arrived first, but, too timid to enter, he found Him standing by the door; but that he without fear or hesitation stepped in and surveyed the situation. (2) That he perceived the grave clothes had been carefully disposed. As Peter had not seen "a vision of angels" there is no reason to suppose that his faculties were too disturbed to note things exactly. (3) That he reached the conclusion that whatever had become of the body it had been removed in an orderly manner. It is doubtful whether he got beyond this. III. THE THIRD WITNESS—"The other disciple" (ver. 8). 1. His excellencies. (1) If younger than Peter, less forward, and much calmer in judgment. (2) Of finer sensibilities, therefore better fitted to discern what related to Christ. (3) A disciple who had specially enjoyed Christ's love, and therefore one who had the highest interest in ascertaining the truth. (4) A spectator of the Crucifixion, and so one who could testify to the reality of Christ's death. 2. His testimony. (1) That before Peter's arrival he had stooped down, and looking in saw the linen cloths lying about. (2) That, emboldened by Peter, he had entered in and examined the cave. (3) That in this examination he perceived what Peter had, the carefully-folded napkin in a place by itself. (4) That in consequence of what he saw he believed Christ was risen. Lessons: 1. The devotion of woman to Christ—exemplified in Mary. 2. The mourning of a saintly heart over a dead Christ—again exhibited in the Magdalene. 3. The unconscious influence of one soul upon another—illustrated in Peter's over John. 4. The different degrees of evidence that in different souls are required to produce faith—witnessed in John and Peter. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The Resurrection of Christ*:—I. ITS DOCTRINAL IMPORTANCE. 1. It affords the most decisive testimony to the Divine character of His person and mission. Our Saviour had wrought many miracles. Did these convince the Jews? Some few of them. But they had no effect on the majority. They ascribed it all to magic. The only means of convincing them was by raising the dead. The Jews thought that beyond the power of sorcery. Accordingly when Christ raised Lazarus, "many of the Jews believed on Him." If then the raising of Lazarus sufficed to convince them, how much more convincing the resurrection of Christ. 2. It is a pledge and assurance that our sins are forgiven. Death was the penalty of our sin; the debt we owed to God; Christ engaged to discharge that debt for us; till He discharged it in full, He was to remain in the prison of the grave. His liberation from that prison was to be the token to us that the anger of God was appeased, that our

whole debt was paid to the uttermost farthing. What then? "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." 3. Without it you could neither be justified nor sanctified. Unless then the Saviour had risen, we should have been without the Sanctifier. So likewise without the Resurrection you could not be justified. It was not sufficient for the priest to slay the victim; he must enter the Holy of Holies with its blood. We are too apt to confine our view to a dying Christ. 4. It is the pattern and earnest of our own. II. To WHAT PRACTICAL USES WE MAY APPLY IT? 1. As an incentive to heavenly-mindedness (Col. iii. 1, 2). 2. For encouragement. 3. For consolation to the bereaved. (*H. L. Nicholson, M.A.*) *Mary Magdalene's alarm*:—I. WHO WAS MARY MAGDALENE? On the western bank of the Lake of Galilee, there stood the village of Magdala; so-called from a "Migdol," or fortified place, round which it clustered, and it means the same as "Castleton." Thence Mary was named the "Magdal-ene." She has often been most unaccountably regarded as the woman which was a sinner (Luke vii. 36–50). This mistake has been repeated in countless legends, hymns, homilies, ancient and modern; and by countless preachers, from Ambrose down to John Bunyan; her life has often degraded into a subject for pictorial sentimentalisms; asylums for once dissolute, but now penitent women, are distinguished by her name. All this matters little to her now but it matters more than a little to us, if by adopting this error, we stand convicted of levity or laxity in our treatment of God's Word. 2. Out of whom went seven devils. Whatever may be the psychological import of the terms, it is clear that they set forth the desperateness of Mary's sorrowful plight before she knew Christ. It was not a great sin, but a great sorrow. At last, she wandered into the path of Jesus; and then the spirits met their Sovereign Master. Out the loathly horrors had to go like burglars who had broken into a house of life belonging to Christ. 3. After that wonder, this new event is reported: "Jesus went through every city and village, preaching and . . . Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils . . . and many others, ministered unto Him of their substance." I can trace the sequence and understand the motive of the action thus chronicled. Ruth said to Naomi, "Intreat me not to leave thee," &c. The inner language of Mary to Jesus would be the same, but with a meaning heightened unspeakably. Of course, this implies that she had substance to minister with; and as she is mentioned in companionship with the wife of Herod's steward, the fair inference is that she probably belonged to an equal social station. But now she counted all things but loss for Christ's sake. 4. At length we see Mary standing at the cross. How did she reach this fearful station? What had she in Jerusalem? The men were bound by law to appear at each great feast; but not the women. In her noiseless, unobtrusive way, she was with Him that she might minister to Him of her substance. It was true that her ministering could do little for Him now; but this she can do, at least she can show her love. When all was over, still she stood there; when the two senators carried away the body into the tomb, she was one of those who could say, "We marked the spot, and shall know it again." She ministered of her substance in helping to prepare the final honours; and on the morning of the first day she was the first to arrive at the sepulchre. 5. It is remarkable that John says nothing of the other women. Perhaps Mary's spiritual presence was always so imperial, that any person meeting her in company at any exalted moment would have seen, heard, and have been conscious of Mary alone. Mary is always the royal personage. Her life was a glorious romance of love to Christ. On earth she was the type of this love; in heaven she is a leader of those who swell the sanctus, "Unto Him that loved us," &c. II. WHAT WAS HER ALARM? "They have taken away my Lord," &c. From dull feeling, firm nerve, or superb physical vitality, some of our friends are not easily frightened; but after what Mary had gone through, we can very well understand that her nature was quick to take alarm. When Jesus expelled the deaf and dumb spirit, Thomas Fuller remarks, "He went out like an outgoing tenant, that cares not what mischief he does." It is reasonable to conjecture that when Mary's seven tormentors were mastered, and their reign of terrible tyranny was over, the traces of it were left in a life of nervous vibration and excitability, and just now her strained life had been strained afresh, and when she was setting out for the sepulchre she had reached the point of the intolerable. When your dead is out of sight, your heart feels fit to break; but if you had the sudden fear that foul violators of the grave had snatched away what to you is most fearfully sacred, such a fear would come with a blow on the brain enough to make the reason totter. So thought Mary as to the buried form of her soul's Holy One. III. HOW HER ALARM ENDED—in a great discovery (ver. 11, &c.).

(*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Two pictures of love*:—I. MARY GOING TO THE SEPULCHRE. The picture exhibits. 1. Fidelity of love. Last at the cross, first at the tomb. (1) She clings to Christ while others have left Him. (2) She holds to Him although He was in the lowest stage of His humiliation. She was not with the crowd who shouted Hosannah. Fine weather Christians are more numerous than Magdalenes. (3) She avails herself of the first opportunity to seek Him. Love is an early riser 2. The courage of love. "When it was yet dark." Darkness creates fear; but perfect love casteth out fear. 3. The liberality of love. She brought spices to anoint Christ's body. (1) She gives her quota although others had given before. True love never asks, "To what purpose is this waste?" (2) She gives to Jesus because Jesus had given to her before. "We love Him because He first loved us." II. MARY AT THE SEPULCHRE. This picture exhibits—1. The mistake of love (ver. 11)—"Weeping" The sepulchre was empty, for Jesus had conquered, and heaven was full of joy. 2. The reward of love—(1) She finds Jesus—"They that seek Me early shall find Me." (2) She finds Him better than she expected; instead of a dead Christ a living Saviour. 3. The appreciation of love (ver. 16)—(1) She thinks highly of Him—"Rabboni." (2) She wants to embrace Him more lovingly than ever. 4. The propagandism of love (ver. 18). Christian missions—love eager to let the world know its Saviour. (*T. Morgan.*) **Early, when it was yet dark.**—I. REGARDLESS OF PERSONAL COMFORT. II. ANIMATED BY HOLY LOVE. III. APPOINTED TO HIGHEST HONOUR. (*S. S. Times.*) I. EARLY SEEKING. II. JOYFUL FINDING. (*Ibid.*) **Seeth the stone taken away.**—While the Lord could have rolled back the stone by His own power, He chose to have it done by an angel to signify that He did not break prison, but had a fair and legal discharge from heaven. (*M. Henry.*) *Hindrances removed*:—Many are the hindrances which keep us from Christ, and from approaching His body. We fear at one time the guard, the men of this world, and at another time are restrained by the stone, by natural hindrances which shut out from our eyes the sight of our Redeemer. But if we are deaf to the prudence of the world, and will go like Mary to Him, we shall find that all hindrances melt away, and that angels have already descended and have taken away the stone from the sepulchre, so that we may know assuredly that He has risen from the dead. (*Ferus.*) **They have taken away the Lord.**—I. MOURNING THROUGH ERROR. II. ERRING THROUGH IGNORANCE. III. IGNORANT THROUGH UNBELIEF. (*S. S. Times.*) *Harmony of the narratives*:—The order of Christ's eleven appearances between His resurrection and ascension, I believe to be as follows: 1. To Mary Magdalene alone (Mark xvi. 9; John xx. 14); 2. To certain women returning from the sepulchre (Matt. xxviii. 9, 10); 3. To Simon Peter alone (Luke xxiv. 34); 4. To two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 13); 5. To ten apostles at Jerusalem, and some other disciples, Thomas being absent (John xx. 19); 6. To eleven apostles at Jerusalem, Thomas being present (John xx. 26-29); 7. To seven disciples fishing at the sea of Tiberias (John xxi. 1); 8. To eleven apostles on a mountain in Galilee, and perhaps some others with them (Matt. xxviii. 16); 9. To above five hundred brethren at once (1 Cor. xv. 6); 10. To James only (1 Cor. xv. 7): 11. To all the apostles, and probably some others, on Mount Olivet, at His ascension. Most of these eleven appearances require little or no explanation. The only appearances about which there is any difficulty are the two first. The knot to be untied is this. St. Mark says that our Lord appeared first to Mary Magdalene (Mark xvi. 9). St. John also describes this appearance; and it is quite plain from his account that Mary Magdalene was alone (John xx. 11-13). Yet St. Matthew says that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the sepulchre together,—saw an angel, and heard that our Lord had risen,—ran to bring the tidings to the disciples, and were met on the way by Jesus, and both saw Him at the same time. Now how can the account of these three witnesses be made to harmonize? 1. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary did not go alone to the sepulchre. By comparing Mark xvi. 1, and Luke xxiii. 55, and xxiv. 1, with Matt. xxviii. 1, it is quite evident that several "other women" accompanied them. 2. On drawing nigh the sepulchre, the company of women saw the stone rolled away from its mouth. At once, on seeing this, it flashed on the mind of Mary Magdalene that the body of Jesus had been removed, and, without waiting a moment, she ran off to Peter and John, and told them, as recorded in John xx. 1, 2. 3. While Mary Magdalene ran off to tell Peter and John, the other women went up to the sepulchre, found the body gone, saw a vision of angels, were told that Jesus had risen, and were commanded to go and tell the disciples. They departed to tell the news. Some went in one direction and some in another; Mary and Salome with one party; Joanna with another. 4. While this was going on,

Mary Magdalene returned with Peter and John to the sepulchre shortly after the other women went away. Whether Mary got there so soon as Peter and John, perhaps admits of doubt. 5. Peter and John saw the empty sepulchre, and went away, leaving Mary Magdalene weeping there. 6. As soon as Peter and John went away, Mary Magdalene saw the two angels, and immediately after saw our Lord Himself, and was told to carry a message to His brethren (chap. xx. 17). 7. In the meantime the other women had gone in two or three directions, to tell the other disciples who lived in a different part of Jerusalem from that where Peter and John lived. Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Salome, were yet on their way when Jesus met them, very shortly after He had appeared to Mary Magdalene. 8. One party of the women, with Joanna at their head, saw nothing of our Lord, but went to the disciples and told them the message of the angels. 9. Shortly after this, our Lord appeared to Peter, who very likely had gone again to the grave on hearing Mary Magdalene's report. 10. In the course of the same day our Lord appeared to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, who had left Jerusalem after Joanna and the women reported the vision of angels, but before our Lord had appeared to Peter. 11. In the evening of the same day our Lord appeared to the apostles, and others with them, Thomas being absent. Luke means by "the eleven apostles" the apostles generally, as a body. This was our Lord's fifth appearance on the day that He rose. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The Resurrection* —I. THE FOLLY OF ALL HUMAN EFFORTS TO PREVENT THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOD'S PURPOSES. The stone had been placed at the mouth of the sepulchre to prevent the fulfilment (Matt. xxviii. 62–66). The Jewish rulers tried to veil their purpose; but it is plain that they looked to the dawning of the third day with anxiety, and that they were determined that, so far as lay in their power, that day should pass away without the event they feared. But their precautions were as vain as all efforts have been to prevent God from carrying out His purpose and fulfilling His promises. II. THE LOVEABLENESS OF THE MAN CHRIST JESUS. He seemed to have led His friends astray (Luke xxiv. 21), yet, instead of joining with His adversaries in condemning Him as a deceiver, they continued to love Him. Had there not been in His character a rare charm, those whom He seemed to have misled so terribly could not have continued to love Him as they did. If after our death we would have all our apparent mistakes forgotten, and our memory cherished, let us live as Christ lived. III. THE SLOWNESS OF THE HUMAN MIND TO RECEIVE GREAT TRUTHS. Of this fact the difficulty which the apostles had in attaching any meaning to our Lord's promises that He would rise on the third day, and in believing in the fact of His resurrection even when it had occurred, is an impressive illustration. This fact should make us patient with those who hold false and foolish views. IV. FULLER LIGHT IS THE REWARD OF FAITH AND LOVE. To the absolutely unbelieving Jews no manifestation of the risen Christ was vouchsafed: and He appeared earliest to those who loved Him most—to Mary and the other women earlier than to any of the apostles. Thus He fulfilled His own word (Luke viii. 18). (*Christian Age.*) **So they both ran together.**—I. SEEKING A COMMON END. II. ANIMATED BY A COMMON ZEAL. III. CHEERED BY A COMMON BROTHERHOOD. IV. ARRIVING AT A COMMON GOAL. (*S. S. Times.*) I. A PROPER END. II. A COMMENDABLE PACE. III. A HELPFUL COMPANIONSHIP. (*Ibid.*) *Running disciples* (Children's Sermon):—There is always something the matter when grown-up people run. Boys and girls hardly ever walk; men and women very seldom run. All young creatures love to run—kittens, puppies, calves, lambs. As we get older we grow more sedate, and the sign that a boy has become a man is that he walks. But if there is an accident, or a fire, or if he has to catch a train then he runs. The text tells us of a race between two disciples who should get first to the Lord's sepulchre. John outran Peter on this occasion, but on that other in the next chapter, although John saw Christ first, Peter was the first ashore. So John did not always outrun Peter. I. THERE ARE SOME DISCIPLES WHO HAVE COME TO A STANDSTILL. When people take a voyage they never think about the machinery until it stops; then everybody is on deck to know what is the matter. Sometimes the long shaft which turns the propeller has to be screwed or "keyed" up, and the machinery has to be stopped. It is the same when a train stops and no station in sight. The windows go up, and people's heads go out. And when the machinery of the body is affected we begin to wonder what is the matter with us. We never know that we have a head till it aches, nor heart, nor lungs till they want keying up. There are a great many stoppages in life. Some stop being respectable—boys who loaf about street corners and taverns. Some stop being honest; they don't pay their bills, and need keying up in their morals. Many were once running disciples who walk in Christ's ways no longer. And then

just as with the steamer, &c., there is something wrong with their souls. It's a dreadful thing to be a disciple who doesn't go at all—like a stopped clock. You can't tell the Christian time of day by looking at their faces. Something is the matter inside. This was the case with the disciples when Jesus died; but when the Spirit came at Pentecost they became going Christians once more. It was like fresh steam to an engine, or the keying up of its shaft, or the winding up of a clock. And so when we have come to a standstill by loss of faith, love, zeal, let us pray for that Spirit to come to us with fresh impulses and desires to enable us to go on in His service again. Standing disciples will never reach heaven. II. THERE ARE WALKING DISCIPLES. The Bible says a good deal about "walk and conversation." You can tell a man's character by his walk. When a man rolls and swings his shoulders from side to side we know him to be a good humoured soul. A drunken man's walk reveals his character. When people go to a funeral they go in slow and solemn procession; but when we see one whom we love, and whom we have not seen for a long time, we hasten our steps. The two disciples walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus, but I expect they ran from Emmaus to Jerusalem. It makes a great difference in our walks what motives we are led by. I knew a boy who was so slow that he was always late to everything but dinner, and we called him Sergeant Slowboots. And to this day there he goes sauntering along as if there were twenty-seven days to the week instead of seven. If we are going to the dentists we generally take our time about it; but if we are going out for a holiday we don't waste a moment. If we are trying to walk in the way of God's commandments we ought to pray, "Quicken me in Thy way." Just as we ought not to loiter when sent on errands or when father calls, so we must not be slow in God's work and when He calls. III. THERE ARE RUNNING DISCIPLES. Some get on faster than others; as John than Peter. He saw things before Peter did. He had a quicker eye and a quicker step. Some people when they enter a room see everything in it at once, while others seem to notice nothing. Some are lithe and active, and can run for a chair or book, while the rest are wondering what to do. It is this quick eye and step which make business men successful. When he was a young lieutenant the Duke of Wellington was asked how soon he could leave for India, "In fifteen minutes, sir." And sure enough in a quarter of an hour he was ready to go—which showed that he was a wide-awake running disciple of his country. God's angels are running disciples. They fly to do His will. When a person runs he must have some object in view which quickens his footsteps. In the boat or horse race those who do the driving are urged on by the desire of winning. "So run that ye may obtain." (*Wilberforce Newton.*) *Different characteristics:*—St. John represents the contemplative, Peter the active. The contemplative person is more nimble in his wit; the active quick at his work. St. John ran faster; but St. Peter went surer. (*Theophylact.*) *All do not reach Christ at one speed:*—Among the children of God all of them have not a like speed. Some of them get a sight of Christ before others. But whoever they be that have the life of God in them, and so are walking on towards Him, they shall, either first or last, meet with Him without doubt. (*Samuel Rutherford.*) **And he stooping down and looking in.**—*Stooping and looking in:*—The variety of Oriental tombs is so great that it is impossible to be certain of the shape of this tomb; but these words, when compared with Matthew's account, do not allow us to suppose that it was like a simple grave cut in the rock, as many of them are. The ancient tombs now accessible, of the kind which allow one to stoop down at the door and see the place of the body, are those provided with steps inside, from the door down to a room of moderate size, about, and in the sides of which are cut the *loculi*, or niches, for the body. The loculi, in such cases, are cut along the side, instead of piercing horizontally like our modern catacomb, and are a mere shelf, with a roof arched lengthwise. This arrangement of an ancient tomb, especially from about the time of Christ indefinitely earlier, is quite common in the East. It not only permits one to stoop down at the door, and look in and see the entire place of the body, but would allow one to sit at the head and another at the foot, as the two angels did. For the lower tier of niches (such tombs seem usually to have one row only, as a general thing, though sometimes they have two), one sitting on a seat no higher than an ordinary chair would have his head higher than the body. Sometimes these niches are so long and so high that there would be room for the body, and for a mourner to sit in Oriental fashion in the niche, one at the head, and the other at the feet. But, since most of the known examples of this kind of tomb were heathen, the larger space was probably for offerings, for provisions for the dead, or for other objects such as the French

call "the furniture of the tomb." It is also true, however, that ancient tombs exist consisting of a mere room, on the floor of which the dead were laid, with the "furniture" that usually accompanied them. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *Stooping and looking*:—None but humble and meek men can see these mysteries. He that will not stoop at Christ's grave shall never be partakers of His death and resurrection. (*Marlorate.*) **Saw the linen clothes lying . . . and the napkin . . . wrapped together in a place by itself.**—It is remarkable, that whenever these holy coverings of our Lord's body are mentioned, they are never called (chap. xi. 44) "grave clothes," as in the case of Lazarus; but they are spoken of as the linen clothes (2 Cor. xiii. 4). (*I. Williams.*) *The cerements of Christ and of Lazarus*:—When our Lord raised up Lazarus, he came forth of the grave "bound hand and foot with grave clothes." Though he was for the present rescued from death by the power of Christ, yet he must still be a subject to it; he is revived, but yet riseth with the bonds of death about him; he must die again; but when our Lord riseth, He shakes off His grave clothes; the linen, that wrapped His body, in one place, and the linen, that bound His head, in another. Our Lord, being risen, "dieth no more; death hath no dominion over Him" (Acts xiii. 34–37; Rom. vi. 9; Heb. vii. 23–25). (*Sir M. Hale.*) *Comfort from Christ's cerements*:—Finding one of his children had been greatly shocked and overcome by the first sight of death, Dr. Arnold tenderly endeavoured to remove the feeling, and opening a Bible pointed to these words, saying, "Nothing, to my mind, affords such comfort, when shrinking from the outward accompaniments of death, the grave clothes, the loneliness, as the thought that all these had been round our Lord Himself, who died and is now alive for ever more." (*Dean Stanley.*) *Lessons taught by the disposition of Christ's cerements*:—You may wonder what interest or significance there could be in these objects, and how they could possibly affect John so. You see such commonplace trifles every day. But—I. Looked at in its connection, we have in this descriptive note some of those "UNDESIGNED COINCIDENCES," and delicate, obscure hints of information, which marvellously enhance the interest and confirm the truth of the Gospel story. Forgers would never have thought of such a circumstance. Jesus not being in the grave, there could be only one of two explanations of this. 1. The sight of the sepulchral draperies, and the face cloth—the first, carefully folded; the second, put carefully away by itself—effectually set at rest the suspicion that evil hands had "taken away the Lord." Robbers do not set things right before they leave; but scatter confusion, out they go. 2. It being certain that no robber had done this work, it was equally certain that Jesus Himself must have done it, and this was all the more confirmed by the calmness, love of order, methodical attention to little things, displayed, which were all in the style of Jesus, and tokens which the witness recognized as surely as we recognize the handwriting of a friend. II. Notice the connection between THE DELIBERATE, ORDERLY HABITS OF JESUS, and the conviction wrought in the mind of one who knew those habits well. Such habits, besides being necessary to Him as a perfect Man, belonged to the Jewish characteristics of His human nature. 1. What were they? The race endowment of the Greeks was an instinctive consciousness of beauty and symmetry in thought and form; the national quality of the Romans, methodical force; the Jewish national peculiarity was statical order. (1) The remarkable tribal, ritual, marching order that shows itself in the story of the Exodus, in the settlement in Canaan, in the Temple, in the return from captivity, &c., could only have been possible in a people with whom order was the native instinct and habitude. (2) This habitude made the people such divinely fitted custodians of the Scriptures; and while the text of the Septuagint is so unsettled that it is impossible to place in it more than a general confidence, the Hebrew Scriptures are so correct that they present only a comparatively small variety of lections. (3) This faculty was always the mark of a great leader; we see it in Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel. 2. Mark how it was exemplified in Jesus. You see it in His instructions to the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples; in the plan of His journeys; in the development of His doctrine; in the arrangements for the feeding of four or five thousand men, besides women and children. A plan was wanted all at once for marshalling the people in companies; for making them all sit in line, with clear passages. All was done with infinite ease; and then came a methodical care in the distribution of the food; a methodical plan to prevent waste—and all this by way of methodical attention to little things; the fragments were carefully gathered up, and twelve baskets were filled. Even on the cross the love of order was seen. He could arrange for the comfort of Mary; could remember the last one

prophecy about Himself that had to be fulfilled before He died, and know the point when He could utter the triumphant cry, "It is finished!" III. Now we come with awe to mark THIS CROWNING INSTANCE OF JEWISH ATTENTION TO FITNESS AND ORDER. Jesus, in the act of conquering death, and in the last moment of the transaction that saves millions of everlasting lives, stops to smooth the shroud, and to put the napkin carefully away into its right place, before He leaves the house of death. A striking instance this of particularity in order, and of attention to "the littles"! Before John noticed how the linen clothes lay, the sight seems to have had no effect upon him; but when, as the result of close observation, he saw how they had been placed, he knew that Jesus had done this; and that, just like Himself, minutely observant, grandly deliberative, divinely serene, He had risen from the grave. IV. IT WAS, AND IS, FULL OF INTEREST AS A REVELATION OF THE SAVIOUR HIMSELF. A symbol, through which He now teaches how carefully He counts, watches, manipulates and rectifies all things with which He has to do as the risen Saviour. He has the care of the Church, and is my own personal Saviour. This act reminds me that such a Saviour exactly meets my wants. Events are often in a tangle, and I cannot set them in order; my life is not made up of sublimities, but of little things. As the result of many things, each small and mean, I find myself bereft of spiritual sensitiveness and vivacity, and I am only half awake to the grandest of all realities; so, through a confusion of trifles I am brought into a mood that lays me open to some great temptation; and the smallest detail in my affairs will not be too small for Him to think of if I forget, nor to put in its right place, if this should be more than I can do. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Order* (Children's Sermon):—You do not see anything strange at first here. You can fold a napkin neatly yourself! Yes; but this one was found in a grave. The disciples had heard that Christ was risen, and went to see if it was true; and found only some graveclothes and a napkin neatly folded. The soldiers who had been set to watch the grave were very frightened when they found the Lord had risen, and so said that the disciples had come and stolen the Lord away! But the napkin told a different tale. Do you think that anybody would have taken the time or the trouble to fold up the graveclothes? Learn from this—I. THE LORD DOES NOT LOVE DISORDER. 1. He has a place for everything, and puts everything in its place. If we find out where He has put a star, we know quite well where to find that star again; it never gets mislaid. Were it otherwise we would never be able to get on at all! If the sun rose one morning in the west and went down in the east we would not be sure of what he might do next day, for he might come from the south and go down in the north; or worse still might not shine at all! 2. Or, if the Lord did not always do the same things in the same way, so that we could depend upon Him, we would soon be starved; for when the farmer had sown his seeds in the spring-time, winter might suddenly come and then all at once hot summer might set in, and so nothing could be grown in the fields. 3. Isn't there a lesson here? You do not always fold up the napkin: *i.e.*, do things as neatly as you might, and put things in their proper places. How you left that seam you had been sewing! How your school-books were scattered about and made you late for school. Slovenly men and women come from careless boys and slatternly girls. Learn now to do as God does. II. THAT IS THE WAY TO FIND TIME. By the time you have found the things you have mislaid, you might have got through a great many pages of that book you are so fond of. In a chemist's shop, there are hundreds of bottles, and many of them all the same size, yet every one contains something different! Now suppose they were all laid down anywhere, and mixed together anyhow, and somebody came and asked for a particular medicine. The chemist might be an hour in finding it, and might even then, in the confusion, give the wrong one and kill somebody. But he has a place for every one, and puts every one in its place. And so dispenses safely and saves time. III. IT IS THE WAY TO BE HAPPY. You can't be careless about things without injuring them, and you can't mislay things without becoming fretful; and then you say unpleasant things, and other people say unpleasant things to you, and so wherever there is confusion there comes every evil work. Learn then to do things neatly and at the right time, and put them in their proper places. Order is heaven's first rule, and God says He is not the Author of confusion. If you would wish to be God's children, you must try to be like Him in this also. (*J. R. Howat.*)

Ver. 8. **Then went in also that other disciple.**—I. ZEALOUS PURSUIT. II. ENLARGED KNOWLEDGE. III. INCREASED FAITH. (*S. S. Times.*) *Unconscious*

influence:—In this slight turn of history we see that men are ever touching unconsciously the springs of motion in each other. Little does Peter think, as he goes straight in, that he is drawing in his brother; and as little does John think that he is following his brother. We overrun the boundaries of our personality—we flow together. There are two sorts of influence, active or voluntary, and that which is unconscious. The importance and obligation of our efforts to do good, that is, of our voluntary influence, are often insisted on; but there needs a more thorough appreciation of the influence which is insensibly exerted. I. EXPEL THE COMMON PREJUDICE THAT THERE CAN BE NOTHING OF CONSEQUENCE IN UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCES, BECAUSE THEY MAKE NO REPORT, AND FALL ON THE WORLD UNOBSERVED. 1. Histories and biographies tell how men have led armies, established empires, enacted laws, &c., *i.e.*, what they do with a purpose. But what they do without a purpose they seldom even mention. So also the public laws make men responsible only for what they do with a purpose, and take no account of the mischiefs or benefits that are communicated by their example. The same is true in the discipline of families, churches, and schools; because no human government can trace such influences with sufficient certainty to make their authors responsible. 2. But you must not conclude that they are therefore insignificant. (1) How is it in the natural world? Nature always conceals her hand. Who ever saw or heard the exertions of that tremendous force which holds the universe together? The lightning is a mere fire-fly spark in comparison; but because it glares and thunders and blasts many think that it is a vastly more potent agent than gravity. (2) The Bible calls the good man's life a light, and it is the nature of light to fill the world unconsciously with its beams. So the Christian shines, not so much because he will as because he is a luminous object. And yet there are many who think that light is a very tame and feeble instrument, because it is noiseless. An earthquake is to them a much more vigorous and effective agency. Little do they think that the light of every morning is an agent many times more powerful. But let the light of the morning cease; the outcries of a horror-stricken world make, as it were, the darkness audible. The globe and all the fellow planets that have lost their sun become mere balls of ice, swinging silent in death and darkness. The light would not wake an infant in his cradle. And yet it perpetually new creates the world, rescuing it each morning as a prey from night and chaos. So the Christian is "the light of the world;" and the insensible influences of good men are as much more potent than their active, as the great silent powers of nature are of greater consequence than her little disturbances and tumults. The outward endeavours made by good men or bad to sway others, they call their influence; whereas it is, in fact, but a very small fraction of the good or evil that flows out of their lives. Nay, how many persons do you meet, the insensible influence of whose manners and character is so decided as often to thwart their voluntary influence? And it will generally be found that where men undertake by argument or persuasion to exert a power in the face of qualities that make them odious, their insensible influence will be too strong for them. II. THE TWOFOLD POWERS OF EFFECT AND EXPRESSION BY WHICH MAN CONNECTS WITH HIS FELLOW-MAN. 1. If we distinguish man as a creature of language, there are in him two sets or kinds of language—voluntary and involuntary; that of speech in the literal sense, and that expression of the eye, the face, the look, the gait, the tone. Speech, or voluntary language, is a door to the soul, that we may open or shut at will; the other is a door that stands open evermore. 2. Then if we go over to the subjects of influence, we find every man endowed with two inlets of impression; the ear and the understanding for the reception of speech, and the sympathetic powers for tinder to those sparks of emotion revealed by looks, tones, manners, &c. And these sympathetic powers are inlets, open on all sides to the understanding and character. Many have gone so far as to maintain that the look or expression, and even the very features of children are often changed by exclusive intercourse with nurses and attendants; but we shall find it scarcely possible to doubt that simply to look on bad and malignant faces, to become familiarized to them, is enough permanently to affect the character of persons of mature age. How dangerous, *e.g.*, for a man to become accustomed to sights of cruelty! No more is it a thing of indifference to become accustomed to look on the manners, and receive the bad expression of any kind of sin. The door of involuntary communication is always open. But how very seldom, in comparison, do we undertake by means of speech to influence others! 3. It is by one of these modes of communication that we are constituted members of voluntary society, and by the other, parts of a general mass, or members of involuntary society. You are

all, in a certain view, individuals; you are also, in another view, parts of a common body—be it the family, the Church, the state. And observe how far this involuntary communication and sympathy results in what we call the national or family spirit. Sometimes this spirit takes a religious or an irreligious character. What was the national spirit of France—*e.g.*, at a certain time, but a spirit of infidelity? What is the religious spirit of Spain but a spirit of bigotry? What is the family spirit in many a house but the spirit of gain or pleasure? Far down in the secret foundations of life and society, there lie concealed great laws and channels of influence, which often escape our notice altogether, but which are as gravity to the general system of God's works. 4. But these are general considerations. I now proceed to add some proofs of a more particular nature. (1) The instinct of imitation in children. We begin our experience by simple imitation, and under the guidance of this we lay our foundations. The child's soul is purely receptive, and for a considerable period without choice or selection. A little further on, he begins voluntarily to copy everything he sees. And thus we have a whole generation of future men receiving from us their very beginnings, and the deepest impulses of their life and immortality; and when we are meaning them no good or evil, they are drawing from us moulds of habit, which, if wrong, no heavenly discipline can wholly remove; or, if right, no bad associations utterly dissipate. It may be doubted whether, in all the active influence of our lives we do as much to shape the destiny of our fellow-men, as we do in this single article of unconscious influence over children. (2) Further on, respect for others takes the place of imitation. We naturally desire the approbation or good opinion of others. You see the strength of this feeling in the article of fashion. How few persons have the nerve to resist a fashion; even in literature, worship, moral and religious doctrine. How many will violate the best rules of society because it is the practice of their circle! How many reject Christ because of acquaintances who have no suspicion of their influence, and will not have till the last day shows them what they have done! (3) Again, how the most active feelings and impulses of mankind are contagious. How quick enthusiasm is to kindle, till a nation blazes in the flame! In the case of the Crusades you have an example. So with fear and superstition, the spirit of war or of party. How any slight operation in the market may spread till trade runs wild in a general infatuation! Now, in all these examples the effect is produced, not by active endeavour, but mostly by that insensible propagation which follows a flame. (4) It is also true that the religious spirit tends to propagate itself in the same way. Spiritual influences are never separated from the laws of thought in the individual and the laws of feeling and influence in society. If every disciple is to be an "epistle known and read of all men," what shall we expect, but that all men will be somehow affected by the reading? Or if he is to be a light in the world, what shall we look for but that others, seeing his good works, shall glorify God on his account? How often one, or a few good men become the leaven of a general reformation! Such men give a more vivid proof of the reality of religious faith than any words or arguments could yield. III. THE ACTIVE INFLUENCE OF MEN IS DUE, IN A PRINCIPAL DEGREE, TO THAT INSENSIBLE INFLUENCE by which their arguments, reproofs, and persuasions are secretly invigorated. 1. It is not mere words which turn men; it is the heart mounting uncalled into the expression of the features; the look beaming with goodness; the tone, the moral character of the man that speaks is likely to be well represented in his manner. If without heart or interest you attempt to move another, the involuntary man tells what you are doing in a hundred ways at once. A hypocrite, endeavouring to exert a good influence, only tries to convey by words what the lying look, and the faithless affectation, or dry exaggeration of his manner perpetually resist. 2. Men dislike to be swayed by direct, voluntary influence, and are, therefore, best approached by conduct and feeling, and the authority of simple worth, which seem to make no purposed onset. Now, it is on this side of human nature that Christ visits us, preparing just that kind of influence which the Spirit of truth may wield with the most persuasive and subduing effect. It is the grandeur of His character which constitutes the chief power of His ministry, not His miracles or teachings apart from His character. The Scripture writers have much to say in this connection of the image of God; and an image, you know, is that which simply represents, not that which acts, or reasons, or persuades. And here is the power of Christ—it is what of God's beauty, love, truth, and justice shines through Him. IV. INFERENCES. 1. That it is impossible to live in this world and escape responsibility. You cannot live without exerting influence. If you had the seeds of a pestilence in your

body, you would not have a more active contagion than you have in your tempers, tastes, and principles. You say that you mean well; that you mean to injure no one. Is your example harmless? Is it ever on the side of God and duty? You cannot doubt that others are continually receiving impressions from your character. As little can you doubt that you must answer for these impressions. By a mere look or glance, you are conveying the influence that shall turn the scale of some one's immortality. 2. The true philosophy or method of doing good. It is, first of all and principally, to be good—to have a character that will of itself communicate good. It is a mistake, sad or ridiculous, to make mere stir synonymous with doing good. The Christian is called a light, not lightning. 3. Our doctrine shows how the preaching of Christ is often so unfruitful, and especially in times of spiritual coldness. It is not because truth ceases to be truth, nor of necessity, because it is preached in a less vivid manner, but because there are so many influences preaching against the preacher. He is one—the people are many; his attempt to convince and persuade is a voluntary influence. Their lives are so many unconscious influences. He preaches the truth, and they are preaching the truth down; and how can he prevail against so many, and by a kind of influence so unequal? When the people of God are glowing with spiritual devotion to Him and love to men the case is different. Then they are all preaching with the preacher, and making an atmosphere of warmth for his words to fall in. Great is the company of them that publish the truth, and proportionally great its power. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *Unconscious influence*:—A young man, away from home, slept in the same room with another young man, a stranger. Before retiring for the night, he knelt down, as was his wont, and silently prayed. His companion had long resisted the grace of God; but this noble example aroused him, and was the means of his awakening. In old age he testified, after a life of rare usefulnesss—"Nearly half a century has rolled away, with all its multitudinous events, since then; but that little chamber, that humble couch, that silent, praying youth, are still present to my imagination, and will never be forgotten amid the splendours of heaven and through the ages of eternity." (*Pulpit Treasury.*) *Incidental results*:—It is told of Thorwaldsen, the Danish sculptor, that when he returned to his native land with those rare works of art which have made his name immortal, the servants, who unpacked the statuary, scattered upon the ground the straw which was wrapped around the marble works. There were unseen seeds in that straw, and soon there were flowers from the gardens of Rome blooming in the gardens of Copenhagen. The artist, while pursuing his glorious purpose and leaving magnificent results in marble, was unconsciously scattering sweet flowers, whose beauty and perfume were to refresh and gladden his native city years after his hand was as cold as the chisel it once so magically moved. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 11–18. **But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping.**—*Lessons*:—1. Christians are often sorrowful, when, if they had clearer knowledge and stronger faith, they would rejoice. 2. Angels sympathize with Christians in their sorrow. If they shed no tears they are not indifferent to ours. 3. The thought of losing Jesus is enough to make His friends weep. When He is absent from the Church, and outward shows divert the eye from the Lord; when, instead of a living Christ, there is only a sepulchre, no whitening of which can compensate for the absence of the Prince of Life; and when He is absent from the pulpit, and where criticism, or philosophy, or Jewish ethics, or Christian polemics are discussed, and the living, loving Christ is absent; and when by worldliness we have no longer that fellowship with Him we once enjoyed—if we are indeed His friends we shall weep, saying of our follies and our sins (ver. 13). 4. Jesus is often very close to His disciples when they do not perceive Him (ver. 14). We are so absorbed in sorrow that we do not see Him who comes to soothe it. We often think He is farthest when He is nearest. Is He not "a *very* present help in trouble?" Like Mary, also, we sometimes mistake Him for the gardener. We think only of the servant when we should acknowledge the Master. We rest in the means of grace when we should rise to the Giver of grace. 5. Christ's first resurrection-word was one of consoling sympathy—not of power, victory, or vengeance. He is tender, loving still. He spake to Mary, and to womanhood through her. He knew how often woman weeps unseen, what a martyrdom of grief she often undergoes by sensibilities wounded, yearnings unsatisfied, love unrequited, closest ties torn asunder, anxieties and toils which only love like hers could enable her to endure, and wounds hidden from all eyes, which only love like hers could bear and yet

conceal; and so Christ's first word after His resurrection was one of sympathy with woman's grief. Seeking Jesus is the best antidote to weeping. 6. True love may be combined with deficient knowledge. "Sir, if Thou have borne Him hence," &c. No name had been mentioned, but Mary speaks as if because He was uppermost in her feelings all the world besides must think of "Him" too. So let the thought of Jesus be in our hearts. Will *He* be pleased? What would *He* have me do? In this enterprise, in that company, shall I have *His* presence and enjoy *His* blessing? 7. Christ knows His disciples individually. He addresses her by the old familiar name (ver. 16). The friend of former days was still individually dear. Are *we* in sorrow, inconsolable, forgetting Him who sends it for our good? He reminds us of His presence, saying, "*Mary!*" Are we fearing some danger as though we had no Almighty Friend to protect us? He places Himself between us and it, and says, "*Mary!*" Are we becoming worldly, restraining prayer, toying with temptation, looking at some forbidden fruit till it becomes pleasant in our eyes? Jesus, in a tone of faithful remonstrance, says, "*Mary!*" 8. Every true disciple recognizes the Saviour's voice (ver. 16). Do we thus confess Him to be "Master," saying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" In sorrow, do we submit with patience, and say, "*Rabboni*"? In danger, do we trust with holy confidence and repeat, "*Rabboni*"? When tempted, do we turn at His reproof and penitently, resolutely exclaim, "*Rabboni*"? At death, Jesus will say, "*Mary!*" It will he the voice not of an enemy, but of our best, our heavenly Friend. It will be Jesus coming to take us to Himself. Shall we be ready at once to welcome Him as *Rabboni*? When He sits on the throne of judgment He will invite to His kingdom every one of His faithful followers, with an individual recognition, calling each by name—*Mary!* Shall we be among them and joyfully respond, "*Rabboni*"? (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre*:—I. MARY'S SORROW. 1. She sought for a lost Christ, and looked for Him where He was not to be found. So—(1) Some lose Christ when any great calamity comes upon them, and their faith is shaken in the Divine goodness. (2) Others fall into temptations, become prosperous, and worldly, lose sight of all spiritual aims, become content with this world, and their faith and hope in Christ are gone. (3) Others get entangled in intellectual difficulties about the Gospels, or inspiration, or miracles, and because they cannot see their way out. Christ meanwhile is almost, if not entirely, lost to their vision. We can lose Christ in a thousand ways, and look for Him in a thousand places where He is not to be found. We try to find Him in books of controversy, in going from one Church to another, in praying for faith in Him, in reiterating the creeds, forgetting that the restoration of all belief must begin on the high road of duty, and that spiritual work is the road to spiritual knowledge, and the recovery of our hold of Christ. 2. Mary failed to recognize Him though so near to her. So we often fail to recognize Christ though He manifests Himself to us in all the manifold forms of our life. We, too, often think that we can meet and recognize Him only in Church; but there is no charm in a Church for disclosing Christ; the charm must be in ourselves, perceiving and answering to the charm that there is in Christ. Then we can see Him everywhere. (1) The wickedest persons ought to reveal Christ, for you may be sure that He is there yearning to recover them. (2) Wherever an afflicted man or woman lies in sorrow, there you hear His voice, saying, "Come unto Me," &c. (3) Whenever you see a man reviled or misrepresented, there you have an image of that Christ who was crucified for His goodness. (4) Christ looks at us through the eyes of every innocent child; for there is in them the light of the kingdom of heaven. (5) Every just and noble deed is a revelation of Christ; for He came not to be ministered unto, &c. 3. She mistook the Divine work for man's. "*They* have taken away my Lord;" not knowing that He had reclaimed His own life by the power of the eternal Spirit. There is a human and a Divine side to every event, and things become significant in proportion as we can see their Divine aspect. There are men who can see in Christ nothing but what is simply human. There are men who have no eye for the Divine. They are mostly cold, self-contented natures; having no moral enthusiasm, nor intellectual grasp, but play upon the surface of a great many things with cold moonlight gleams. Let us guard as beyond all price the faculty which can see God in all things. II. THE STRENGTH OF MARY'S LOVE (ver. 15). Her overflowing love in the midst of her grief does not wait to measure her strength. She was equal to anything that her love prompted her to undertake. Love is the real worker of miracles in this world. And I am speaking now of human love; the Divine love, which is the parent of ours, is to ours as the ocean is to the rivulet, and as the sun

is to the glow-worm. Human love still undertakes tasks that are beyond its strength, and dies in hopeless endeavours. How many lives are there who have not been able, through years of ill-treatment, to uproot the love of their youth, and who still wait and pray for a change in the husband who has long ago forfeited all title even to respect. And I think there are some men of the same nature. There is a love that descends upon those lower than itself, as when the mother loves the unworthy son or daughter, and there is the love that bends, entranced before a goodness and a beauty far surpassing itself. This was the love that kindled in the soul of Mary, and the highest proof that we have it is that we do not waste our time in visions and rapture, but imitate the love of Christ in doing His work. "Inasmuch as ye did it," &c. III. THE IMPERFECTION OF MARY'S FAITH. She desired and dwelt too much on the outward Christ. Therefore she must not touch Him. The most difficult thing is to pass away from the outward things of religion into the region where faith grasps its objects, and sees its truths, and feels their reality. Does eternity open to you when you sing, or pray, or meditate? When you gather round the Lord's table, does it proclaim the unseen fact of Christ's sacrificial love? IV. OUR LORD'S MESSAGE SENT BY MARY (ver. 17). 1. This was a message of forgiveness. There are two things difficult about forgiveness—the power to forgive and the manner in which it is done. There are some natures that cannot forgive, even when they profess to do it, but when we can turn our resentment into pity and mercy we have learned the lesson which Christ taught us from the cross. 2. The message was one of continued, unbroken affection. Go and tell My brethren—not My poor weak followers and disciples, not even My friends. He was not ashamed of them, notwithstanding all their spiritual poverty and their want of sympathy with Him. What a lesson it reads to us! (*C. Short, M.A.*)

Mary at the empty tomb:—How does the risen Saviour reveal Himself? I. To WHAT LONGING? 1. Even then the seeing the risen One was not a thing of physical sight. It was dependent on the condition of the inner life. Not to the world, who did not want to be convinced, but to those who were longing to be fully convinced that He was the Saviour. 2. Mary, foremost among these, could not tear herself away from the grave. She had passed through the scene at Calvary in mute amazement; now she realized that her heart had lost its last stay, and the whole world seemed like an empty tomb. What would become of her now His Divine life was no longer there for her poor life to cling to, as ivy to oak, and train itself heavenwards. 3. Is not this a page in our history? The Saviour once took you by the hand and your life began to twine itself around His. Then this childlike confidence was lost, but the longing remains. This is the deepest sorrow—to know what can help and to have lost it—to seek the Lord among the evidences of His life, and have only an empty grave to go to. When we have to stand before our own life as before an empty tomb, which reminds us only of what we have lost, and in which we cannot find our childhood's Saviour there is no comfort for us. A risen and living Saviour is what we want. It would not have helped Mary had she found the buried One. If our longing souls rest in the fact that He *has* lived, what can He be to us? He is not here; He is risen, is the Divine message to us. II. IN WHAT EXPERIENCE? While Mary is still hopeless He is beside her. Though invisible and unknown He is near all who seek Him. Why not disclose Himself then? "Woman, Mine hour is not yet come." The experience God gives depends for its value on our susceptibility, and this comes to maturity only by persistent seeking. She turns again to seek Him when Jesus says, "Mary!" It was through her name that the Lord revealed Himself. A name may awaken emotion, as when you hear the voice of one long absent. She knew her Lord in that He knew her. Her name is written in His heart for ever. It is the heart that recognizes the living Saviour. III. WITH WHAT DIRECTIONS. The complaint of the heart is not of the reality of precious moments, but that they are only moments. Mary had no advantage in this over us. The moment she recognized Him He says, "Touch Me not." Stern but needful words. Mary needed to be taught that the fellowship of the future would be very different from that of the past. Few had enjoyed His intimacy, henceforth all might and in a higher form. Their dependence on Him as a man must be changed into a holier relation—"brethren." All this Mary had to learn amid her joy, that her joy might not be taken from her when the Lord should ascend. And as this joy would naturally seek to retain the beloved object she is bid serve Christ by going to His brethren and bearing witness to others. Moments such as this are short and fleeting; must be; should be. It is not good to live on mountain peaks. Mary now knew that what

is needed for the service of Christ is power from on high. (*Dr. Beyschlag.*) *The interview between Jesus and Mary* :—We see—I. THAT THOSE WHO LOVE CHRIST MOST DILIGENTLY AND PERSEVERINGLY ARE THOSE WHO RECEIVE MOST PRIVILEGES FROM CHRIST'S HAND. 1. Mary would not leave the sepulchre when Peter and John went away to their own home. Love to her Master made her honour the last place where His precious body had been seen by mortal eyes. And she reaped a rich reward. She saw the angels whom Peter and John had never observed; had soothing words addressed to her; and was the first to see our Lord, and to hear His voice. 2. As it was in the morning of the first Easter Day, so will it be as long as the Church stands. All believers have not the same degree of faith, or hope, or knowledge, or courage, or wisdom; and it is vain to expect it. But it is certain that those who love Christ most will always enjoy most communion with Him. To know Christ is good; but to "know that we know Him" is far better (1 John ii. 3). II. THAT THE FEARS AND SORROWS OF BELIEVERS ARE OFTEN QUITE NEEDLESS. 1. "Mary stood at the sepulchre weeping." She wept when the angels spoke to her, and when our Lord spoke to her. And the burden of her complaint was always the same—"They have taken away my Lord." Yet all this time her risen Master was close to her. Like Hagar in the wilderness, she had a well of water by her side, but she had not eyes to see it. 2. How often we are anxious when there is no just cause for anxiety! How often we mourn over the absence of things which in reality are within our grasp! Let us pray for more faith and patience, and allow more time for the full development of God's purposes. Jacob said "All these things are against me"; yet he lived to thank God for all that had happened. If Mary had found the seal of the tomb unbroken she might well have wept. The very absence of the body which made her weep was a cause of joy for herself and all mankind. III. WHAT LOW AND EARTHLY THOUGHTS OF CHRIST MAY CREEP INTO THE MIND OF A TRUE BELIEVER. 1. The first surprise, and the reaction from great sorrow to great joy, was more than the mind of Mary could bear. It is highly probable that she threw herself at our Lord's feet, and made greater demonstrations of feeling than were seemly or becoming; too much like one who thought all must be right if she had her Lord's bodily presence, and all must be wrong in His bodily absence; like one who forgot that her Master was God as well as Man. And hence she called forth our Lord's gentle rebuke, "I am not yet ascending to My Father for forty days: your present duty is not to linger at My feet, but to go and tell My brethren that I have risen. Think of the feelings of others as well as of your own." 2. The fault of this holy woman was one into which Christians have always been too ready to fall. In every age there has been a tendency to make too much of Christ's bodily presence, and to forget that He is "God over all, blessed for ever" as well as Man (Rom. ix. 5). The pertinacity with which Romanists cling to the doctrine of Christ's real corporal presence is only another exhibition of Mary's feeling. Let us be content to have Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, and when two or three are met in His name. What we really need is not His literal flesh, but His Spirit (John vi. 63; 2 Cor. v. 16). IV. HOW KINDLY AND GRACIOUSLY OUR LORD SPEAKS OF HIS DISCIPLES. 1. He bids Mary Magdalene carry a message to them, as "His brethren." All was forgiven and forgotten (Psa. ciii. 13, 14). 2. As He dealt with His erring disciples, so will He deal with all who believe and love Him, until He comes again. When we wander out of the way He will bring us back (chap. vi. 37; Psa. ciii. 10). (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Mary at the sepulchre* :—1. We little realize how much light goes out of the world with some lives. "There was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour," write Matthew and Mark in their record of the Crucifixion. This symbolized a great fact. We know how the vanishing of one life may be to us like the setting of the sun: many of us have passed through such an experience. After the Evangelists have recorded the burial, they pause and halt in the narrative. The record only moves again when the light begins to return. "As it began to dawn towards the first day" are the words with which Mark starts anew; so, too, in different phrase, the other Evangelists emphasize this new starting-point. 2. Again, observe the revealing power of a great trial. It takes great or trying events to reveal all the strength and beauty which otherwise lie dormant in some characters. The breeze of summer brings music out of the Æolian harp, but only the storms of winter can awake the mighty deep into harmonious symphony and make the trees of the wood clap their hands in grand accompaniment. So it required great tests to reveal the devotion of these grand heroic women toward their Lord. 3. This expression of devotion was very human, and supremely womanly. How significant—how full of strange emotion—the first visit to the grave where our dearest lie! 4. This was a very

beautiful and expressive protest against mortality. Beneath all this anointing was the conviction that man was too noble to pass away into decay. In the proposed anointing of the Christ by the women, we find the mightiest protest against the corruption of the grave; but God would yet accomplish the same end in His own way. John, however, centres his narrative in one person: Mary's love was the most intense and the most persistent. "But Mary stood" (or Revised Version, "was standing")—stationed herself—words expressive of resoluteness. Up to this point there was a measure of companionship in sorrowful watching among the mourners, —now we reach the point of isolation. Others had accepted the theory that Jesus had been taken away, and had left with sorrow, but Mary was more persistent, since to her more had been forgiven. The sorrow of this little community now became Mary's, as if it were exclusively her own. "As she wept." According to the three Synoptic Gospels, the other women were afraid, or "affrighted." Mary wept. There is nothing new in weeping at the grave. It is the old place of weeping. More tears have been shed there than anywhere else. But the circumstances are exceptional in this case. Others have wept because the grave is tenanted; Mary wept because it was empty, and because the ministry of love in anointing the dead body seemed no longer possible. At length, by steady gazing, she found that the grave was not so empty as it had appeared. There was no dead body in it, but there were two of God's angels. Mary saw them. Peter and John did not. They were in two great a hurry. Men do not see angels in such a mood—they only see "linen clothes," and the like. "They say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?" Tears are a profound mystery to angels. But it was a misuse of the mysterious capacity to weep that perplexed them now. Weeping in this case they knew was out of place. "Why weepest thou?" are words of challenge. "Because they have taken away my Lord," was Mary's reply. These words reveal, among other things, the soul's power of appropriation—"*My* Lord." This is the greatest paradox of being, that finite man or woman can claim the Infinite God as his or her possession. "Thou art *my* God," said the Psalmist. But here, too, we have weeping inadequately explained. Mary's data are wrong. "They have taken away my Lord." How much more the angels knew about it than Mary! How inadequate our explanation of our grief when we are challenged! There is an impatience in the answer. She has silenced the angels with a false theory, and hastily withdraws, or "turns round," and waits not for the reply. It is a terrible thing when sorrow becomes reflective, and turns in upon itself. But as Mary turns there is another Presence near. Now it is asked by One who has Himself wept by the grave side. There is a tear in this tone of inquiry. Remember in passing, as a significant fact, that these are the first recorded words of Christ after the Resurrection—"Woman, why weepest thou?" &c. What a reflection for sorrowing ones! There is here also the additional question which completes the first. "Why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" Sorrow is stupefying. There was a danger for Mary to forget her search in the steady gaze, becoming more vacant as it was continued. The question of the angels threw her in upon her sorrow; the further question of Christ awakened within her the recollection of her quest. It aroused the spirit of search and of expectation anew in Mary. It is a sad thing when, in our sorrow, we forget the aim of life, and lose the inspiration of hope. This takes all the buoyancy out of life. Our Lord would ever save us against this. Observe Mary's answer as contrasted with her answer to the angels. To the angels she replied, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." This is sorrow in its reflective, despairing form. On the contrary, her answer to Jesus is—"Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." This is sorrow in its resolute and hopeful aspect. "I will take Him away." She could not have carried Him; yet she saw no difficulty. There is a frenzy of love which is well-nigh omnipotent. There is yet hope of Mary. It is a grand thing when sorrow has not taken all the courage out of us. The Christ can hide Himself no longer from her. He reveals Himself now through speech. Of all things about us, the voice is that which, amid the processes of change, retains its identity most. "Mary." How much Jesus compresses of tenderness and revelation into that one word! Her reply is equally brief—"Rabboni." Here we have a dialogue in two words. When feeling is intense, utterance becomes laconic. "Rabboni" is the word in which Mary's soul expresses alike its love and its wonder. We find here a passionate concentration of feeling. The spirit of loving discipleship is crystallized and perpetuated in that one word. There are times when the whole soul flashes forth and reveals its personality in an exclamation. The first impulse of the soul

in the presence of the risen Christ is to worship. It is a moment of infinite surprise. It is the reaction from blank despair to boundless ecstasy. The gospel of the open grave is the story of the Resurrection and the prediction of the Ascension combined. "I ascend!" She had stooped and looked into the grave for the Christ; henceforth she will look up and wait for her Lord from heaven. Thus is the story grandly progressive, and the past and present are made predictive of the yet more glorious future. (*David Davies.*) *Love in tears; or, Mary at the sepulchre:*—I. MARY'S MOURNING, or love's grief expressed (ver. 11). 1. Standing beside the vacant tomb—a hopeful circumstance. How much worse for her had it been tenanted! 2. Lamenting in mistaken sorrow. Most sorrow perhaps of this sort. Christians grieve when they ought to rejoice, *e.g.*, at the graves of those who are for ever with the Lord. Continuing dejected without. Had Mary gone in she would have found it a habitation of angels. "No more a charnel house to fence, the relics of lost innocence," &c. (Keble). II. MARY'S VISION, or love's attention arrested (vers. 12–14). 1. The advanced guards of the King. (1) Their nature—angels. (2) Their number—two, to correspond with the two robbers. (3) Their appearance—in white, or shining garments (Dan. x. 6; Rev. x. 1). (4) Their situation—at the head and feet, guarding the place from profanation. (5) Their question—to arrest attention and convey sympathy. 2. The person of the Risen Lord. (1) Near her, as always to His people (Matt. xviii. 20), especially in times of sadness (Luke xxiv. 15). (2) Speaking to her. Christ still notes the tears of His people (Luke xxiv. 17; Heb. iv. 15). (3) Yet unrecognized by her, as He often is by His sorrowing disciples (Luke xxiv. 16). III. MARY'S MISTAKE, or love's blindness discovered (ver. 15). 1. Great. Already she had committed several blunders—seeking the living among the dead, sorrowing when she ought to have rejoiced, &c., but none so great as mistaking Christ for Joseph's gardener. 2. Natural. The likeliest person at that hour was the gardener, and as to other disciples He may have had "another form." 3. Persistent. 4. Beautiful—love knows no impossibilities; and no passion is so omnipotent as that of a renewed heart for Christ. "At this hour millions would die for him" (Napoleon). IV. MARY'S AWAKENING, or love's darkness dispelled (ver. 16). 1. The familiar voice. What a wealth of pitying love would be infused into the "Mary" (*cf.* chap. xxi. 15; Luke xxii. 48; Acts ix. 4, 10). 2. The spell broken. No voice but One could say "Mary" like that. 3. The heart relieved—"Rabboni." V. MARY'S PROHIBITION, or love's ardour restrained (ver. 17). 1. The restriction—"Touch Me not." 2. The reason—"I am not yet ascended." 3. The consolation. The restriction would only be temporary. VI. MARY'S COMMISSION, or love's service claimed (ver. 17). 1. To whom sent—Christ's brethren. (1) The condescension in it—God's Son calls them brethren. (2) The honour in it. (3) The love in it—they had deserted Him. 2. With what charged—a message concerning—(1) Himself. (2) His ascension. (3) The Father. VII. MARY'S OBEDIENCE, or loves willingness expressed (ver. 18). 1. With cheerful resignation. 2. With prompt execution. 3. With faithful repetition. Learn—1. "Blessed are they that mourn," &c. 2. The eyes of Christ's people are sometimes holden (Luke xxiv. 16). 3. "My sheep hear My voice," &c. 4. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father," &c. 5. The ascended Christ is not ashamed to call His people brethren (Heb. ii. 11). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Three aspects of piety:*—I. Piety in SADNESS. Notice here—1. The intensity of her affection. 2. The greatness of her courage. Few of the bravest men care to walk through a churchyard after dark; and rough soldiers were guarding Joseph's tomb. 3. The imperfection of her faith (ver. 15). We often only see a gardener in the sublimest messenger of God. II. PIETY IN RAPTURE (ver. 16). Note—1. The rapidity of our mental changes. Mary passed as in a moment from anguish to ecstasy. 2. The power of Christ's voice. Neither Gethsemane, the Cross, or the grave had changed it. Thus by a word Christ can lift the soul into the highest bliss. III. PIETY IN ACTION. Note—1. Christ's merciful identification with His disciples. "My Father and your Father." 2. The heavenward direction which their sympathies should take. Look upward—"I ascend," "Seek those things which are above." 3. The right direction of religious feeling. Action at once expresses and realizes emotion. Go and work. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Vers. 12, 13. **Two angels . . . say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?**—*The weeping one to weeping womanhood:*—1. Christians are often sorrowful when, if they had clearer knowledge and stronger faith, they would rejoice. "Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping." She wept because she thought He was dead. But the absence of the body—an additional grief—was a proof that there was no cause for

grief. That which then caused weeping, afterwards caused rejoicing. And thus we often weep at that which would give us joy did we rightly know or fully trust. 2. Angels sympathise with Christians in their sorrow. 3. The thought of losing Jesus is enough to make His friends weep. "She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." It is grief to Christians when, in any sense, their Lord is taken away. 4. Jesus is often very close to His disciples when they do not perceive Him. "She turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus." We think only of the servant when we should acknowledge the Master. We rest in the means of grace when we should rise to the Giver of grace. We deem Him absent when, in the blessing He gives, through the humblest of instruments, we should adore Himself. 5. Christ's first resurrection word was one of consoling sympathy: not of power, victory, or vengeance. He is tender, loving still: "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." His first word was not to an official but a private person; not to the strong but to the weak; not to an apostle but to Mary. He spake to womanhood through her. He knew how often woman weeps unseen—what a martyrdom of grief she often undergoes by sensibilities wounded, yearnings unsatisfied, love unrequited, closest ties torn asunder. 6. True love may be combined with deficient knowledge. "Sir, if Thou have borne Him hence, tell me where Thou hast laid Him and I will take Him away." Because He was uppermost in her feelings all the world besides must think of "Him" too. So let the thought of Jesus be in our hearts. Will He be pleased? What would He have me to do? In this enterprise, affection sees no difficulties. Love laughs at the impossible. Jesus accepts true love in spite of its errors. There may be theology, correct and complete in every detail, but without love; and there may be love, true and deep, allied with much ignorance. Should not we also be lenient with intellectual mistakes when associated with reverent love? Jesus will excuse mistaken modes of worship and of thought; but no orthodoxy or churchmanship, however sound, will win recognition from Him without love. 7. Christ knows His disciples individually. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary." 8. Every true disciple recognizes the Saviour's voice. "She saith unto Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master." Do we thus confess Him to be "Master?" saying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*)

Eyes too full of tears:—No one cries when children, long absent from their parents, go home. Vacation morning is a jubilee. But death is the Christian's vacation morning. School is out. It is time to go home. It is surprising that one should wish life here, who may have life in heaven. And when friends have gone out from us joyously, I think we should go with them to the grave, not singing mournful psalms, but scattering flowers. Christians are wont to walk in black, and sprinkle the ground with tears, at the very time when they should walk in white, and illumine the way by smiles and radiant hope. The disciples found angels at the grave of Him they loved; and we should always find them too, but that our eyes are too full of tears for seeing. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Mary: Needless trouble:—This weeping woman is a typical rather than a unique character, specially of those who are always missing the point in Christian narrative and doctrine. They are faithful, kind, intelligent, but they miss the point. They go long journeys in order to get wisdom, but they always leave the principal thing behind them; they put away the key so carefully that they never know where to find it again. Mary rushed into the details of a controversy instead of standing a little way from it and catching its outlines and its general bearings. There is very much practical atheism in this devoted woman's talk. Though she is talking to angels, yet she has left God out of her sobbing and tearful speech. She speaks as if the whole question lay between certain other people and herself; thus, "They have taken" and "I know not." She is lost where millions of other people have been lost—in the region of second causes—bringing themselves to disappointment and tears. Many of us ought to take our stand beside Mary. Those, *e.g.*—I. WHO ARE UNABLE TO SEE THE DIVINE HAND FAR ABOVE ALL HUMAN MEDDLING AND STRIFE. To many of us human history is but a disorderly and haphazard movement. Where is the religious eye that sees God above it all? Mary said that somebody had done mischief; the idea never occurring to her that her Lord might have taken Himself away. And so we are victimised by our senses; our eyes and ears deceive us; and our hearts have lost the power of completely trusting God; and so life has become an enigma without an answer, and a fight in which the strong man wins all, and that all is less than nothing and vanity. II. WHO IN ALL AGES HAVE GIVEN THEMSELVES UP TO UNNECESSARY GRIEF. "Why weepest thou?" Mary had her answer

ready, but it was an answer founded upon a mistake. So our explanation of our grief may be but a fool's answer or a blind man's guess. Are not God's angels often asking this? They see the things that are hidden from us. We see the underside of the pattern which God is weaving, they see the upper side in all the charm of its celestial colour and all the beauty of its infinite perfection. No doubt God's providence is full of mystery, a road of deep declivities and sharp curves, with many a jungle and many a wild beasts' den; yet there is a foot-track through it all onward to the summer landscape and the harvest plain. Why weepest thou? Surely not over the child who has gone to the care of the angels and the sweet rest of the pure skies. Surely not over the disappointment whose sharpness has taught thee thy best prayers and mellowed thy voice to the tenderest music. Why weepest thou? If for sin, weep on; if for God, your tears are not vain only, but unnatural and impious. When Mary knew but part of the case, she wept over it; when she knew it all, her joy became almost a pain by its very keenness. So shall it be with ourselves in the revelations which are to come. III. WHO CAN ONLY RECOGNIZE CHRIST UNDER CERTAIN FORMS AND IN CERTAIN PLACES. If Mary had seen the dead Christ in the grave, probably she would have felt a sad satisfaction. But the idea of death having been turned to life never occurred to her. Christ was infinitely larger in spiritual influence than Mary had imagined, and He is infinitely larger and grander than any Church has conceived Him to be. There are people who would rather have a dead Christ in their own sect and ritual than a living Saviour outside of their own approved boundaries. There are others who care more for their own idealized pictures of Christ than for the living Man Himself. I find Christ in all Churches where the Christly spirit is. What man has seen all the truth of God? Into what sectarian hut has God crowded all the riches of heaven? You may find Christ everywhere if you seek Him with a true heart. IV. WHO ARE ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT CHRIST AS IF HE WERE ABSENT: it is a historical Christ they refer to—a Christ that once was, but no longer is. Now, at the very moment of Mary's complaint, the Lord was looking at her! She thought He was the gardener! How clearly this shows that though we may think we know Christ, yet we know Him only in one aspect, and if we happen to see Him in any other, we actually know nothing about Him! We only know Christ in one place, in one ritual, in one theology, in one Church. Take Him out of these, and He becomes a common man, unknown, and suspected of stealing Christ, stealing Himself! Some persons do not know Christ except from the lips of their favourite preachers. Others do not think they have kept Sunday properly unless they have attended a particular place of worship. I would see Him and hear Him everywhere—in all history, in all communions, in commerce, in art, in all the endeavours and enterprises of civilization. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Weeping at the wrong time*:—Our Lord would tell us by this question that ofttimes we weep when we have cause to rejoice. She should have said, "'This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.' This is a day when a decree is passed in heaven in your favour, that the lost seed of Adam is redeemed; and thou also art in the decree of redemption among the rest; therefore thou shouldst not weep." (*Samuel Rutherford.*) *Heavenly attire*:—These witnesses were clad in white. The angels, they have not our common country clothes, but they are like heaven in their apparel, to teach all those who are heirs of heaven to be clad like their country. If we think to be heirs of God in Christ, let us not be like the rest of the corrupt world. (*Ibid.*) *The sorrow of development*:—May we not take this as a parable of—I. THE WAY IN WHICH WE MISAPPREHEND THE ACTUAL FACTS OF OUR EXPERIENCE. 1. God comes to us, but not in the form that we expect, and therefore we do not recognize Him. It is a misfortune that befals us, not a providence; a cruel mocker who has taken away the body, not a Divine hand. Mary thought only of the adversaries of God, frustrating His purposes. Peter afterwards said they did "whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." 2. How often it is the Christ, when we think it is only the gardener! A preacher uttering vague thoughts in a blundering way may be Christ speaking to human souls. The chancest meeting in the street may be Christ diverting the entire course of our lives. Should we not learn to see Christ in every form? And is not half the sorrow of our life because we do not see Him where He really is—in providences, in rough forms of character, in homely forms of work, in diversified forms of theological thought, Church life, goodness? In a thousand things it is only the gardener, because our eyes are blinded by prejudice or sorrow. II. THE WAY IN WHICH WE MISAPPREHEND THE PROCESSES THAT GOD IS CONDUCTING WITH US. We weep in bitterness over a lost

blessing when it is simply its transformation into a higher one. "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." "It is expedient for you that I go away," &c. How we weep over the grave of buried things—lost beliefs, habits, forms of service, as if truth, or usefulness, or goodness, or even the Christ, were slain, when they are simply being transformed. It is as if the husbandman were to weep over his decomposing seed corn, the child over his outgrown clothes, the lad over his disused school-books. God is teaching us that "We rise on steppiug-stones of our dead selves to nobler things." When the plant becomes pot-bound the gardener breaks the pot as the first essential condition of its development. Before Christ can be to the disciples the Christ of resurrection life and glory, He must be crucified and eutombed. And the ignorant affection of His disciples weeps. We cling even to the dead forms of things because they have been precious, but God's laws of development demand that we should let the dead bury their dead, and follow Him. 1. Our theological beliefs advance to more perfect truth by the falling away of old forms and the development of new ones. From the Day of Pentecost we have ever been advancing. In educating your children you begin with a picture alphabet and end in abstract reasoning. Or you begin with simple commands, and then appeal to intelligence. But when the youth becomes the man, the law of obedience is superseded. It has so educated his mind and heart that he has become a law unto himself. And you do not think that moral safeguards are relaxed when the youth obeys from reason and the man becomes a law to himself. So God educates us. The evidences which attested Him to the older Church were miracles; then came the prophets, when miracles ceased, and the intelligent reason was appealed to; then the spiritual economy of Christ, when men believed in Christ, not because of His miracles or intellectual arguments, but because He spake directly to their souls—"told them all that ever they did," met their sense of spiritual need. (1) Proofs of the being of a God are changing. Those from causation, design, miracle, special providence, are, of course, as absolutely true as ever; but a keen dialectic discovers flaws in the reasoning, incompleteness in the demonstration. We have come to feel that the most conclusive of all proofs is that we are spiritual men. Our spirits answer to His spiritual nature as the wards of a lock to its key. We do not prove God by argument so much as we see and feel Him. And is not this proof far more conclusive? And yet how many think material proof more satisfactory! Let one of them fail, and they feel—"They have taken away my God, and I know not where they have put Him." But may not this very discomfiture be the means of driving our belief in God to the higher ground? Now we believe, not because of the proof of science, but because we have seen Him ourselves. The most ignorant peasant whose soul is filled with the life and light of God has a much surer ground than all the evidences of Paley. (2) Our conceptions of the character and feelings of God change and develop with our spiritual education. It is so in the Bible. In the earlier books the predominant conception is that of sternness. He is holy, majestic, distant. How this is softened in the time of David and the prophets! When we come to the New Testament—to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—the revolution of feeling is almost startling. And the development has never been arrested. Every generation has attained to a higher conception of God than its predecessor. To us God is more of a gracious, tender Father than He was fifty years ago. Old men see this with apprehension; they cling to their old Calvinism, and tell you that the sense of righteousness has relaxed with the sternness of law. Nay, God's hold upon our affections is stronger than upon our fears. The Divine Father is more than the Divine Magistrate? (3) Are not our conceptions of Christ Himself ever rising in truth and spirituality? Less and less we "know Him after the flesh," more and more we know Him after the Spirit. Take for example—(*a*) His Incarnation. Less and less it is an arbitrary conjunction of two different natures; more and more it is a coming together of profound and wonderful affinities. Man bears God's image, therefore God takes upon Him man's nature. When we are asked about the Incarnation we do not so eagerly have recourse to proof texts. As with the being of a God, so with the Incarnation of the Christ, the proof may be argued on purely intellectual grounds, but we have come to think that the supreme proof is the religious and spiritual demonstration. The Incarnation exactly and fully meets all the necessities of my spiritual nature. So I believe in gravitation and electricity, not because I can demonstrate them, but because, assuming them by hypothesis, they perfectly account for all the phenomena. (*b*) So we give more emphasis than our fathers did to the human element of our Lord's nature. Where they debated about His Divinity and devoutly wor-

shipped Him as God, we think of His humanity and rapturously love Him as man. It is not that we believe in the Divinity the less, but we see how He embodies His Divinity in humanity, so that He can live, and suffer, and sympathize, and die. He is Divine because He is so grandly, helpfully human. (*c*) Much more marked have been the changes through which the doctrine of atonement has passed. There was the strange idea held by the early Church, that the death of Christ was a ransom price paid to the devil; then there was the theory that it was the necessity of a struggle between justice and mercy; then there was the forensic theory; then there was the commercial theory; then there was the predestinarian theory. We have attained larger, freer, more spiritual conceptions of it, as a grand moral process, embodying great principles, and satisfying eternal righteousness and love. And every generation has felt, in the giving way of its special theory of the Atonement, as if the atonement itself must be surrendered. It was only the chrysalis that was falling away, that the Atonement itself might be the more grandly conceived. 2. Men's theories about the Bible undergo development. We get nobler conceptions of its inspiration and more spiritual conceptions of its meaning. It is the very lowest theory that every letter of it is Divinely dictated. It is surely higher to conceive of the entire moral nature of the sacred writer as engaged in receiving and recording the Divine revelation. And yet when you assail the mechanical theory, which the facts utterly discredit, in order to assert the spiritual theory, men cry out that you are bereaving them of the very ark of God. They cling to the letter, which killeth, and are afraid of the Spirit, which really makes both the writer and the book a living power. 3. Similar things may be said concerning conceptions of the Church. Every development of Church life and liberty and spirituality has been ennobled by the throwing off of some old restrictive ecclesiasticism. And the emancipating process has caused alarm. How the Temple Jews would despise the worship of the Upper Room; and yet there the promise of the Father was realized. In manifold forms the Christian Church has been, and is, as intolerant as Old Judaism itself. And when men began to ask whether organized Church societies, however legitimate and expedient in themselves, were really identical with the Saviour's conception of His Church, and claimed that the New Testament Church included all men everywhere who truly loved Him, the timid got alarmed, and thought that the Church itself was being denied. At every step the cry of alarm, and sacrilege, and infidelity is raised, and that which is really emancipation, and advance to higher spirituality and greater moral power, is regarded as the destruction of sacred and precious things. So when barriers round the table of the Lord are broken down; so when the ecclesiastical conditions of Church membership are made easier. 4. So, again, good men are terrified when the personal religious life of a man is emancipated from mere precept and tradition, and thrown upon living principle and intuitive love, when bonds of asceticism are broken, and the Divine use and good of all things is freely enjoyed. How many pious people of the past generation deemed religion itself imperilled when Methodist bonnets and Quaker coats were laid aside! How much faith has rested in the cowl of the monk or the hood of the nun, and how weak the faith that so rests! 5. The same principle would apply to the course and process of God's providential dealing with our life. He smites away the lower good in which we have rested that He may put us in possession of the higher good which otherwise we should not seek. Friends, health, property—these were the husks and props of our strength. They fall away, and we cry out in helpless desolateness; the good of our life has failed, its pleasant things are laid waste. "What good shall my life do me?" Nay, but these simply hindered and concealed our real life; they are but as the fleshly Christ; they perish, and we are thrown upon more spiritual things; we develop into a nobler life. 6. The crowning illustration is the life that comes through death. How we weep over our dead, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died"! True, but neither would he have been raised from the dead. Our dead friends are more to us than when they lived; not more to the sense, but more to the soul. (*H. Allon, D.D.*) *The empty tomb*:—1. On Easter Day the tears of Mary Magdalene are at first sight inappropriate. They seem to check the flow of joy which is the privilege of the festival. They recall the sadness of the Passion, of the Burial. And yet they do not appear here without good reason. It is impossible to surrender ourselves unreservedly to one mood of feeling. No earthly sorrow is unrelieved by some ray of brightness, no joy is without the shadow of some grief. It might seem that we require the foil if we are to do justice to the feeling of the moment; just as a landscape which is relieved by the alternate play of light and shadow is more

welcome than that which lies under the uniformly splendid but oppressive glare of a southern sun. 2. Tears, they say, are wont to be unreasonable, but Mary Magdalene knew the reason of hers. They evidence—I. MARY'S LOVE. 1. She arrived at the sepulchre alone and first of all. As we learn from the other Gospels, she was one of a company of women; but just as later on "John did outrun Peter," so there is reason to think it had been with Mary Magdalene. Her more ardent love was impatient of the measured pace of others. Mary, then, must not be merged in the company. Her relation to the Resurrection is all her own. "She loved much." And in this there is reason. For what is rightly-regulated love but moral power of the highest order? As St. Paul puts it, "The love of Christ constraineth us." Love is the very muscle and fibre of moral force. 2. All this may seem commonplace; but it requires to be reasserted. The moral power of love for goodness, for humankind, for right as against wrong, for truth as against error, is sometimes discredited by being labelled with a new name. "Beware," men say, "of being led by emotion. Emotion is for women, the unthinking, the young; it deserves no recognition in the life of a man, since he should be swayed only by reason." Here observe, first of all, an unwarrantable assumption, namely, that emotion is another name for love. Emotion may be vulgar passion and violent hate; ay, though they pose in the garb of the most unimpassioned philosophy. And emotion is by no means always power. It may be as unfruitful as any speculation. But love, the concentration of purified desire upon an infinitely noble object, moves and constrains all the resources and faculties of man. And, therefore, love, so far from being the monopoly of women or children, is the very grace of manliness; it kindles reason itself into activity; it gives nerve and impulse to will. Woe to the man who is without love; woe to him, above all, if he glories in his moral poverty! He will never achieve anything solid or great. It is love—now as in the days of Mary Magdalene—which conquers difficulty and outlives disappointment. II. MARY'S DISAPPOINTMENT. 1. Mere curiosity would have been tranquil where Mary is in agony. There is no reason for thinking that she believed more than the apostles. At that time they expected to find Jesus in His grave; and so did she. The past was tragic, irretrievable failure; so she thought. But in His dear body there was a centre-point for love. Nothing else was left. This she would honour. She did not care to look forward. For the moment this was enough; it was her all. And then she came, early in the morning, and found Him gone. It was dreadful. She could bear the Crucifixion better than this. For the moment it was the ruin of the little that was left to love. 2. If you say that all this is unreasonable, you know little of true affection. Certainly love seeks its object; but if its object be out of reach, then it seeks anything which suggests that object. A picture, handwriting, a bit of old furniture—almost anything—is enough for love. The objects upon which it fixes are, to other states of feeling, matters of indifference; but to love they are everything. So it was with Mary. We can imagine what comment her tears would have provoked from some well-to-do Scribe or Pharisee. Why should a Jewish girl thus care to haunt the precincts of the dead in the early morning? Why should she trouble herself if the grave had been rifled? Surely there were objects nearer home with greater claims upon her sympathies! Let her rid herself of this sentimentalism! But what would it have mattered, did she know it, to Mary Magdalene? Love is supremely indifferent to criticism. It has eyes and ears for one object only. Mary was at that very time gazing on an angelic form, but this was as nothing. Do not try to measure the movements of a soul on fire by the stilted rules of your artificial society, which can create and understand anything better than an unselfish love. Let her cry on bitterly, as she stands there; for she needs you not. Have the grace to let her cry awhile, and then consider if her tears and her love have not that in them from which you may learn something. III. MARY'S PERSEVERING RESOLUTION. She does not mean to sit down and wring her hands, and cease to inquire and to hope. No; He must be somewhere; perhaps she has a dim hope that He has not been taken away by human hands after all. Anyhow she will cross-question any one that she meets, whether it be an angel or a gardener, till she knows the truth. The disappointment does not overmaster her love. It was said of English soldiers by a foreign commander, when recalling his own experience, that they did not know when they were beaten. And so Christian hope refuses to believe that it is ever beaten. It is to tempers of this kind that Jesus ever reveals Himself: it is the hopeful who in fact succeed. In Mary Magdalene that old promise was made good: "They that seek Me early shall find Me." He whom she had sought in the tomb was alive before her eyes; and her joy was

fulfilled. Conclusion: Mary, weeping before the empty tomb, reappears in each generation of Christians. She is the type of those who have a genuine love of religion, but who, from whatever cause and in various ways, are for a time, at any rate, disappointed. Take the case of a person who has for some years paid scant attention to religious matters. He may not have broken God's law in any very flagrant way; but he has lost sight of God. Still he remembers something of what he learned from his mother; something of his early prayers; something of his Bible. And as he knows that the years are passing quickly, and that he must die, he trusts himself to the guidance of those memories of the past. He sets out—it is a painful and a creditable effort—to visit the sepulchre of his early life as a Christian. There he trusts to find again the reality of religious faith; there he seeks the body of the Lord Jesus; but, like Mary, perchance, he finds the body of Jesus gone. He remembers how he used to think about sacred subjects; but somehow his old thoughts will not recur to him. He cannot recognize the accustomed haunts of his spirit; the old phrases of thirty years ago are no longer to him what they were. He opens his Bible; but, alas! it is interesting to him only as literature. He tries to pray; and prayer is to him only like poetry, an exercise which warms the soul; he approaches the Holy Communion, but here again he finds only a symbolical ceremony which recalls the dead past. Everywhere he sees traces of the old presence which haunt his memory—the napkin and the linen clothes; and he murmurs sadly that something has taken away the Lord. Is it not possible that he is repeating the very intelligible mistake of Mary Magdalene? Is he not forgetting the meaning of the lapse of time? She knew not that there are hours, in the life of souls, which may count for centuries, and that she had been living through such hours as these. She did not bethink herself that her Saviour might be preserved to her, not in the tomb where they laid Him, but under new conditions. Had Mary remained at the sepulchre, from the burial onwards, she must have witnessed the Resurrection. As it was, she had been absent. She has lost the thread of continuity. In time she found that her Lord was there, as before, but in the garden, not in the grave. Nor need it be otherwise with such a case as I am considering. Believe it, the old truth is what it was. But a generation has passed since you were a boy; and a generation counts for much in a busy age like this. What wonder if some of those associations of a boyish mind have been disturbed; if some misapprehensions have been corrected; if the relations between different fields of thought have been made clearer—during the interval? What wonder if some of this activity has resulted in what looks like dislocation or destruction, and caused perplexity? Depend on it, the body of Jesus is not lost. Do not despair because you find it no longer amid the old conditions, the grave-clothes, &c., of a bygone time. Distinguish between the Unchanging, Indestructible Object of the religious life of the soul of man, and the ever-shifting moods of human thought and feeling that circle round Him, as the ages pass. Be as patient and hopeful as Mary, and your share in Mary's tears will surely be followed by Mary's joy. You will recover for your Bible, prayers, communions, much more than their old meaning. You will have exchanged Jesus in the tomb for Jesus in the garden; the religious thoughts and resolves of a boy for the religious horizons and aspirations of a ripened manhood. (*Canon Liddon.*) *A lost Christ*:—Mary's grief indicated—I. LOVE. 1. We see this in her early visit, her lingering, and the words in which she expressed her sorrow. She had been tied to Christ by gratitude for a great service, and had been always ready to minister to His needs. All this had awakened a feeling of special possession. 2. We whom Christ has delivered from the thraldom of sin should, like her, cherish towards Him heartfelt devotion. The best company, even that of angels, would not compensate for the loss of Christ. II. FORGETFULNESS. She could hardly have missed hearing Him refer to His resurrection. But memory failed her, as it did the apostles. Our grief often originates from or is intensified by our forgetfulness of Christ's promises. There is not a condition for which we cannot find some consolation in God's Word. III. IMPULSIVENESS. Whom did she mean by "They"? Foes? Joseph? the disciples? Perhaps she had no definite ideas. Somebody had removed the body; but she never thought Christ Himself. So, too, our impulsiveness often lands us in wrong conclusions. (*F. J. Austin.*) *The lost Christ*:—There was a famous preacher in the last century whose sermons, though full of ingenious reasoning and brilliant rhetoric, were empty of Christ. One morning after service a poor old mother was seen to stand alone, outside, weeping still tears. On being asked her trouble, she said, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

Without Christ in the service of the sanctuary, music, eloquence, the most imposing ritual, is empty; a full church is an empty church; the most magnificent temple is only an empty tomb. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*)

Ver. 14. **And when she had thus said, she turned herself back.**—Why? Simply because she had now no care about glimpses of a mere heaven—felt no interest in the discourse of mere angels, but only longed to have her grief out uninterruptedly? Perhaps. But some of the earliest teachers of the Church thought that it was because at this point of the dialogue she saw a new expression rise on the faces of the two shining ones, as if suddenly looking at some august appearance dawning behind her. This explanation is more fascinating, and not less likely to be true; but we cannot know: we only know that she turned—perhaps turned mechanically, turned without interest or expectation. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 15. **Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?**—*The risen Christ and the Magdalene*:—I. HOW JESUS WAS HIDDEN FROM MARY. There are times when friends are unrecognized because of mental absorption or because of our belief that they are elsewhere, or because of a supposed moral impossibility that they should be there. 1. Mary was under the influence of unfavourable associations. (1) She had passed the interval doubtless with the disciples occupied with preparations for the completion of the embalmment. Her thoughts, therefore, were about the tomb in which the joy of her life seemed buried, and her companions would not exert any counteracting influence. The best answer to the calumny that they invented or dreamed the Resurrection is that they were all so unprepared for it. While the Lord was with them, disease and death fleeing at His presence, they could not believe that He would die. Now that He had died they forgot all His assurances that He would live again. It is not surprising, then, if Mary, drawn into the current of their unbelief and despair, should have her vision now dimmed. (2) In our own daily life, are we not continually drawn away into modes of thinking and feeling which operate to hide Christ from us? Modern teaching and example tend to weaken the realizing power of faith. Numbers tell us that our own wisdom and strength are sufficient to find the blessed life; that sin needs no cleansing in Christ's blood, and the heart no quickening by His love. Then there is the spirit of unconfessed doubt, more deadly than antagonism to trust in Christ, and indifference, which is more deadly still. All this helps to blind the spiritual vision. 2. Closely connected was Mary's false notion of Jesus. He was, despite His own promise, a dead Jesus to her. And so false thoughts of Him are largely the cause of unbelief and hatred on the one hand, and of doubt and hesitation on the other. Men are thinking of another Christ than He who came that we might have life—of the Christ as churches have often made Him—the Christ of creeds and systems, of the dead letter rather than of the living Spirit, of sect or school. And men's minds are so full of these representations that they do not know Him who is love. 3. Tears blinded Mary's eyes. So may sorrow, joy, excitement, dim ours. Our mistake may differ from hers. We may mistake the gardener for Christ. All do so who put priest, church, system, &c., in the place of Christ. II. JESUS CONVINCED AND SUBDUED MARY. He had but to turn His eye upon her, and address His gracious words to her; and then when her eyes were opened and her ears caught the sound of His voice there was no doubt or hesitation longer. 1. Here we see the marvellous personal attraction of Jesus. Again and again do we find friends and foes impressed by His aspect. In the synagogue at Nazareth; in the Temple before the accusers of the woman taken in adultery; in the garden when the soldiers fell to the ground. Is the power of His personal influence lost because He is no longer here as man with men? No; His dealings with Mary are a type of His dealings with us. 2. He manifests Himself everywhere to seeking souls. Why was Mary honoured to be the first? We might have thought His mother would have been selected, or John, or Peter. Christ blesses men not because of birth, or talent, or office, but according to the humility and earnestness with which they seek Him. 3. He revealed Himself in a personal call, and only as Mary heard and answered that call was her joy complete. And there are innumerable voices that come from Him to-day—voices of mercy or affliction; voices that waken to gratitude or melt to penitence; voices that startle in the ease of carnal security or that comfort in the hour of trouble; voices to break the stubborn heart or to revive the heart of the contrite one—and not one of them is without signification. (*J. Guinness Rogers, B.A.*) *The Lord's question to Mary*:—I. SOME OF THOSE TO WHOM THIS QUESTION MAY BE STILL ADDRESSED. 1. Those who

have not yet found rest for their souls in God. If God be in the heart there are many ways in which men may enjoy Him; and, if God be absent, there are as many by which they may seek to fill up the vacant place—power, fame, pleasure, knowledge, and affection. For a while they are deceived by the ardour of pursuit, or the first glow of possession. But there comes the death of their hope, their grief before its grave. And so, if their nature be of the common superficial kind, they begin the chase after new shadows. Or, if the nature be deeper, they turn in upon themselves to lament the vanity of human endeavour. And yet the Christ is near the place where they are groping among the ashes of buried hopes, which come to them to make them feel after and find Him. 2. Those who have had a deep sense of the soul's value, and of Christ as a Friend who could meet its need. But they seem to have lost Him. It may come in different ways; through a shaking of our faith in the Divine and eternal as real, or through a loss of our own personal hold of them, or, as often happens, through an intermingling of both. But, however it comes, those who feel it are of all men most miserable. The cause of the gospel was never so despaired of as in the hour of its birth, and this question is for the encouragement of those who are seeking Him whom they seem to have lost. 3. Some of those who know that they have not only a dead but a risen Lord. A little view of His greatness made one of His disciples say, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man," and the sight of it, with the spiritual eye, filled the apostle with an eager longing—"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." II. THE ANSWER, WHICH IS CONTAINED IN THE FORM OF THE QUESTION. It is composed of two parts; the first directs us inward to our own heart, with its want and sorrow, the other, outward to what is to meet and relieve it. Let us look at them, 1. It may be that speculative unbelief is troubling your soul. Observe, then, how in creation and man, there is an agreement between the need and cry, and the provision, *e.g.*, seed and climate, eye and light, hunger and bread, thirst and water, the breathing frame and the vital air, and the manifold necessities and supplies which are like prayers and answers in every place and through all time. If it be so in the lower wants, shall it fail to approve itself in the higher? Shall God have regard to the animal necessities and turn a deaf ear to the cries of the soul? The ear which hears the young raven's cry cannot be deaf to the sobs and prayers of human hearts. And let us thank God that He has made the soul so that when it is truly wakened by Himself, none but Himself can satisfy its need. If there are such breathings of desire in human spirits there must be an object and end for them. The word is nigh thee, even in thy heart, and then the living Word Himself is near who answers it: "Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" 2. But it may be that your trouble is that you feel unable to lay hold of Him. Then the question still comes with its own answer. Ask yourself of your pain, and see if there be not in Him the remedy you seek. Are you oppressed with the burden of guilt? Here is forgiveness from His hand in a way which should meet your heart's desire. Is life a battle to you, with daily cares, troubles, and temptations, others leaning on you, and you without strength? There is one who comes to help the fallen that they who wait upon Him may renew their strength. Is it that you feel the loneliness of life when lover and friend have been put far from you, and the world outside is bleak and bare? There Christ stands at the door and knocks—"If any man open, I will come in." 3. It is by putting such questions as these that we learn the fitness of God's answer to our heart's cry, and find it all in Jesus Christ. It is the way God Himself has taken in the Bible; for what is the Old Testament, with its utterances of want and longing desire, but a pressing of the question, Why weepest thou? and what is the New Testament but the unveiling of Him who answers the question, Whom seekest thou? And when He comes in person what is His earthly life but a touching of the deep chords of man's nature, that He may awaken him to a consciousness of his misery and sin, and then assure him of His power to save and satisfy? And what is this life but a questioning us of our heart-sores and losses, with strength and comfort interspersed like pledges which make us say, Lord, to whom but to Thee? in order that He may prepare us for the answer when the weeping of the night gives place to the joy of the morning? "I will come and take you to Myself." III. SOME THINGS WORTHY OF NOTICE IN THE RECOGNITION WHICH FOLLOWED. 1. That Christ reveals Himself to the heart before He discloses Himself to the eye. He stood at first beside Mary as a stranger, led her to review her past, and seek and find Him in her sorrow; and then He removed the cloud which had come between, and appeared as the risen Saviour. It is this method which explains to us the gloomy hours and long questionings of some who

are seeking Him: "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" We wonder that God does not show Himself and speak out. But He means to deepen the sense of need, and to make the revelation of Himself more blessed, "Whom having not seen we love." 2. That Christ makes Himself known in the way of duty. Some make comfort the guide of their spiritual life. But this recognition of Christ came to one who had no comfort, and who was scarcely seeking it. She came to Christ's grave because she could not stay away. Grief, loyalty, love, drew her there, and she had her reward. 3. Christ's way of revealing Himself. A human historian would have constructed a long speech, but Christ used a single word—so simple, so natural. It is like Him who has distilled His mercy into short Bible words—Immanuel, Jesus, Saviour, God is Love,—making it small that it may enter feeble hearts, as He makes the drops of water small to visit the blades of grass. The single word was a name. It spoke of personal knowledge and interest. We read that "God counts the stars and calls them by their names;" but it is something greater in Him that He calls by name the children of men: "Jacob whom I have chosen; the seed of Abraham my friend." "He called His own sheep by name." It was at the name that she turned and knew Him. 4. In this way of recognition, we have a hint of how Christian fellowship shall be restored in the world beyond death? This great Friend, who carries all other true friendships in His heart, named Mary from beyond His grave, to bid us hope and trust that He will meet and name His friends on the heavenly threshold Christ surely first as well befits Him, but afterward they that are Christ's, and ours. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *A handkerchief*:—1. Woman has had many reasons for weeping since the fall. 2. Jesus went to His death amid weeping women, and on His rising He met a little company of them. 3. The first words of a risen Saviour are to a weeping woman. 4. He who was born of woman has come to dry up woman's tears. 5. Observe the wise method followed by the Divine Consoler. (1) Magdalene is to state the reason of her weeping. Often sorrow vanishes when it is defined. It is wise to chase away mystery and understand the real cause of grief. (2) He helps her also by coming nearer to her grief in the second question. She was seeking *Him*. He was Himself the answer to His own inquiries. 6. In all cases Jesus is the most suitable Comforter and comfort. Let us put this question in two ways. I. Is IT NATURAL SORROW? 1. Art thou bereaved? The risen Saviour comforts thee, for He—(1) Assures thee of the resurrection of the departed. (2) Is with thee, thy living Helper. (3) Sympathizes with thee, for He once lost His friend Lazarus; yea, He Himself has died. 2. Are thy beloved ones sick? Sorrow not impatiently, for He—(1) Lives to hear prayer for healing. (2) Waits to bless them if they are dying. 3. Art thou thyself sick? Be not impatient, for Jesus lives—(1) To moderate thy pains. (2) To sustain thy heart under suffering. (3) To give life to thy body, as He has done to thy soul. 4. Art thou poor? Do not murmur, for He—(1) Lives, and is rich. (2) Would have thee find thine all in Himself. (3) Will never leave thee nor forsake thee. 5. Art thou of a sorrowful spirit? Do not despond, but see—(1) Where *His* sorrows have brought *Him*. (2) How He came to the sorrow, and how He cometh still. What He does in His consoling ministry, and imitate Him by cheering others. Thus thou shalt thyself be comforted. II. IS IT SPIRITUAL SORROW? 1. Distinguish. See whether it be good or ill. Is it—(1) Selfish? Be ashamed of it. (2) Rebellious? Repent of it. (3) Ignorant? Learn of Jesus, and so escape it. (4) Hopeless? Believe in God and hope ever. (5) Gracious? Then thank Him for it. 2. Declare. Tell Jesus all about it. (1) Is it sorrow for others? He weeps with thee. (*a*) Are loved ones abiding in sin? (*b*) Is the Church cold and dead? (2) Is it the sorrow of a seeking saint? He meets thee. (*a*) Dost thou miss His presence? (*b*) Hast thou grieved His Holy Spirit? (*c*) Canst thou not attain to holiness? (*d*) Canst thou not serve Him as much as thou desirest? (*e*) Do thy prayers appear to fail? (*f*) Does thine old nature rebel? (3) Is it the sorrow of one in doubt? He will strengthen thee. Come to Jesus as a sinner. (4) Is it the sorrow of a seeking sinner? He will receive thee. (*a*) Dost thou weep because of past sin? (*b*) Dost thou fear because of thine evil nature? (*c*) Art thou unable to understand the gospel? (*d*) Dost thou weep lest thou grow hardened again? (*e*) Dost thou mourn because thou canst not mourn? Conclusion: 1. He is before thee: believe in Him, and weeping will end. 2. He accepts thee: in Him thou hast all thou art seeking for. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Women and the Bible*:—A Hindoo woman said to a missionary, "Surely your Bible was written by a woman." "Why?" "Because it says so many kind things for women. Our pundits never refer to us but in reproach."

(*Ibid.*) *Mission 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. (*Mrs. H. B. Stowe.*) *The living God the source of comfort*:—A prudent and pious lady observing her husband dejected by some misfortune which had befallen him, to such a degree that he could not sleep, pretended in the morning to be disconsolate herself, and gave way to lamentation and to tears. As she had spoken cheeringly to him the evening before, he was astonished and asked the cause of this sudden grief. Hesitating a little, she replied that she had been dreaming, and that it seemed to her that a messenger had come from heaven, and had brought the news that God was dead, and that all the angels were weeping. "Foolish woman," said the husband, "you know right well that God cannot die!" "Indeed," said the wife; "and if that be so certain, how comes it that you are now indulging your sorrow as immoderately, as if He really did no longer exist, or, at least, as if He were unable to set bounds to our affliction, or mitigate its severity, or convert it into a blessing? My dear husband, learn to trust Him and to sorrow like a Christian. Think of the old proverb, 'What need to grieve if God doth live?'" (*J. L. Nye.*) **She, supposing Him to be the gardener.**—*Christ the gardener*:—1. It is not an unnatural supposition; Mary was mistaken here; but if we are under His Spirit's teaching we shall not make a mistake, for if we may truly sing, "We are a garden walled around," &c., that enclosure needs a gardener. 2. Neither is the figure unscriptural; for in one of His own parables our Lord makes Himself to be the Dresser of the vineyard. 3. If we would be supported by a type, our Lord takes the name of "the Second Adam," and the first Adam was a gardener. Thus also Solomon thought of Him when He described Him as going out with His beloved for the preservation of the garden, saying, "Take us the foxes," &c. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," we have here—I. THE KEY TO MANY WONDERS in the garden of His Church. 1. That there should be a Church at all in the world; a garden blooming in the midst of this sterile waste. "Ye are of God, little children, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." We understand its existence, "supposing Him to be the gardener," but nothing else can account for it. He can cause the fir tree to flourish instead of the thorn, and the myrtle instead of the briar. 2. That the Church should flourish in such a clime. This present evil world is very uncongenial to the growth of grace, and within are elements which tend to its own disorder and destruction if left alone; even as the garden has in its soil all the germs of a thicket of weeds. The continuance and prosperity of the Church can only be accounted for by "supposing Him to be the gardener." Almighty strength and wisdom are put to the otherwise impossible work of sustaining a holy people among men. "I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." 3. That ever we should have been placed among the plants of the Lord. How is it that we have been kept there, and borne with in our barrenness, when He might long ago have said, "Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?" Who could have manifested such infinite patience? I know not, except upon this ground, "supposing Him to be the gardener." II. A SPUR TO MANY DUTIES. 1. Joy. Surely it must help every little plant to drink in the sunlight when it is whispered among the flowers that Jesus is the gardener. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," He will make the best of you. You cannot be in better hands. 2. Valuing the Lord's presence, and praying for it. We ought whenever the Sabbath morning dawns to pray our Well-beloved to come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits. It is our necessity that we have Christ with us, "supposing Him to be the gardener"; and it is our bliss that we have Christ walking between our beds and borders, watching every plant, training, maturing all. 3. Yield ourselves up entirely to Him. A plant does not know how it ought to be treated. Happiness lives next door to the spirit of complete acquiescence in the will of God, and it will be easy to exercise that when we suppose the Lord Jesus to be the gardener. 4. Bring forth fruit to Him. If Jesus is to bear the blame or the honour of what we produce, then let us use up every drop of sap and strain every fibre, that we may produce a fair reward for our Lord's travail. III. A RELIEF FROM CRUSHING RESPONSIBILITY. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," the Church enjoys a better oversight than mine; all must go well

in the long run. He that keepeth Israel doth neither slumber nor sleep. A certain man of God in troublous times became quite unable to do his duty because he laid to heart so much the ills of the age. Then one said to him, "Mr. Whitelock, are you the manager of the world?" No, he was not quite that. "Did not God get on pretty well with it before you were born, and don't you think He will do very well with it when you are dead?" That reflection helped to relieve the good man's mind, and he went back to do his duty. While this relieves us of anxiety it makes labour for Christ very sweet. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," I am quite willing to work on a barren rock, or tie up an old withered bough, or dig a worthless sod; for, if it only pleases Jesus, the work is profitable to the last degree. 1. In dealing with the souls of men, we meet with cases which are extremely difficult. Some persons are so fearful that you do not know how to comfort them; others are so presumptuous that you hardly know how to help them; others so fickle that you cannot hold them. Some flowers puzzle the ordinary gardener: we meet with plants which are covered with prickles, and wound the hand that would help them. These strange growths would make a great muddle for you if you were the gardener; but "supposing Him to be the gardener," you can go to Him and say, "Lord, I do not understand this singular creature. Oh, that Thou wouldest manage it, or tell me how." 2. And then, again, plants will die down, and others must be put into their places, or the garden will grow bare; but we know not where to find them. We say, "When yonder good man dies, who will succeed him?" Let us wait till he is gone and needs following. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," the Lord has other plants in reserve which you have not yet seen: the Lord will keep up the true apostolical succession till the day of His second advent. IV. A DELIVERANCE FROM MANY GLOOMY FEARS. I walked down a garden where all the path was strewn with leaves and broken branches and stones, and I saw the earth upon the flower-beds tossed about: all was in disorder. Had a dog been amusing himself? or had a mischievous child been at work? No; the gardener had been doing it for the good of the garden. It may be it has happened to some of you that you have been a good deal clipped lately. Well, if the Lord has done it our gloomy fears are idle. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," then—1. The serpent will have a bad time of it. Supposing Adam to be the gardener, then the serpent gets in and mischief comes of it. So, if we are afraid that the devil should get in among us, let us be always in prayer, because Jesus can keep out the adversary. Other creatures intrude; caterpillars and all sorts of destroying creatures. How can we keep them out? There is no protection except one, "supposing Him to be the gardener." 2. What if roots of bitterness should spring up among us to trouble us? Who is to prevent this? Only the Lord Jesus by His Spirit. 3. Suppose the living waters of God's Spirit should not come to water the garden, what then? We cannot make them flow. Ah, but the Spirit of God will be in our garden, "supposing our Lord to be the gardener." The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands. V. A WARNING FOR THE CARELESS. 1. There are many to the Church what weeds are to a garden. Take heed; for one of these days, "supposing Him to be the gardener," "every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." 2. Others are like the branches of the vine which bear no fruit. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," He will fulfil that sentence: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away." VI. A QUIETUS TO THOSE WHO COMPLAIN. 1. Certain of us have been made to suffer much physical pain; others have suffered heavy losses. Take the supposition of the text. The Lord has been pruning you sharply. Be quiet until you are able to say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away," &c. 2. Especially I speak to those who have suffered bereavement. The best rose in the garden is gone. The gardener came this way and gathered it. Dry your grief by "supposing Him to be the gardener." VII. AN OUTLOOK FOR THE HOPEFUL. "Supposing Him to be the gardener," then—1. Expect where He works the best possible prosperity. It is our unbelief that straitens God. 2. Expect Divine intercourse of unspeakable preciousness. When Adam was the gardener the Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day; and "supposing Him to be the gardener," then we shall have the Lord God dwelling among us. 3. Expect He will remove the whole of the garden upward with Himself to fairer skies; for He rose, and His people must rise with Him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ the Gardener*:—If Creation itself was a mediatorial act; that "God created all things by Jesus Christ"; then Jesus is the true Gardener. 1. Every flower that blows was once a thought in the mind of my Saviour; and every wave of loveliness that charms me began in Him, passed on, at last reached my

heart as its strand, and broke there. All the blooms of all the gardens owe their life to Him; and all the lights of science are hid in His "treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He plants God's gardens, He waters them, He gives the increase. Flowers, like sweet wonders, blossoming in our hedge-rows; shy flowers that look out from the green darkness of a Devonshire lane; flowers that waver like a rich mist of beauty all round the shafts of the forest; flowers in every strip of moss that softens the wayside stone; flowers under every leaf you lift in some rustic tangle; flowers that tesselate every inch of the upland moor; small flowers such as those which only a magnifying glass can show; and great flowers crowning stalks thirty feet high; flowers that blaze mile after mile in the rolling prairie; flowers about which strange birds dart like live jewels in the tropical day; land-flowers that seem delicate as coloured light, and fine as woven air; sea-flowers, in gardens that lie like worlds of enchantment under the great southern oceans, on floors where no mortal can ever stand, but of the existence of which science is sure; "Crimson weeds that spreading, flow, Or lie like pictures in the sand below," in the pools left between sea-side boulders. All these are witnesses to Christ. Oh, yes, He is the Gardener—Gardener of the wild landscape, Gardener of the trees as well as of the flowers. Trees of the orchard, of the wood, of the stately forest, of the shadowed avenue, of every zone, are all of His plantation. And as I muse in the solitudes of nature on these aspects of His perfection, think of the infinite delight He must feel in creating flowers, and the tender kindness He shows in giving them; think of Him "walking amidst the trees of the garden," and think of Him for ever calling into life the million marvels of the green wilderness, I have larger and more exalted thoughts of the Saviour who "wore the platted thorn" for me, and feel that these revelations of His glory enlighten and animate my faith. 2. But He cultivates other gardens than these. "Devout Magdalene," meditates Bishop Hall, "thou art not much mistaken. As it was the trade of the first Adam to dress the garden, so it is the trade of the Second Adam to dress the garden of the Church. He digs up the soil by seasonable afflictions, He sows in it the seeds of His grace, He plants it with gracious motions, He waters it by His own Spirit, He weeds it by wholesome censures. Oh! blessed Saviour, what is it that Thou neglectest to do for this selected enclosure of Thy Church? As in some respect Thou art the True Vine, and Thy Father the Husbandman, so also in some other we are the vine, and Thou art the Gardener. Oh! be Thou such to me as Thou appearedst to Magdalene! Break up the fallows of my nature, implant me ever with Thy fresh grace, prune me with meet corrections, bedew me with the former and the latter rain; do what Thou wilt to make me fruitful." (*C. Stanford, D.D.*)

Ver. 16. **Jesus saith unto her, Mary.**—*Christ's salutation to the Christian:*—No one ever used human language so eloquently as Jesus. Men have spoken with such arguments, rhetoric and passion, as to convince and move multitudes. But no one save Jesus could by simply saying, "Follow Me," draw any one from his trade, his home, and bind him in life-long devotion. What power in the look He, a helpless prisoner, cast upon His renegade disciple! But I suppose that this word "Mary" surpassed all others—1. In what it revealed of Himself. Those lips were endowed with a new power, as there had passed upon them the change which had glorified His resurrection body. These bodies, as organs through which our souls express themselves, are like poor untuned instruments upon which one would play. It is only by study of the art and long practice that the most skilful can make them reproduce what is in the depths of the heart. But Christ's resurrection body was perfectly adapted to express all the emotions of His spirit. All the sentiment of His soul was doubtless put into the manner and tone with which He spake that word "Mary." There must have been a world of revelation and love in it; the infinite thought filling and flowing out from the human word more than the electric light radiates from the bulb of glass which encloses the spark. 2. Because of His choice of an auditor. The import of the occasion was so great, the moment when life and immorality were brought to light, that the earth might well have been assembled while the heavens bowed down to hear the first word of the risen Son of God. But Jesus chooses one auditor. And who is it? A king? A high priest? A prophet with intellect inspired to comprehend the grandeur of His tidings? No; but a simple woman. And why? Because she loved the Saviour most. Very deep the lesson we are to learn from this, that not to the most serviceable even, nor to the most spiritually learned, not to those who were

appointed to the highest dignities in the Church by His own designation, the holy apostles, but to her who loved Him most, gave He the most resplendent honour of all. The blessing of Christ will most enwrap us as we come closest to Him. You will learn most of His truth as you give yourself up to feel His affection. I. WHAT IS THAT WORD WHICH OUR LORD CHOOSES THROUGH WHICH TO REVEAL HIMSELF? There was one word so immense in its meaning, so sacred, that the few would not venture even to pronounce it. How appropriate if those lips which are henceforth to pronounce from the throne of heaven the mandates of the universe had uttered that word in tones of thunder, "I am God!" It would have been in keeping with the guard of angels and the magnitude of the event. But Jesus saith unto her, "Mary." He called her name. His sense of His divinity and dominion is no greater than His love and sympathy for one sorrowing human being. "I have called thee by name," said God to the Old Testament people. Our Saviour emphasizes very beautifully the same truth. "He called His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." We cannot lose ourselves in the multitude of the world so as to escape His eye, nor in the multitude of His saints so as to have only a part of His gracious care. II. MARY RECOGNIZED, NOT ONLY HER OWN NAME, BUT THE VOICE THAT UTTERED IT. At first she did not see that it was Jesus. But the voice penetrated both Jesus' disguise and her own blindness. That expressed more than the mere presence did. The call which He makes to the heart is beyond all the external evidence for His divinity and presence. A man may through ignorance be unable to answer infidel objections, and yet be unshaken because of the impression Christ has wrought upon his inner experience. What argument could have robbed the dying Wesley of the confidence he uttered, "God is with me"? How that word "Mary" stirred the recollection of the disciple! He said it doubtless just as He used to say it. The word recalled His casting out the seven devils. Such the fulness with which our Saviour's call to us to-day is laden. It is a reminder of what He has always been to us. His watch over you began long ago. For you He died as truly as for Mary. And His providence and Spirit have hovered over you like the two wings of a mighty angel shadowing you as you have moved down the path of life. Do you remember what He was to you in the hour of your conversion? in the hour of sorrow? Try to think what you would be now had not His goodness kept or guided you. You were never such a friend to yourself as this unseen, mysterious companion has been to you. And as He calls each of us by name—the name mother's voice so fondly called in our childhood—the name by which dear ones will try in vain to call us back for one moment's recognition as our souls disappear through the death shades—He condenses into it all the love and good of past years. Our life-long, tried, infinite Friend calls us again. III. But it was not merely an old-time greeting Mary received. IT WAS A NEW AND MEASURELESS BENEDICTION. That salutation made real to her all she had ever dared to hope. With the other disciples she did once fondly dream that He who gave life to others would Himself always live. But how terrible the disappointment? But now her wildest dream is surpassed by the reality. Oh! if we could only realize what Christ means by His salutation to-day! Mass all the longings of your heart; they are nothing to be compared with the reality. (*J. M. Ludlow, D.D.*) *The power of the human voice and ear*:—The voice is an instrument more delicate than the finest organ or harp, and capable of expressing emotions more manifold and spiritual than these. The soul within is a player of marvellous subtlety that can so handle this Divine instrument as to translate into articulate sounds (of talk or music), and sometimes into a word, the thousand and one emotions of which the spirit is susceptible. Only one other phenomenon rivals these in strangeness, viz., the capacity which belongs to the intelligence that sits behind the ears of interpreting, with a speed surpassing thought and an accuracy excluding mistake, the thoughts and feelings that another has impressed upon these waves of sound. When Mary, wrapped in sorrow, heard the old voice speak, caught the undefinable "something" that made that voice stand out from all others as pre-eminently dear to her heart, she comprehended the situation without further remark. No voice but one could say "Mary" like that. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **She turned herself.**—We know from ver. 14 that Mary had already turned once from the grave when Jesus appeared behind her. Here again she "turned herself." Not recognizing the person who spoke to her, and thinking He had been the gardener, she partially turned away, as a woman naturally would from a strange man, and hardly looked at Him, while she spoke of taking the body away. But the moment the voice of Jesus sounded in her ears, she turned again directly to Him, and made

some movement towards Him. Chrysostom says, "It seems to me that after having said, 'Where hast thou laid Him?' she turned to the angels to ask why they were astonished; and that then Christ, by calling her by name, turned her back to Himself from them, and revealed Himself by His voice." (*Bp. Ryle.*) **And saith unto Him, Rabboni.**—This title existed in Jewish schools under a threefold form: Rab, *master*, the lowest degree of honour; Rabbi, *my master*, of higher dignity; Rabboni, *my great master*, the most honourable of all, publicly given to only seven persons, all of the school of Hillel, and of great eminence. (*C. S. Robinson.*)

Vers. 17, 18. **Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not.**—*Touch not:*—What a strange thing that both the old world and the new should have began with the same prohibition. (*Dean Burgon.*) *Noli Me tangere:*—The lesson is to a soul brought into the conscious presence of the Lord. Oh, to be in that condition! Mary Magdalene had wept because of her Lord's absence, and longed to find Him; and now she has her desire: He stands before her. Oh, that we knew where we might find Him (Job xxiii. 3)! Her conduct in holding Him by the feet was natural, and yet it was forbidden by a higher wisdom than that of mortal men. I. THE CAUTION. "Touch Me not." 1. We may blunder even in our closest friendship, and need a prohibition. We have never need of greater caution than in our nearest approaches to God. Courtiers must be most careful in the throne-room. 2. We may carnalize the spiritual. This has ever been a tendency with even the best of the saints; and it has misled many in whom affection has been stronger than intellect. 3. We may seek most passionately what is by no means essential. The assurance of sense, by touch or otherwise: when the assurance of faith is far better, and quite sufficient. The detaining of one who has no intention of going. 4. We may crave what were better further on. When we are raised to eternal glory we shall be able to enjoy what now we must not ask. 5. We may be selfish in our enjoyments. Staying to contemplate alone by ourselves, when we ought rather to bless others by publishing the blessed news (2 Kings vii. 9). II. THE MISSION. "Go to My brethren." She would have preferred to stay, but Jesus bids her go. 1. This was better for her. Contemplation alone may degenerate into the sentimental, the sensuous, the impracticable. 2. This was better for them. They heard the best of news from the most trustworthy of informants. 3. This was unquestionably done by this holy woman. What she had seen she declared. What she had heard she told. Women are said to be communicative; and so there was wisdom in the choice. Women are affectionate, and so persuasive; and therefore fit to bear such a tender message as we have now to consider. III. THE TITLE. "My brethren." Our Lord, of design, chose this title to comfort His sorrowing ones. They had so acted as almost to cease to be His followers, disciples, or friends; but brotherhood is an abiding relationship. They were—1. His brethren, though He was about to ascend to His throne. He was still a man, though no more to suffer and die. He still represented them as their risen Head. He was still one with them in all His objects and prospects. 2. His brethren, though they had forsaken Him in His shame. Relationship abiding, for brotherhood cannot be broken. Relationship owned more than ever; since their sense of guilt made them afraid. He was a true Joseph to them (Gen. xlv. 4). Relationship dwelt upon, that they might be reassured. Never let us omit the tender sweetness of the gospel, its courtesies, benedictions, and love-words, such as the "My brethren" of the text before us. If we leave out these precious words we shall mar the Master's message of grace. IV. THE TIDINGS. "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father." This message was meant to arouse and comfort them. 1. By the news of His departure they are to be aroused. 2. By the news of His ascension they are to be confirmed. 3. By His ascension to the common Father they are to be comforted with the prospect of coming there themselves. He is not going into an unknown country, but to His home and theirs (chap. xiv. 2). 4. By His ascent to God they are to be struck with solemn awe, and brought the more reverently to look for His presence among them. See how practical our Lord is, and how much He values the usefulness of His servants. Have we not somewhat to tell? Whether man or woman, tell the Lord's brethren what the Lord hath told to thee. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Noli Me tangere:*—Mary Magdalene, because she loved much, had this morning divers favours vouchsafed her. Now comes an unkind word and mars all. A cold salutation for an Easterday morning. A little before He asked why she wept? This is enough to set her on weeping afresh. For if she wept that others had taken away her Lord, much more now when her Lord takes away Himself. Christ came unknown, and then known; but, unknown, Christ

proves better to her, for then He asked her kindly why she wept? but known, He grows strange to forbid her to touch. I. THE RESTRAINT. 1. The thing forbidden. It is nothing to touch; and yet to touch Christ is not nothing. Many strove to touch Him, and there went virtue from Him even while He was mortal: but now He is immortal much more. That was not her case to draw ought from Him: it was for pure love. To love it is not enough to hear, or see; but to touch and take hold. The nearest union is *per contactum*. 2. The party. Not Christ. Why not Him? Christ was not wont to be so dainty. He suffered the rude multitude to throng and to thrust Him. *Noli Me tangere* would have done well on Good Friday. Why suffered He them then? why suffered He not her now? For all she had done and suffered one poor touch had been but an easy recompense. Of all other, this prohibition lay not against her: of all times, not at this. II. If we look at THE REASON: we shall find it yet more strange—"I am not yet ascended." But when He was ascended, one would think, she should be further off still. Let us consult upon this prohibition. *Noli Me tangere* can rise but one of these ways. 1. On His part that was touched. "Touch Me not," you will hurt Me, or, I shall hurt you; I am fire, I shall scorch you: an edge tool, I shall wound you: pitch, I shall defile you: some contagious thing, I shall infect you. But Christ was not now in state to receive or do any hurt. 2. We resolve, then, it was not on Christ's part. He might be touched, and was by Thomas; but on hers she might not touch Him. (1) Chrysostom thinks it was to correct her want of due reverence. After her wonted fashion, she made toward Him; nor with that regard which His new glorified estate demanded. The touchstone of our touching Christ is with all regard and reverence that may be. Two causes of this. One, a defect in her judgment; the other, an excess in her affection. Christ's reason imports as much. You touch Me, not as if I were upon ascending, but as if to stay here still. Hence we learn, that when He sees we forget ourselves, Christ will take a little state upon Him; will not be saluted with *Rabboni*, but with some more seemly term. Thomas said, "My Lord and my God." It is no excuse to say all was out of love. Love, if it be right, doth nothing uncomely. And such love Christ loves. A strange kind of love, when, for very love to Christ, we care not how we carry ourselves towards Him. This may be said, she was not before so carried away with sorrow, but she was now as far gone in the other of joy: and so like enough to forget herself, as Peter on the Mount. He knew not what he said, nor she what she did. Out of which our lesson is, that in the sudden surprise of any passion no touching Christ then. Say she were unfit, yet all is not clear. For why then did others touch? Thomas with his faith in his fingers' ends? They touched because they believed not; she touched not because she misbelieved. They touched that they might know He was risen: she touched not that she might know He was not so risen, as in former times she had known Him. If the text be against rudeness, to restrain it; then is it for reverence to enjoin it. (2) Gregory thinks it was to hasten the message, and that all was but to save time. As if He should have said, "There is a matter in hand, would be done out of hand; and therefore for this time hands off." And the reason will follow well so. "You need not be so hasty, I am not yet ascended. You may do this at some other time." To the disciples and to Christ no haste was too much; all delay too long. Yet a touch and away would not have taken up so much time. True, but He easily foresaw if He suffered her to touch that she would have taken hold too, not have let Him go. (3) Augustine thinks it was to wean her from all fleshly touching, and teach her a new and true touch. As if, till He were ascended, He would not be touched: and then He would. And there is reason for this sense. For the touch of His body, which she so much desired; that could last but forty days. Christ Himself touched upon this point in chap. vi. 62. It was her error to be all for the corporeal presence; for the touch with the fingers. So were His disciples. From which they were now to be weaned. That if they had before known Christ, or touched Him after the flesh, yet now from henceforth they were to do so no more. Christ resolves the point. The flesh, the touching, the eating, profits nothing. The words He spake were spirit. So the touching, the eating, to be spiritual. And Thomas, and Mary, or whosoever touched Him on earth, if they had not been more happy to touch Him with their faith, than with their fingers' end, they had had no good by it at all. It was found better with it, to touch the hem of His garment, than without it, to touch any part of His body. Now, if faith be to touch, that will touch Him no less in heaven than here. (*Bp. Andrewes.*) *Mary Magdalene and Thomas with the risen Christ*:—I. WAS MARY DENIED AND THOMAS GRANTED, THE SAME FAVOUR? Then we

should see in the case of Thomas a greater condescension to the doubts and fears of the human heart. Mary did not need proof; Thomas did. The clearing away of Thomas' doubts strengthened the evidence of our Lord's resurrection. II. THERE WAS NO DENIAL OF FAVOUR TO MARY. In her case the arrested act was one of affection, and Jesus may be understood as reminding her that the hour for adoration has not yet come—"For I am not yet ascended." Nothing of that enters into the act of Thomas. His is not an act of worship, but of scrutiny. Mary is checked in worship; Thomas is permitted to touch, to obtain proof that it is indeed the Master. III. BUT WHY IS MARY'S REVERENCE CHECKED? Because the Master has work for her to do. Our Lord really forbids not, but checks her reverential act; and His purpose is to transfer her attention to her mission. Even if Mary's act were merely one of personal affection, there would be only the more reason why duty should interrupt her demonstrations of regard. IV. MARY THOUGHT HE WAS COME BACK TO STAY. So He virtually says: Not so; "I ascend." Think of Me no more in the flesh; think of Me on the throne. For, while in one breath the Lord says, "I am not yet ascended," in the next He commands her to tell His brethren, "I ascend unto My Father." (*The Study.*) *Christ and Mary*:—I. IT WAS A REAL BODY THAT APPEARED TO MARY. "Touch Me not;" then it was possible to touch Him. Wisdom never tells us not to do what cannot be done. The voice she heard was not a dead voice; the form she saw was not a form that trembled in the twilight far within the tomb, but one that stood boldly forth in the clear, cheerful day outside. II. HERE WAS A GENTLE REPROOF, POINTING TO THE LACK OF SPIRITUALITY IN MARY'S FAITH. To her the supreme object of faith could be touched with fingers. She assumes that He has come back to the old scenes to be what He was before. She is content with this and with His unfinished work. The words of Jesus were to discipline and raise her faith, and to break to her the truth that He is no longer to be revealed under the forms of time, and in the world of sensation, but to the soul. That we may be helped to watch against this and avoid the tendency to make a fetish of Him who has now inaugurated the reign of the Spirit; and truly obey the ancient call of devotion, "Lift up your hearts," let us feel that Christ is still speaking to us, in His words to Mary. III. ALTHOUGH MARY HAD THIS CHECK, ALL THE DISCIPLES MAY TOUCH HIM, NOW HE IS IN HEAVEN. The word "yet" conveys this inference; and the next words, "You are not to touch Me until I am gone; then you may." "When My earthly manifestation ends, your privilege of touching Me begins." We actually have open to us a better and happier privilege than that which Mary thought the ultimatum of dignity and bliss. This true touch is essential to the true life. All knowledge, all sympathy is from touch; there is no food, no drink, no healing without touch. Sin is cured by the Saviour's touch; and this perpetual contact is the medium through which He sends into us the Divine electricity of power and holiness. Only a few could come in contact with a simple human presence at one time; but all, at one time, can touch that which is ascended for the very purpose that it may "fill all things." You may touch Him in the city, in the field, when going out, when coming in, when no eye can see, in the garret, in the cellar, in the deep mine, in mountain heights, in the turmoil of care, in atmospheres in which, without a miracle, no grace can live; and wherever He is thus touched, the manifold miracle of grace is wrought. IV. THIS MAY HAVE INCLUDED AN INJUNCTION TO MARY NOT TO DELAY HER ERRAND TO THE DISCIPLES. "Do not linger. I am going, and will soon be gone. Go to My brethren. There is no time now for tender intimacies and protracted intercourse; I have this more important employment for you: you must make haste if you would give them fair notice." So now, Christ is always calling us away from the passive to the active; from personal enjoyment to practical service. 1. "Go." In the history of the new life, Christ's first word is always, "Come"; His next, in some form or other, is always, "Go." 2. "To My brethren." (1) Why was this message not sent first to His mother? Through age after age the nations have called her "Our Lady," yet all through the forty days she is passed by in the narrative like one forgotten. This is an inexplicable blank, unless we understand that, foreknowing the idolatry of Mary, it was thus divinely arranged. (2) Why were not the rejecters of Christ first informed of His resurrection? "Why not go first to the Scribes and Pharisees, &c., and those who complain that they want evidence?" Because of this principle: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given," &c.; because, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," &c. 3. "My brethren." He had never so called them before, yet they never seemed to be so unworthy. He might have said, "Go, tell swearing Peter, dull Philip, doubting Thomas, cautious Nathanael," &c. Had they

heard of the Resurrection thus, the news might have almost killed them; and they might have said, "He is risen to smite us." But, as if to prevent this, the despatch is addressed to His "brethren." Grand instance this of the truth that He "is not ashamed to call us brethren." Take fresh heart at the thought of it, and learn that it is not in the power of infirmity to unbrother us. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) **But go tell My brethren.**—*Christ's work in heaven and ours on earth*:—1. Christ's words were addressed to Mary's thoughts, which was, "Now all is fulfilled. He has returned from the Father; He is going to take us to His kingdom, and we shall be for ever with Him." "Not so," replies our Lord, "I have more work to do, and so have you." 2. There is a remarkable difference between Mary's case and that of Thomas. She believed too much; he too little. Her eager faith is corrected by the "Touch Me not, but go"; his unbelief is removed by "Come, reach hither thy hand." Man would have said to faith, "Touch me"; to unbelief, "Touch me not." I. CHRIST'S WORK. He has gone—1. To get the Spirit for us. Now He has received the promise of the Father—"Gifts for men." 2. To intercede for us. 3. To prepare a place for us. 4. To give repentance and forgiveness. Thus He cautions us—"Be calm and patient; I have gone to do My work. It must be done, and then no more delay." II. OUR WORK. Mary had something else to do than touch and enjoy; so have we—work. 1. For ourselves. "Follow Me," "Take up your cross," "Let your light shine," "Grow in grace." 2. For the Church. We are members one of another to "bear one another's burdens," &c. 3. For the world—to pray for it, preach to it, save it. How long Christ's work will last we know not, but ours will soon be done. Therefore, "Whatsoever thy hand," &c. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *Christ teaching us how to think about Himself*:—We are taught to think of—I. THE STRENGTH AND CONSTANCY OF HIS LOVE. "My brethren" was applied—1. To those who had recently acted in a cowardly and cruel manner. 2. To those whose state of mind was most dishonouring to Himself (Mark xvi. 10–15; Luke xxiv. 11–21). 3. In the most momentous crisis in His history. 4. Without the slightest hint of their unworthy conduct. II. THE COMPLETION OF HIS EARTHLY WORK—"I ascend." As the farmer leaves the field when it has been cultivated, awaiting the results of his toil in the harvest; as the mariner leaps on shore when the voyage is over; as the warrior returns home when the victory is won; so our Lord turned His attention to heaven immediately on the conclusion of His work on earth, where He had been an exile. 1. In His life He had presented a perfect example of what men should be. 2. In His person and works He had supplied the most advanced revelation of God. 3. In His death He had atoned for the sins of the world, and laid the basis for a universal offer of pardon and eternal life. 4. In His resurrection He had given a pledge that His people should rise and that the last enemy should be destroyed. And now He turns His thoughts homeward. III. THE POWER AND DOMINION ON WHICH HE HAS ENTERED. 1. His personal rest and honour. "Ascend." What a contrast to His descent (chap. xvii. 15). 2. The fulfilment of His promise respecting the Spirit (chap. xiv. 25, 26; xv. 26, 27). 3. His prevalent intercession (Heb. ii. 9–11; vii. 24–28). 4. His unlimited authority and power to promote our interests. "Lo, I am with you alway"; "The Lord stood by me." 5. The certainty of His final recompense in the conquest of the world. "He must reign." 6. His return to receive us unto Himself. IV. THE ONENESS BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HIS PEOPLE. "My Father," &c. Suggestive of mutual—1. Relationship. 2. Resemblance. 3. Interests. 4. Possessions. 5. Prospects. (*J. Bovery.*) *Christ's message to His brethren*:—I. THE PARTIES. "My brethen." Here is nothing that savours of any displeasure of remembering any old grudge, or of pride. The term "brethren" implies—1. Identity of nature. Then if He rose as man, man also may rise; if the nature be risen, the persons in it may. In the first Adam our nature died, in the Second our nature is risen. 2. Risen with the same love and affection He had before, or if changed changed for the better. Before He said, "My friends." Here, "My bretbren." II. THE COMMISSION. The fathers say that by this word she was by Christ made an apostle. Nay, an apostle to the apostles. 1. An apostle: for what lacks she? (1) Sent immediately from Christ. (2) Sent to declare. (3) Sent to make known Christ's ascending, the very Gospel of the gospel. 2. This day, with Christ's rising, begins the gospel; not befor . Crucified, dead and buried, no good news in themselves. Them the Jews believe as well as we. At her hands the apostles themselves received these glad tidings first, and from them we all. 3. Which, as it was a special honour, so was it not without some kind of reproach to them for sitting at home. Christ is fain to seek Him a new apostle. 4. And by this the amends is

made her for *Noli Me tangere*. For to be thus the messenger of so blessed tidings is a more special favour than if she had touched Christ. Christ would never have enjoined her to leave the better to take the worse. So that hence we infer that to go and carry comfort to them that need it, to tell them of Christ's rising that do not know it, is better then to do nothing but touch Christ. Touching Christ gives place to teaching Christ. How well this agrees with her offer in ver. 15: "You that would take and carry Me, being dead, go take and carry Me now alive." It shall be a carrying in a better sense. Stand not here then touching Me; go and touch them, and with the very touch of this report you shall work in them a resurrection from a doleful and dead to a cheerful and lively estate. III. THE MOTION. 1. "Tell them that I ascend." Why not rather "I am risen" (more proper for this day)? Because He needs not tell her that. She could tell that of herself. And besides, I ascend implies as much. Till He be risen, ascend He cannot. But as she saw by His rising that He had the keys of hell and death, had unlocked those doors and come out from thence, so by ascend He tells her that He hath the keys of heaven's gates also, which He would now unlock, and so set open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. 2. To show us what was the end of His rising. Christ did not rise, to rise; no more must we. Christ rose to ascend; so are we to do. To rise from the bottom of the grave to the brink of it, and stand on the grave-stone, is but half a rising. To rise up as high as heaven, that is to rise indeed; that is Christ's rising, and that to be ours. As there was no gospel till the Resurrection, so the Resurrection is no gospel unless "ascend" follow it. *Resurrexit*, tell that to all the world—all that die in Adam shall rise in Christ: miscreants, Jews, Turks, and all. No gospel that, properly. Tell the Christian of *ascendo*, too, the resurrection to life and not to condemnation. Better lie still in our graves, than rise, and rising not to ascend. 3. He saw upon these tidings they would say, "He risen, then shall we have His company again as heretofore." But by sending them word of His ascending He gives them warning that He rose not to make any abode with them. This He knew would be a hard lesson. They were still and ever addicted to His bodily being with them. They would have built Him a tabernacle here. To rid them of this error He shows them thus, that for Him to be here below on earth that is not it; but for them to be with Him there above in heaven that is it. Thither would He raise them and us with this His *ascendo*. 4. So then seeing Christ stayed not here, we are not to set up our stay here; not to make earth our heaven. IV. To MY FATHER. Every motion hath a whence and a whither. To ascend is, to Christ, His natural motion; heaven is His natural place. His work being done. And "to My Father" no less (chap. xiv. 28). But to go from them is no good news. It was like "touch Me not" to Mary. What then is their comfort or ours? In this, "To your Father" as well as Mine. And He doth express here the whither by the party to whom, rather than by the place to which, because the party will soon bring us to the place, and to somewhat besides. So we have good right to make His Father ours, and His Father's house ours, that there we may dwell together *fratres in unum*. There be of the Father's that make these words as so many steps of Jacob's ladder, which we are to ascend by, or so many wheels as it were of Elias's chariot, in which he was carried up to heaven. There lie before us four pairs or combinations by which *ascendo* is drawn in the text. 1. Father and God, instead of "the Lord God" of the law. Father is a name of much good will, but many a good father wants good means to his good will. God is added that He may not be defective that way. 2. His, ours; and ours His, interchangeably. A blessed change: His great Meum for our little vestrum, little ours for great His. As there is no comfort in heaven without God, nor in God, without a Father, so is there not any either in Father, heaven, or God without ours to give us a property in them. 3. "My Father" will do us no good. That which must do us the good is "your Father," and we need no more (chap. xiv. 8). But how should His be ours? 4. This leads us to the last combination, "My God and yours." For that His Father may be our Father, no remedy but our God must first be His. (1) His Father, as God; His God, as Man. As the Son of God, a God He hath not; a Father He hath: as the Son of Man, a Father He hath not; a God He hath. (2) But now, how shall we get His Father to have Him to be our Father? First, His Father He was from all eternity; He only can say properly, *patrem meum*. But He is content to quit that and to take us in; and He being our Brother before to make us His now. For upon His ascending He adopts us, and by adopting makes us, and by making pronounces us His brethren, and so children to His Father. But, till then, a God we had, but not a Father; at least, not such

a Father of Him as since we have. So we see the necessity of both these combinations. But we are not so to look to our own comfort, but that we preserve His honour. There is order taken for that by severing each pair—mine and yours; yet otherwise His and otherwise ours; both as Father and as God. As Father: His by nature, ours by grace. As God: our God by nature. His no otherwise, then as He took upon Him our nature. (*Bp. Andrewes.*) *The brotherhood of Christ*:—I. TO WHOM IS CHRIST A BROTHER. 1. To the apostles and their associates. 2. To all who do God's will (Matt. xii. 46–50). 3. To all who are undergoing sanctification (Heb. ii. 11). II. HOW DOES HE FEEL TOWARDS HIS BRETHREN? 1. He is not ashamed to own the relationship (Heb. ii. 11). He sympathizes with them and loves them (Heb. ii. 17). 3. He identifies Himself with them (Matt. xxv. 40). III. WHAT BENEFITS DO HIS BRETHREN DERIVE FROM HIS RELATIONSHIP? 1. Teaching (Heb. ii. 12). 2. Providential care (Matt. xxv. 40). 2. Consciousness of His sympathy. IV. LET US LEARN. 1. To establish this relationship by faith, love, obedience, growth. 2. To appreciate it with the honour, and help it brings. 2. To extend it to others by leading them to salvation. 3. If we are faithful we shall live with our Elder Brother for ever. (*J. T. Whiteley.*) **I ascend unto My Father.**—*The ascension of our Saviour*:—I. THE PERSONS TO WHOM THE MESSAGE IS ADDRESSED. 1. Why not the Scribes and Pharisees, &c., and render His resurrection undeniable? Because—"Whosoever hath to him shall be given," &c. He never refused explanation to any humble inquirer—but He will not force information upon those that "hated knowledge." To what purpose is it to adduce evidence to those that shut their eyes? They kuew the report of the guards. But His own followers only laboured under infirmities. They wished to be established in the truth. These He calls—"My brethren." This is more than He could have said of angels. He is only their Lord. "It behoved Him to be made like unto His bretbren," &c. Many an elder brother has stood between the affections of the father and the rest of the children, and by engrossing the whole of the inheritance has reduced the younger branches to dependence, if not to want; but Jesus pitied those who were less happy than Himself, and determined to make them partakers of all His honours and riches. Thus they are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." By using this name He would—1. Show that His elevation had not made Him forgetful of those He was to leave behind. 2. Comfort them. They had acted a very unworthy part, and their consciences made them uneasy. By this He seems to call after them, and say, "Return, ye backsliding children." Thus He dispels their anxiety, and fills them with hope. And thus He realizes His illustrious type. 3. Intimate their duty? "Since I do not disown you, notwithstanding your imperfections—follow My example; love as brethren." II. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE INTELLIGENCE. This ascension was real and local. Let us consider it in reference to—1. Himself. (1) He returned to the place whence He came, and assumed the glory which He obscured. (2) To enjoy the reward of His humiliation and sufferings. 2. His enemies. (1) Thus He is a Conqueror. He had foes, but He vanquished them; "and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly." Sin, the devil, the world, death—these are the enemies He has overcome. And to-day He enjoys His triumph. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates," &c. (2) But as He triumphs, He also bestows upon us various and inestimable blessings—"gave gifts unto men." 3. His people. (1) He ascended as the High Priest of their profession. (2) As their Head and Representative. (3) As their Protector and Governor. Conclusion: And now what remains but that we translate this article of our creed into our lives. 1. Follow Him where He now is. "If ye then be risen with Christ," &c., why then are you so attached to earth? Why seek ye the living among the dead? 2. "Seeing that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." 3. What encouragement can you want to rejoice in Him? You have a Brother at court. 4. "But where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (*W. Jay.*) *Christ's interview with Mary at the sepulchre*:—Nothing is more grand, more precious, than the news to be announced to them. "I ascend to My Father," He who is so by nature; "and to their Father," by adoption and grace; "to My God," in covenant with Me as their Head, and "to their God," in covenant with them through Me and under Me. Words which at once show the triumph of Jesus Christ and the triumph of the Christian. Let us illustrate these two ideas. I. IT WAS THE TRIUMPH OF JESUS CHRIST, AND REMOVED THE SCANDAL OF THE CROSS. "If thou be the Son of God," said the blinded Jews when insulting Him, "come down from the cross." Jesus did more—He came alive from the tomb; and this miracle of

Divine power is only the first step of that elevation into which He is entering. "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and unto My God and your God." This is, then, the triumph of Christ. II. IT IS A SOURCE OF THE RICHEST CONSOLATION AND TRUST TO ALL BELIEVERS. "I would wish this text," says the excellent Baxter, "written on my dying bed; I would wish to view it with my closing eyes, that I might exult in the agonies of dissolution." Ah! Christians, never forget it! And let it also be your rule in all your conduct; your consolation in your trials; your trust in the most disastrous situations. 1. If the Father of Jesus Christ is your Father and your God, always listen with docility to a voice at once so august and tender; follow the glorious example of the "first-born among many brethren." 2. If the Father of Jesus Christ is your Father and your God, submit with an entire resignation to all the dispensations of Providence, as Jesus submitted to them. 3. If the Father of Jesus Christ is your God and Father, then let this tender assurance augment your faith, your love, your detachment from the world. (*H. Kollock, D.D.*)

Vers. 19–23. **Then the same day at evening.**—*The first Lord's Day evening*:—I. THE ANXIOUS COMPANY. The twelve, with the exception of Judas and Thomas, were gathered and kept together by a community of interest in Christ. They betook themselves to retirement from lack of sympathy from without, and from fear of the Jews. There was excitement among them by reports of the Resurrection. II. THE DIVINE VISITOR. His appearance was—1. Miraculous. 2. Unexpected. 3. Welcome. His greeting touched the chords of memory. 4. Indubitable. "He showed them His hands!" III. THE SUDDEN JOY (ver. 20). 1. Their suspense was at an end. 2. Their fears dispelled. 3. Their dim hopes realized. 4. Their belief in His predictions established. 5. Their pleasure in His society renewed. 6. Their confidence in His Divine mission revived. IV. THE SACRED COMMISSION. Christ—1. More fully repeated His former language. 2. Instructed them to devote their life to the declaration of God's mind, and the publication of a gospel of pardon for guilty men. 3. Added dignity to their duty in comparing it to His own mission. 4. Imparted the necessary qualifications. Conclusion: It is Christ's presence that hallows every Lord's Day evening. 1. Giving Spiritual power to the preacher. 2. Imparting grace and blessing to the faithful hearer. (*Prof. J. R. Thomson.*) *Jesus meeting His disciples after the Resurrection*:—Note here—1. The reality of Christ's sufferings, death, and resurrection. 2. The proof and attestation of His love. 3. The assurance that He is not ashamed of His humiliation and sufferings on our behalf. 4. The pledge of our resurrection. 5. The affecting circumstances of the history. I. THE EVENT ITSELF was memorable. Never was such known in the history of man. Jesus came back in fulfilment of His own prophecy, as an evidence of the acceptance of His atonement, as the conqueror of sin and death. II. THE TIME was memorable. The first day of the week, and the sun must not go down on that day before the Sun of Righteousness shines on the spirits of His dejected people. Thus our Lord puts peculiar honour on the day, and authorized the observance of it by His own example which has all the force of law. But the evening is specified. Why not the morning? Because they did not seek Him. The approach of Christ is often at our evening time—when the sun of hope and happiness is low and our comforters are few; when we least expect the aids of His providence, and are ready to say, "Is His mercy clean gone for ever?" So in the time of His disciples' despair He appeared. III. THE PLACE was memorable. Probably the scene of the Last Supper; to them like Bethel to Jacob, or the fig-tree to Nathanael. We are all affected by localities in which great blessings or deliverances have been experienced. IV. THEIR PRIVILEGES were memorable. 1. Personal revelation of Christ. 2. Peace. 3. Spiritual power. (*T. H. Day.*) *The appearance to the second company*:—I. THE MEMBERS of the second company. It has been almost invariably assumed from 1 Cor. xv. 5 that they were apostles only. But "the twelve" is only a collective term. Just as the Roman magistrates, called the decemviri, were so called even though there might be vacancies in the body, so this term was applied to the apostles, though Judas was not counted, and Thomas was an absentee. And there is evidence to prove that the apostles did not alone consitute the assembly. Luke speaks of "the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them"; and it is also inevitable from the circumstances. If the brave women had come, expecting a calm retreat and a cordial welcome, would it be said to them from within, "There is danger in the air; we have shut the door for fear of the Jews; besides, no one can join this company but apostles?" If James and Joses, Simon and Judas, the

brothers of our Lord, had knocked at the door, would it have been said to them, "No admission for any but apostles?" If Mark or Luke had whispered the password at the gate, would the answer have been, "This is a meeting of apostles only?" Depend upon it, this company was not a row of ecclesiastical dignitaries, each with a nimbus round his head, and the embroidered symbols of his office on his shoulders; it was only a family, met at the time of a great sorrow, and in the common family room. There was no division between clerical and lay; no upper and lower apartments—one for apostles, one for ordinary disciples. II. THE FAST-CLOSED DOORS. Most likely this was at the house of John, the beloved disciple—that to which he had conveyed Mary. And we may assume that it was built in a style common to dwellings occupied by persons in fair circumstances. There would be a court open to the sky; and in the four sides of this court there would be rooms opening on to it. In this court the company would be assembled; and as its door was fastened by a great wooden key or iron bar, what did they fear? The bursting in of constables to arrest them on the lying charge of stealing a body out of its grave? They knew that such a charge had been lodged against them only that very day. Did they fear the mob? It was the way of the Jews thus to storm the house of one who was unpopular (Acts xvii. 5); and they could now set no limit to the possibilities of their wicked madness. Perhaps they had no distinct plan of defence, and no particular thought of saving their lives; but mainly out of half-instinctive impulse, they barred the court gates. III. THE GREETING OF THE MASTER. His greeting to the first company had been, "Rejoice!" To the second, "Peace!" As Chrysostom says, "To the women He proclaims joy; because they were plunged in grief. With a suitable interchange, therefore, He gives peace to the men, on account of their strife. The first was a small detachment of the general society, and consisted of women only. The second was the general society itself, including all the men." The women had been true, and were only conscious of grief; the men had not been true, and, besides their grief, were conscious of deep agitation and burning shame. This message was meant for our one, whole family, not for apostles alone. When we are in trouble, none of us hesitate to take the comfort that breathes in the fourteenth and following chapters of this Gospel. While you read Christ's language after His resurrection, and compare it with those discourses, you say what He says now is but the continuation of what He said then. He said, "My peace I leave with you"; and now, having "made peace by the blood of the Cross," He comes in His own person to pay the legacy! When we see any one wearing the badge of the Cross, yet seeming not to know the secret of the peace that cost Christ the cross to obtain, how can this be accounted for, unless these Christians think that the peace is only figurative; or that they must be better Christians before they can presume to take it? We might say to such, "You are indeed no better Christians than the men who once cowered behind the shut gates of a certain courtyard in old Jerusalem. Let each crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," go and take this peace from the hand of the dear Christ. IV. THE RESURRECTION BODY OF OUR LORD. 1. It was not an ordinary body, liable to ordinary laws; still, it was a body, perhaps, like that in which the Saviour had walked with Adam in Paradise, wrestled with Jacob, or reclined under the oak at Mamre. No stone wall could shut it in: no iron bar could keep it out; no law of gravitation could detain it; but it was a body. 2. It was flesh —"All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, &c. . . for one star differeth from another star in glory." This glory was the glory of the celestial; visible to mortals only by the light of miracle, and by an act of Divine prerogative. As Moses, with face of celestial flame, "put a veil over his face," that the children of Israel might converse with him, so did the King of Moses veil His glories so that the disciples might speak to Him and live. To show them that it was a true body, He even condescended to take food (Luke xxiv. 43). 3. The very body that had been crucified. "He showed them His hands and His feet." Thus did He establish that fact of His resurrection on which the entire supernaturalism of our religion is decided, and on which all the work of the Atonement depends; while doing this He most emphatically and pathetically called their attention to the Atonement itself. V. THE COMMISSION GIVEN TO THE DISCIPLES (vers. 21–23). 1. The symbol. Both in Hebrew and Greek the word for breath is the word for spirit. The act of breathing here was an "outward and visible sign" of the Holy Spirit, now to be given for the first time; not indeed as a Divine energy in the human heart, but as an energy working through the finished facts of the Gospel, and as the gift of Christ crucified; not to be given for the first time either,

in the sense of being given then and there; but to be given for the first time in the dispensation which Christ was about formally to inaugurate. For the Son of God to promise a boon is potentially the same thing as for Him to give it. When we hear Him say that He will do a thing, our souls exclaim, "It is done!" 2. The formula: "Whosoever sins ye remit," &c. What is the import of this? (1) Not the same as that of the great utterance first addressed to Peter, afterwards to the whole body of His colleagues (Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18). We are summoned to think, not of the power that can forbid or permit matters that have to do with the government of the Church, but of the question, When may sin be remitted? when retained? (2) Dr. John Owen says, "Christ here speaks of remitting or retaining sins by declaring the doctrine of the gospel;" and this appears to be the true sense of this mysterious clause. God, by the voice of Christ, had already told the world whose sins He would remit, and whose retain. He who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is saved—that is, his sins are remitted; he who refuses to believe is condemned already—that is, his sins are retained. This arrangement of remedial grace is fixed and irrevocable, and no sentence pronounced by man, whatever his office in the Church may be, can in the slightest degree alter it, nullify it, or add to it. (3) This declarative mission is the mission of all disciples. It was given to all Christians as such—to ministers and people alike, while as yet they were undistinguished. Surely as Christ was sent by the Father to do what He still continues to do for you, so surely are you sent by Him to do this. Have we received the Holy Ghost? It is only as sharers in the life of our risen Lord that we are sent on His embassies. We must all take in, then give out, that life; tell only what we personally and vitally know; and speak, each according to the measure of His gift. The first thing wanted in the Church is more life; after that, and as the result of it, more work. There may be work without life. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Christ's appearance to His disciples* (Text, and Luke xxiv. 36–48):—I. HE DECLARED HIS BEING WEARY IN ORDER TO TRANQUILIZE THEIR HEARTS. His benediction expressed—1. The great want of human nature, "Peace." The tumult of the disciples is typical of that of those who are at war with—(1) Themselves. (2) Society. (3) The universe. 2. The great design of Christ's mission. He came to reconcile man to his Maker, to Himself, and to the Creation—to reproduce in humanity that supreme sympathy with God which is the essential and unfailing security of spiritual tranquility. II. HE APPEALED TO THEIR REASON IN ORDER TO ALLAY THEIR FEAR. 1. Their fear implied their belief—(1) In disembodied spirits. (2) In the possibility of disembodied spirits appearing to them. (3) In disembodied spirits being unfriendly to them. 2. In Christ's appeal—(1) He assures them that spirits may exist apart from matter, and in this state appear to living men. (2) He demonstrates the materiality of His resurrection body. (3) He throws upon them an inquiry into the cause of their superstitious fear. Inquiry into our mental phenomena will soon expel superstition. III. HE GAVE THEM EVIDENCE IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH THEIR FAITH. "While they believed not for joy"; just as we say, "the news is too good to be true." Observe, in relation to the evidence He presents of His resurrection—1. Its nature. (1) A palpable exhibition of the reality of His body—He eats with them. (2) A clear showing that His resurrection answered the predictions of Scripture. "All things must be fulfilled," &c. 2. Its effect. "Then opened He their understandings," &c. IV. HE PROPOUNDED HIS SYSTEM IN ORDER TO INDICATE THEIR DUTY. 1. The great doctrine of His system. "Repentance and remission of sins." 2. Its world-wide aspect—"All nations"—not a sect or class. 3. The order of propagation, "Beginning at Jerusalem." V. HE ENDOWED THEM WITH EXTRAORDINARY POWER IN ORDER TO FIT THEM FOR THEIR EXTRAORDINARY WORK. 1. He performs a symbolical act. 2. He endows them with extraordinary authority. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The risen Jesus appearing to His disciples*:—I. THE TIME WHEN HE APPEARED. "The same day at evening." 1. Not till He had appeared before to others. Mary Magdalene had seen Him, and Peter and the Emmaus two. It is painful to be thus passed over; to know that He is lifting up the light of His countenance upon others, while we have no glimpse of it. We do not like an earthly friend to pass us by; much less the heavenly. 2. When they did not expect Him, surely they would have left the doors open. And often does He surprise His people. The heart is closed in despair against Him. But "at evening time, it is light"; when light is the last thing expected. Does not this call upon us to cultivate a waiting, expecting spirit. We must not think ourselves forgotten, our turn will come. 3. When they were talking together of Him. St. Luke tells us that "Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them as they *spoke*; not prayed. What an honour was here put on

Christian conversation and communion! And our own experience corresponds. When have our hearts been warmed in social converse, and left refreshed, and longing to see one another again? Has it not been when, forgetting a vexing world, we have spoken together of our blessed Master? "Where two or three are gathered together in My name," &c. II. THE SALUTATION. We may regard it as—1. An indication of the peace that reigned within His own soul. We are most ready to speak of what our hearts are full. With distracted minds we are not likely to speak of peace, unless it be to deplore our want of it. 2. An assurance of His forgiveness. 3. An intimation of our Lord's power to communicate the peace it speaks of. Observe the action, "He showed unto them His hands and His side," suggesting that He had made peace for them through the blood of His cross. "See here that the chastisement of your peace has been really on Me. I shall show this hand and this side to My Father on His throne, and claim peace for you." III. THE EFFECT OF THIS APPEARANCE AND SALUTATION—more than peace, it was gladness. Here is a striking fulfilment of that promise—"Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Their joy was connected with the sight of their Master. Nothing but this could comfort Mary. She goes from the garden to the disciples, and finds them absorbed in sorrow. She bears her testimony, but of what use is it? St. Mark says, "They believed her not." Not one word do we read of their joy till Jesus Himself came. "Then were the disciples glad." Now there is such a thing still as a sight of this risen Saviour. S. Paul tells the Galatians who could never have beheld His face in the flesh, that "before their eyes Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth, crucified among them." To see Christ, then, is to understand this gospel, to receive it of Christ and heartily believe it. Have you ever thus seen the Lord? Till you have thus seen Him, you will never be happy men. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The risen Lord's greetings and gifts* (also Matt. xxviii. 9):—I. THEIR STRANGE AND MAJESTIC SIMPLICITY. Think of what tremendous experiences He had passed through since they saw Him last, and of what a rush of rapture and disturbance of joy shook the minds of the disciples, and then estimate the calm and calming power of that matter-of-fact and simple greeting. They bear upon their very front the mark of truth. Would anybody have imagined the scene so? Neither the delicate pencil of the great dramatic genius nor the coarser brush of legend can have drawn such a trait in character as this, and it seems to me that the only reasonable explanation of it is that these greetings are what He really did say. He has come from that tremendous conflict, and He reappears, not flushed with triumph, nor bearing any trace of effort, but surrounded as by a nimbus with that strange tranquility which evermore enwrapped Him. So small does the awful scene which He has passed through seem to this Divine-human Man, and so utterly are the old ties and bonds unaffected by it, that when He meets them, all He has to say to them as His first greeting is, "Peace be unto you!"—the well-worn salutation that was bandied to and fro in every market place and scene where men were wont to meet. Thus He vindicates the Divine tranquility of His nature; thus He minimizes the fact of death; thus He reduces it to its true insignificance as a parenthesis across which may pass unaffected all sweet familiarities and loving friendships. II. THE UNIVERSAL DESTINATION OF THE GREETINGS OF THE RISEN LORD. Whatsoever any community or individual has conceived as its highest ideal of blessedness and of good, that the risen Christ hath in His hands to bestow. He takes men's ideals of blessedness, and deepens and purifies and refines them. The Greek notion of joy, as the thing to be most wished for those dear to us, is but a shallow one. They had to learn, and their philosophy, and their poetry, and their art came to corruption because they would not learn that the corn of wheat must be cast into the ground and die before it could bring forth fruit. They knew little of the blessing and meaning of sorrow, and therefore the false glitter passed away, and the pursuit of the ideal became gross and foul and sensuous. And, on the other hand, the Jew, with his longing for peace, had an equally shallow and unworthy conception of what that meant, and what was needed to produce it. If he had only external concord with men, and a competency of outward good within his reach without too much trouble, he thought that because he "had much goods laid up for many years" he might "take his ease, and eat, and drink, and be merry." But Jesus Christ comes to satisfy both aspirations by contradicting both, and to reveal to each how much deeper and diviner his desire was than he dreamed it to be; and therefore how impossible it was to find the joy that would last in the dancing fireflies of external satisfactions or the delights of art and beauty; and how impossible it was to find the repose that ennobled and was wedded to

action in anything short of union with God. The Lord Christ comes out of the grave in which He lay for every man, and brings to each man's door, in a dialect intelligible to the man himself, the satisfaction of the single soul's aspirations and ideals, as well as of the national desires. III. THE UNFAILING EFFICACY OF THE LORD'S GREETINGS. Look at these people to whom He spoke. Remember what they were between the Friday and the Sunday morning; utterly cowed and beaten. They were on the point of parting. The Keystone withdrawn, the stones were ready to fall apart. From that time, when, by all reasonable logic and common sense applied to men's motives, the Crucifixion should have crushed their dreams and dissolved their society, a precisely opposite effect ensues, and not only did the Church continue, but the men changed their characters, and became, somehow or other, full of these very two things which Christ wishes them, namely, joy and peace. Now I want to know—what bridges that gulf? How do you get the Peter of the Acts of the Apostles out of the Peter of the Gospels? Is there any way of explaining that revolution of character, whilst yet its broad outlines remain identical, which befell Him and all of them, except the old-fashioned one that the something which came in between was the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the consequent gift of joy and peace in Him, a joy that no troubles or persecutions could shake, a peace that no conflicts could for a moment disturb? In His right hand He carried peace, and in His left joy. He gave these to them, and therefore "out of weakness they were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens," and when the time came, "were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." There is omnipotent efficacy in Christ's greetings! The one instance opens up the general law, that His wishes are gifts, that all His words are acts, that He speaks and it is done. Christ's wishes are omnipotent, ours are powerless. IV. OUR SHARE IN THIS TWOFOLD GREETING. When the women clung to His feet on that Easter morning they had no thought of anything but "we clasp Thee again, O Soul of our souls." But then, as time went on, the meaning and blessedness and far-reaching issues of the Resurrection became more plain to them. And I think we can see traces of the process in the development of Christian teaching as presented in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles. Now, in all three aspects—as proof of Messiahship, as the pattern and prophesy of immortality, and as the symbol of the better life which is accessible for us, here and now—the resurrection of Jesus Christ stands for us even more truly than for the rapturous women who caught His feet, or for the thankful men who looked upon Him in the upper chamber as the source of peace and of joy. For therein is set forth for us the Christ whose work is thereby declared to be finished and acceptable to God, and all sorrow of sin, all guilt, all disturbance of heart and mind by reason of evil passions and burning memories of former iniquity, and all disturbance of our concord with God, are at once and for ever swept away. Again, the resurrection of Jesus Christ sets Him forth before us as the pattern and the prophecy of immortal life. This Samson has taken the gates of the prison-house on His broad shoulders and carried them away, and now no man is kept imprisoned evermore in that darkness. Therefore the sorrows of death, for myself and for my dear ones, the agitation which it causes, and all the darkness into which we shrink from passing, are swept away when He comes forth from the grave, serene, radiant, and victorious, to die no more, but to dispense amongst us His peace and His joy. And, again, the risen Christ is the source of a new life drawn from Him and received into my heart by faith in His sacrifice and resurrection and glory. And if I have, deep-seated in my soul, though it may be in imperfect maturity, that life that is hid with Christ in God, an inward fountain of gladness, far beyond the effervescent, and therefore soon flat, waters of Greek or earthly joy, is mine; and in my inmost being dwells a depth of calm peace which no outward disturbance can touch any more than the winds that rave along the surface of the ocean affect its unmoved and unsounded abysses. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **Jesus stood in the midst.**—*Jesus in our midst:*—I. THERE IS A PECULIAR MANNER IN OUR LORD'S COMING TO HIS DISCIPLES. 1. He came gladly: for He came so soon and so often: at least four times in one day. His delights were ever with the sons of men. He is glad to come and sup with us that we may sup with Him. 2. He came to those who were quite unworthy of so great a privilege. 3. He came to the full assembly, after He had been seen by the few. 4. He came when they were met together quietly, secluded from the world and its cares. It is a good thing for the saints to be shut in, and the world shut out. You must not expect Jesus to show Himself to you if your heart is at home, or at the

workshop, or seeking after vanity. 5. He came when they were all thinking and talking about Him. 6. Some one will say, He will not come here, for there are many barriers, and we are not in a condition to receive Him. But were there no difficulties then? The doors were shut, and the disciples were in fear. Whatever doors there may be between my Lord and my soul, He could pass through them or open them to get at my heart when it longs after Him. You have a fear upon you which you cannot shake off. So had the disciples, or they would not have closed the doors. But Jesus comes though sins encompass us, and doubts and fears and cares hang thick about our path. He comes as the dew which waiteth not for man. II. OUR SAVIOUR HAD A PECULIAR MANNER WHEN HE WAS COME. 1. He stood, He did not flash across the room like a meteor, but remained in one position as though He meant to tarry. He stood in the midst. There are many preachers, but not one of them is in the midst of the family circle. The Lord alone is there, the centre of all hearts. Others are present, and they shine with differing lights, but He is the sun, the centre and ruler of the system of His Church. 2. He speaks, and His word is, "Peace be unto you." 3. He showed to His disciples, not a new thought, a philosophic discovery, a deep doctrine, a profound mystery, or indeed anything but Himself. The most conspicuous thing He showed in Himself was His wounds, and if He be present here, the chief object of faith's vision will be Himself; and the most conspicuous point in Himself will be the ensigns of His passion. 4. In so doing our Lord opens up the Scriptures. Christ's presence is always known by His people by the value which they are led to attach to the Scripture. 5. They then forget all their fears. As He had given them peace with God, so now He puts aside the fear of man. III. THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST WITH HIS DISCIPLES EXCITED VARIOUS EMOTIONS. 1. The disciples—(1) Were terrified, for they thought Him a Spirit. It is a sign of man's depravity that a spirit should alarm him. If we were more spiritual we should be glad to commune with them. (2) When this had a little ceased Jesus said to them, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" I suppose they began to think of their ill conduct to their Master, and conscience made them tremble. (3) We are told by Mark that He also upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart. (4) Meanwhile they doubted whether it could be He, and when they were convinced they greatly rejoiced, and almost at the same time the very vividness of their joy blinded them into another doubt. Like a pendulum, they swung from joy to unbelief. 2. But come to ourselves. Suppose that our Lord were here. We should be filled with—(1) The profoundest awe. Should we not, like John in Patmos, fall at His feet as dead? At any rate, we would devoutly bow the knee before Him, and reverently adore. (2) Overflowing love! How would our hearts melt while He spake! Brethren, He is here! Let us give that loving adoration to Him even now. (3) Serene joy. (4) Deep contribution. IV. HE LEFT CERTAIN PERMANENT GIFTS, which also can be realized by His spiritual presence. 1. The realization of His person. 2. A commission. 3. The Holy Ghost which He breathed upon them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Christ among His people:—From this we learn—1. That the primitive disciples were in the habit of meeting for mutual comfort and edification, which says to us, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together," &c. 2. That the time of their religious gatherings was the first day of the week, which supplies authority for our observance of the Lord's-day as the Christian Sabbath. 3. That when so assembled they were always visited by Christ; which shows that He keeps His promise—"Where two or three," &c. 4. That where Christ presents Himself, He invariably does four things. I. HE BRINGS A BENEDICTION. One of the last things He promised is the first which He bestows—"peace." Observe this is—1. The great blessing of the covenant, including every kind of peace the human heart can want—peace with God, conscience, man. 2. A much-needed blessing, as urgently needed now as then; because of guilt and danger. 3. A purchased blessing; secured by the shedding of Christ's blood. 4. An efficacious blessing. It was no mere wish, pleasant to hear, not vague or idle in significance, but an actual communication of the thing desired. II. HE GIVES A REVELATION. "He showed them," &c. This revelation was—1. Divine. (1) In its origin "He," and it is still Christ Himself who bestows upon His people the "spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." (2) In its character. What He showed was Himself, than which He has nothing higher to impart. Christ crucified and risen is the highest revelation that can be given on the subject of God, man, truth, duty, salvation, eternal life. 2. Sufficient. (1) Then. The assembled apostles required no more, nor Thomas on the following Lord's-day. (2) Now. It contains all that

a sinful man wants to justify his reason in reposing faith in Christ. 3. Cheering. "Then were the disciples glad." And so joy and peace to-day are the invariable results of a believing apprehension of the Saviour (Rom. xv. 13; 1 Pet. i. 8). III. HE ASSIGNS A COMMISSION. "As My Father," &c. This is—1. Authoritative in its source. It emanates from Him to whom all power in heaven and earth has been given by the Father, and to whom by our saintship we owe allegiance. From Him, therefore, who has a right to command, and who cannot be disobeyed without incurring heinous guilt. 2. Imitative in its character, fashioned after the pattern of Christ's, by the same authority, in the same manner, and for a similar end. 3. Alternative in its issues, being fraught with either blessing or cursing. "Whosoever sins," &c. IV. HE SUPPLIES A QUALIFICATION. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." A qualification—1. Much needed. "Not by might nor by power." 2. Perfectly sufficient. Not that Christ's people are to neglect subsidiary helps, such as learning, &c.; only that with the Spirit they will not be left destitute of anything requisite for their work. 3. Very real. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **Peace be unto you.**—*Salutations.* How curiously full of meaning are the different forms of salutation which have been in vogue in different countries and ages! The joyous Greek used to say, χαῖρε!—*i.e.*, rejoice, take a cheerful view of what is before you. The sturdy Roman used to say, *Ave! Salve! Vale!* Be alive, healthy, strong to surmount all enemies and difficulties; override and trample them down. The serious German, Saxon race used to say, *Farewell!*—fare on, travel on as best you can along this uncertain mysterious road, walk well, discreetly, and then, whatever betide, it shall be well with you. The Christian of modern times, of whatever race, says, *Good-day!* Good evening! God bless you! Adieu! Good-bye! &c. God and God's goodness be with you. We commend you to a better guidance than ours. Go on towards God, and may God and all good go on with you. But there is still another form, still universal in the East, *Peace be with you!*—*i.e.*, peace to the traveller amidst the ceaseless wars and feuds of the desert. Peace from robbers by night, from the enemies' snares, from quarrels which embitter life if they do not destroy it, from the alarms which destroy comfort if they do not destroy life. It was this in which our Lord chose to express His best wishes for His disciples. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Christ's salutation*:—1. The day mentioned is the day in commemoration of which every Sabbath now is kept. There is no difference between the Jewish and the Christian Sabbath, except the difference there is in the landscape when the sun is on it and when the sun is off it. 2. We progress in the actings of faith very slowly. Were faith in lively exercise you would see in the midst of this house a glory brighter than ten thousand thousand "mountains of light," with the beams of the meridian sun falling on them. You would see in the midst Jesus; for "where two or three," &c. I. THE SALUTATION—"Peace!" Of all the words that fall on man's ear, none is more delectable. 1. At the sound, perhaps—(1) We think of our infancy, ere the passions of the heart uncoiled themselves, or the cares and turmoil of life were encountered. (2) Or of some happy individual whose mind is graced with all scholarship, charmed with all sensibility, cultivated and wrought up to the mastery of the passions, and the education of the faculties, whose mind seems like a piece of music in tune. (3) Or of some happy family, in which there is such a consentaneousness of thinking and harmoniousness of feeling, such a rippling of kindliness, such a flowing of tenderness that though there are several individuals in the family, it really seems as though they were but one heart beating in the house. (4) Or of some happy land over which the waves of anarchy never rolled, in which the plaints of discord were never heard; where peace and contentment universally prevail; where "every man sits under his own vine and his own fig-tree, having none to make him afraid." (5) Or of a scene inclusive of and transcending all this, even of the garden of Eden itself. 2. But Christ used it in a more sacred sense than any of these. It signifies peace after a war, calm after a storm, tranquility after confusion. In nature, before the storm comes there is generally a very emphatic calm. When the sea is going to be searched through and through, there comes on the deep hush. And now big come the rain drops, now loud comes the wind, now fierce drives the tempest, and before it everything that is rotten gives way directly. Such a time will overtake us all. The peace of the worldling drifts away at once. If the worldling admit that he had any, it is generally found to consist in some reflection to this effect, that on the whole the world has gone tolerably smoothly with him, and he hopes it will continue to do so. But that is not a peace that will live in the storm. But the peace which Christ gives is profound and abiding. When the storm comes down

on the water, we, perhaps, suppose that the storm has ploughed the ocean up to its depths. Not so! Down a few yards at most is the body of water lying in a state of perfect repose, as when God first gathered the waters into the sea. Such is the peace which Christ gives. The storm does not destroy it. It is deep, abiding peace. 3. Not indeed that "peace" can be found in outward things. Take away from the believer in Christ that to which worldly men may look for satisfaction, wealth, station, power, friends, health, and you have not come down to where his peace lies. Certainly, if these outward things could ever have yielded peace, they would have yielded it to Solomon. With astonishing energy and perseverance he worked the problem through; and when he had exhausted his experiments, he summed up the result—"Vanity of vanities; all is vanity!" And yet very few men are willing to take that lesson from Solomon. II. THE ACT WITH WHICH THE SAVIOUR ACCOMPANIED HIS SALUTATION. He did something. Actions are more powerful than words. 1. He showed them His hands as much as to say, If these hands had never have been pierced, these lips would not have pronounced, "Peace be unto you." The chastisement of your peace has been laid on Me; "by My stripes ye are healed." He showed His side, so that we might say, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee!" 2. The showing of the hands and the side of Christ is the only symbolical movement that now remains. All types which intimated beforehand the glories of our redemption by the death of Christ are gone but this. So now, the whole of your behaviour in relation to Christ just resolves itself into this—touching the hands and side of Christ. Believing in Christ and touching Him are the same thing. 3. Then observe the point of difference there is between the actions of men and this action of our Lord in showing His hands and His side. You can never depend on the action of man—he is mutable. But Christ "is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He is always showing His hands and His feet in heaven to signify that He is always doing so on earth to faith. Cannot you touch His hands and His side? "Oh!" you say, "it takes such a great effort." Cannot you make a great effort? I know I can. Let your temporal affairs all get into some great extremity, and I know what you are capable of. Suppose you were drowning—some one throws a rope to you—what kind of movement do you make? All I want from you in relation to Christ is a similar effort on the part of the mind which the body takes towards the rope. Conclusion: To those who have this peace, I must speak to them in the language—1. Of congratulation. 2. Of exhortation; for Christ hath said, "As my Father hath sent Me, so send I you." You are chartered for usefulness. Is there ignorance in the world—remove it. Is there delusion—dissolve it. Is there infidelity—go and supply the elements of faith. Is there immorality—go and check it. Is there misery—wipe its tears, terminate its sighs. (*J. Beaumont, M.D.*)

The peace of Christ:—I. THIS GREETING WAS CUSTOMARY AMONG EASTERN NATIONS. 1. It was, with slight variations, of high antiquity, and we meet with it all through the Bible. 2. In our Lord's-day it had become as much part of the social habits of the people as "Good-morning" is among ourselves. In earlier days, no doubt, men had invoked peace from heaven with the utmost seriousness; but by this time it had become a mere conventional phrase; and yet our Lord did not scruple to use it. But it would be a great mistake to infer that He used it conventionally. A conscientious man will mean what he says, even when he uses words prescribed by custom or etiquette. And among great teachers the majority have been less forward to employ new language than to breathe a new meaning into old words. In Christ this latter method is especially observable. He picks up, as it were from the roadside, the common words which fall from men as they saunter unthinkingly through life; and He restores to them their original power and sanctity. His work was to bring reality in all its shapes into human life. Once before, in the supper-room, He rescued the blessing of peace from unmeaning formalism. "Not as the world giveth give I unto you." 3. The word "peace" does not, in the original, mean only or chiefly rest. The Hebrew root-word means whole, entire; a thing as it should be according to its origin or capacity. Of this state of well-being, freedom from disturbance is either a condition or a result. Yet here, as so often else, the incidental meaning has displaced the original. But our Lord had His eye no doubt, at least partially, on its original sense. He meant not merely tranquility but that which leads to it—wellbeing in its largest sense as affecting the highest interests of a being like man. II. WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SENSE SUGGESTED BY THE BLESSING TO THOSE WHO HEARD IT. 1. Not peace with the Jews without! That could not be (Luke xii. 51). His followers indeed were so much as lieth in

them to live peaceably with all men. But this region of possible intercourse could only extend where the truths of faith were not imperilled. Peace with the Jews at that time, like peace with the non-Christian world in later ages, was only to be had by a surrender of the honour and cause of Christ. 2. Nor peace among yourselves! Doubtless this is of priceless value, as involving the best spiritual blessings, and as an evidence to the world of the truth of our Lord's religion (chap. xiii. 35). But this peace was not then especially needed. The instinct of self-preservation drew and kept them together. The sad day of divisions among Christians was yet to come. 3. But peace in their individual souls—a sense of protection which conquers or ignores fear. There they were for fear of the Jews. They knew what measure had been dealt to their Master. What could they—His disciples—expect? Then He came and said, "Peace." And from His lips the blessing of peace meant safety from every adversary. This is a primary effect of Christ's blessing. It distracts attention from things without. It does not destroy them. Sickness, death, the loss of friends, opposition, the bad tempers, prejudices, follies of those around us, &c., remain as before. But they no longer absorb attention. The eye of the soul is fixed on the Divine and the eternal. III. FREEDOM FROM ANXIETY IS NOT THE ONLY OR THE CHIEF PART OF PEACE. Its root is deeper. The soul must be resting on its true object; or the tumult within will continue in thought, affection, will, conscience. 1. The Crucifixion had thrown the disciples into the greatest mental perplexity. They had trusted that it had been He that should have redeemed Israel. Upon this state of mind the Crucifixion burst like a thunderbolt. True, prophecy and He Himself had foretold it. But the human mind has a strange power of closing its ear to the unwelcome when it is half-comprehended. Christ's words then describe the intellectual effect of His mere appearance. The sight of Jesus risen restored order to the thoughts of the disciples. The Crucifixion was no longer the ruin of their faith if it was followed by the Resurrection. The prophecies were consistent after all. This is still the work of Jesus in the world; when He is recognized by souls He blesses them with intellectual peace. Without Him the belief in a Holy God is embarrassed by the gravest perplexities. All the great haunting questions about life and destiny are unanswered, to any real purpose, until Jesus appears. It is indeed sometimes mistakenly supposed that a Christian knows only the peace of mental stagnation; and that in order to be what is oddly called a thinker, a man must needs be a sceptic. It is of course true that a Christian is not for ever re-opening questions which he believes to have been settled on the authority of God Himself. But to believe is not to condemn thought to inertness and stagnation; a man does not do less work at mathematics because he starts with holding the axioms to be beyond discussion. On the contrary, a fixed creed, like that of the Christian, imparts to life and nature such varied interest, that, as experience shows, it fertilizes thought. The human intelligence has, on the whole, been cultivated most largely among the Christian nations. 2. The disciples had, for the moment, by the death of Jesus, lost the object of their affections. How much they already loved our Lord they did not know until He was removed. Now they felt the weary, restless void of an aching heart. When, then, Jesus appeared He brought peace to their hearts (Song of Solomon iii. 4). Mental satisfaction does not alone bring peace, if the heart remains unsatisfied. And that which satisfies the heart is beauty; that uncreated and eternal beauty of which all earthly beauty is but the shadow. Sooner or later trouble and death make havoc of temporal peace. Only one Being satisfies the affections in such sort, that the soul's peace is insured beyond risk of forfeiture (Isa. xxvi. 3). 3. Our Lord's crucifixion had disturbed all the plans for action and life which had been formed by the apostles. They had been looking forward to the establishment of a new kingdom, and to their own places in and work for it. These visions now seemed to have vanished. The apostles were like men who had just failed in business—all is despair. And the will, the energetic and sovereign faculty of the soul, suddenly set free from the tension of continuous effort, falls back upon itself, and becomes within the soul a principle of disturbance. No men know less of inward peace than the unoccupied. A leading secret of peace is work. Our Lord then restored that sort of peace which comes with occupation pursued under a sense of duty. Many a working man, who does not know how to get into the day what he has to do, supposes that the condition of idle people is to be envied. No mistake can well be greater. Work guarantees the peace of the soul; because the soul must be active in some way, and work secures healthy action. 4. But the peace which man needs most especially, and which our Lord gives most abundantly,

is that of the conscience. Did the apostles as yet understand in detail how their Master would reconcile them to God? It is difficult to say. They knew that this reconciliation was, in some way, to result from His mission and life. But if the violence of His enemies had indeed prevailed, this was a mere matter of phrase and conjecture; His life was essential to the completion of His work. They knew not whether they were saved after all. They had lost that peace which comes from a sense of union with God. When, then, our Lord appeared He restored peace, because He restored the sense, however indefinite as yet, of pardon for past sin, and of reconciliation with God. Without this there can be no true peace for the soul of man. Perhaps no Christian, since the days of the apostles, has illustrated the peace which Jesus gives so fully as Augustine. Read that pathetic story of his early life in his Confessions. What a restless life was his before his conversion! The intellect tossed about on the waves of speculation, without solid hold on any one reassuring truth. The heart distracted between the ideals presented by false philosophies, and the ideals suggested by sensuality. The will unable to fasten on any serious duty; the victim of a feverish unsettlement, or of a capricious languor. The conscience profoundly stirred by the terrible conviction that the Son of Peace was not there, and alternating between the phase of insensibility and the phase of agony. Then came his conversion, and with it what a change! Peace in his understanding, which now surveys with a majestic tranquility, the vast realms of revealed truth; more penetratingly, more comprehensively than any Christian since St. Paul. Peace in his heart, which now turns its undistracted and enraptured gaze upon the Eternal Beauty, who, as he says, is always ancient yet always young. Peace in his will, for which the problem of duty has been simplified; he knows what he has to do, and he does it with all his might. Peace in his conscience. There is no longer any sense of an inward feud with the law of absolute holiness. All has been pardoned through the blood of Jesus; all is possible through His grace. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Christ's peace the antidote for the world's distractions*:—You may have stood by the side of one of those brawling mountain streams which descend from our southern and western coasts into the sea. Such a stream rushes with its noisy waters down its narrow 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, and difficulties, and distractions that make up the noise and clatter of the stream of our daily life. They go on increasing and increasing; they engross our whole attention till they are suddenly met and absorbed by some thought or object greater than themselves, advancing from a wider, deeper, stronger sphere. From a thousand heights the streams of human life are for ever rushing down; but there is another stream advancing into each of those channels, a tide from that wider and trackless ocean, to which they are all tending; and deep indeed is the peace which those tides may bring with them wherever their force extends. The very measure of the greatness of the idea of God and of the things of God is the depth of the peace which that idea is able to impart. (*Dean Stanley.*)

Ver. 20. **When He had so said, He shewed them His hands and His side.**—*The wounds of the risen Christ*:—I want to point out the significance of Christ's action in showing to these men His hands and His feet; and what we learn from it is this. I. CHRIST'S DESIRE THAT HIS DISCIPLES' BELIEF IN HIS RESURRECTION SHOULD BE RATIONAL. His first purpose was to reduce the agitation of their minds so that they might be able to receive evidence of certain great and essential truths of which they were to be the future preachers. They were to go forth into the world and establish His kingdom amongst men, but the foundations of that kingdom were to be distinct historical facts; the chief among them being these two—that He had died and that He had risen again. Christ purposed to gain rule over human hearts, but no dead man can do that. When, therefore, He stands among them on this memorable evening He invites them carefully to examine Him. He possesses a physical body, and is not a phantom. Their senses are to testify to that. The more closely you consider it, from whatever side you look upon it, you will see how supremely important this fact of the resurrection is, and how essentially necessary it was that the evidence for it should be rational and unquestionable. II. CHRIST'S DESIRE THAT HIS DISCIPLES SHOULD BELIEVE THAT THOUGH HE

WAS RISEN HE WAS ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED. Perhaps you will mark that I use the words "essentially unchanged." Essentially—and I do so because there seem to be indications throughout all the incidents of the forty days that though our Lord possessed the same body as He had before the Resurrection, yet there were differences in it. Whatever may have been the effects of the Resurrection upon the outward structure, Christ could say, "It is I, Myself." For the real personality of a man is not his body. That may change; it has changed many times from childhood up to the years of mature manhood; it is perpetually changing. It is so that we think of death and the resurrection. They will not affect our personal identity, though we may be introduced into a new sphere, and possess God's gift of a glorified body. The man, the woman, the child in essential characteristics will remain, however sublime and marvellous may be the changes in the form of their manifestation. Christ states this fact, and appeals to it—appeals to it as a reason why these alarmed men should be calmed. "It is I, Myself." Fear may be banished, because Christ is unchanged. This fact is to be the source of perpetual comfort and strength to those who call Christ Lord. "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He fearlessly asserts this fact, and bases on it an appeal for the most perfect confidence. Do you not see how that appeal to His personality rests on their former experience of His character? Ah! we can think of some passed away, whose reappearance with such words on their lips would be a signal for alarm and terror to those who were familiar with them in the earthly life. They were cruel, mean, selfish, tyrannical; their career was marked by all the vices and follies which can stain human character. What an awful thing it would be for us to meet them as they step out of the invisible into our midst and hear them say, "It is I, myself, unchanged by the experience of death." III. CHRIST'S DESIRE THAT HIS DISCIPLES SHOULD RECOGNIZE HIM AS THE CRUCIFIED ONE. "He showed them His hands and His feet," says Luke; "He showed them His hands and His side," says John; not contradicting, but supplementing, one another's accounts, for evidently He showed them all three—hands, feet, and side. The disciples knew Him by the marks of His suffering. It is thus He would be recognized by all men everywhere—as the once crucified, though now risen and ascended, Prince and Lord. Not because He received cruel wounds and endured a fulness of agony, but because by that pain and sorrow redemption for mankind has been wrought out. We are at first brought into relationship with Him by this fact. We may know Him afterwards as the Mediator, Intercessor, King, Friend; but all possibility of intercourse with Him must begin at the Cross; must begin through those tokens of His suffering love by which He has ever been known. Offer me a Christ who has no wounds received on behalf of sinners, and I do not know Him; I dare not recognize Him. Tell me that He lived a noble life, that He taught grand truths to men, that He did many a work of mercy and compassion amongst the poor and sorrowing, that He was bitterly and shamefully persecuted by His unresting enemies, that He expired at last with fortitude and heroism, a martyr to His principles—and I say: "Yes, all that is well; but answer me—answer the impassioned yearning of my heart—did He die the just for the unjust? did He bear our sins in His own body on the tree?" (*W. Braden.*) *The hands of Christ:*—Those hands are—I. THE HANDS OF A WORKMAN. He has no sympathy with the idler, but honours toil. II. HEALING HANDS. There was no limit to the beneficence of Christ's touch. Deafness, dumbness, fever, blindness, leprosy fled from it. III. PLACED IN BENEDICTION ON THE HEADS OF LITTLE CHILDREN. None are too young to enjoy the Shepherd's care, none too old to need it. IV. SAVING HANDS. They grasped the sinking Peter. They will hold us to the end. V. AN EVIDENCE OF HIS HAVING SUFFERED FOR US. In six days they made the world, now they are pierced for the sins of the world. VI. A PROOF OF THE RESURRECTION. The wounds are healed, but the scars remain. VII. USED IN INTERCESSORY PRAYER FOR US. A Roman soldier returned from the wars found his brother on trial for his life. He held up the stumps of his arms, and turned the tide in the court, and saved his brother's life. Here was sacrifice turned into intercessory prayer. VIII. THE DIVIDING LINE OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT. On which hand wilt thou stand? Conclusion: Let the hands of Jesus lead and support you. (*T. L. Cuyler.*) *The risen Saviour:*—1. By these tokens Christ made Himself known. He might have taken other steps to bring about a recognition—recalled incidents known to Himself and to them only; or wrought some mighty miracle. 2. It may appear strange that Christ should have risen in this condition. (1) It would seem to impair the completeness of His triumph. When

the three Hebrews came forth from the furnace, no trace remained upon them of the fire. And when Christ emerged from fiercer flames, we might expect Him equally unaffected. (2) Allowing that such evidences existed, their concealment would seem most natural. His sufferings and death had been attended with the utmost ignominy and disgrace. (3) It would seem to give an unpleasing character to the future life. He bears in Himself, on the other side of the grave, the signs and the results of His shame and agony here. Viewing Him as the Pattern, we are led to ask: Will it be so with ourselves? If men had been left to themselves to form their own conception of the risen Christ, they would never have thus represented Him. Note—I. THE PERFECT IDENTITY OF THE SAVIOUR'S PERSON. 1. He is the same Jesus as they had parted from a few days before. A change had taken place, but not such as to affect His identity. 2. This identity exists to-day. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday," &c., must be the watchword of our faith. How the person of Christ has been altered by men! What "developments" has He undergone! As we look around us to-day, we see men setting up Christs after their own fancies, utterly unlike the Christ of the Gospels. Let us cling to His abiding identity. II. THE PERMANENT CHARACTER OF HIS REDEEMING WORK. His sufferings still continue, not as to their actual agony, but as to their results. They remain for ever, graven upon the form of the Redeemer. The cross itself stood but for a few hours; the actual sufferings lasted but for a little while. But their influence can never cease. Had He risen with no memorials of His passion upon Him, men might have doubted, and the doubt would have grown stronger with the ages. But as we look upon Jesus, and see His hands and His side, we learn that He still retains His sacrificial character, and that our faith may rest upon Him as surely as though the Cross and resurrection were events of to-day. III. THE SAVIOUR'S ESTIMATE OF HIS SUFFERINGS. 1. Men looked upon them as shameful, but to Himself they were glorious. Nothing can minister such joy to His heart as these marks received in that fierce conflict, now crowned with victory, into which He threw Himself for man's deliverance. 2. There shall be something like this with ourselves. Life is a battle from which we do not escape without wounds. Yet the things that are most terrible now may yield hereafter our greatest joy. The darkest things here may be the brightest there. IV. THE TRUE METHOD OF PRESENTING CHRIST TO MEN. Show them "His hands and His side." Insist upon His sacrificial character, upon His death as an atonement for sin. 1. There are those who present Christ to men, but do not show them "His hands and His side." They point to the mystery of His incarnation, His moral perfection, &c. But all this, necessary and good as it is, fails to meet man's case as a sinner. Tell them all this, but tell them especially that, being all this, He died for sinners as an atonement for their sins. 2. This method of presenting Christ is the mightiest for overcoming unbelief. You may reason with men on the evidences of Christianity, and they may remain in their unbelief. "Show them His hands and His side;" put Christ before them in His sufferings and self-sacrifice, and minds that had only become stronger in their opposition through argument and embittered by controversy, have yielded. 3. This method is the mightiest for conquering the pride and selfishness of the human heart. Nothing can equal the force of His appeal when He thus presents Himself to man. A legend has come down to us to the effect that Satan once appeared to one of the mediæval saints in the form of the risen Saviour, but that the saint discovered and repelled him by asking for the print of the wounds. V. THE METHOD OF HIS REVELATION HEREAFTER. Amidst the countless multitudes of heaven's inhabitants, we may recognize the Man of Calvary by these signs. (*W. Perkins.*) **Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.**—*Gladness in seeing the Lord*:—The disciples were glad because—I. THEIR SUSPENSE WAS AT AN END. It had been prolonged for two days, and must have been peculiarly distressing. Now light broke in upon their darkness. II. THEIR FEARS WERE DISPELLED. They doubted and were sad, for they had an awful dread lest all their convictions concerning Jesus were groundless. This was now dissipated. III. THEIR HOPES WERE REALIZED. Fear and hope had alternately taken possession of them. They hoped against hope; in the hearts of some hope had vanished. But now it dawned again brightly on their sight. IV. THEIR BELIEF AND CONFIDENCE WERE NOW ESTABLISHED. Now they recollected what they had all but forgotten: that all happened as He had foretold. He would now be to them all that they had ventured to anticipate. V. THEIR PLEASURE IN HIS SOCIETY WAS RENEWED. He was very dear to them, and had called them "friends." The sight of Him who was to them "the altogether

lovely" brought gladness to their hearts. As they had grieved because they saw Him not, so now when they saw Him, their sorrow was turned into joy. VI. THEIR EYES WERE OPENED TO THE MEANING OF THEIR EARTHLY LIFE, AND TO THE PROSPECT OF IMMORTAL FELLOWSHIP WITH THEIR DIVINE LORD. Soon they saw that it was to be their vocation to be witnesses of His resurrection, and ambassadors and heralds of His gospel. So honourable an office might well be contemplated with gratification. And they must have felt if His death were no barrier to this Divine fellowship, so theirs could never sever them from Jesus, but must bring them into a nearer and eternal communion. (*Family Churchman.*) *A sight of Christ*:—That holy man, Mr. Walsh, when the Lord revealed Himself to him, was obliged to cry, "Hold, Lord! remember I am but an earthen vessel; and if I have more of this delight I must die." One said he would like to die of that disease, and I am very much of his mind. They say, "See Naples and die"; but to improve on it, another said, "See Naples and live": and truly this is the better sight of the two. I would fain see my Lord so as to live to His praise. Oh, for such a vision as should shape my life, my thought, my whole being, till I became like my Lord! Oh, to see Him so as to be changed into His image from glory unto glory! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The joy of Christians in the presence of their Lord*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. It differs from physical delights, intellectual or social, in depth, purity, and permanency. 2. It is the repose of a soul on an infinite, personal Being. 3. Our Redeemer, Advocate, and Friend. 4. Whose presence assures all needed grace, here and hereafter. II. METHOD OF SECURING IT. 1. Self-renunciation, cordial reliance on Christ. 2. Prayerful meditation on what He is and has done. 3. Doing the duties of the Christian life. III. RESULTS. 1. Fortifies against sin and inspires in life's work. 2. Makes religion attractive. 3. Takes away the fear of death. Conclusion: 1. We see why some do not have this joy; inadequate views of their privilege, absorbed in the world, or indulging in sin. 2. It is practicable and so a duty. 3. Appearance of Christ a joy to the believer and a cause of alarm to the sinner, so a test of character. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *Reasons for the joy of the disciples on the Resurrection*:—They were glad when they saw the Lord, as—I. IT GAVE PROOF THAT HE HAD ESCAPED THE FURY OF HIS FOES. They had lately looked on Him as lost. Now they saw Him completely exempt from danger; and their joy was proportioned to their intense love. Could He have given them salvation at the expense of His own destruction, it would have yielded them no satisfaction. In proportion as we love our Saviour, we shall rejoice that He is now at the right hand of God. II. IT AFFORDED AN EVIDENCE OF HIS CHARACTER, AND A CONFIRMATION OF HIS MISSION AND DOCTRINE. God has shown His complacency in virtue by crowning it with glory in the exaltation of His Son. The signature of the Divine hand was thus put upon it: and they were enabled to go abroad and establish Christianity on the basis of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Had He not risen, they must have been utterly ashamed and confounded. Who could pretend that the Divine Being would by this stupendous miracle give sanction to imposture. How thankful to God should we be for having placed our religion on such a basis of evidence! III. IT PROVED THE ACCEPTANCE OF HIS SACRIFICE and the completion of His obedience in behalf of His believing followers. Without this His death is like that of an ordinary man; but this proves the merit and power of His death. "Who is he that condemneth? when it is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen." Hence there remains no bar to the salvation of every penitent sinner. This is the source of a joy as extensive as the Church of God. IV. IT WAS A PROOF OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE BLESSINGS WHICH HE HAS PROCURED BEYOND THE PRESENT STATE; a pledge of their entrance into heaven. He rose as the Head of His body the Church; He entered into the holiest as the Forerunner of His people: it was His prayer "that they all may be with Me, and behold My glory." His desire will be fulfilled that their joy may be full. V. THEY HAD THUS A PLEDGE OF HIS PROTECTION OF HIS CHURCH FROM ITS ENEMIES, AND OF ITS FINAL TRIUMPH OVER ALL. They were now assured that greater is He that is in the Church than he that is in the world. (*Robert Hall.*)

Vers. 21-23. **Then saith Jesus unto them . . . as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.**—*The correspondence between the two missions*:—Christ is the Arch-Missionary and the Arch-Apostle (Heb. iii. 1), at once both the Author and the first Bearer of the office; and the apostles are His successors. Christ came in His Father's name (chap. v. 43), and they came in Christ's name. Christ was sent that He might speak, not of Himself, but what He had heard of the Father (John viii. 27; xiv.

10; xv. 15); and His servants are sent, not to preach dreams of human wisdom, but the Word of God (Jer. xxiii. 16; 1 Pet. iv. 11). Christ was sent not to destroy but to save souls (Luke ix. 56; John iii. 17); and His ministers are sent with power to build up, and not to destroy (2 Cor. xiii. 10). The Father worked with Christ, and left not the Son alone (John v. 17, 19; xvi. 32); and Christ works with us so that our labour is not in vain. Finally, as Christ was sent, that through suffering He might enter into His glory; so also has He bequeathed His shame (Matt. x. 22), and His cross (chap. xxi. 18), but after that His glory also (Luke xxii. 29; comp. 1 Pet. v. 1). Now, if we should all "honour the Son even as we honour the Father," so to the servants of Christ also the honour is due, that in them we honour the Lord who has sent them; as He Himself says, "He that heareth you heareth Me," &c. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) *Christ's mission one with ours*:—His mission and their mission were one. The purpose that fired His heart as He came from the glory to the Cross, and was returning from the grave to the throne, was to be their purpose. There was to be the same aim and the same grand consummation in view. The subaltern, the common soldier, the drummer in the campaign, may feel that they are taking part in the same cause that is keeping the anxious general awake at night, and taxing all his ingenuity and energy. And so the humblest servant in His house who can do nothing more than talk to a few children, or carry a cup of cold water to a fainting one, or place a few flowers on the table in the sick room, or read a few verses from a psalm or sing a few stanzas of a hymn to an aged Christian, may rejoice in the consciousness that his little work is finding a place in the grand plan that has its sweep through the centuries; that the little ripple of his love is helping the flow of the tide that is to cover the world with glory; that his feeble heart-beats are in unison with the pulses of the eternal God. "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." It is the voice of authority; it is the voice "that rolls the stars along"; but it speaks to a human will, a human heart; and He has confidence that His word will be obeyed. (*James Owen.*) *The true Spirit of missions*:—I. THE RISEN LORD MANIFESTING HIMSELF TO THE CHURCH. 1. He did not manifest Himself first of all to the collective disciples, but to Mary Magdalene, &c. This is God's way. His blessings are not for the Church apart from its individual members. No Church will have collective manifestations whose members do not find Him in the garden, in the closet, in the way, sitting at meat, &c. 2. He manifested Himself while they were talking about Him. Mary declaring that she had seen Him, others that He had opened the scriptures, others were doubting; then someone said, "There He is in the midst of us." 3. He bestowed His benediction. With a reminiscence of "Let not your hearts be troubled," *i.e.*, agitated, He said, "Peace," &c. 4. He demonstrated the reality of His resurrection, and made the disciples glad. What makes the heart of God's people glad is the revelation of Christ, not as here, but as on the way to Damascus to Paul, "God revealed His Son in me, that I might preach Him." He to whom Christ has never manifested Himself is in no condition to preach Him. 5. Now, how did He come? There were there, as there are here, persons wondering how Christ could manifest Himself. Are there not closed doors, impenetrable walls, and one difficulty after another in this nineteenth century to prevent this? No, the only barrier which can keep Christ out is unbelief. "Oh," you say, "there is unworthiness." No! look at the people in that room! We know little, even in natural things, of what is likely and unlikely, except by experience. For instance, if we knew that there was outside these walls trying to get in some sunlight, sound or electricity, and we were asked how it was to get in, and we knew nothing about iron, and glass, and stone, and air, we should say that sound, *e.g.*, would get in much easier through air than through iron—and yet we know it will go much faster through iron. And when God makes a thing to pass through, it will pass through, and when He is in the question, no barriers can keep Him out. "Where two or three are gathered in My name," &c. II. COMMUNICATING HIS SPIRIT TO THE CHURCH. This is more than the manifestation of Himself. We are particular to think of our seeking Christ and the Spirit; but here are both waiting to communicate themselves. Here is Christ not waiting for them to breathe out a prayer for the Spirit, but breathing the Spirit upon them. There is one word with reference to the Spirit which is very expressive—influence. This means nothing more than a flowing in just as water will flow in upon a meadow until the meadow is completely under it. And we talk of being under the influence if any man with that idea in our mind. But the Bible never represents the Spirit as inert water coming in by gravitation, but as being "poured" in with a will and hand that has power to send it. And so when

we come to the word "inspiration," it is not a mere gliding in of a gale of air, but the "breathing" in from a living being warm with feeling and earnest with will. So here. And thus Christ calls to mind some Old Testament records. The disciples would feel that the world in a moral sense was "without form and void," &c., and that the Spirit was coming forth to make the chaos and the darkness feel His power, and each of them might have said, "We are all dead men"; but there was the Second Adam, the quickening Spirit, to breathe into their nostrils the breath of life to make His dead disciples living souls. They would think, too, of the valley of dry bones, and the command, "Breathe upon them." He had told them that it was expedient for them that He should go away so that He might send the Spirit; and now, on the very first day of His reappearing, the first thing He does is to show them He that is just as near as the breath that is breathing upon them. "Go," He says in effect; "but before you go, take the breath to travel with. Go; but before you spread the sails of your ship, the Lord of the winds shall make the winds blow for you. Go to convert the world; but before you try to raise the dead, let it be seen that the Lord has raised you." Christ is breathing now, and saying, "Receive ye," &c. III. LAYING HER COMMISSION TO WORK UPON THE CHURCH. 1. "As the Father," &c. This has been interpreted to mean, "With the authority which the Father sent Me, I send you." Now, the authority with which Christ came was to restore all things to make atonement, &c. So it cannot mean that. No; the disciples were under, not in, authority. He sent them forth to preach, love, labour, pray, as He preached, &c. Never a man of them could play the king as He did. They were to go representing Him; they were to go in love and self-sacrifice as He had gone. 2. Then He says, "Whosoever sins ye remit," &c. Who are the "ye"? Those present —not Peter or John, or the ten collectively. We are expressly told that other disciples were there—Mary, &c.—and not the slightest difference was made. What the Lord meant He meant for all. There are two ways of interpreting what He did mean —the one the way in which the Church of Rome interprets it, and the other the way in which the Church of St. Peter interprets it,. Rome tells a man He must go and confess to and get absolution from a priest. But take the first case in which a man cries out in the presence of Peter for remission (Acts ii.). Does Peter ever say, "come aside and confess?" or John, or Paul? Is there a hint of any such transaction? No, you will find that every one demands repentance and faith in Christ, and promises forgiveness upon that. That was the use which Peter understood was to be made of this. And the remission was not a transaction somewhere above the clouds, but actually carried into the man's soul so as to transform him. The remission was conscious, real and immediate. Now in the Church of Rome there are five ways of remission. (1) By baptism. (2) By confirmation. (3) By penance. (4) By indulgence. (5) By extreme unction. Of course, after all that they ought to be remitted. But supposing a man has received all these remissions from the pope himself; why, you will find masses offered for his sins in purgatory! Such is not the remission of Christ. When Christ remits all sin is at once cast away, gone for ever into the depths of God's forgiving love. And the Church's mission is to testify to every man that there is remission without price, priest, sacrifice. Show His hands and His side and there is the proclamation of remission of sins. (*W. Arthur, M.A.*)

Receive ye the Holy Ghost.—*The gift of the Spirit*:—The Christian dispensation is remarkable for two unspeakable gifts—God's gift of His Son and God's gift of His Spirit. And it were hard to say which gift is of the greater practical value; for without the gift of the Spirit we perish under the very shadow of the cross, while with it we possess all that the Cross promises. Consider—I. IN WHAT THIS GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST CONSISTS. 1. Not in an empty sound, but in a veritable and substantial gift. When God says "I will pour out My Spirit upon you," He does not mock us with a sound of words; for the gift is larger than the word that speaks it. 2. Not in the gift of a number of good things figuratively represented as a gift of the Holy Ghost. If there is a literal expression anywhere in God's Word, then the gift of the Holy Ghost is the gift of the Holy Ghost; and to suppose it to be anything else is to reduce the Scriptures to a shadowy phantasm of figures with no fixed meaning. 3. Not in the gift of the Spirit on our behalf, merely to prepare the economy of saving grace. The Spirit was given not only to inspire the Word, to anoint Christ, to qualify the apostles, and to fill all the organisation of Christianity with light and life; but is also given as a direct and immediate gift to the believer. Not only as a gift of germinating and fructifying efficiency to the soil and atmosphere in which the seed-corn is placed, but also as a gift of life and growth-power to the seed-corn itself. "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you." 4. It consists

in the grant of His abiding presence. There is a necessary presence of the Spirit, by reason of His nature—"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?" But this is a presence in which He is caringly, lovingly, helpingly, savingly with us. God was always in the world; but when He came in Christ, He was "God with us" in a very special manner. So with His Spirit in this gift. 5. It consists in a gracious affluence and influence of the Spirit upon our spirits. A patriot orator addresses his countrymen. Like a subtle, invisible fire, the fervour of his spirit flows out in his words, gestures, and looks, and flows in upon the spirits of the crowd, till all are moved and roused to action. And shall not the spirit of God—by the words of God, the wounds of Christ—move us to grief or joy, to hope or zeal? Believe in the life and energy of the Spirit. 6. It consists in the production of "fruits of the Spirit." The Spirit's movings would be a small gift without their effects; as the warmth and refreshing of sun and rain would be without the following harvest, or as the sound of David's harp on Saul's troubled spirit without the ejection of the evil spirit. And we are liable to be deceived by false, or human and merely natural emotions. Trust no emotion that does not hallow the heart; but do not distrust the Spirit's influence because "many false spirits are gone out." II. THIS GIFT IS A GIFT FOR ALL BELIEVERS IN COMMON. For the ordinary work of a common salvation. Not only to enable men to speak with tongues, but to enable men of blasphemous tongues to speak the praises of God; not for "gifts of healing" only, but to heal the sin-sick souls of penitents to all time; not for "prophecies" merely, but to enable glad-hearted believers to foretell and foretaste the joys of heaven. Is a man to be born again—to belong to Christ, to be assured of adoption, to be sanctified? For all these, and all the gracious round of gospel purposes the Spirit worketh. And the promise is to "as many as the Lord our God shall call." III. THE STANDING NECESSITY FOR THIS GIFT. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Men can read the Bible, but cannot make it as a hammer, or as a fire; can build sanctuaries, but cannot make them temples of God; can organize churches, but cannot make them "habitations of God" except "through the Spirit;" can make sermons, but cannot convert souls; can arrange and marshall attacks upon vice and sin, but cannot make them "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds." Even the Lord Jesus Himself was "anointed with the Holy Ghost, to go about doing good;" while not a captain was ever sent against the Philistines, or an Aholiah or a Bezaleel employed upon the tabernacle without a measure of God's Spirit. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." IV. HOW IS THE GIFT TO BE OBTAINED? 1. Believe in the Holy Ghost. All baptized into His name; part of the Christian benediction from above is His communion. Believe in His power and gift. 2. Confess your dependence on this gift. This blessed shower will slide away from the mountain side of self-sufficiency, to rest richly in the valleys beneath. The Spirit is promised when "the city shall be low in a low place." 3. Be ready to receive the gift. The Spirit comes to work a holy work. If you reject His work you reject Him. Submit to all His working, and He will come. 4. Ask the gift of the Father in Christ's name. While Christ prayed the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon Him. While the apostles prayed the place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. 5. Rely upon the gift, and venture on God's work in expectation of it. Stretch forth the withered hand. Like the priest who bore the ark, put your foot into the waters of your swelling Jordan; sound your trumpet against your frowning Jericho, and expect the help you need. (*Lay Preacher.*) *Receiving the Holy Ghost*:—I. THIS BREATHING WAS MORE THAN A SYMBOLIC ACT, CONFIRMING THE PREVIOUS PROMISE; it was more than an assurance—"Ye shall receive." It was an actual, though partial, impartation of the Holy Spirit. 1. In this connection, in Luke, we read that "their understandings were opened, that they might understand the Scriptures." They receive now from Him a pledge and an earnest of the greater fulness that would come on the Day of Pentecost. This was a breath, heralding the "rushing mighty wind;" a little cloud, the size of a man's hand, the precursor of the clouds that would soon pour out a flood upon the parched ground. God often gives earnests of His blessings. A John the Baptist comes to prepare the way for Christ. The morning star heralds the sun. 2. This was the pledge of the Pentecost, when they were filled with the Spirit. And after that we read that in a prayer meeting they were again filled with the Spirit. There was a greater fulness, because there was greater room, because their natures were enlarged. Sometimes a father has to say to his spendthrift son: "My boy, when I have given you this, I shall have no more that I can throw away." God will never say that to us; every gift

is a seed from which a larger gift will grow. All natures are not the same, and there comes a larger measure of spiritual influence to some than others. The large tree, with its spreading branches and broad leaves, is drinking in from the air and sun and rain that which would suffice for three or four smaller trees. II. THE NATURE OF THIS SPIRITUAL POWER AS BESTOWED BY CHRIST. 1. The words "breath" and "life" and "spirit" are used synonymously. "The Lord God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of lives." "Come from the four winds, O breath!" and the breath came into the dry bones and they lived. But the physical is a symbol of a higher life, and the Spirit of God is the life of this higher nature. The question asked by scientific men is, How came life at first? From God. In regard to spiritual life, it is the testimony of all, from those early disciples downwards, "Not I, O Lord, but Thy Spirit in me." 2. This is a real thing. Just as the breath of Jesus, falling warm on the disciples' faces, and the word of hope or courage whispered to a brother in darkness, and lifting him up to the light, and the battle-cry of freedom, arousing a nation from dogged despair, are real things; so this breath from heaven is real, a new, vital force coming into the man. He is a new man. "The old things are passed away; behold they are become new." 3. The question of inspiration has been much discussed of late. The word is literally "inbreathing." And I believe that the writers of this book were divinely inspired, that the prophets and apostles, with their varied powers and attainments, were harps along which the breath of God swept, and discoursed sweet and immortal strains to the world. But I believe that every Christian is divinely inspired for the work God means him to do, that the Spirit which came upon Bezaleel, the builder of the tabernacle, comes to the Christian in his humblest service to guide and teach him. He is not required to write a Bible, to be an apostle to the Africans or Chinese, to lead a crusade against slavery, or to usher in a great reformation; and, therefore, he has no inspiration for all this. But for the service required of him there is adequate power, and the five barley loaves in a lad's basket may be multiplied into a feast for five thousand men. III. THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS THE DISCIPLES' EQUIPMENT FOR THEIR GREAT MISSION—a mission that has to do with sin. "Whose soever sins," &c. There were many evils afflicting the world at that time, as there are to-day; they were the sores on the surface, but Christ went to the root of the disease. It is possible to change the circumstances and yet not change the man. Laws may be improved, social and national customs may be reformed, wrongs may be redressed, abuses may be corrected; but, after all, this is only like giving a new coat to the leper or putting a new tombstone on the grave. But Christ came to deal with the evil thing itself, to work at the centre, and from that to the circumference, to put the leaven in the midst of the meal, to take away sin, and destroy the work of the devil. "But do these words appear," you may say, "to delegate the power which the priests assume?" In reply, consider that these words were not addressed to all the apostles. Thomas was absent. And the words were not addressed to the ten apostles alone. 1. "Whose soever sins ye remit," or forgive. What does this mean? That a man is to take the place of the Saviour, and undertake to forgive sins? No; but he bears a gospel from Christ which is a message of forgiveness; and when that gospel is received, forgiveness is received, and we are warranted in saying, "You are forgiven;" and what we say on earth, the angels, in their songs over the returning prodigal, say in heaven. Sin begets despondency, and a man says, "I shall never get rid of it; the load is tied on too fast; like the Nessus shirt, it clings to me—it will be with me for ever." You, as a Christian, have to reply: "No; the load may be removed, the devil driven out, the sins washed away." It is a great thing to help a man to realize this. Think of how Paul dealt with a man who had fallen in Corinth. Did he ask the man to confess to him and receive absolution? No; but he requested the Church to forgive him, and by their forgiveness to help him to believe in the forgiveness which abounds beyond the abounding sin. 2. "And whose soever sins ye retain," &c. That is, the message of forgiveness may be rejected. If not only the load of guilt remains, but, by reason of that rejection, is made heavier. The preaching of Christ cannot leave men as it finds them. The gospel of life may become a savour of death unto death. Where there is a rejection of Christ, we are authorized to say, "Your sins remain. There is no other way." And as the decisions of our colonies, are generally confirmed by the government at home; so the decisions of a divinely-directed society, whether in Church discipline or teaching, are ratified in heaven. Conclusion: For good service to the Church and the world, what do you need? Mental powers? knowledge? training? books? Yes. But, above all, you need the

Spirit of God. Sunday-school teachers, if you would do your work well, you must have the Spirit. Witnesses for Christ in daily life, if you have the Spirit, there will be a right emphasis, a consistency, and courage in your testimony. (*James Owen.*) **Whose soever sins ye remit.**—*The remission of sins*:—I believe that nothing more than the authority to declare can be got out of these words, and I entirely reject the strange notion that our Lord meant to depute to the apostles the power of absolutely absolving or not absolving any one's soul. My reasons for maintaining this view of the text are as follows: 1. The power of forgiving sins, in Scripture, is always spoken of as the special prerogative of God. The Jews themselves admitted this (Mark ii. 7; Luke v. 21). It is monstrous to suppose that our Lord meant to overthrow this great principle. 2. The language of the old Testament Scripture shows conclusively that the prophets were said to "do" things, when they "declared them about to be done." Thus Jeremiah's commission (Jer. i. 10) can only mean to declare the rooting out and pulling down, &c. So also Ezekiel says, "I came to destroy the city" (Ezek. xliii. 3); where the marginal reading is, "I came to prophecy the city should be destroyed." The apostles were doubtless well acquainted with prophetical language, and I believe they interpreted our Lord's words in this place accordingly. 3. There is not a single instance in the Acts or Epistles of an apostle taking on himself to absolve any one. The preachers of the New Testament declare in the plainest language whose sin is pardoned, but they never take on themselves to pardon. When Peter said to Cornelius and his friends, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43); when Paul said at Antioch, in Pisidia, "We declare unto you glad tidings;" "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts xiii. 32, 38); and when Paul said to the Philippian jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xv. 31); in each case they fulfilled the commission of the text before us. They "declared whose sins were remitted, and whose were retained." 4. There is not a single word in the three pastoral Epistles to show that the Apostle regarded absolution as part of the ministerial office. If it was he would surely have mentioned it, and urged the practice of it on young ministers, for the relief of burdened souls. 5. The weakness of human nature is so great, that it is grossly improbable that such a tremendous power would ever be committed to any mortal man. It would be highly injurious to any man, and a continued temptation to him to usurp the office of a Mediator between God and man. 6. The experience of the Romish Church affords the strongest indirect evidence that our Lord's words can only have been meant to bear a "declarative" sense. Anything worse or more mischievous, both to minister and people, than the results of the Romish system of penance and absolution it is impossible to conceive. It is a system which has practically degraded the laity, damaged the clergy, and turned people away from Christ. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The gospel of absolution* (Text, and Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18):—Let us inquire—I. WHAT IS ABSOLUTION? "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." If we refer to another occasion upon which Christ used this metaphor of the keys, we shall find that Christ was accustomed to associate with the expression knowledge and the specific power that comes from knowledge (Luke xi. 52). The reference here can only be to the knowledge that unlocks the gates leading into the kingdom of heaven. That was Christ's future gift to Peter. Putting this side by side with the fact that Christ had just been speaking of a knowledge of His own Person and character that had been given to Peter, what can the knowledge that Christ would by and by give be but the knowledge of the Father, of which He was the only one spring and channel amongst men? It was through that knowledge that Peter was to open the way for men into the kingdom of heaven. "To bind" and "to loose" was to teach and to rule in the kingdom of heaven, in harmony with the knowledge received from the Father. You will observe that the promise deals more immediately with things, not persons, with truths and duties, and not with human souls. And then we turn over two chapters in Matthew's Gospel that are separated from each other by a few months of time, and we find practically the same language, with the metaphor of the keys dropped from it, addressed to a much wider circle of disciples. In the later version of the same words, you will find that the binding and loosing refers to that which is impersonal. "What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." No unconditional infallibility is ascribed in the passage either to the Church or its ministers. It declares its infallibility with special safeguards. Go into an observatory, and watch some astronomer as he is following the transit

of a star. His telescope is so adjusted, that an ingenious arrangement of clock-work is made to shift it with the transit of the star. His instrument is moving in obedience to the movement of the star in the heavens. But the clock-work does not move the star. The astronomer has made his faultless calculations; the mechanic has adjusted his cranks and pendulums and wheels and springs with unerring nicety, and every movement in the telescope answers to the movement of the star in the far-off heavens. The correspondence rests on knowledge. And so when the things that are bound on earth are bound in heaven. Every legislative counsel and decree and movement in a truly apostolic and inspired Church answers to some counsel and decree and movement in the heavens. But then the power of discerning and forecasting the movements of the Divine will and government rests upon the power of interpreting the Divine character and applying its principles of action, as that character is communicated to us by Jesus Christ. You are giving a boy his first lesson in astronomy. You show him an orrery. You tell him that the central disc represents the sun, and the third from the centre the earth, and so on. And then you ask him to turn the handle which puts all these metallic balls representing things in the heavens in motion. You say that every movement here is a counterpart of every movement in the skies. But unless the boy is very dull indeed he does not suppose he is actually turning the planetary system with this little handle. And yet if the machine be faultless in construction, whatever is done on earth is done in heaven. Whatever is bound here is bound yonder likewise. The words addressed to the apostles by Jesus Christ on the evening of His resurrection from the dead approach more nearly to what has been understood by the term "absolution" than the earlier utterances. Here the apostles are spoken of as dealing with the souls of men in direct judgment. In the preceding instances they have been viewed as dealing with souls through the instrumentality of the truth. Here the instrumentality falls more or less into the background, and the witnesses to Jesus Christ are viewed as justifying or condemning, saving or destroying men by the power of their word. "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." And yet, after all, this is but a more solemn and impressive form of the earlier statement. As the doctor takes the key of his drug-store and selects from the specifics that are arranged around him, he kills or makes alive. His key means a power of absolution. When it is first put into his hand he is entrusted with as solemn a responsibility as the judge who pronounces death-sentences or the Home Secretary who presents a death-warrant to the sovereign for signature or recommends a reprieve. When he selects this drug, or looks upon that as hopeless to apply under the conditions into which the patient has fallen, he is dealing with questions of life and death. And so Christ in His closing admonitions to the disciples teaches that they are not dealing with speculative truth only. They are commissioned to deal with grave, spiritual destinies. "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." The words imply that the truth the apostles shall preach to men in the crowd, as well as present to the individual in the course of their more private ministrations, is the truth by which men shall be judged in the day of Jesus Christ, and that the impression produced here and now under their preaching shall be confirmed then. The sphere of the apostles' ministry and the sphere of the final judgment shall be penetrated by the same moral laws and principles. We sometimes find that things that apply under the conditions of one age do not apply under the conditions of another. Acts done in one country may have no worth or validity if the doer of them goes to another. The principles to be set forth by the apostles in their relation to the collective or individual souls of men alike are universal, not local, of Divine and not human authority only, eternal and not temporary and terminable in their sanctions. "Whose soever sins ye shall remit shall be remitted unto them." It will help us in our endeavour to reach just conclusions on this question, if we remember that the power possessed by the first messengers of the gospel was greater than the power possessed by its messengers now, and approximated more closely to the exclusive type of prerogative claimed by the modern sacerdotalist. The first possessors of a truth wield a more terrible power than their successors can expect to wield, when that truth has become widely known. The curative properties of certain drugs now used in medicine were once known only in certain families. The knowledge was kept a secret within these families for generations. The knowledge was a monopoly. Through that monopoly they had in many cases power of life and death. That knowledge diffuses itself through a hundred text-books over half

the globe, and becomes accessible to any one who can read. The special power accruing to the first possessors of the secret through their monopoly has passed away. And so with the knowledge by which entrance into the kingdom of heaven was to be gained. That knowledge at first was the monopoly of the few who followed Christ. But that condition of things exists no longer. If Peter himself could come into our midst, he would find his distinctive prerogative gone. That special knowledge which made him an absolver of souls gifted with a prerogative of life and death, he would find the possession of little children in Sunday schools. It is said that when the Earl of Essex was in high favour with Queen Elizabeth, she one day gave him a ring, accompanied by the request that if he should ever find himself in circumstances of trouble in which her help could avail, he would at once send that ring as the sign of his appeal to her good offices. She would then do everything in her power to aid him. Some time after he was arrested for rebellion, and condemned to die. Elizabeth signed his death-warrant, but waited with tears and solicitude for the return of the ring, that was to be the sign of his appeal to her clemency. The ring had been entrusted by the condemned earl to the Countess of Nottingham for delivery into the hands of the queen. The Countess kept back the ring, and suffered the sentence to be carried into effect. The ring gave her the power of remitting or retaining sin. To make the illustration serve the purpose for which we want to use it just now, we must suppose the Countess was the go between for the transmission of the ring not from the condemned man to the queen, but from the queen to the condemned man, and for the ring we must substitute a password. The power of absolution in the evangelical sense is very much like that. The ring, or the password, is the truth through which the forgiveness of God must be carried home to anxious, sin-burdened multitudes. And this leads us to ask the question, Upon what conditions does this power of opening and closing the kingdom of heaven, and of retaining and remitting the sin of men, rest? You will observe, in the first case, nothing whatever was promised to Peter, except so far as he was already the subject of a teaching inspiration, and was to become so in a yet richer degree in future days. He held the keys, and could bind and loose in so far as the Son was revealed to him by the Father and the Father by the Son, and not one iota beyond. He could not open the gates of the kingdom by any private authority and apart from the possession of these truths. And then we come to the promise of this same power to the whole congregation of the disciples. There is no power of binding and loosing, you will observe, apart from Christ's indwelling presence within the Church. And then we come to the last case. Christ connected the power of absolution with a symbolic act, in which He made the disciples recipients of His own life, and partakers and instruments of the Holy Ghost by that fellowship. But it will be observed that there is no valid retention or remission of sin that can be pronounced to men, except by the lips of which the Holy Ghost is the unceasing breath. Given that condition in the case of either priest or layman, and I am free to extend the province of absolution just as far as the most extreme sacerdotalist has ever sought to extend it. The ideal Church and the ideal minister may have all the power the sacerdotalists claim, but to assume that the Church and minister of to-day and every day is ideal in actual life and attainment is to make a very strong demand upon our credulity indeed. I go and look for the minister who is so filled with the Holy Ghost that he becomes infallible in moral judgment, and always speaks the exact thought of God in acquitting or condemning men. And I scarcely know where to find the man who has been lifted by the inspiration of the Spirit above error. I come therefore to the conclusion that these are delineations of ideal Christianity; not ideal in the sense that they are beyond the line of practical possibility, but ideal in the sense that they are realized only by an uncommon exaltation of soul. II. The question arises, WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO PRONOUNCE AN ABSOLUTION OF THIS SORT? The sacerdotalist replies, The man who has received an ordination that is unbroken in the line of its succession from the apostles, with Peter at their head. But the power committed to Peter is entrusted some few months later, not only to the apostles, but to each and every disciple who might chance to be offended by the wrong or transgression of another and who would be loyal to certain specified directions, as well as to the whole congregation of believers in their corporate capacity. The thorough-paced sacerdotalist demands confession as a preliminary basis for the absolution he utters. That demand is a tacit admission of the frivolity of his claim. It is just as though some thought-reader should boast that he would read the number of a bank-note placed in a sealed safe, and ask first to be allowed to look at the cash-book of the firm through whose hands the note

last passed, and in which a record was made of the number. If the priest cannot read the heart of the penitent without the help of his confession, he is still less able to read that Divine heart, from whose secret judgment the absolution of the individual must spring. A genuine absolution must rest as much upon a correct interpretation of the mind of God to the individual, as upon the interpretation of the state of the individual mind itself. Indeed, no confession can supply an accurate basis for the utterance of an edict of absolution. The same acts may represent very diverse religious conditions in people of diverse knowledge, training, and experience. The God, who is a God of knowledge, and by whom actions are weighed, and He only, can read unerringly all the delicate factors in our spiritual state and condition, and pronounce the absolution that is unimpeachably and eternally judicial. So far, however, as absolution deals with the proclamation of God's good will to the penitent, whoever is filled with the mind and spirit of Christ is free to proclaim it. The proclamation, resting as it ultimately does, upon Christ's authority and that of His disciples, is just as good from one man's lips as another's, if he be spiritually qualified to reflect the mind of God. It is not the man who clothes the truth with the authority of his office. It is the truth that clothes the man with his authority as he utters it. News may not always come from the Government gazette, or be proclaimed by the town crier who fills an office that may have existed from the first incorporation of the town; and yet it may be good and trustworthy news notwithstanding. It has been calculated that the amount of heat received from the sun in the course of a year is so great that if the earth were covered, from pole to pole, with an ice cap a hundred feet thick, the heat would suffice to melt away every atom of that ice heap. And the amount of heat our earth receives is but a trifle in comparison with the total volume given off by the sun. It is scarcely so much as a drop in the rainfall of a year. Our earth receives only one twenty-five-thousand-millionth of the heat the sun gives off year by year. God's forgiveness is as bountiful as that. From the burning depths of His great, unfathomed heart He is ever pouring boundless grace and incomprehensible compassion. His love is sufficient, not only to melt the sin from every human heart, but to melt the sin from as many worlds, if they needed it, as there are human souls in this ant-heap world of ours. Do not suppose that the warmth of God's forgiveness, before it can melt or transform our natures, must needs be gathered up into the burning-glass of some petty priest's insignificant absolution. God's warm love is pouring down upon you Sunday and week-day alike, without stint or condition other than that you will meekly and penitently receive it. You are not dependent upon the absolution of either the confessional or the inquiry room. (*T. G. Selby.*)

Vers. 24–29. **But Thomas, called Didymus . . . was not with them when Jesus came.**—*St. Thomas*:—Mark—I. How much Christians may lose by not regularly attending the assemblies of God's people. 1. Thomas was absent when Jesus appeared, and consequently missed a blessing. He was kept in suspense and unbelief a whole week, while all around him were rejoicing in the thought of a risen Lord. 2. We shall all do well to remember the charge (Heb. x. 25). Never to be absent from God's house on Sundays, without good reason; never to let our place be empty when means of grace are going on—this is one way to be a prosperous Christian. The very sermon that we needlessly miss may contain a precious word in season for our souls. The assembly for prayer and praise from which we stay away may be the very gathering that would have cheered and stablished our hearts. We little know how dependent our spiritual health is on little, regular, habitual helps, and how much we suffer if we miss our medicine. The wretched argument that many attend means of grace and are no better for them should be no argument to a Christian. Such an one should remember the words of Solomon (Prov. viii. 34), and the Master's promise (Matt. xviii. 20). II. How kind and merciful Christ is to dull and slow believers. 1. It is hard to imagine anything more provoking than the conduct of Thomas, when even the testimony of ten faithful brethren had no effect on him. But it is impossible to imagine anything more patient and compassionate than our Lord's treatment of him. He comes again at the end of a week, and apparently for the special benefit of Thomas, and deals with him according to his weakness, like a gentle nurse dealing with a froward child. If nothing but material evidence could satisfy him, even that evidence was supplied. 2. This, doubtless, was written for the comfort of believers. The Holy Ghost knew well that the dull, slow, stupid, and doubting are by far the commonest type of disciples in this evil world, and He has taken care to supply abundant evidence that

Jesus bears with the infirmities of all His people. Let us take care that we copy our Lord's example. III. How CHRIST WAS ADDRESSED BY A DISCIPLE AS "GOD," WITHOUT PROHIBITION OR REBUKE ON HIS PART. When Cornelius fell down at the feet of Peter and would have worshipped him, the Apostle refused such honour at once (Acts x. 26). So did Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiv. 14). The Divinity of Christ is one of the foundation truths of Christianity. Unless our Lord is very God of very God, there is an end of His mediation, His atonement, His advocacy, His priesthood, His whole work of redemption. These doctrines are useless blasphemies, unless Christ is Divine. Let us bless God that the divinity of our Lord stands on evidence that can never be overthrown. Above all, let us daily repose our sinful souls on Christ, with undoubting confidence, as one who is perfect God as well as perfect man. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The man who missed the meeting*:—After a great fire, or a flood like that which desolated Johnstown, a time always comes for a deliberate calculation of the loss. But it is seldom that we sit down and figure out how much we have lost by neglect of opportunity, or the waste of time. It is said that a great American lawyer once put down in black and white the loss of money and reputation which resulted from his stopping on the way to the trial of an important case, to have two minutes' gossip with a friend. Such calculations are rare, because we no more like to think of what is irrecoverably gone than a soldier likes to visit a battlefield where he was ignominously beaten. 1. The personal presence of his Master was one element of the loss. 2. But Thomas also lost the help which he might have had in the Christian sympathy of his brethren. They were in a common trouble. That trouble ought to have bound them the more strongly to each other. In the Paris exposition of 1889 was a wonderful picture, which told its own story. A peasant's hut furnished the scene. The scanty household belongings told of poverty. The fire had gone out on the hearth. The rough table was destitute of food. In the corner, covered with a white sheet, lay something which spoke of death. But, huddled close together, as if fearing to be parted, the children are represented as clinging to each other. The whole picture seemed to say, "When the mother is dead, what can the children do but keep together?" That was the spirit in which Christ's personal followers met on the first Sunday night after the Crucifixion. Their only comfort, when their Master was dead, was in keeping near to each other. What a help it would have been to Thomas, if, in the loneliness of his supposed orphanage, he could have had the strength which comes from personal contact with others in the same experience of sorrow! On our Illinois prairies, the farmers, in the harvest-time, never set a single sheaf of grain standing by itself. They put them so that half a dozen lean the one against the other, and thus give mutual support. The old story tells us that Alexander the Great mourned over the loss of a day. But Thomas must have deplored the loss of a week. On an ocean steamship, there are no hours of greater discomfort than those in which the fog-whistle sounds its dismal note. The incertitude where the right way lies, and the consciousness of peril without the power to see how to avoid it, make every such hour an hour of misery. But such a fog is as nothing to that which envelops him who finds a distrust of his nearest friend creeping over his soul. It would all have been spared him, if he had been "there when Jesus came." The evidence which Christ granted him a week later might have been given him when the other disciples "knew it was the Lord." One of the first effects of doubt of the gospel in the heart of a Church-member is to keep him away from the meetings of his brethren. The very place in which Christ would meet him, and remove his puzzling difficulties, is the place he neglects. (*Bp. Cheney.*) *Thomas "not there": a lost opportunity*:—The disciples had met; but there were three vacant places. Jesus Himself was absent: would He ever be present again? Judas, too, was no longer one of their number, and never would be. There was yet another vacant seat: "Thomas, one of the twelve . . . was not there." Why this absence? The weather had probably nothing to do with this absence; nor could it be attributed to some casual hindrance. Thomas had no heart to go. This would make his absence painfully significant to the other apostles. Most ministers know how the absence of friends from services depresses those present, even when it cannot be traced to such a reason as this. There is a chilling influence felt whenever the minister's eye rests upon timber instead of worshippers, and every empty pew opens its mouth wide in discouraging eloquence, which makes it necessary for the preacher to open his wider than usual, or the vacant seat will have it all its own way. Thomas, like Philip, Matthew, and Nathanael or Bartholomew, belonged to the meditative and doubting section of the apostles. Philip's doubts came through

his love of mathematics. To him everything had to be reduced to a sum in proportion, or to be arranged in its proper form and sequence like a problem in Euclid. "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little," and "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us," are the two utterances which reveal the nature of Philip's doubts. Thomas's doubts, on the contrary, came through his despondency. One man's doubts arise from his brain, another man's from his liver. Depend upon it, God does not ignore the physical, any more than He does the mental, infirmities which sometimes becloud our faith. In harmony with this prominent characteristic of Thomas, as given in both instances by John, it would appear that his absence on this occasion was due to the depressing influence of sorrow and unbelief. Notice that here, and side by side, we find two operations of sorrow. First we find the combining power of mutual grief in bringing the disciples together; while, in the case of Thomas, we find the isolating power of sorrow in keeping a man apart from his fellows. Unbelieving sorrow makes a man close the door upon himself. He does not want to be brought into contact with old companionships or associations, but becomes isolated from all, and in loneliness broods over his grief. Now, what was the result of all this in the experience of Thomas? 1. He, by his absence, missed a great opportunity, and in one sense missed it irreparably. He "was not there when Jesus came." We know what it is to be unburdened, or at least to have our burdens lightened, by being brought into contact with others who are bearing similar burdens to our own. It is a spiritual fact, which has no counterpart in physics, that two men who bear their own burdens, when brought shoulder to shoulder, find that by that touch the burden of each is lessened. Thus Thomas would have missed much from forfeiting the communion of other sorrowful ones, even if Christ Himself had not come. But the loss seems to be multiplied a thousandfold when we read that Jesus came when "Thomas was not there." Now, Thomas was the last man who could afford this loss. No one of the eleven—for Peter had already seen the Master—needed the consolation, which came with the Master's presence, as much as Thomas did, and yet he was the only one who was absent. I have often noticed that since then those who can least afford such a loss are those who are oftenest absent when Jesus comes to cheer and bless His own. 2. Thomas by his absence missed the sight, for the time being, of his risen Lord. Thus he was the last of the apostles to whom that was granted. 3. Thomas, too, by this absence missed the first discourse of the risen Christ. Turn to Luke xxiv. 44–49. There we have a brief outline of the Master's sermon at that service from which Thomas was absent. What a loss was that! He forfeited his Lord's exposition of the Old Testament in relation to Himself. 4. Again, Thomas by this absence missed all that is contained in the words preceding our text—"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost," &c. (vers. 21–23). This was the gift of the Risen Lord, as the gift of the Day of Pentecost was that of the Ascended Lord. This Thomas missed. Are there not lessons here for us? Observe, first of all, that it was easier for the inspired writer to record the names of those absent from, than those present at, this service. Would it were so in our day when meetings are held for prayer! Again, how much sooner some of us would solve our problems if we took them to the sanctuary, and not, like Thomas, nursed them in solitude! (*David Davies.*) *Our Lord's interview with Thomas*:—I. AMONGST CHRIST'S DISCIPLES ARE MEN OF MANY TEMPERAMENTS. Cautious Thomas, impetuous Peter, loving John. Let no man condemn his brethren because unlike himself. Christ knows how to sanctify all. II. EVERY MAN SHOULD BE ON HIS GUARD AGAINST HIS WEAKNESSES: the cautious and hesitant against despondency and scepticism. III. SINCERE DOUBT CALLS FORTH NOT THE CONDEMNATION, BUT THE PITY AND HELP OF CHRIST. Let us not by harshness drive the earnest doubter into disbelief. He may become the immovable, because intelligent, believer. IV. BE IT OURS TO SEEK THE HIGHER BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE WHO THOUGH NOT SEEING BELIEVE. We shall not seek in vain. He will manifest Himself to us as He does not unto the world. V. LET NOTHING DETER US FROM MAKING THOMAS'S CONFESSION OUR OWN. (*Preacher's Monthly.*) *Thomas called Didymus*:—I. HIS HISTORY. 1. Parentage. Unknown, though from the circumstance that he is always conjoined with Matthew (Matt. x.; Mark iii.; Luke v.), who was a son of Alphæus (Mark ii. 14), and the two are always followed by James, also the son of Alphæus, it has been supposed that he was Matthew's twin brother. 2. Apostleship. Belonging originally to the circle of John's disciples, he appears, like Andrew, Simon, James, and John, to have

gone early over to Christ. In the second year of Christ's ministry he was called to serve as an apostle. 3. Appearances. (1) In Peræa (chap. xi. 16). (2) At the supper table (chap. xiv. 5). (3) After the Resurrection (text). 4. Disappearance. After this he is only mentioned once (Acts i. 13). According to the Fathers, he preached in Parthia, and was buried in Edessa. A later tradition says he carried the gospel into India, where afterwards an old colony of Syrian Christians on the coast of Malabar, calling themselves "Thomas Christians," claimed him as their founder. II. HIS CHARACTER. Of—1. A melancholy disposition. Constitutionally and habitually looking on the dark side of things, Thomas preferred to walk on the shady side of the street (chap. xi. 16). 2. A slow judgment. Thomas never travelled faster than his understanding or reason would permit, and these were never hasty in forming decisions (chap. xiv. 5). 3. A critical mind. Thomas liked to search things to the bottom, to see before he believed (ver. 25). 4. A courageous spirit. He was not afraid to encounter danger and death with and for His Master (chap. xi. 16), although taken with a panic, like the rest, he forsook Christ and fled. 5. A true heart. His judgment once convinced, his heart never hesitated, as here. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Two passages from the life of Thomas the Apostle*:—I. THE FIRST PASSAGE is in vers. 24, 25. 1. His distinction. "One of the twelve." Twelve rare stones once burned in the breast-plate of the High Priest; a glorious mass, the richest symbol of value, honour, and glory. The twelve apostles were like these gems. There was no duplicate stone, no duplicate apostle, and one could never be mistaken for another. Thomas was a man of pronounced individuality. His very unbelief was all his own. But with all their diversities these twelve live stones were all wrought into one symmetrical whole, the Priest carried them all on his heart. 2. The disapproving mark set against his name. "Thomas . . . was not with them." In this we recognize the spirit of rebuke. We are obliged to read it in connection with his title. He was not one of "the seventy," but "one of the twelve." What, after all, was the great wrong? That is a merely negative charge. Men generally think that simply not to do a thing is, at any rate, to be harmless. But in the sight of God few things are negative. Not to do right is to do wrong. Christ cries, "He that is not for Me is against Me." The law reserves its loudest thunders for negations. "Curse ye Meroz." Why? "Because they came not up to the help of the Lord." And Christ's most fearful formula of condemnation is, "Inasmuch as ye did it not." Thomas might have said, "I hinder no other man; if I do no good, I do no harm, for I simply do nothing." Nothing! (1) The disciples were drawn together by love. If not orphans in fact, they were in feeling, and their hearts would say, "We must be all in all to each other now; let us cling closer and closer." Did they cling? All were together that night but one. (2) They would be drawn together in worship. Allow that their faith was weak, it was not yet quite a thing of the past. A child does not cease to be a child because it is suffering from fever; the instinct which makes it natural for life to seek its source, and for God's child to fly to God in trouble, was working in them still. "But Thomas was not with them." (3) They met from the habit of meeting as Christ's appointed witnesses. But Thomas "was not with them." 3. There is no explanation of his absence. (1) It seems fair, however, to ascribe it to his constitutional unbelief. To him doubtless it looked like stark lunacy to think that Christ could be alive again. "I will not be taken in again; I will not love any more," said poor Southey when his child died; so in spirit said Thomas now. (2) Connected with, and consequent on, his unbelief, there might be the most dismal apathy. He wanted no companion but his own forlorn thoughts, and therefore he would not go. It is like saying, "Because I am hungry, I will take no food; because I am caught in a storm, I will seek no shelter," &c. Where was the melancholy man? Did he lie flung upon the floor all night; or had sorrow put on the mask of levity, and did he laugh? Did he try to walk off the agony of his grief, striking away to the hills of Bethlehem, or to the groves of Olivet, or to the ghostly wilderness, where once the scapegoat wandered, or to the haunted solitudes of the Dead Sea shore? Wherever he stumbled along, he would say, "I did once think that He was the Redeemer of Israel! It is all over now!" 4. Hear what he says after the meeting. "Old Father Morris," says his American biographer, "had noticed a falling off in his little village meeting for prayer. The first time he collected a tolerable audience, he took occasion to tell them something 'concerning the conference meeting of the disciples' after the Resurrection. 'But Thomas was not with them.' 'Thomas not with them!' said the old man in a sorrowful voice; 'why, what could keep Thomas away? Perhaps,' said he, glancing at some of his auditors, 'Thomas had got cold-

hearted, and was afraid that they would ask him to make the first prayer; or, perhaps,' he continued, looking at some of the farmers, 'he was afraid the roads were bad; or, perhaps,' he added, after a pause, 'he thonght a shower was coming on.' He went on significantly summing up common excuses, and then with great simplicity and emotion he added, 'But only think what Thomas lost, for in the middle of the meeting the Lord Jesus came and stood among them!'" After the meeting, "the other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord." While they told their tale with burning words and eager gestures, he stood unmoved. Mary Magdalene said that she had seen the Saviour. "Ah, no doubt you are an excellent woman, but you have been deceived, you are so imaginative." Then Peter said, "I have seen the Lord." "I am sure you think so, but you must be in error." Then John said, "But indeed I have seen the Lord." "That is good evidence for yourself, but it does not convince me." Then Bartholomew and others would say, "We have seen the Lord, and five or six others have told you so. Do you think we have conspired to tell a falsehood?" "No, my brethren, far from it; yet I have known such things in the world as for five or six persons to be mistaken. I feel that your witness deals with such improbabilities that I cannot receive it." At last he declared downright, "Except I shall see," &c. II. THE SECOND PASSAGE is in vers. 26–29. 1. The meeting renewed. Like the first, it was on the first day of the week, a fact not easy to account for except on the theory of a special law of Christ. He gave the first and second Sunday the sanction of His presence, leaving the interval to pass in silence, looking as if He meant to make the day stand out with sharp relief, as the day which was to have Sabbatic benediction. 2. The absentee returned. Thomas, as a true man, could not remain an absentee. It is hard for like not to fly to like. Everything in grace, like everything in nature, will sooner or later "go to its own company," and so did Thomas. 3. How the unbelief was dealt with: as the affliction of a true disciple. Unbelief has many varieties. There is the unbelief of—(1) The indifferent—that says, "What is truth?" That is, Who knows? Who cares? What does it matter? (2) The vain—that which delights to air itself in public; which is thought to be the mark of the thoughtful, or of the original, or of the heroic. (3) Of one who has indolently allowed unbelievers to think for him; who has caught it as a cold is caught, simply by standing about in draughts. (4) Of temperament. Some persons *must* sift evidence before they commit themselves. The term "sceptic" is from a root that means "cover," or "shade," and would in old time have been applied to a man who shaded his eyes with his hand in order to look into a thing narrowly and intently, determined not to be mistaken about it. It may therefore be fitly applied to a man of doubting temperament; but while it points to this, it also includes the idea of a shadow over the mind, and a tendency to take dark, uncertain, unhappy views of things. (5) The unbelief of Thomas was from the last-named cause. Christ called His disciples "children." Here was the serious and critical illness of a child. Is a child less loved when ill than when well? He knew that the sceptical nature of this man went along with simple, noble, self-renouncing love. 4. Jesus, in dealing with it, revealed His forgiving love. Infirmity given way to and persisted in deepens into sin. It was a sin not to believe after he had heard the Master say, "Let not your heart be troubled," &c., and after hearing His repeated foreshowings of His resurrection. It was sin to set up his own single decision against the evidence of his ten tried companions, and not to be satisfied with mental conviction and to demand in such a case as this the report of his fingers. With patient pity. Christ sought the poor wanderer, and with unspeakable tenderness brought him back. 5. The confession made. What was the immediate occasion of this cry? The offer was indeed made to the doubter, of the very tests he asked for. But Thomas did not accept this challenge; his had been a perilous venture to dare, and now he drew back from the edge of the precipice up to which he had come. The stubborn spirit melted in the flash of a moment, and the bold unbeliever became a little child. Touch was not thought of now. Christ was fully revealed. Love has sharp sight and quick responsiveness; in the new light, yet mingled with a sense of mystery, he recognized the Lord of his heart; with wonder, with tender and exquisite ecstasy, and with adoring prostration of soul, he cried, "My Lord and my God." (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *St. Thomas's doubt*:—Of all the apostles, St. Thomas affords the most striking parallel to the prevailing tendencies of our age. These words of his might have been spoken by a disciple of the modern school of sensational philosophy. The impatience of dictated belief and the dependence upon the evidence of the senses, which are the common habits of our day, are here both plainly expressed. I. St.

THOMAS'S DOUBT VIEWED IN RELATION TO HIS OWN SPIRITUAL CONDITION. 1. It is a decided doubt. We look upon doubt as something that wavers, falters, hesitates. But St. Thomas shows the opposite spirit. He is very positive. The dogmatism of unbelief is often observed: but here we may see the dogmatism of doubt. Though the expression appears paradoxical, it is verified by common observation. If a man lays down certain conditions on which he will believe, and regards these conditions as absolute and final, he is as dogmatic in his decision not to decide the question before him till those conditions are fulfilled as if he were determining the question itself. Now, is there not a certain pride and assumption in the position thus taken up? Can we be so sure that our criteria are perfectly sound? Is it not possible that our doubt may arise from no deficiency of grounds for reasonable belief, but from artificial requirements which we have set up without any warrant for them? 2. This doubt must be distinguished from distrust. The apostle does not waver in his allegiance to Christ; he merely questions the astounding rumour of the resurrection. The really important matter for all of us is an active loyal trust in Christ. It is far better to have this, and yet to hesitate in regard to facts in the history of Christ, than to accept all those facts in a bare intellectual conviction, but to have no living faith in Him. There are men like the doubting disciple who cling to their trust in their Lord though they are sadly tried with questions about the facts and doctrines of the gospel. Of course the haze that obscures these truths must make the act of earnest, practical faith more difficult than it would be with a clear assurance in regard to them. 3. St. Thomas's doubt resulted in part from his despondent and gloomy disposition. It is not charitable for persons of a cheerful disposition to be harsh in rebuking the painful doubts of gloomy minds. II. ST. THOMAS'S DOUBT AS ILLUSTRATIVE OF A COMMON PHASE OF THOUGHT. There was a method in his doubt. He had a very clear idea of what he required to satisfy his mind. 1. The first requisite was personal experience. St. Thomas had not been with the disciples when Christ appeared. He must see for Himself. A similar disposition is apparent in the claims for individual conviction advocated so strenuously in the present day. This is the great Protestant principle of private judgment run wild. People refuse to accept a doctrine because the Church authorizes it. It must be proved to them on its own merits. Wholesome and sensible as this demand is when kept within reasonable limits, it lands us in absurdity when it is pushed to extremes. We cannot obtain direct evidence of every truth. Life is too short for the task, and our faculties are too limited. We accept facts of history on testimony. Is it not reasonable that we should accept the historical foundation of religion in the same way? No one mind can survey the whole realm of science. The most strict disciple of the school of inductive philosophy is compelled to rely largely on the researches of other men. Why should not the same principle apply to the acquisition of spiritual truth? No doubt personal experience of spiritual truth is the strongest ground for believing in it as well as the surest way of understanding it. Still, our creed will be very thin and meagre if it never transcends our life. The great use of the Bible is to bring us into contact with truths which are vastly above and beyond our present experience, that thereby our experience may be enlarged and elevated. He who confines himself to the light of experience cripples the growth of experience, and thus prevents that very light from becoming brighter. 2. The other requisite was the evidence of the senses. St. Thomas must see the very wounds of Christ with his own eyes, and touch the wound-prints with his fingers, before he will believe. Spiritual contact with the risen Lord is not enough. This evidence of the senses is set in the first place among our modern grounds of conviction. Yet the senses are being proved to be liable to great illusions, and at least they can show only objects of sense. The spiritual world is wholly dark to them. But no evidence of the senses will reveal these great truths. He who confines himself to that one avenue of knowledge shuts the door against the light of the highest revelation. His position is unreasonable. We have souls as well as bodies, and there are ideas which can never reach our souls through touch and sight. (*W. F. Adeney, M.A.*)

The scepticism of Thomas:—It is interesting and instructive to note—I. THE VARIETY OF TEMPERAMENT IN THE APOSTLES. St. Peter, *e.g.*, is impulsive and demonstrative, and at times self-reliant (Matt. xiv. 27-31; xxvi. 33, 35, 70, 75). St. John is calm and undemonstrative, quietly leaning on Jesus' bosom. St. Andrew would seem to have been self-retiring and contemplative; while Paul is all for action. 1. One of the advantages of keeping the Saints' Days is that we thus have opportunity to study these different characters, their individual virtues and failings. 2. All

the apostles may be called typical men: they find their counterpart in all ages. St. Thomas may be taken as the type of the sceptical mind. 3. There is a difference between scepticism and unbelief, although often confounded together. The sceptic doubts, and looks into the matter; the unbeliever rejects altogether, too often without inquiring (Acts xvii. 32), and frequently on moral grounds (chap. iii. 19). But scepticism may end in unbelief; therefore a dangerous spirit to indulge: useful as a safeguard against error and imposition, but needs to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. II. THE SUBJECT ON WHICH ST. THOMAS WAS SCEPTICAL, VIZ., the resurrection of Christ. 1. The idea of a resurrection at all scarcely found a place in the disciples' minds. They were not expecting such an unheard-of event (chap. xx. 9; Luke xxiv. 18–25). This enables us to realize the position of Thomas the better. 2. With St. Thomas's scepticism contrast the unbelief of the Athenians (Acts xvii. 32). They rejected the doctrine of the resurrection in intellectual scorn, or with a quasi-polite show of deference; while Thomas asked for further proof. The men of Athens put the light from them; Thomas asked for more. 3. The scepticism of St. Thomas accordingly contributes towards establishing the fact of the Redeemer's resurrection, as we are reminded in the collect for the day. On the importance of this fact, see 1 Cor. xv. 1–20; Rom. i. 3, 4. III. OUR LORD'S TREATMENT OF THOMAS'S SCEPTICISM. 1. Thomas had nothing but hearsay evidence to trust in (chap. xx. 24). Evidently a man who did not believe everything he heard, but at the same time ready to receive the truth on sufficient grounds (Acts xvii. 11). The Saviour dealt with him accordingly, and as He had done with the Baptist (Matt. xi. 2–6). 2. This was in accordance with our Lord's usual method. To intellectual unbelief He vouchsafed the gracious answer and adduced an argument (Matt. xxii. 29–33). Where faith was weak and wavering, He came to the rescue (Mark ix. 23; Matt. xiv. 30, 31). Only against the error of the heart He launched His fiercest invectives (Matt. xxiii. 13–15, &c.). "In this world God cleanses our hearts, in the next He will cleanse our brains also." Application: 1. Our Lord's sympathy with honest doubt. He knows what is in man, and has compassion accordingly (Isa. xlii. 3). If we are honestly seeking after God's truth, His Spirit will guide us into it (chap. xvi. 13). Let us take all our spiritual difficulties to "the Son of man." He knows them all, and has grace in store to meet them (Heb. iv. 14–16). 2. Observe the special blessing which the Redeemer pronounces upon a simple unquestioning faith (Matt. ix. 22; Mark x. 52; Matt. xv. 28). (1) We are in the position of those who "have not seen," and for our comfort these words (chap. xx. 29) were spoken. (2) While Thomas asked for more proof, let us ask for more faith (Luke xvii. 5), that so the blessing of "not seeing, and yet believing," may be ours. *(F. J. Calthrop, M.A.) The honest sceptic and how to treat him*:—We have here—I. AN INTERESTING RELIGIOUS SCEPTIC. There are certain features in this scepticism of Thomas that mark it off from common scepticism. 1. It was negative, not positive. He did not echo the everlasting "no" of the infidel world; all he said was, I cannot believe it without more evidence. He did not manifest any affinity of feeling with that presumptuous herd who arrogantly proclaim gospel facts impossibilities, gospel doctrines absurdities, and gospel believers brainless fanatics or cunning knaves. 2. It was intellectual, not moral. The wish is often the father to the thought—the creed the offspring of the heart; but it was not so here. 3. It was frank, not underhanded. To whom did Thomas avow his unbelief? To the sordid worldlings who felt no interest in those things—to the sneering infidel who would readily nurse his doubts into atheism? Or to Scribes and Pharisees who would be only too delighted at the indications of his apostacy? No, like an honest man he expressed his disbelief in the face of the believers. Let modern sceptics imitate his example in this. Let them, instead of appealing to the thoughtless crowd, and seeking to work their infidel notions by jokes and tales into the minds of the unreflecting multitude, go at once to the Church, and say openly and respectfully, as did Thomas, We cannot believe in the doctrines you offer unless you give us more evidence. This might serve the common cause of truth and the common interest of our race. 4. It was convincible, not obstinate. There are some men so inveterate in their prejudices that no amount of evidence will modify their opinions. Such was not Thomas. After he first avowed his unbelief, did he seek every possible means to establish himself in his infidel view and avoid opportunities for obtaining evidence? The reverse of this is the fact. "Eight days" after he declared his scepticism, we find him with the disciples, no doubt in search of sufficient proof to convince him. Honest doubt is active, because it is a law of mind to seek certitude. II. AN EXEMPLARY RELIGIOUS GUIDE. We have here detailed the method in which Jesus

dealt with this poor sceptic. Does He denounce him as a heretic, expel Him from the circle of His disciples, or treat him even with cold indifference, which to sensitive natures would be worse than severity? No. How then? Let the ministers who fulminate against all who cannot subscribe to their tenets, the sectarians who consign to perdition all beyond the pale of their little Church, mark well the conduct of Christ. 1. The direct speciality of His merciful treatment. He did not address some general remarks bearing on the subject of doubt to the whole company, leaving Thomas to apply them if he would. He deals directly with Him. He saw that the man was on the margin of the cold, dark infidelity, and that he required prompt and special attention. 2. Its exquisite considerateness. The request of Thomas was objectionable on many grounds, yet Christ condescends to grant it. He might have reproved him, but He at once says, "Reach hither," &c. 3. Its moral influence. Thomas said, "My Lord and My God, I am more than convinced, I am won by the majesty of Thy love." Mark well, then, Christ's method of treating scepticism, and take heed to the fact that in this respect He has left us an example. III. A SUPER-EMINENT RELIGIOUS FAITH (ver. 29). These words imply two facts. 1. That it is possible for those who have never seen Christ to believe in Him. Wherever His gospel goes, there goes evidence sufficient to produce faith without any visible manifestation. There is—(1) The testimony of competent witnesses. Had not the apostles every opportunity of thoroughly knowing those facts of Christ's history which they propounded? Had they any motive to deceive? (2) The testimony of our consciousness. There is such a congruity between the doctrines of the gospel and the intuitive beliefs of mankind, and between its provisions and our deep-felt wants, that it comes with a self-evidencing power. (3) In ordinary matters we believe without seeing every day. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen," as is shown in Heb. xi. Ever since the departure of Christ the language of the Church has been, "Whom having not seen we love," &c. 2. That those who believe in Him without seeing are peculiarly blessed. We are apt to think that the contemporaries of Christ were privileged above us. This is a delusion. Faith without sight—(1) Is more praiseworthy than faith by sight. There are two kinds of belief—the one voluntary, the other involuntary. The one comes by a proper inquiry into evidence, and the other springs up irresistibly whenever a fact is visible to the senses, or a proposition truthful to the mind. The latter is without moral merit, and for it man is not responsible. But voluntary faith depends upon a man's agency. There is a universe of facts that lies beyond the realm of my senses and that transcends all my *à priori* ideas. Belief in those facts requires evidence, and the evidence requires honest investigation. This voluntary faith has a moral character. Why do men not believe in Christ? It cannot be said for the want of evidence, but because that evidence is either entirely neglected or examined improperly. Now the faith of Thomas sprang from the sense, and had in itself but little merit. (2) Is frequently more accurate. The senses are deceptive. "Things are not what they seem." Reason has evidences on which to build a faith of unquestionable truthfulness. (3) More ennobling. It involves a higher exercise of mind. Whatever tends to stimulate and work the mental faculties is good. Faith founded on rational evidence implies and demands this mental action. Sensuous faith does not. The history of the apostles illustrates this. How morally weak, because mentally inactive, were they during their personal connection with Christ! But after His ascension, when they are thrown upon rational evidence, how strong they become in a few days. Conclusion: The subject suggests—1. An incidental argument in favour of Christianity. The fact that there was such a man as Thomas amongst the disciples shows that there was no collusion between them; and that they were not a body of superstitious and credulous men. 2. The superiority of our advantages over those of the contemporaries of Christ. 3. The duty of the Church in relation to doubters. 4. The relation to Christ which it is the supreme interest of humanity to seek—that which Thomas expressed, "My Lord and my God." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The folly of doubting*:—Ask thy soul these questions: First, Whether there be any gain by doubting? Faith purifies the heart; but doth doubting purify the heart? Secondly, Whether there is anything more pleasing to God than to trust him in and by Jesus Christ, when all comforts are out of view, and when you see nothing but what is contrary to the thing promised? Thirdly, Whether you must not venture upon Christ at the last? and if you must venture upon Christ at the last, why not now? When a man hath to go over a river, though he ride once and again into the water, and come out, saying, I fear it is too deep for me; yet considering that there is no other way for him, he

resolves to venture, for, saith he, the longer I stay, the higher the water will rise, and there is no other way for me—I must go through at the last, why not at the first? and so he ventures through. Thus it is with you. You say, "Oh, but my heart is not humbled; oh, but I am a great sinner; and how can I venture upon Jesus Christ?" Will thy heart be more humbled by keeping from Jesus Christ, and wilt thou be less a sinner by keeping from Him? No, certainly; for the longer you stay from Christ, the harder it will be to venture on Him at the last. Wherefore, if there be ever a poor, drooping, doubting, fearing, trembling heart reading these words, know that I do here, in the name of the Lord, call out to you and say, Oh soul, man or woman, venture, venture, venture upon Christ now; for you must come to trusting in time at last; and if at last, why not now? (*William Bridge.*) *Thomas doubting*:—Let us consider—I. THE LEGITIMACY OF DOUBTING. 1. It is an evil habit to always think of doubt as sinful. It may be, because it may be the sign of a captious and insincere mind; but what can and ought a man do but doubt, if the evidence is not sufficient? Christian faith, it is true, is more than an act of the reason, but it never contradicts, and is itself, so far, an exercise of reason. 2. Are we to believe because our ancestors believed, and so gave us the Christian faith as an inheritance? Partly so; but never chiefly. If we are right-minded, right-hearted, we cannot help some preferences in favour of what comes to us from our forefathers. But this never can justify us in accepting the Christian faith. We must put on it the stamp of our own intelligence, and hold it in the grip of our own conviction. 3. It were better for us to be satisfied with evidence when it is enough than to be so critical and exacting as to demand that it shall be irresistible; better to be satisfied with the testimony of two senses than to require the concurring testimony of a third. Still, there are always those who are not so easily satisfied as their brethren. And when Thomas asks for more evidence, there is nothing to be done but to furnish it. 4. We have the highest of all examples for this procedure—Jesus Himself, who made this distinct appearance to satisfy His doubting disciple, and all besides him who are of his temper and school. II. DOUBT, IF IT IS TO CONTINUE TO BE LEGITIMATE AND WHOLESOME, MUST BE ALWAYS ACTING AS A FORCE, URGING MATTERS ON TO A PRACTICAL AND DECISIVE SETTLEMENT. 1. A merely speculative scepticism that entertains questions politely for a few hours simply for intellectual interest; that puts the Christian religion among the things, waiting a far-off day of settlement; is a most injurious habit. All deep earnestness is against it; and all high living; and all Holy Scripture; and the whole mind and heart of Christ. 2. That Christ did exist no sane man will deny. It will be granted, too, that some respect ought to be paid to His own wish and will in considering the matter of His claims. Here, then, is One who has filled the world with His name and influence; who never published a line, and yet has set all the world publishing books about Him; who never led an army, and yet has overrun the four quarters of the world; who never entered a palace, and yet exercises a sovereignty that kings might well envy. Now, has not He a right to say something as to the way His claims shall be treated? This is what he says, "Reach hither thy finger," &c. Some one says, "I acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the chief of the sons of men." That will not do. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hand." The hand that laboured, that healed, that blessed the little children, that rolled back the gates of Death. Another says, "I see that Jesus Christ wields a vast influence over many hearts and over all the world, and with that influence I have no intention of interfering." That will not do. "Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side!" into the love-wound; the fountain of this world's purity; the only place where salvation can be found. Another says, "I shall remain neutral for a while; there can be no harm in that." That will not do. "Be not" or literally "Become not unbelieving, but believing." Every man is becoming something more and more each day. The matter will not remain in balance. Consciously or unconsciously, it will ever grow to firmer faith or deeper unbelief. Therefore press the matter to settlement. III. HOW IS THIS SETTLEMENT TO BE REACHED? 1. It was easy for Thomas to do it. Or, rather, it was easy for him to reach satisfaction without doing it. Apparently, he never did reach thither his finger. He was surprised, most of all, to hear his own expressions of doubt reproduced, when no one could have told the Master of them. All doubting is over now, and all desire is gratified: "My Lord and my God!" 2. The same principle operates still. A man lays down certain conditions as indispensable; but as he goes on he finds he can believe without them. Doubts are solved by the heart as well as by the intellect. There must, of course, be apprehended truth, else faith is only a superstition. But where there

is an earnest mind the way of life will be plain and open. Now let us think again how Thomas was satisfied, and what the kind of proof was that brought him into this happy condition. Not by touching, for he never touched Him; not by seeing, although he did see Him; not by hearing, although he did hear, and knew the voice. The proof taking rank above all proofs was that God was near, and that he felt the awful glorious presence. 3. But where is the analogy between Thomas and any living person now? Here it is common now for those who reject Christianity to say, "Faith is not at our bidding. Show us the truth, and give us sure proof of it, and there will be no question left." And if we ask, "What kind of proof," &c., the answer is, "I can construct an argument in logic, so that no sane man will be able to resist the conclusion; or, I can demonstrate a mathematical problem, so that there can be no demur; or I can make a scientific experiment, so that a particular result shall lie before the eyes of every observer." Do you the same by religion, and then you may blot the word "unbeliever" out of your vocabulary. Now what is all this but to say with Thomas, in his honest but lower mood, "Except I shall see," &c. And yet he did believe with less than this, and so does many a one now who thinks for a while that he never can. 4. Let it be plainly told we have no certainty of a mathematical, logical, scientific kind. We use the means for rational conviction. In a sense we try the Lord and His great claims, as He says we may, by rational and outward tests. If we had not these to begin with, we could make no beginning. But as we begin to reach forth the finger of examination and the hand of verification, and thus approach the great central person Himself, we feel how true it is that spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and that "no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The doubt of Thomas*:—1. There are some men whose affections are stronger than their understandings: they feel more than they think. They are perhaps the happiest class of minds: for it is happy to be without misgivings about the love of God and our own eternal rest in Him. "Blessed are they that have believed." 2. There is another class whose reflective powers are stronger than their susceptive: they think out truth—they do not feel it out. Such a man was Thomas. Happy such men cannot be. An anxious and inquiring mind dooms its possessor to unrest. But manly and affectionate they may be: Thomas was. "Let us go up too, that we may die with Him." And men of mighty faith they may become: Thomas did. Now this question of a resurrection which made Thomas restless is the most anxious that can agitate the mind of man. So awful in its importance, and out of Christ so desperately dark in its uncertainty, who shall blame an earnest man severely if he crave the most indisputable proofs? Very clearly Christ did not. Thomas asked of Christ a sign. His Master gave him that sign, with a gentle and delicate reproof it is true—but He did give it. Note—I. THE NATURALNESS OF THE DOUBTS OF THOMAS, which partly excuses them. 1. Nature is silent respecting a future life. There is enough to show us that there may be a life to come; there is nothing to make it certain. You strain at something in the twilight, and just when you are beginning to make it out the light fails you. So when we strain into nature's mysteries, to discern the secrets of the Great Hereafter. There are probabilities, nothing more. 2. Let us examine some of them. (1) The wish for immortality is a kind of argument: it is not likely that God would have given man such a feeling, if He had not meant to gratify it. If we thirst, God has created liquids. If we are susceptible of attachments, there are beings to gratify love. If we thirst for life and love eternal, it is likely that there are an eternal life and love. But more we cannot say. (2) The traditions of universal belief. How came it to be held by all, if only a delusion? And yet when you come to estimate this it is only a presumption. The universal voice of mankind is not infallible. (3) We are met by many resemblances to a resurrection—that of the moth from the grave of the chrysalis. For many ages the sculptured butterfly was the type and emblem of immortality. Again, there is a kind of resurrection when the spring brings vigour and motion back to the frozen pulse of the winter world. And yet all this, valuable as it is in the way of suggestiveness, is worth nothing in the way of proof. They only look like resurrections. The chrysalis only seemed dead: the tree in winter only seemed to have lost its vitality. Six thousand years of human existence have passed away; countless armies of the dead have set sail from the shores of time. No traveller has returned from the still land beyond. Now look at all this without Christ, and tell us whether it be possible to escape such misgivings as these which rise out of such an aspect of things. I do not wonder that Thomas, with that honest, accurate mind of his, wishing that the news were true, yet dreading lest it should be false, and deter-

mined to guard against every possible illusion, said so strongly, "Except I shall see," &c. II. THE CHRISTIAN PROOFS OF A RESURRECTION. This text tells us of two kinds of proof: 1. The evidence of the senses—"Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed." This external evidence of Christ's resurrection is twofold. The witness of Thomas, who was satisfied with the proofs, and of John, who records the circumstance. (1) Try the witness by ordinary rules. John does not say that he had heard the story from Thomas, and that years afterwards he had penned it down when his memory might be failing. He was present the whole time. All the apostles were there: they all watched the result with eager interest. Now, a scene like that is one of those solemn ones in a man's life which cannot be forgotten. Estimate next the worth of the witness of Thomas. Evidence is worth little if it is the evidence of credulity. But here was a man who dreaded the possibility of delusion, however credulous the others might be. He resolved beforehand that only one proof should be decisive. The evidence of testimony which he did reject was very strong, but he held out against it. He would trust a thing so infinitely important to nothing but his own scrutinizing hand. (2) Try the evidence next by character. Blemished character damages evidence. Now, the only charge that was ever heard against John was that he loved a world which hated him. The character of Thomas is that he was a man cautious in receiving evidence, and most rigorous in exacting proof, but ready to act upon his convictions when once made, even to the death. Who impeaches that testimony? (3) Once more—any possibility of interested motives will discredit evidence. Ask we the motive of John or Thomas for this strange tale? John's reward—a long and solitary banishment to the mines of Patmos. The gain and the bribe which tempted Thomas—a lonely pilgrimage to the far East, and death at the last in India. (*a*) The evidence to which Thomas yielded was the evidence of the senses. Now, the feeling which arose from this Christ pronounced to be faith—"Thou hast seen, thou hast believed." Observe then, it matters not how faith comes—whether through the intellect, as with Thomas—or through the heart, as with John; but faith is a state of soul in which the things of God become glorious certainties. It was not faith which assured Thomas that Christ stood before him: that was sight. But it was faith which from the visible enabled him to pierce up to the truth invisible: "My Lord and my God"; and which enabled him ever after to venture everything on that conviction, and live for One who had died for him. (*b*) The faith of Thomas was not merely satisfaction about a fact: it was trust in a Person. The admission of a fact, however sublime, is not faith: we may believe that Christ is risen, yet not be nearer heaven. Thomas passed on from the fact of the resurrection to the Person of the risen—"My Lord and my God." Trust in the risen Saviour—that was the belief which saved his soul. And that is our salvation too. 2. The evidence of the Spirit—"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." There are thousands of Christians who have never examined the evidences of the Resurrection: they are incapable of estimating it if they did examine; they have never seen—they know nothing of proofs and miracles—yet they believe and are blessed. How is this? I reply, there is an inward state of heart which makes truth credible the moment it is stated. Love is credible to a loving heart; purity to a pure mind. Of course that inward state could not reveal a fact like the Resurrection; but it can receive the fact the moment it is revealed without requiring evidence. The love of St. John himself never could discover a resurrection; but it made a resurrection easily believed, when the man of intellect, St. Thomas, found difficulties. Therefore "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," and therefore "he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." Now it is of such a state that Jesus speaks. There are men in whom the resurrection begun makes the resurrection credible. In them the Spirit of the risen Saviour works already. They have risen out of the darkness of doubt, above the narrowness of life, above fear, above self; being "risen with Christ:" and the man in whom all that is working has got something more blessed than external evidence to rest upon. The Resurrection in all its heavenliness has begun within his soul, and he knows as clearly as if he had demonstration, that it must be developed in an eternal life. Now this is the higher and nobler kind of faith. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Thomas: the honest sceptic*:—Renan, in the fiction which he calls "The life of Jesus," when he treats of the resurrection of our Lord, breaks out into a rhapsody utterly unworthy of the critic and historian, "Oh, Divine power of love! sacred moments when the passion of a deluded woman gives to the world a God raised from the dead." The Church is prepared to prove that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the best authenticated facts in the

world's history. The witnesses of the resurrection include every variety of temperament and intellect. I. THE DOUBT OF THOMAS. 1. His was not the doubt of vanity. The superficial frivolous nature, proud of doubts as if they were signs of intellectual superiority, is too frequently to be met with. 2. His was not the doubt of hostility. Many who doubt dislike the truths which they doubt. But Thomas was heart-broken over the loss of Jesus. Some have nothing but sweeping denunciation for every kind of doubt or even of inquiry concerning truth. Christianity courts inquiry, commands it. The moral earnestness developed by Christianity necessitates it. Elements that cannot be praised were, however, present in the doubt of Thomas. 1. It was self-willed. As if mentally dwelling upon revelations said to have been granted to others he lays down rigid requirements, and declares nothing else shall satisfy him. 2. It was irrational. What was the nature of the testimony he refused to accept? And yet whilst the testimony of ten tried apostles and several godly women goes for nothing, his own ten fingers are to be all-decisive. Was there no other way in which assurance of a risen Christ could take possession of his heart, no higher way of spiritual illumination? Are our senses our only medium of certainty? God's highest revelations are by His Spirit to man's spirit. II. THE LORD'S TREATMENT OF THE DOUBTER. 1. Jesus let him for a while taste the bitterness of his doubts. Men are often permitted to drink deeply of the bitter cup which they have wilfully made their own. Thus God tests them. Nothing more perfectly reveals the moral character of a doubter than the instinctive tendencies of his mind during his mental conflicts. Christian and Pliable both fell into the Slough of Despond. Pliable struggled to the side nearest the City of Destruction, but Christian with infinite toil reached the side nearest the Celestial City. Though differing in opinion from his brother disciples, all his sympathies were with their sincerity and goodness. 2. Jesus was full of forbearance towards him. 3. Jesus deeply humbled him—"Then said He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger," &c. Surely no severer rebuke can be given than amidst the joys of full conviction to be recalled to the low-born doubts of His less noble self. 4. Jesus warned him of his danger—"Become not faithless, but believing." There is danger to all who doubt that the finer sensibilities of their nature be injured, that their spirit grow harsh and cold, and out of harmony with moral truth. 5. Jesus declares that there is another, a higher way to certainty than that by which Thomas has reached it. III. THE RESULT OF THE LORD'S TREATMENT. See in Thomas the submission of a sincere soul. 1. Thomas instantly yielded. The moment of conviction became the moment of submission. 2. Thomas publicly yielded. Before all the disciples he had spoken his doubts; before all he retracted. 3. Thomas fully yielded. The honest inquirer convinced becomes the earnest and intelligent believer. As the corn that lies in the earth all through the winter months yields the most bountiful harvest, so the faith of Thomas slowly germinating amidst long, sorrowful musings becomes perfectly developed. The tardy believer becomes the foremost confessor. (*W. J. Cooke.*) *The unbelief of Thomas*:—The resurrection of Christ is a fact of the utmost importance. If He had not risen, there would have been an end to His mission. Now, in reference to this fundamental article, we have everything that could be desired in the way of proof. There were five hundred such witnesses. It certainly was not to their interest to assert such a fact, but the reverse. But what adds still more weight to their testimony is the fact that, according to their own showing, they were all obstinately incredulous at first. They would not be satisfied until they were overwhelmed with proofs. At the time when this event took place, they were not at all in a state of mind to be deceived: they were not expecting any such occurrence, and, indeed, would not be convinced without repeated evidences. Now, for instance, we have in the text the case of a man who was determined not to believe. I. Let us inquire into THE CAUSES OF HIS UNBELIEF. We may find a first cause in the character of the man; a second, in the state of his mind at that period; a third, in the superstitious opinion which was set up in opposition to the testimony. 1. With respect to the character of the man, a few slight notices appear to our minds very significant. They betray that he was a man of strong feeling and of ardent zeal, not altogether unmingled with presumption. In the context, nothing will do but that he must personally see Christ, nay, must touch His body; or else, because it is barely possible that they might be deceived by an apparition, he will not believe. Now, this turn of mind, though praised by men, is certainly a disadvantage in religion, and is treated with little favour in the Inspired Volume. What room is there for faith with persons who insist upon being able to explain everything; who must see, handle, and demonstrate, or else they will not believe? Where is that spirit of child-like simplicity,

which is so proper to the disciples of Christ? It is a great evil to believe without evidence, and by the mere force of prejudice; but it is a greater evil still to set our own wisdom above the wisdom that cometh from above, and to lose ourselves in the perplexities of reason, whose highest glory it is to subject itself to God, the Infinite Reason of the universe. 2. A second cause is found in his state of mind at that period. What that state of mind was can be sufficiently made out by circumstances. *Why* he was absent, it would be useless to inquire; the question is, Ought he not to have been there? It is quite certain that he paid dearly for his absence; and it is scarcely possible to resist the conclusion, that it arose from his determined rejection of the idea of a resurrection. He had seen his Master die in the hands of His enemies, and had made up his mind that all was over; the object of their association was gone, and there was nothing more to hope for, or to hold them together. Had he been in the path of duty is it likely that he would have been abandoned to his disquietudes? To estimate that state of mind, we must yet further remark the ignorance and carnal prejudice which possessed him in common with the rest of the disciples. They none of them knew the spirituality of the Redeemer's kingdom. A sullen withdrawment from the means of grace is the very best nurse that unbelief and desperation can have. It shuts itself out from all good tidings, and resolutely clings to the worst presentiments of evil. 3. A third cause may be found in the superstitious opinion which was then universally prevalent among the Jews. They believed that the souls of the departed could appear to surviving friends, clothed in a spiritual body, exactly resembling them when they were alive. You will remember that our Saviour found His disciples under the influence of that opinion when He came to them in the boat, walking on the sea in the fourth watch of the night, and would have passed by them. They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. Now, all these marks are necessary, that we may not extenuate the sin of Thomas on the one hand, nor unduly magnify it on the other. It has its aggravations, and it has also its alleviations; it may not be improper just to look at each. 1. The unreasonableness of his unbelief appears from considering the evidence which he rejected. He would allow no weight to that kind of evidence, on which chiefly, to the present hour, the fact of the Resurrection rests. All his brethren testified, not that they had heard that Christ was risen, but that they had seen Him, had conversed with Him, that He had invited them to touch Him, and had eaten and drunk before them. Now, Thomas ought to have admitted the truth of their testimony. 2. Again, the kind of evidence that he demanded aggravated his sin. He not only refused the ground of faith which God had provided for His Church in all ages, he set up an impious claim of his own—"Except I put my finger in the print of the nails, I will not believe." He is determined to walk by sight, not by faith. He is not satisfied with mental conviction, his senses must be judges; nay, more, his senses must be satisfied in the most objectionable manner possible. But it is admitted that this Apostle was better than his word, and did not avail himself of the last proof. 3. His sin was aggravated by the obstinacy and openness that distinguish his unbelief. All that week he had ample opportunities of hearing from his brethren and from the women the same statements of what they had seen and heard related, with every circumstance of credibility, and with all the earnestness of conviction. Here, then, is not only a sin, but a sin wilfully and pertinaciously indulged, at great hazard to himself, and to the scandal of all his brethren. But, on the other hand, we ought not to look at these exaggerations only; we must remember that the unbelief of Thomas was of a kind very different from that which arises out of a disaffection of heart to the truth; and that, therefore, it is not to be confounded with that of ungodly men. They wish the things themselves not to be true, and so do not believe them. The doctrine of the gospel is opposed to their lusts, and so they are determined not to admit it. Their sinful hearts are the principal agents in their unbelief. It is no wonder that men cannot see the force of truth when they do not want to see it. But the unbelief of Thomas was of another kind.

II. Let us glance briefly AT THE GRACIOUS MANNER IN WHICH HIS DOUBTS WERE REMOVED. Eight days after the disciples again assembled, and this time Thomas was with them. This circumstance speaks in his favour, as showing that the statements of his brethren had not been wholly ineffectual. 1. The intimate knowledge of his heart that Christ displays. He proves himself perfectly acquainted with all that he had said, and with the whole state of the Apostle's mind. 2. Observe the condescending love which Christ exemplifies. He offers to grant him all that he had desired, as if He had said, Thou hast insisted upon touching Me. Come, then; lay thy finger upon these recent wounds; and "be not faithless, but believing." Who

does not perceive an ineffable tenderness breathing through these words? 8. Observe the quiet but effectual reproof which our Lord administers. Here are no severe reproaches, no looks of anger. Here he reproves by an affectionate concession which could not but melt a heart that really loved him. He reproves by a soft word of admonition, "Be no longer faithless," implying that this had hitherto been his disciple's sin; yet, with what a gentle hand does he touch the wound! Finally, he reproves by a benediction—a benediction implied, "Thou hast seen and believed," and thou art blessed; for happy is he who at last attains to the exercise of faith, after long doubt and obstinate prejudices: a benediction expressed—more happy still are they who have not seen and yet have believed. III. Let us endeavour to TRACE THE EMOTIONS WHICH THIS REVELATION PRODUCED IN THE APOSTLE'S MIND. "My Lord and my God." 1. This is the language of humble confession. Confession of his fault. How could he have looked upon that scarred body, after having stood out against the testimony of so many witnesses, without acknowledging how much he had been in the wrong. 2. But, though we cannot allow that this sentence is nothing beyond a sudden note of surprise, we perceive clearly enough it is the language of adoring wonder. The unbelief of Thomas arose from the very fact that he looked upon a resurrection as so great a miracle that it could not be reasonably entertained. It is the very grandeur of the effect that provokes his incredulity. 3. We can penetrate a little further into the sentiments embodied in his confession. We find it impossible not to include some of a more tender, exquisite, and even ecstatic character. This moment of discovery must have been almost like a glimpse of heaven falling upon a man in whom a sense of shame was mingled with overwhelming gratitude. This is the joy unspeakable and full of glory, which every true convert realizes, when he is enabled by faith to embrace the Atonement, while his heart is yet broken on account of sin. The subject which has thus far engaged our attention may be properly concluded by two or three observations. 1. We have before us an unanswerable argument for the truth of Christianity; for, if the resurrection of Christ be a fact, then Christianity is true. 2. The subject leads us plainly to infer the sinfulness of unbelief. We grant that it has its degrees of turpitude, like all other sins; but in all its degrees it is opposed to the fundamental requirement of the gospel. Unless we will impeach the clearness and sufficiency of the revelation, the fault must be laid, after all, upon the unbelief of man. It is not questioned that there are many things in Scripture beyond our comprehension; but the fact that such things are revealed is quite distinct from their explication. Is the only way of redemption clearly made known? Can any sincere and earnest inquirer ask the way to heaven, and fail to obtain an answer from any want of distinctness upon essential truths? We answer, no. "They are all plain to him that understandeth." "The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." 3. Lastly, we may observe, that the proper objects of faith are things invisible. Herein it is a higher faculty than sense or reason. It does not supersede them, but it embraces what they cannot reach. That which is palpable to the senses, or demonstrable to the mind, is not properly the object of faith but of knowledge. Faith does not behold, nor touch, nor prove; it receives upon testimony. If we receive the witness of men the witness of God is greater. (*D. Katterns.*) *The doubting disciple*:—Observe—I. THE WEAKENING OF ONE'S RELIGIOUS CONFIDENCE IS THE FIRST AND FATALEST OF SATAN'S WILES. II. BUT IN INDIVIDUAL CASES IT DOES NOT ALWAYS FOLLOW THAT ONE WHO DOUBTS HAS FALLEN INTO A MORTAL SIN. Thomas raises a question concerning the most vital of all the evidences of Christianity. Yet Jesus deigns to reason with him, grants the proof he seems so superciliously to demand. Martin Luther used to say that no man was wicked because the unclean birds sometimes lit upon his head; he was bad only when he tamely suffered them to build their nests in his hair. III. THE PRESENCE AND COMPANIONSHIP OF PRAYING MEN IS A GOOD HELP TO FAITH, AND THE ABSENCE OF IT FREQUENTLY GIVES THE REASON OF ONE'S DOUBTING. It has been a quaint but familiar use of this incident, which has made it the basis of many an exhortation concerning neglect of prayer-meetings. Thomas's name of "the missing disciple" is almost as well known as that of "the doubting disciple." There is always strength in the countenance of an earnest assembly of praying men; Thomas lost that at all events. IV. CHRISTIANITY DOES NOT DISDAIN THE USE OF ARGUMENTS ADDRESSED TO HUMAN REASON IN ITS LOGIC. "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord." Our religion is a reasonable religion. There was nothing in Thomas's demand that was unauthorized; he only wanted what the rest of the disciples had had from the Lord Himself while he was away. V. THE SYSTEM OF OUR FAITH GOES ALTOGETHER, THE MOMENT ANY ONE DOCTRINE OF IT IS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED. Really,

the only thing Thomas had doubted was the resurrection of Jesus. And yet, when this was settled, he gave up everything in a grand confession of fresh acknowledgement. VI. A BELIEF FOUNDED IN RELIGIOUS TRUST IS BETTER THAN A BELIEF CONSTRAINED BY ARGUMENT. There is no real conflict between reason and faith; and yet reason is so proud that it refuses to accept what faith craves. So sometimes it keeps needed truth off at arms' length—as a crazy man might be conceived to toss a loaf of bread from hand to hand, testing it for its weight, while he was literally starving for food. But faith longs only to receive it, and live upon it. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *The Church in its treatment of doubt:*—I. TEMPERAMENT WAS THOMAS'S ONE TEMPTATION, AND HE DID NOT KNOW IT. 1. Perhaps he accounted as a virtue that critical temper which was his greatest defect and danger. When a man thinks far more of the touch of his ten fingers than of the testimony of ten apostles, self-reliance becomes conceit. When a man talks much about liberty for his tongue, he seldom thinks about liberty for other people's ears. Whilst Thomas insisted on his right to be convinced in his own way, he never seems to have felt the indignity he put upon the honesty of his friends. 2. A man's fault is not so much that he is not fit, but that he refuses to believe that he is unfit. Trust is far more natural to some than others. To question with wrinkles in the forehead, and the grey eyes half-closed in meditative wonder, is as natural to some children as the uncontrolled, sunny, upturned gaze of the other child's most trustful and reverent love. The little Thomas as naturally cuts his drum open to see where the noise comes from as the little Mary believes without a suspicion every fairy story. Light will take its colour from the glass through which it passes, and truth will take its shape from the quality of the mind it passes through. We do not so much blame Thomas for being Thomas, only for not knowing that he was Thomas. 3. A man like Thomas ought to well know if at any time he should hesitate to judge, he should specially do so just when he had lost a dear friend. For Thomas, then, life had but one sense—touch. Sorrow, and morbid meditation had, for the time, robbed Thomas of all other faculties. There is a love born of mere touch, and there is a love that loss and death can never touch. There is a love dependent on circumstances, and there is a love that defies storm, and cloud, and death. If Thomas have the one and John the other, all we ask is that Thomas knows his condition, and not so readily assert his superior judgment. If a man of ordinary prudence gets to know that his weak heart says to him, "Never hurry," or that another organ says, "Never eat certain things;" so let us know if our condition disqualifies us for judgment, and let us trust others, and act with them, rather than argue and oppose. Most of the sceptics I have met in life were like Thomas—all disqualified for their work before they began it. II. THOMAS WAS ABSENT FROM THE MEETING. 1. He was alone, who of all the eleven could least afford to be alone. Loneliness was health to Peter at times—it was always poison to Thomas. Whenever we get the list of the apostles, which is presumably in Christ's order, you always get Thomas bracketed with Matthew. Matthew was a man to celebrate his conversion with a great feast. If, now, Thomas had taken his Master's hint in always associating him with Matthew, he had reasoned now, "I must avoid loneliness, and keep close to the brightest of our company." 2. Why was Thomas absent? The fact that John gives no reason, and calls him Didymus, thus associating him with the previous references—all of a despondent character—shows that the cause was in Thomas, and not due to circumstances. Matthew is the type of the sociable nature, and Thomas of the unsociable. Such a man to-day would declare no one spoke to him in church; that the service was not what it ought to be. Gloomy imaginations are never at a loss for reasons for being dissatisfied. But love not only attends, but enjoys all the meetings; profits where discontent starves; and sees beauties where mere criticism can only snarl and pull to pieces. III. CHRIST COMES TO MEETINGS WHEN HE DOES NOT GRANT PRIVATE INTERVIEWS. When Thomas does not want to go to church he often concludes "that Christ is not confined to churches, you can find Him in the fields, in the quiet of the home, in Bible study." True. But Christ has put special honour on the meetings of His people. How often have I known people begin to set a low value on religious services; and, as a result, the whole tenor, tendency, and aspect of their life has become changed. IV. THE WAY TO GET ABSENT THOMAS BACK. 1. His absence was noted. The Greek indicates that the others sought out the absentee. Everybody likes to feel he is missed. Mother ought not to rest when the weakest and most short-sighted, too, hasn't come home. Would that the whole Church felt like the Shepherd, and went after every wandering sheep! "I have been a member of the Church nearly forty years," said one, "and now I

have been absent a month and no one has called to see me." "Excuse me," said a shrewd observer of human nature, "during your forty years' membership how many have you gone to see?" "Not one," was the reply which truth insisted on. There Thomas received what he gave. 2. But far, far more turns on what they said to Thomas. They did not blame him or argue with him. They just went with positive testimony, "We have seen the Lord and are glad." To show a man that you are well and equal to any task is better than a dispute about medicine. Would that all of us were more ready to tell out what Christ has done for us, and less and less concerned to analyse texts! 3. They did not exclude him from their fellowship because he was faithless. Thomas knew that he had doubted about Lazarus, and yet Lazarus was raised. Christ had promised that He would rise again. He had here the abundant testimony of ten friends; yet, spite of all, he says, "I will not believe." Don't make little of the state of Thomas, and say: "Oh, but he was anxious to believe." Nothing of the sort. He does not say, "*If* I see I will believe," but "*Unless*." His mental attitude is negative and obstinate. 4. Thomas would surely have been lost to the Church if any harsh measures had been adopted towards him. A very slight hint that he was unfit for their fellowship because he cherished such doubts, and he would have told them how wanting they were in intellect. Words would have followed words, and that fellowship had been dissolved with bitterness. The Church should so treat doubt as not to intensify it. Doubt lives and thrives in isolation; opposition doubles its force. The Church must be as patient with Thomas as Christ was. Christ waited eight days for his slow faith to ripen. The Christian may not like the smell of smoking flax. To blow it out is easy; to blow it into a flame needs patience; but which is better and more Christ-like? V. IN CHRIST'S TREATMENT OF THOMAS NOTE THAT ONE LOOK WAS ENOUGH. If we can bring men closer to Christ, then Christ Himself will and can do all the rest. Conclusion: 1. Doubting is a very easy process, requiring little capital. Once indulged it is of rapid growth, and feeds on its own unrest and misery. 2. Notice in the speech of Thomas that objectionable "I and my." Pride and self-will are never lovely; but to find doubt indulged, and not find these two features prominent, is a very, very rare occurrence. Thomas was willing and glad to lose his doubts; but many doubters seem to be proud of theirs. (*R. H. Lovell.*) *Unbelief convinced: or Thomas with his Lord*:—I. THOMAS'S MISTAKE (ver. 24). 1. Perhaps justifiable. He may have been—(1) Unwell and confined to his own abode, the intensity of his sorrow having preyed so heavily on his mind as to endanger his health. (2) Uninvited to the meeting, which, however, if advised concerning it, he ought to have attended without an invitation. (3) Unaware of the startling intelligence which had brought them together—hardly a likely supposition. (4) Unsatisfied with the grounds on which that intelligence was based, and employed at the moment in sifting out the truth. (5) Unwilling to be idle when there was good news to spread abroad—which is putting the best construction on his behaviour, as the next hypothesis is the worst. (6) That Thomas had been present at the beginning, and had listened to the "idle tales" of the women, Peter, &c., but had retired unable to accept the testimony even of so many. (7) The likeliest assumption is that he was away because his morose and melancholy disposition felt unequal to accepting the amazing rumour. 2. Decidedly wrong. (1) If away through grief it was wrong to be selfish in his sorrow and forget his brethren, who needed comfort. (2) If absent because waiting for further evidence, he ought to have gone to the best place to get it—the company of the disciples. "If I go, I will come again." (3) Had he been where he should have been, in that upper room, he would have found what he sought, and so saved himself much misery. II. THOMAS'S DECLARATION (ver. 25). 1. The occasion of it. The communication of the ten—a testimony—(1) Clear and unambiguous. They had seen *the Lord*, not an apparition; they had seen Him, not dreamt about Him. (2) Unanimous and decided—not the unsupported assertion of Peter who was always "enthusiastic," but backed up by James and John, our Lord's two other confidential associates; of Matthew the publican, a man accustomed to look into matters; of Andrew and Philip, both persons of sagacity, &c. (3) Ample as to the number of witnesses and details of evidence; sufficient for the requirements of historic credibility. 2. The good in it. Thomas did not—(1) Assume that a resurrection was impossible. (2) Deny it in Christ's case. (3) Assert that no amount of evidence would satisfy him. (4) Allege that no weight of evidence would render it credible. (5) Bargain for conditions of believing which were impossible. 3. The evil in it—(1) Unreason, in rejecting this overwhelming testimony. (2) Presumption, in dictating the amount of evidence in

which he would believe. (3) Pride, in demanding more satisfaction than was offered to or desired by the rest. (4) Folly, in calling for demonstration which, as the event showed, was not required. III. THOMAS'S INVITATION (ver. 27). 1. Gracious. Certainly he did not deserve it. 2. Startling. How had Christ come to know he had used these words? The higher knowledge of his Master would flash upon him (chaps. i. 47, 48: ii. 25; iv. 17, 18). 3. Admonitory: that Thomas was on dangerous ground, "Become not faithless!" Not yet definitely committed to unbelief, he was at the parting of the ways. 4. Urgent. In earnest about him, Christ condescended to accept him on his own terms. IV. THOMAS'S CONFESSION (ver. 28). 1. A declaration of faith in Christ's resurrection. 2. A recognition of Christ's supreme divinity. 3. An appropriation of Christ as Lord and God. V. THOMAS'S REBUKE (ver. 29). 1. Graciously prefaced—"Thou hast believed." 2. Tenderly expressed. 3. Really conveyed. Learn—1. How much a Christian may lose by absence from the house of God. 2. How foolish to lay down conditions on which one will believe. 3. How faithfully Christ keeps His promise. 4. How tenderly Christ deals with the errors of His own. 5. How dangerous to cherish doubt. 6. How graciously Christ accepts the homage of penitent and believing souls. 7. How high the felicity of those who now believe in the risen Lord. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Doubts*:—I. Now, I wish you to observe in the first place what Thomas had done. HE HAD DOUBTED. He had not disbelieved; he had only refused to believe. It is impossible, in reading this narrative, to identify the doubt of St. Thomas with the disbelief of those Jews who demanded a sign from heaven. He evidently wished to believe if he could; they evidently did not. He was a warm-hearted generous man, ready, as he had shown once before, to die, if need were, for his Master's service. But though St. Thomas was not wanting in devotion, his faith was slow. He could not believe without very clear proof. Once before he had shown this. When our Lord had said, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know:" St. Thomas had replied, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" In fact, he would have everything made quite distinct and unmistakable. And so on this occasion he was not satisfied with the evidence of the ten other apostles and of the women; he was not sure that he could rely on their inability to be misled; he must have overwhelming evidence or he would not believe. It was not the wilfulness of one hardened in his own theory which he would not quit; nor yet of one who could not bear to accept a truth which would unsettle his life. It was honest doubt; such doubt as naturally grew out of his state of mind. II. AND HOW THEN WAS IT TREATED? Our Lord does not treat it as a sin. There is not the slightest trace of fault-finding in what our Lord says to him. He only tells him that his is not the most blessed state. The most blessed state is that of those who can believe without such proof as this. There are such minds. There are minds to whom the inward proof is everything. They believe not on the evidence of their senses or of their mere reason, but on that of their consciences and hearts. Their spirits within them are so attuned to the truth that the moment it is presented to them they accept it at once. And this is certainly far the higher state—the more blessed—the more heavenly. St. Thomas most assuredly had not attained the blessedness of those whose souls were ready to accept the resurrection at once. But still his doubt was not a sinful doubt, or it would have been met, as the disbelief of the Jewish rulers was met: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas." This was not the way in which our Lord dealt with His loving but honest disciple. The proof that he asked for was given him. He asked to have his senses convinced, and his senses were convinced. He had not asked anything presumptuous; he had not asked for any miracle. He asked for the same evidence that had already been given to others, and which he might fairly suppose was within his reach. And he got it. Christ came in and directly addressed Himself to him. He reminded him of the very words that he had used. He offered him the very proof that he had wanted. And St. Thomas's words express, if anything could express, the fulness of the deepest conviction; the fulness of a faith that could never again be shaken, because it had reached down to the very central truth of the fact before his eyes. He saw our Lord and he knew that not only was He that Jesus, the Son of Man, with whom he had lived, and to whose teaching he had listened for some years past, but that He was indeed his Lord and his God—the Lord of life and the Conqueror of death. St. Thomas's doubt is a type and his character an example of what is common among Christians. There are some indeed who are never troubled with doubts at all. They live so heavenly a life that

doubts and perplexities fall off their minds without fastening. They find enough in their faith to feed their spiritual life. They do not need to inquire into the foundations of their belief. They are inspired by a power within their hearts. The heavenly side of all truths is so clear to them that any doubts about the human form of it are either unintelligible, or else at once rejected, or else disregarded as unimportant. But that is not always the case. There are very many who are startled at times by strange perplexities. What shall we do with these difficulties when they arise? 1. In the first place let us not permit them to shake our hold on God and of conscience. However far our doubts may go, they cannot root up from within us, without our own consent, the power which claims to guide our lives with supreme authority. They cannot obliterate from within us the sense of right and wrong, and of the everlasting difference between them. By this a man may yet live if he have nothing else to live by, and God will assuredly give him more in His own good time. 2. But yet, again, let us not treat such doubts as sins, which they are not, but as perplexities, which they are. As we must not quit our hold on God, so do not let us fancy that God has quitted His hold on us. To fancy that every doubt is of itself a sin, is altogether to mistake God's love and mercy. Rather let us endeavour to see why such doubts are sent. Doubts are, in many cases, the birth-pangs of clearer light. They are the means by which we grow in knowledge, even in knowledge of heavenly things. Better far, no doubt, to grow in knowledge by quiet steady increase of light, without these intervals of darkness and difficulty. But that is not granted to all. These doubts are often the fiery trial which burns up any wood, hay, or stubble, which we may have erected in our souls, and leaves space for us to build gold, silver, precious stones. They may distress us, but they cannot destroy us, for we are in the hands of God. 3. Yet once more in all such cases remember St. Thomas, and feel sure that what is wanting Christ will give. He does not require you to say that you believe what you do not believe; for that would be dishonest. He does not require you to force yourself to believe by an act of your will; for that would be only self-deception, and nothing could justify that. You are not called on to believe till you are fully able to do so; but you are called on to trust. To trust is in your power. To resign yourself lovingly to God in the full confidence that His love will do all that you can need, and that out of darkness He will be sure to bring light; to walk to the uttermost of your power by the light that you already have; to hold fast by God's hand, and to trust the promises that he whispers in your conscience; that you can do, and that you ought to do. But are there no other doubts but these? Are there no such things as sinful doubts which cannot expect enlightenment? Assuredly there are. Doubts may come from mere levity of mind which will not see the deep truths revealed within the soul; doubts may come from conceit, delighting to find something new and different from the rest of the world; doubts may come from a hard heart which has been warned by conscience of its sinful state, and cannot bear to admit the reality of a truth which imperatively demands a change of life; doubts may be like those of the Pharisees who were resolute not to believe, and only asked for proofs that they might have something to attack. Such doubts are fearful sins, and as we indulge them we know that they are sins. (*Bishop Temple.*)

Ver. 25. **The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord.**—*A sight of the Lord—what it produces:*—I. AN EVER DEEPENING SENSE OF SIN. See Isaiah (vi. 5); Job (xlii. 5, 6); Peter (Luke v. 8). II. AN EVER ENLARGING MEASURE OF JOY. See David (Psa. iv. 6, 7; xvi. 11; xxi. 6), the disciples (ver. 20), the eunuch (Acts viii. 39), the jailer (Acts xvi. 34). III. AN EVER ADVANCING DEGREE OF HOLINESS (2 Cor. iii. 18; 1 John iii. 2, 3). IV. AN EVER STRENGTHENING RESOLUTION TO ENDURE. Like Moses (Heb. xi. 27); Paul (2 Tim. iii. 11); Christ (Heb. xii. 2, 3). V. AN EVER GROWING DETERMINATION TO SPEAK FOR CHRIST (Acts iv. 20). VI. AN EVER KINDLING DESIRE TO BE WITH CHRIST (Phil. i. 23). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **But he said unto them, except I shall see.**—*Advice to doubters:*—Do not exercise your doubts. Exercise your faith. Doubt is weakness, faith is power; doubt is disease, faith is health. Let the sick part rest. Exercise the well part, and it will encroach more and more until it drives out the sickness. Take care of your faith, however small, as the famine-stricken guard the scanty seed grain, as the snow-bound, lost woodsman nurses his last match. Little faith may grow to great faith and become a power. "What a great matter a little fire kindleth." Do not think about your doubts. Intellectualize your faith, exercise it, use your ingenuity upon

it, see what can be done with it, live up to it, what there is of it. Yonder at Niagara you see the graceful steel bridge span the chasm where the untamed whirlpool thunders below. How leapt that span from cliff to cliff? They say a tiny kite flew over the chasm and fell upon the other side. The chasm was spanned. You say by a thread. Yes, by a thread. But the thread was used to pull over a cord, and the cord to pull over a rope, and the rope a chain, and the chain a cable, and on the cable was built the bridge, upon whose strong and steadfast span the massive trains crash across. Thus may it be with the most attenuated thread of faith. What possibilities, what destinies, hang upon it! Ah! it may be lightly snapped asunder. But that thread may grow to a cord, and the cord to a rope, and the rope to a cable, and the cable to a bridge, spanning the chasm between heaven and earth. And our prayers shall ascend, and God's blessings shall descend, like the angels ascending and descending on the ladder which Jacob saw. (*R. S. Barrett.*) *Doubts not to be lived in:*—"Is it always foggy here?" inquired a lady passenger of a Cunard steamer's captain, when they were groping their way across the Banks of Newfoundland. "How should I know?" replied the captain, gruffly; "I do not live here." But there are some of Christ's professed followers who do manage to live in the chilling regions of spiritual fog for a great part of their unhappy lives. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *Folly of doubt:*—I once heard of a poor coloured woman who earned a precarious living by daily labour, but who was a joyous, triumphant Christian. "Ah, Nancy," said a gloomy Christian lady to her one day, who almost disapproved of her constant cheerfulness, and yet envied it—"Ah, Nancy, it is all well enough to be happy now; but I should think the thoughts of your future would sober you. Only suppose, for instance, you should have a spell of sickness, and be unable to work; or suppose your present employers should move away, and no one else should give you anything to do; or suppose"—— "Stop!" cried Nancy, "I never supposes. De Lord is my Shepherd, and I know I shall not want. And, honey," she added to her gloomy friend, "it's all dem supposes as is makin' you so mis'able. You'd better give dem all up, and just trust de Lord." (*W. Baxendale.*) *Cure for doubt:*—A theological student once called on Dr. Archibald Alexander in great distress of mind, doubting whether he had been converted. The doctor said, "My young brother, you know what repentance is, what faith in Christ is. You think you once repented, and once believed. Now, don't fight your doubts; go all over it again; repent now, believe in Christ now: that's the way to have a consciousness of acceptance with God. I have to do both very often. Go to your room, and give yourself to Christ this very moment, and let doubts go. If you have not been His disciple, be one now. Don't fight the devil on his own ground. Choose the ground of Christ's righteousness and atonement, and then fight him." (*Ibid.*) *Doubting cured:*—A theological student once went to Dr. Hodge with his difficulties about the divinity of our Lord and Saviour. The doctor listened patiently, and then said, "My dear young friend, your difficulties are of the head. If I should answer them, new ones would suggest themselves. The best way to remove them, and guard yourself from future and similar troubles, is to have Christ within you. Learn His life; learn to trust in Him more, to love Him more; become identified with Him; and your doubts as to His divinity will disappear." The young student followed his advice; his doubts fled; and, on a subsequent death-bed, he bore his testimony to the divinity of our blessed Lord. (*Ibid.*) *Modern scepticism:*—I put you on your guard against the scepticism of our time. And do you think that I am about to enlarge upon the scepticism of Rosseau, of Diderot, of Voltaire, of Bolingbroke, of Hobbes, and of Hume?—that was swept away with their ashes, and is buried. The great scepticism of our time is market-scepticism, political scepticism, and religious scepticism. Men who feel that it would be wicked to sacrifice great pecuniary interest for the sake of principle; men who think it would be a tempting of Providence to refuse profitable business speculations, to leave profitable situations, or to refuse dividends of evil; men whose consciences will not permit them, as the members of a corporation, to expose its wickedness; men who stand in the market, and feel that they have a right to do anything that wins, these men are infidels. You need not tell me that they believe in the Bible: they believe in an empty Bible—a Bible of the letter, and not a Bible of the Spirit which says to a man, "Sacrifice your right hand before you do your integrity." (*H. W. Beecher.*) *End of a sceptic:*—A reliable informant, Voltaire's own physician, writes to a friend as follows: "When I compare the death of a righteous man, which is like the close of a beautiful day, with that of a Voltaire, I see the difference between bright, serene weather and a black thunderstorm. It was my lot that this man should die under

my hands. Often did I tell him the truth, but, unhappily for him, I was the only person who did so. 'Yes, my friend,' he would often say to me, 'you are the only one who has given me good advice. Had I but followed it, I should not have been in the horrible condition in which I now am. I have swallowed nothing but smoke; I have intoxicated myself with the incense that turned my head. You can do nothing more for me. Send me a mad doctor! Have compassion on me, I am mad! I cannot think of it without shuddering.' As soon as he saw that all the means which he had employed to increase his strength had just the opposite effect death was constantly before his eyes. From this moment madness took possession of his soul. Think of the ravings of Orestes. He expired under the torment of the furies." (*Professor Christlieb.*) *Unbelief does not bring comfort*:—David Hume, after witnessing, in the family of the venerable La Roche, those consolations which the gospel only can impart, confessed, with a sigh, that "there were moments when, amidst all the pleasures of philosophical discovery and the pride of literary fame, he wished that he had never doubted." (*New Handbook of Illustration.*) *Folly of unbelief*:—Once a sceptic in Dr. Bonar's church said, "Sir, I do not believe there is a God." It was 10 p.m., and no time for argument. I cast the burden on the Lord in prayer, and looked so happy that he said, "Are you laughing at me?" "No; but I was thinking if all the grasshoppers on earth were to say there is no sun, it would not alter the matter. The Bible says, 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.'" "Well, that is so," he said. I then showed him that God calls every man that does not believe in Him a liar. The man went home seeming much impressed; and when I met him some months afterwards he said, "I found out that I was a fool and a liar, and have come to Christ." Thus the sword of the Spirit had pierced his heart. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Unbelief a non-conductor*:—See these electric wires that are shooting their mysterious threads throughout our land, communicating between city and city, between man and man, however distant; dead, yet instinct with life; silent, yet vocal with hidden sound; carrying, as with a lightning-burst, the tidings of good or evil from shore to shore. Separate their terminating points by one hair's breadth from the index, or interpose some non-conducting substance, and in a moment intercourse is broken. But refasten the several points, or link them to the index with some conducting material, and instantaneously the intercourse is renewed. Joy and sorrow flow again along the line. Men's thought's, men's feelings, men's deeds, rumours of war or assurance of peace, news of victory or defeat, the sounds of falling thrones, the shouts of frantic nations, all hurrying on after each other to convey to ten thousand throbbing hearts the evil or good which they contain. The non-conductor is unbelief. It interposes between the soul and all Divine intercourse. It may seem a thing too slight to effect so great a result, yet it does so inevitably. It shuts off the communication with the source of all glad tidings. It isolates the man, and forbids the approach of blessing. That conductor is faith. In itself it is nothing, but in its connection everything. It restores in a moment the broken communication; and this is not from any virtue in itself, but simply as the conducting link between the soul and the fountain of all blessings above. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*)

Ver. 26. **Then after eight days again His disciples were within.**—*The Christian Sabbath*:—Jesus rose the first day of the week, and appeared to His disciples. Then He appeared not again till the eighth day after, nor do we read of the disciples meeting meanwhile. The day is thus mentioned for some special end, which could be no other but to show the translation of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first. Hence, therefore—1. It appears that Christ preferred the first day before the seventh. 2. The disciples had their public and solemn meetings on that day (Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2). 3. It is called the Lord's day (Rev. i. 10), as the Eucharist is called the Lord's supper (1 Cor. xi. 20). John supposing thereby the day to be well known. So Ignatius and Tertullion. Justin Martyr calls it Sunday. So then the Jewish Sabbath was buried with Christ, and the Christian rose with Him. I. WHY WAS THE DAY THUS CHANGED? 1. The Jewish Sabbath, as kept on the seventh day, was but a ceremony peculiar to the Jews; a sign that God was their God, and they His people (Exod. xxxi. 13, 14, 17; Ezek xx. 12, 30). But now they have ceased to be God's peculiar people, and therefore the sign must needs cease. 2. The Jewish Sabbath was kept in commemoration not only of creation but of redemption from Egypt (Exod. xx. 8; Deut. v. 13–15). But this redemption was but a type of Christ's, and must needs give place to it. Hence the Sabbath was among the shadows of those things to come (Col. ii. 16, 17). 3. The Jewish Sabbath began

but in Moses; for we read not of their keeping it till it rained manna (Exod. xvi.); and if we reckon back from this we find that Pharaoh was destroyed on the Sabbath. But on our Sabbath our spiritual Pharaoh was destroyed; for Jesus rose from the dead. Moreover, all the Mosaical law ended in Christ, and therefore this: and the Jews still adhering to it were destroyed on it; for it was their Sabbath when Jerusalem was taken. II. WHETHER WE ARE BOUND TO OBSERVE THE LORD'S DAY AS THE JEWS THEIR SABBATH? 1. Though the appointment of one day in seven for the religious rest be of positive institution, yet the rest or duty to be observed on that day is certainly moral and perpetual. Now—(1) This was ordained before Moses (Gen. ii. 2, 3). Questionless, the patriarchs observed it; be sure they had weeks (Gen. xxix. 27, 28). (2) It is part of the ten commandments (Matt. v. 18). (3) The reasons assigned for keeping it are moral and perpetual; as—(*a*) It is a Sabbath or rest of the Lord. (*b*) On that day He rested from the work of creation. (*c*) He blessed and sanctified it. (4) The law of nature teaches that we ought to set apart some time for God's service, and there seems to have been some remains of this day among the heathen. 2. The reason of observing one day in seven is the same to Christians as to Jews and patriarchs, *i.e.*, on account of the Creation, which we are obliged to bless and serve God for, as they; and as to the designation of the Lord's day in particular, that certainly is much more binding on Christians, as our deliverance was greater, and of infinitely more consequence. III. HOW MUST THIS DAY BE SPENT? It must be sanctified, *i.e.*, set apart unto the Lord. 1. You must lay aside all worldly employment (Exod. xx. 8; Lev. xxiii. 2; Amos viii. 5; Nehem. xiii. 19). 2. And all carnal pleasures, which impede God's service (Isa. lviii. 13). 3. And set apart the day—(1) For private devotions, to rest in God (Isa. lviii. 13). (2) For public duties (Luke iv. 16); as the apostles. For this end—(*a*) Set your worldly business in order over night. (*b*) So soon as you are awake remember it is the Sabbath. (*c*) Endeavour by prayer and meditation to get above the world. (*d*) Absent not yourself from the public worship of God. (*e*) Fill up the intervals as much as possible with prayer, reading, meditation, conferring. Conclusion: Consider—1. God has given you six days, and set apart this for Himself; do not rob Him of it (Ezek. xxiii. 38). 2. Consider the judgments upon profaneness of it (Numb. xv. 33, 34). 3. There is a blessing promised to them that sanctify it (Isa. lvi. 2, 6, 7). 4. This is the way to live as if in heaven upon earth. 5. This is the way to spend an eternal Sabbath in heaven when we are parted from the earth. (*Bp. Beveridge*). **Peace be unto you.**—*Peace from the risen Christ:*—I. THE BLESSING PRONOUNCED. Peace; that which is needed by—1. The mind perplexed with doubt. 2. The conscience oppressed with guilt. 3. The heart agitated with sorrow. II. WHO PRONOUNCED IT? He—1. Who had Himself felt the need of it. 2. Whose death purchased it. 3. Whose life secures it. III. WHEN? 1. When the resurrection had ratified it. 2. When the disciples were seeking it. (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*)

Ver. 27. **Then said He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger.**—*Signs and evidences:*—1. How struck must Thomas have been when his Lord addressed to him the very words which he had himself used (ver. 25)! Jesus knows how to send the word home to us. 2. In the church of to-day we have many a Thomas,—slow, suspicious, critical, full of doubts, yet true-hearted. 3. Thomas set his Lord a test, and thus tried His patience. 4. The Lord accepted the test, and so proved His condescension. 5. The proof sufficed for Thomas, and thus showed the Lord's wisdom. 6. Peradventure, certain among us would desire tests of some such sort. To those we would earnestly say—I. CRAVE NO SIGNS. After the full proofs which Christ gave to His apostles, we need no more, and to look for further signs and evidences would be wrong. Yet some are demanding miracles, faith-healings, visions, voices, impressions, transports, depressions, &c. 1. It is dishonouring to your Lord. 2. It is unreasonable, when the truth bears its own evidence. 3. It is presumptuous. How dare we stipulate for proof more than sufficient, or demand evidence of a sort which pleases our prejudices! 4. It is damaging to ourselves. Faith must be weak while we demand for it such proofs; and in this weakness lies incalculable mischief. 5. It is dangerous. We may readily be driven either into infidelity or superstition, if we give way to this craving for signs. Picture what Thomas could and would have become under the influence of his unbelief, had not his Lord interposed. II. YET TURN TO CHRIST'S WOUNDS. Let these stand to you instead of signs and wonders. Behold in these wounds—1. The seals of His death. He did actually and truly die. How could He outlive that wound in His side? 2. The identification of His person

as actually risen. 3. The tokens of His love. He has graven us upon the palms of His hands. 4. The ensigns of His conflict, of which He is not ashamed, for He displays them. 5. The memorials of His passion, by which He is manifested in glory as the Lamb that was slain (Rev. v. 6). This should more than suffice you; but should doubt still linger—III. USE SUCH EVIDENCES AS YOU POSSESS. 1. The sacred narrative of our Lord's life and death, if carefully studied, exhibits a singular self-evidencing power. 2. The regenerating and purifying result of faith in the great Lord is a further piece of evidence. "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. vii. 20). 3. The solace which faith yields in sorrow is good proof. 4. The strength it gives in the hour of temptation is further help. 5. The ardour of mind and elevation of aim, which faith in Jesus creates, are other experimental arguments. 6. The visitations of the Holy Spirit, in quickening the heart, reviving the spirit, and guiding the mind, are additional proofs. Thus the Holy Ghost bears witness to our Lord. 7. The actual enjoyment of fellowship with the Lord Jesus Himself is the master-key of the whole controversy. "We have known and believed" (1 John iv. 17). Conclusion: 1. Does this seem an idle tale to you? 2. Should you not see cause for fear, if it be so? 3. Seek now to view those wounds believingly, that you may live. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ known by the nail prints*:—In an old legend it is said that Satan once appeared to an old saint and said, "I am Christ," when the saint confounded him, and exposed his pretensions, as he said, "Then where are the nail-prints?" (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Be not faithless but believing*:—A gentleman who assisted the Countess of Huntingdon in the management of Spa-fields Chapel, called upon her one day, to expostulate with her on the impropriety of entering into engagements without having the means of honourably fulfilling them. Before he left the house her letters arrived. As she opened one her countenance brightened, and her tears began to flow; the letter was to this effect, "An individual, who has heard of Lady Huntingdon's exertions to spread the gospel, requests her acceptance of the enclosed draft to assist her in the laudable undertaking." The draft was for five hundred pounds—the exact sum for which she stood engaged. "Here," said she, "take it, and pay for the chapel, and be no longer faithless, but believing."

VER. 28. **And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God.**—*My Lord and my God*:—Let us consider—I. THE EXCLAMATION OF THOMAS. It is as much as a man could say if he wished to assert dogmatically that Jesus is God and Lord (Psa. xxxv. 23). To escape from the force of this confession some have charged Thomas with breaking the third commandment, just as thoughtless persons take the Lord's name in vain and say, "Good God!" or "O Lord!" This could not have been the case. For, in the first place, it was not the habit of a Jew to use any such exclamation when surprised. The Jews in our Lord's time were particular beyond everything about using the name of God. In the next place, it was not rebuked by our Lord, and we may be sure He would not have suffered such an unhallowed cry to have gone without a reprimand. Observe, too, that it was addressed to the Lord Jesus. 1. It was not a mere outburst, accepted by our Lord as an evidence of faith, but a devout expression of holy wonder at the discovery that Jesus was his Lord and God, and probably also at the fact that he has not seen it long before. Had he not been present when Jesus trod the sea? &c. Now on a sudden he does know his Lord, and such knowledge is too wonderful for him. How I wish you would all follow Thomas! I will stop that you may do so. Let us wonder and admire! 2. An expression of immeasurable delight. He seems to take hold of the Lord Jesus with both hands, by those two blessed "my's." There is here a music akin to "my beloved is mine, and I am His." I pray you follow Thomas in this. Before you Jesus now stands, visible to your faith. Delight yourselves in him. 3. An indication of a complete change of mind,—a most hearty repentance. Instead of putting his finger into the print of the nails, he cried, "My Lord and my God." 4. A brief confession of faith. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he be able to unite with Thomas heartily in this creed. 5. An enthusiastic profession of his allegiance to Christ. "Henceforth, thou art my Lord, and I will serve Thee; Thou art my God, and I will worship Thee." 6. A distinct and direct act of adoration. II. HOW DID HE COME TO THAT EXCLAMATION? 1. He had his thoughts revealed. The Saviour had read them at a distance. Notice that the Saviour did not say, "Put thy finger into the nail-prints in My feet." Why not? Why, because Thomas had not said anything about His feet. We, in looking at it, can see the exactness; but Thomas must have

felt it much more. 2. All the past must have risen before his mind, the many occasions in which the Lord Jesus had exercised the attributes of Deity. 3. The very manner of the Saviour, so full of majesty, convinced the trembling disciple. 4. But the most convincing were our Lord's wounds. III. HOW WE MAY COME TO IT. If ever any one of us shall cry in spirit and in truth, "My Lord and my God!" the Holy Spirit must teach us. We shall so cry—1. At conversion. 2. In deliverance from temptation. 3. In time of trouble, when we are comforted and upheld. There have been other occasions less trying. 4. While studying the story of our Lord. 5. In the breaking of bread. 6. In times when He has blessed our labours, and laid His arm bare in the salvation of men. 7. In the hour of death. 8. In heaven. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *My Lord and my God*:—I. THIS IS NOT AN EXCLAMATION—1. Because such exclamations were abhorrent to the Jews. 2. It would be without warrant in Scripture. 3. It is by its form necessarily an address—"Thomas said to Him." II. THE MEANING OF THE WORDS. 1. Lord, κύριος, means owner, and as ownership includes control, it expressed—(1) The idea of ownership founded on possession, as Lord of the Vineyard, Lord of Slaves, Lord of the whole earth. (2) The Lordship without reference to its ground; hence kings are also called lords. So also heads of families, husbands, &c. (3) Hence a mere title of courtesy as dominus, mister, &c. (4) As applied to God it retains its relative meaning—the relation of God to His creatures as their Owner and absolute Ruler. It is substituted in the LXX. for Jehovah, Shaddai, Elohim, and not only for Adon or Adonai. Hence in the New Testament it is used for Christ. He is our Lord in the sense in which Jehovah was the Lord of the Hebrews. Christ owns us both as Creator and Redeemer. 2. God. What this means passes all understanding and imagination. It is easy to say, "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal," &c. But who can comprehend the Infinite? We know that one infinite in His Being and perfections must be—(1) The object of adoration, supreme love, absolute submission. (2) The ground of confidence. (3) One in whose favour is eternal life. All that God is, Christ is. All that is due to God is due to Christ. 3. "My" means not only that Christ is the Person whom we acknowledge and confess to be our Lord and God, to the exclusion of all other persons out of the Godhead; but that He stands in the relation of Lord and God to *us*, and that we stand in a corresponding relation to Him; that we recognize His ownership and authority; depend on His protection, adore, love, trust, and serve Him as our Lord and God. This it is to be a Christian. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The confession of Thomas*:—The words imply—I. SELF-KNOWLEDGE. 1. When Thomas says this he is confessing that his past life has been a mistake. The arrogance of his former speech contrasts strikingly with the lowliness of this. A new revelation had been given him, making known the one great need of his soul—a Lord to control his will, and form his judgment, and give law to his inmost spirit. Our great want is a ruler; submission is one of the deepest of human needs. (1) Let self-will be ever so successful, the heart is still unsatisfied. Ambition is soon sated; and the "head that wears a crown" is "uneasy," not more because of the cares of government than because the monarch is tired of himself. Even the partial stimulus which self-seekers have, while yet they are striving for their object, witnesses to the same truth; a man may choose his aim, but when he has chosen it, it controls him. No man ever found rest till his aim in life was decided on. Seeking an object, men for a time are tranquil, for they are freed from self; but when their object is secured, they fall again into the restlessness of bondage to a self that is insufficient for them. (2) Look now at another class of men of nobler character. The truth-seeker is freed from self, for he feels truth to be absolute, independent of him, and he yields allegiance to it. The lover of right is under an eternal law of rectitude; righteousness is not something that he invents. Right is, and is his lord. Duty is what we owe, not what we choose to give. But what is truth? Its seekers are all in disagreement. What is right? The standard of rectitude in our England is very different from that of ancient Rome. Has duty any higher standard than statute law, or regard for the greatest happiness of the greatest number? These very words set us again upon a drifting sea of self-will. Truth, duty, rectitude—these are cold words. To stir passion and control affection they must be seen embodied in personal form. Love, reverence—these are the heart's deep wants. Cold abstractions can never deliver us from self. 2. Thomas had found all he needed in Christ. Christ was "the Truth;" His will absolute righteousness; duty was what he owed to Him. There was no coldness nor vagueness in these names when summed up in the person of His Lord. Love

rises to worship in his confession; his heart is at rest when he says, "my Lord." (1) This is the secret of Christ's power over men. He comes among them as their Lord; He claims authority and submission. Christ does not allure men by pleasures, flattering their self-will. He simply bids them "Follow Me," and they leave all and follow Him. He speaks to those to whom self-will is barrenness, and there is fruitfulness. He speaks to those whose selfishness is weakness and disease, and in obedience to Him come health and energy. And herein do we see the meaning of "Come unto Me all ye that labour . . . . Take My yoke upon you," &c. For in meekness and obedience our spirits find their end and purpose, and herein is rest. (2) In Christ, too, we see how blessed to yield our wills to the will of God. He who came to tell us that we are ruined, because we seek our own wills and not the will of God, must Himself be submissive. He who came revealing absolute truth and righteousness, claiming our homage for them, must Himself yield them homage. Christ can rule because He knows how to obey. II. KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEANING OF LIFE. 1. It was Christ's perfect knowledge of Thomas which brought from him the confession. (1) Christ had heard the sceptical words; He had been with Thomas, though Thomas had not been with Him. But Thomas could not stop here; as none can rest in one separate instance of His knowledge and grace. He who knew this must know all. All his past life would flash upon him, and he would recognize it all as Christ's plan to educate and bring him to Himself. (2) Christ had done infinitely more than to simply give Thomas his own test for the resurrection; He had brought Thomas to a better mind, and made that test appear absurd. The touch would only have convinced that the risen Jesus was here; Thomas, without touching Him, calls Him "My Lord and my God." Underlying Thomas's wish for sensible proof there had been the unquenchable longing for personal intercourse. That John and the others had seen Christ was nothing to him. Nothing can reveal a personal Lord to us but that Lord's communion with ourselves. Thomas's heart was satisfied now, and to Christ's guidance he could absolutely submit. 2. It is such a guide we want; one who can read our heart and supply every need. It is such a guide we preach in Jesus; not one who lived a few years in Palestine; but One who was "before all things," and who is ever with His people. He knows you, for He formed you for Himself; your life, with all its difficulties and perplexities, is His plan for educating you for Himself and God. Each doubt He is waiting to clear away; even your wilfulness does not drive Him from your side. III. KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. 1. Thomas recognized the character of God rather than the dignity of Christ, and herein lay the true value of his confession. The mere confession that Christ is a Divine Person is barren: the knowledge that God is come into actual fellowship with us in Christ is new life to the spirit. The looking for God in awful grandeur obscures the perception of God in the perfection of moral excellence, the influence by which goodness sways the heart. It was to deliver men from this very error that Christ came. The disciples were ever expecting that Christ would communicate some stupendous truth concerning God. Gradually their conceptions of Him became exalted; Christ's own words were fufilled, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Here at length from Thomas breaks the full confession that this is God. 2. Thomas could not say, "My Lord," without saying also "My God;" for it is shocking to yield the whole heart to any other than God. In the fact that he could not but adore Jesus, that Jesus claimed and had won his homage, it was revealed that Jesus was Divine. If He be not God, then are we idolators; for idolatry is the love and service of the creature as though it were supreme; and higher love and service than Christ has won from Christian hearts is impossible. If He be not God, then have we two Gods: the one a name, a cold abstraction; the other the Jesus who sways our spirits and to whom we render the consecration of our lives. 3. We may now see why so much importance is attached in the New Testament to the Divinity of Christ. The confession of Christ is not an act of the speculative intellect, it is the movement of the heart and the submission of the life to Him. There are Christian Unitarians who call Christ "Lord," though they hold back from calling Him "God." There are un-Christian Trinitarians who call Christ "God," and yet He manifestly is not their "Lord." It is sad that the words "My Lord and my God" should ever be separated. But he is a Christian, whatever the articles of his creed, who finds Christ sufficient for the soul's need, and whose life reveals that it is under His rule. *(A. Mackennel, D.D.)* *Thomas's confession of faith:*—These words imply—I. JOYFUL RECOGNITION. Partings are painful; but the bereavement of the ten was over. And now the restored fellowship of Christ brought Thomas peace.

So every new revelation of Christ brings joy to His disciples now. But recognitions are not always joyful (1 Kings xxi. 20; Matt. viii. 29; Mark i. 24; Rev. i. 5; vi. 15, 16). How different the meeting of loved ones (Acts xii. 14–16; xxviii. 15; Gen. xlv. 26; xlvi. 30). So Thomas and all disciples rejoice in Christ who, though He was dead, is alive again, and crowned with glory and honour. II. DIVINE HOMAGE. Friends rise in our estimation as we know them better. Love tested by trial. Suffering and death reveal the soul. Perhaps we never see so clearly the greatness of our friend as when he is taken from us. So it seems to have been with the disciples. It was only after the Resurrection that they beheld the fulness of His glory. What a testimony to the Divine greatness of Jesus in this confession! How horrified was Paul (Acts xiv. 15, 16); Peter (Acts x. 25); the angel (Rev. xxii. 9) at the thought of being worshipped; but Jesus receives it as His right. III. APPROPRIATING FAITH, "My," a little word, but of deep significance. Faith is a personal thing. Mark the difference between Thomas's faith and—1. The faith of devils (James ii. 19; 1 John v. 10–12). 2. The faith of mere believers in historical Christianity. It is one thing to say, "The Lord He is God," and another to say, "My Lord and my God." Luther says that the marrow of the gospel is in the possessive pronouns. IV. SELF-SURRENDERING LOVE. Paul says, "Yield yourselves to God." This is the difficulty; but never till it is done are we truly converted. But once done it is done for ever. The sight of Jesus wins the heart. Conclusion: Happy are those who can say, "My Lord and my God." Here is—1. The true bond of union (1 Cor. i. 2; 2 Cor. x. 1). 2. The noblest inspiration of life (2 Cor. v. 14). 3. Strength for work. 4. Comfort in trouble. 5. Hope in death (2 Cor. iv. 6–8). (*W. Forsyth, M.A.*) *Christ satisfying the instinct of reverence:*— I. THE INSTINCT. 1. Reverence is a word by itself, and has no synomym. It is not respect, regard, fear, honour, nor even awe. It would be inaccurate to apply it to wealth, rank or power. If we reverence their possessor it must be for something over and above them. Even if we give it to age, royalty, or genius, it is only because there is in these a touch of sacredness. For reverence is the sense of something essentially and not accidently above us. Old age is above in the incommunicable sanctity of an ampler experience, and a nearer heaven; royalty is the theory of a Divine commission and a theocratic representation; genius is the possession of an original intuition which is to be a voice for mankind. 2. This reverence is an instinct; but there is much to support the theory of an instinct of irreverence. The insolence of lusty youth, clever shallowness which denies admiration, and can see in religion only a sentiment, or a thing for ridicule, such a spirit may be common in literature and society, but it is no instinct; it is a degeneracy. Man worthy of the name has always something above him; and even where self presides at the worship, it is rather as priest than idol. 3. It is easy to misdirect this instinct. Man feels himself very little, an atom in a mighty system. There must be something above him. What? The celestial bodies? This instinct enforces a worship. What object so worthy as they? There are those now who reverence nature, and law to them is but a name for deity, and they worship this unknown god. Others a beautiful friend, till they find some day the idol broken in pieces or vanished. Nor do these misdirections cease when at last God becomes the object, inasmuch as reverence for church architecture, decoration, and music may be giving His glory to another. II. CHRIST SATISFYING THIS INSTINCT. 1. The instinct is abroad seeking its object. It finds it not in an abstraction. Nature cannot satisfy it. It may be a grand thought that I am part of a system which is the universe and whose breath is deity. Yet I, insignificant I, find no rest in this vastness. I go forth among my fellows, and cannot help loving and reverencing: yet the bright illusion vanishes. 2. Shall it always be thus? I see an end of all perfection, and yet there is in me an idea of perfection, might I but attain unto it. Is there none such? Yes, there is God—the Infinite, Eternal, Self-existent. Yet I feel myself in the land of things too high for me and too vast. Cannot I get nearer, until I touch? To answer this Christ comes forth, takes our nature, obeys, loves, suffers, dies, and bids us follow Him with a love as devoted as it is unidolatrous, being very man and very God. 3. Can this one heart contain all the devotions of all men? Can I be assured of attention in the adored of the nations? Yes. "If *any* man thirst," &c. (*Dean Vaughan*).

Ver. 29. **Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen yet have believed.**—*Who is blessed?*—Thomas's conduct was strange but honest. How much better to be

doubting Thomas than the believing priests! They believed the resurrection, or they would never have given to the soldiers the price of a lie. They believed, but they would not believe. Thomas doubted, but would gladly have believed. In the matter of faith and unbelief men may be divided into four classes. I. THOSE WHO WILL NOT BELIEVE EVEN WHAT THEY SEE. Such were the men who apprehended our Lord. Not one of them in his past life had fallen, or seen another fall, at a word. But now they all fall. Yet they apprehend the mysterious Man, just as if nothing special had occurred. Such was Pharaoh. What evidence will ever convince him that he had better let Israel go? But nothing less than ruin will convince him. Such was Ahaziah (2 Kings i.). More sad and shocking still, perhaps, is the case of Stephen's judges. Whether the accused be like an angel or a fiend, matters little or nothing to the Sanhedrim. Yes; there is a class of men like Solomon's fools, whose folly will not leave them, though they be braved in a mortar; men who can hear nothing softer than thunder, who can feel nothing lighter than vengeance. II. THOSE WHO BELIEVE ONLY WHEN THEY SEE. To this class Thomas for a time belongs, and Abraham and the apostles Our Lord, in the plainest words, and more than once, had said that He should rise on the third day. Who believed it? To this class, of course, belong the men of the world. One can hardly draw a line between saint and worldling so strong and so clear as this. The worldling trusts in himself, or his friends, or his wealth, or his stars; the saint trusts in God. III. THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN, AND YET HAVE BELIEVED. Without this faith it is impossible to please God. Without faith a man may be a logician, a mathematician, a general, a man of business; but by what possibility can he be a child of God? Take faith from the earth; let everything be done by sight; let the consequence of every action be immediate and irresistibly evident; and what is left but calculation and business, time-tables and statistics? Life has become a counting-house, in which all we want is a sharp eye and a strong hand. With faith has gone every high and holy feeling—all patience, courage, largeness of heart. The believer is every way blessed. 1. He has the best moral education which even the All-wise can give him. What better exercise than to rise from the seen to the unseen? Who can be more noble than he who, in the very sunshine of prosperity, refuses to trust flattering appearances, or even flattering facts? And of all brave men is not he the bravest who, in the darkest and saddest hours, maintains an unflinching trust in the God who hides Himself? 2. He wins an infinite prize. Eternal life is the goal of faith. Do we want an example of steady faith? See it in Noah, who for one hundred and twenty years built the ark. How the faith shines through the long, slow years! IV. THOSE WHO BELIEVE NOT ONLY WITHOUT BUT AGAINST APPEARANCES—as Abraham when commanded to offer Isaac, and Job when he said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," and the three Hebrew children. (*W. J. Frankland.*) *The blessedness of faith*:—I. RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGE NOW UNDER THE COMMON GRACE OF THE GOSPEL IS GREATER THAN THAT POSSESSED BY THOSE WHO COMPANIED WITH CHRIST IN THE FLESH. This is the case as regards—1. The evidences of Christ's Godhead and Divine Apostlate. At first sight it would seem impossible that any evidences should transcend that accorded to Christ's contemporaries. Yet against this was the constant presence of the Lord's manhood, which must have been fruitful in misgivings. But this well-spring of incredulity is now sealed. We know not Christ after the flesh. When we connect this with the moral effects of Christianity, the testimony of millions to Christ's power to bless and save, it is clear that a return to the Apostle's position would be a loss. 2. The substance of Christian truth. The multitudes to whom Christ spake in parables had no pre-eminence over ourselves; for they were left in ignorance of much that Christ taught His disciples. But these disciples were left in ignorance of many things they were not able to hear until the descent of the Spirit, and all the fruits of their subsequent inspiration we enjoy. 3. The prime grace of the gospel, the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins. Here, perhaps, more than anywhere, we are apt to draw unfavourable contrasts. Could we but bring our spiritual pollution to where the leper knelt! The music of that word "forgiven," uttered by Christ's own lips—did that but fall upon our ears! But are we sure that if Christ were upon earth we should be inclined to seek Him? That the same hindrances of shame, worldliness, &c., would not still operate? And then why should the utterance of Christ's own lips be more satisfactory than the inward witness of the Holy Spirit? But in two respects one privilege is immeasurably higher. (1) We understand better than they did the way of salvation by Christ. (2) Christ is accessible to us, as He was not to the bulk of

mankind then. 4. The comparative means for obtaining a perfect preparation for eternal life. (1) The aids incentive to holiness with which Christ's attendants were privileged were transcendently great. Think of His teaching on the character of God, the evil of sin, the excellence of religion; His miracles; the moral force of His example. (2) Yet we may easily over-estimate this privilege. It was not of itself, and as a matter of course, an instrument of salvation, as the case of Judas makes only too clear. (3) Besides, the disciples had no such opportunity of securing holiness as we have, for the Holy Spirit was not given till Jesus was glorified. II. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH GOD GOVERNS HIS CREATURES, IT IS BETTER THAT WE ARE CALLED TO LIVE FOR A WHILE BY FAITH AND NOT BY SIGHT. 1. Inward satisfaction in the service of God is in proportion to the difficulties of the service. Were it not for the renunciation of the world, the crucifixion of self, the wrestling with evil, which go hand in hand with the return of a sinful spirit to God, there would be little of that joy which come so often with the first revelation of Christ. If evangelical truth in its sublimer mysteries were accessible to every vagrant aspiration, how poor a harvest of Divine delight would they furnish compared with that now yielded to the toilsome husbandry of thought and devotion! And when we pray, and labour, find peace, thereby we owe it to the spiritual hindrances which block our approach to God and to outward pressure and trial. 2. A life of faith is fitted to produce a symmetry and perfection of Christian character such as could scarcely come by a less trying process. Those Christians are the wisest, and meekest, and most spiritual to whom the largest share of providential trouble has fallen, and the perfecting of the Church for the duties of time and for the felicity and services of heaven is only to be secured under the operation of faith in the unseen Saviour. Were the presence which faith imposes lifted off the Church, pride would take the place of humility, and self-worship consecration to Christ, and hardness charity. 3. The ultimate rewards of creatures like ourselves are determined by the severity of the ordeal which constitutes moral probation. If there be creatures whose final estate is determined apart from probation, we can hardly imagine them possessors of a blessedness comparable to those who have suffered and so are perfected. There is not a good, even of this world, the fruits of pains and trouble, which is not the sweeter from the price we pay for it. III. THE TEXT HAS OTHER SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS. 1. Towards Christian belief. It shows a strong shadow on millinarianism. Whatever advantage such a state of things might be supposed to confer on the Church, on the principle of the text it would be a diminution, not a heightening, of its present privilege. 2. Towards Christian sentiment and observance. It distinctly frowns upon all interposition of the material and human between God in Christ and our souls. The entire genius of Christianity is hostile to religious symbolism, and the history of the Church utters a strong caution against the use of sense as a helpmate to faith. Faith needs it not. It is impious to set up Moses' candlestick again now that the Sun has risen. 3. Towards Christian character and life. (1) It rebukes the spirit of religious discontent and envy. (2) It suggests the greatness of our religious obligation as Christians. (3) It opens a glorious prospect of blessing from God as the recompense of faith. (*J. D. Geden, D.D.*) *A simple faith*:—A peasant of singular piety, being on a particular occasion admitted to the presence of the King of Sweden, was asked by him what he considered to be the nature of true faith. The peasant entered fully into the subject much to the King's comfort and satisfaction. When the king was on his death-bed he had a return of his fears as to the safety of his soul, and still the same question was perpetually put to those around him, "What is real faith?" The Archbishop of Upsal, who had been sent for, commenced in a learned and logical manner a scholastic definition of faith, which lasted an hour. When he had finished, the king said, with much energy, "All this is ingenious, but it is not comfortable; it is not what I want. Nothing but the farmer's faith will do for me." (*J. Everett.*) *Faith and sight*:—I. SIGHT WITHOUT FAITH—sin. 1. Ancient—the sin of the Jewish people. 2. Common—the sin of many now. 3. Great—since that which in Christ is presented to the eye of faith and reason ought to lead to heart acceptance of Christ. II. FAITH AFTER SIGHT—salvation. Exemplified—1. In the disciples (except perhaps John) (ver. 8), who believed in Christ risen after they had seen Him. 2. In those who to-day believe in Christ only after their intellectual difficulties as to Christ have been solved. III. FAITH WITHOUT SIGHT—blessedness. 1. It implies a larger measure of Divine grace. 2. It exhibits a higher degree of Christian virtue. 3. It secures

a richer experience of inward felicity. 4. It wins a readier commendation from the lips of Christ. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The Bible a help to the sight of faith*:—You may have stood on the sea coast while a friend has been looking out to sea through a telescope, perhaps it was when you were at Douglas waiting the arrival of a steamer from Liverpool, on which you were expecting a beloved relative. While you are standing on the rock, your friend is looking through the glass, and saying, "Yes; I see him!" You reply, "Let me have the glass! I cannot believe it, unless I see too." You lift the glass, and in a little while, you say, "Ah, I see him; now, he sees us, and is waving his handkerchief to us!" Here is a telescope which God has provided for every man. We can see, through it, that the record of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, are facts, as plainly as if we had seen Him with our eyes and touched Him with our hands. We also see that He is our Saviour, who died in our room and stead; and that we are saved from the penalty of eternal death, because our iniquities were laid on Him instead of on us. We see through this Divine telescope, that when Jesus was nailed to the cross, He died, not for His own sins, but for ours! Through this glass we see the water of life, and notice to our joy that any thirsty soul may drink thereof, without money and without price. Through this blessed glass, we see the hand of the Lord directing our paths, and holding us up in slippery ways. It is the most wonderful telescope in the world. It shows us our departed friends and children in a beautiful land, where they wear white robes and have neither any sorrow nor sin; and it shows that we have a mansion in paradise on which our names are written; but, best of all, it reveals that we—we!—shall actually enjoy the blessedness of heaven! (*W. Birch.*) *Meditation a help to the sight of faith*:—Meditation and contemplation are often like windows of agate, and gates of carbuncle, through which we see the Redeemer. Meditation puts the telescope to the eye, and enables us to see Jesus after a better sort than we could have seen Him if we had lived in the days of His flesh; for now we see not only Jesus in the flesh, but the spiritual Jesus; we see the spirit of Jesus, the core and essence of Jesus, the very soul of the Saviour. O happy you, that spend much time in contemplations! I wish that we had less to do, that we might do more of this heavenly work. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Sight and faith*:—Walking by sight is just this—"I believe in myself;" whereas walking by faith is—"I believe in God." If I walk by sight I walk by myself; if I walk by faith, then there are two of us, and the second one—ah! how great, how glorious, how mighty is He—the Great All-in-all—God-all-sufficient! Sight goes a warfare at its own charges, and becomes a bankrupt, and is defeated. Faith goes a warfare at the charges of the King's Exchequer, and there is no fear that Faith's bank shall ever be broken. Sight builds the house from its own quarry, and on its own foundation but it begins to build and is never able to finish, and what it does build rests on the sand and falls. But faith builds on the foundation laid in eternity, in the fair colours of the Saviour's blood, in the covenant of grace. It goes to God for every stone to be used in the building, and brings forth the top-stone with shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it!" (*Ibid.*) *Sight of faith*:—Sight is the noblest sense; it is quick; we can look from earth to heaven in a moment: it is large; we can see the hemisphere of the heavens at one view: it is sure and certain; in hearing we may be deceived; and, lastly, it is the most affecting sense. Even so, faith is the quickest, the largest, the most certain, the most affecting grace: like an eagle in the clouds, at one view, it sees Christ in heaven, and looks down upon the world; it looks backwards and forwards; it sees things past, present, and to come. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *Faith, not sight*:—By constant sight, the effect of objects seen grows less; by constant faith, the effect of objects believed in grows greater. The probable reason of this is, that personal observation does not admit of the influence of the imagination in impressing the fact; while unseen objects, realized by faith, have the auxiliary aid of the imagination, not to exaggerate them, but to clothe them with living colours, and impress them upon the heart. Whether this be the reason or not, the fact is true, that, the more frequently we see, the less we feel, the power of an object; while, the more frequently we dwell upon an object by faith, the more we feel its power. (*J. B. Walker, M.D.*) *Faith without sight*:—1. Those who saw and believed not were far from being blessed. 2. Those who saw him, and believed, were undoubtedly blessed. 3. Those who have not seen, and yet have believed, are emphatically blessed. 4. There remains the superlative degree of blessedness in seeing Jesus face to face without need of believing in the same sense as now. 5. But for the present this is our blessedness, this is our place in the gospel history—we have not seen, and yet have believed. What a comfort that

so high a degree of blessedness is open to us! I. DO NOT LET US DIMINISH THIS BLESSEDNESS—1. By wishing to see. (1) By pining for some imaginary voice, or vision, or revelation. (2) By craving marvellous providences, and singular dispensations. (3) By hungering for despairs or transports. (4) By perpetually demanding arguments and logical demonstrations. (5) By clamouring for conspicuous success in connection with the preaching of the Word, and the missionary operations of the Church. (6) By being anxious to believe with the majority. Truth has usually been with the minority. 2. By failing to believe. Believe—(1) Practically, so as to act upon our faith. (2) Intensely, so as to laugh at contradictions. (3) Livingly, so as to be simple as a child. (4) Continually, so as to be evenly confident. (5) Personally, so as to be assured alone, even if all others give the lie to the doctrines of the Lord. (6) Thoroughly, so as to find the rest of faith. II. DO NOT LET US THINK THIS BLESSEDNESS UNATTAINABLE. 1. This blessedness is linked for ever with the faith which our Lord accepts: in fact, it is the appointed reward of it. 2. God deserves such faith of us. He is so true that His unsupported word is quite enough for faith to build upon. Can we only believe Him as far as we can see Him? 3. Thousands of saints have rendered, and are rendering, such faith, and are enjoying such blessedness at this moment, We are bound to have fellowship with them in like precious faith. 4. Hitherto our own experience has warranted such faith. Has it not? 5. Those of us who are now enjoying the blessed peace of faith can speak with great confidence upon the matter. Why, then, are so many cast down? Why will they not believe? III. DO NOT LET ANY OF US MISS IT. The faith which our Lord described is exceedingly precious, and we ought to seek after it, for—1. It is the only true and saving faith. Faith which demands sight is not faith at all, and cannot save the soul. 2. It is in itself most acceptable with God. Nothing is acceptable without it (Heb. xi. 6). It is the evidence of the acceptance of the man and his works. 3. It is a proof of grace within: of a spiritual mind, a renewed nature, a reconciled heart, a new-born spirit. 4. It is the root-principle of a glorious character. 5. It is exceedingly useful to others: in comforting the despondent, in impressing unbelievers, in cheering seekers, &c. 6. It enriches its possessor to the utmost, giving power in prayer, strength of mind, decision of character, firmness under temptation, boldness in enterprise, joy of soul, realization of heaven, &c. Conclusion: 1. Know you this faith? 2. Blessedness lies that way. Seek it! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith with and without sight:*—I. WHAT WERE SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES ENJOYED BY THOSE WHO LIVED AND SERVED GOD IN THE TIMES OF MIRACLE? 1. To a considerable extent the pious Jews and the first Christians believed because they saw. Not that they walked wholly by sight. Noah was "warned of God of things not seen as yet." Abraham went out of his old home, "not knowing whither he went." And those worthies mentioned in Heb. xi. acted without assistance from the objects of time and sense, in the instances that are specified. But taking into the account the whole course of their lives, they were much more aided by sight than we are. (1) For it was a dispensation of supernaturalism. Who could be an atheist as he stood under Mount Sinai. Who could query the possibility of miracles, when he saw the waters of the Red Sea rising up; when he saw the shadow go back upon the sun-dial: when he heard Christ call up Lazarus from the tomb. (2) Now there was something in this, unquestionably, that rendered faith in God's power comparatively easy. Jacob, *e.g.*, must have found it no difficult thing to trust in a Being who was directing him, watching over him, and delivering him. 2. How differently the modern believer is situated! Generation after generation has come and gone, but no celestial sign has been given. Christians have believed that God is, but they have never seen His shape nor heard His voice. They have had faith in immortality, but no soul has ever returned to make their assurance doubly sure. In some instances, this reticence has produced an almost painful uncertainty, and wakened the craving for some palpable evidence of unseen realities. And all the attempts of Spiritualism are another testimony to the craving natural to man for miraculous signs. Sceptics contend that the miracle is irrational. But, certainly, nothing is irrational for which there is a steady and constant demand upon the part of human nature. II. SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES WHICH THE CHURCH OF GOD EXPERIENCES IN THESE LATTER DAYS, WHEN THERE IS NO MIRACLE TO ASSIST FAITH. Believing without seeing—1. Is a stronger faith; and the stronger the faith, the greater the blessedness. (1) If Thomas had put credit in the affirmation of the other disciples, it is evident that his faith in Christ would have been greater. For Christ had foretold that He was to be crucified and to rise. Thomas had witnessed the crucifixion, and knew that this part of his Lord's

prophecy was fulfilled. If, now, he had believed the remainder, he would have believed the disciples' report. But his demand evinced that his faith needed to be helped out by sight. (2) If we examine the Scriptures, we shall find that that faith is of the best quality which leans least upon the creature and most upon the Creator. Take the case of Abraham. He was the subject of miraculous impressions; but there were some critical points in which His experience resembled more that of the modern believers, and it is with references to them that he is styled the "father of the faithful." Consider the trial of his faith when commanded to sacrifice Isaac. (3) It is to this high degree of faith that the modern believer is invited. We have never seen a miracle. We have only read the record of what God did, in this way, thousands of years ago. Our faith must therefore rest more upon the simple authority of God, and be more spiritual. The inward powers of the soul are nobler than the five senses; and their acts have more worth and dignity than the operations of the senses. There is no very great merit in following the notices of the five senses. An animal does this continually. But when I believe that God is great and good, when phenomena seemingly teach the contrary; when my faith runs back to the nature and attributes of God Himself, and is not staggered by anything that I see, then I give God great honour. All that this kind of faith requires is, to be certain that the Divine promise has been given; and then it leaves all to Him. 2. Honours God more. We cannot show greater respect for any one than to take his bare word. There are comparatively few men of this first class and standing. And just as far as we withhold our confidence in God until we can see the wisdom of His ways, we dishonour Him. Suppose a sudden and inexplicable sorrow—a missionary is cut down in the midst of great usefulness; a wise and kind father is taken away from a family that leans entirely upon him: if in these instances no doubts are felt, what an honour do they render to God by such absolute confidence. For the faith in such cases terminates upon the very personality and nature of God. It passes by all secondary causes and reposes upon the First Cause. Oftentimes our faith is of such a mixed character, that it honours the creature as much as the Creator. For example, if we expect that the whole world will be Christianized, partly because of the Divine promises and partly because the wealth and civilization and military power of the earth are in the possession of Christian nations, we honour the creature in conjunction with the Creator; and this is to dishonour Him, for He says, "My glory will I not give to another." The faith of the Church is of the purest, highest kind only when she trusts solely and simply in God, and looks upon all favouring circumstances as results, not as supports, of His promise. Take away the promises and agency of God, and where would be the wealth, &c., of Protestant Europe and America? "Sufficient is Thine arm alone, and our defence is sure." The early Church, with the civilization of the Greek and Roman world arrayed against them, could not lean upon it in conjunction with God, if they would. They were shut up to the mere power and promise of the Most High. And what honour did they give Him in this: and how did He honour them in return? Conclusion: From this subject it is evident—1. That God is the sole object of faith. There is a difference between belief and faith. We may believe a man; but we may believe in and on God alone. Faith is the resting of the mind; and the mind can find no rest in a creature. 2. If God is the sole object of faith, then we must beware of a mixed or partial faith. We must not trust partly in God, and partly in His creatures. He will receive no divided honours. As in our justification we cannot trust partly in the blood of Christ, and partly in our own good works, so in our more general relation to God, our confidence must not rest upon any combination or union between Him and the works of His hands. 3. We know these things, happy are we if we do them. (*Prof. Shedd.*)

Faith of Thomas:—Faith, resting upon the word of promise, upon a Divine testimony, is more noble, spiritual, and ingenuous; displays more candour and humility, and brings more glory to God, than that which is the result of sensible manifestation. In illustrating these words, let us—I. EXAMINE THE NATURE OF THAT FAITH WHICH IS HERE COMMENDED BY OUR SAVIOUR. Faith, in its most general sense, is the strong persuasion of any truth, the firm assent of the mind to it. This persuasion may be founded on the evidence of our senses: thus Thomas believed that Jesus was risen, because he saw, felt, and heard Him; thus I believe there is a sun, because I behold it, and am warmed by its beams. Sometimes this persuasion is founded on the deductions of reason: thus, because I discover in the universe so many effects, to produce which there must have been an intelligent First Cause, I believe there is a God (chap. x. 37.) But though the word faith is thus used, both

in common language and in the Scriptures, to signify that persuasion which is founded on the evidence of the senses or the deductions of reason, yet, in its more strict and proper reason, it denotes that assent of the mind which is founded on testimony. It is in this manner we believe, although we do not see. Thus I am told that there is such a city as Rome, such a river as the Nile; and though I have never seen them, I am persuaded of their existence, because it is confirmed to me by witnesses who had oportunities of knowing, and who had no interest in deceiving me. Their testimony fully supplies the place of the evidence of the senses or the deductions of reason. If the testimony be that of man, there results from it human faith; if the testimony be that of God, there results from it Divine faith; if it be of God through Jesus Christ and His apostles, there results Christian faith. But that we may more fully understand the nature of this faith, let us consider a few of its properties—1. It is enlightened. To believe without seeing is very different from believing without evidence or proof. The believer is not a weak being, receiving every thing without examination; nor any enthusiast, assenting without motive or light. 2. This faith is humble. A thousand objects connected with the being, attributes, and purposes of God, with the schemes of providence, or the plan of redemption, necessarily present to him abysses which no finite mind can fathom; but, filled with veneration and wonder before the Infinite, the incomprehensible, he submits his understanding; he strives not to break through those barriers which the Eternal has placed around His throne. 3. This faith is firm. The foundation of his belief is more stable than the heavens and the earth. It is not a mere probability, a wavering hope, an uncertain guess; but the declaration of God, on which he rests his assured belief and his everlasting interests. 4. This faith is universal in its object: receiving as true the whole of the sacred volume, its histories, its predictions, its doctrines, its precepts, its threatenings, its promises. 5. Finally, this faith is active, efficacious, purifying. It is not confined to a barren admiration of the truths and facts that are revealed; it descends into the heart, and sanctifies all its powers; it receives the precepts and commands of God as well as His promises; it requires the sacrifice of corrupt passions as well as the submission of our reason. Let us not deceive ourselves; the conviction of the understanding must pass to the heart, and then be manifested in all the actions of a holy life. II. Inquire WHY THOSE WHO THUS BELIEVE, ALTHOUGH THEY DO NOT SEE, ARE BLESSED. I. They are so because they display true wisdom, both in the choice of objects to occupy their mind, and in the rules they follow in giving their assent to them. They select for their belief, and contemplation, the most important truths. Place by their side the most sublime human sciences; and in comparison these sciences, to Him who judges without prejudice, and with a reference to the eternal duration of man, will appear only a vain and pompous ignorance. How trifling in reality are the pursuits of the greatest earthly philosopher, if he is ignorant of the science of salvation! More happy and more wise are they who are contented to behold with the eyes of God what they cannot behold with their own; who submit to be directed by the infallible Father of lights; who, "though they see not, yet believe." 2. Happy also because they act not only in the wisest, but also in the most advantageous manner, since they thus avoid misery and secure felicity. Without this faith, what overwhelming doubts, what cruel uncertainties, what multiplied fears surround us! Without it, what hope has the penitent? Can God forgive the rebel, in consistence with His holiness? In what mode can the remission of our sins be secured? These and a thousand other questions are unanswerable. Without it, what adequate consolation is there to the persecuted and oppressed? What relief to the bereaved? What comfort to the dying? (*H. Kollock, D.D.*) *Faith in an unseen Christ*:—Here is another "beatitude" in addition to what Matthew gives. Christ was Himself the "Blessed One"; and well knew who were "blessed," and what made them so. But how and why are believers so specially "blessed?" I. THEY THROW THEMSELVES UPON THE BARE WORD OF GOD. So that their faith rests on no divided evidence; and the foundation they build on is not partly strong and partly weak, partly iron and partly clay, partly rock and partly sand, but wholly rock, iron, strong. Sight may change; to-day bright, to-morrow dim; but God's testimony changes not. II. THEY COME DIRECTLY INTO CONTACT WITH GOD HIMSELF. No medium comes between them and God. The soul touches Him who is a Spirit, needing no interpreter nor introducer. III. THEY GET MORE INTO THE HEART AND REALITY OF THE THINGS OF GOD. Sight often crusts over spiritual things, or builds a wall. Simple faith goes in at once to the heart and

core of things. Instead of cruising along the rocky sea-board, it strikes inland, and pitches its tent amid the gardens and by the streams of a richer and more glorious country. It is in itself simpler, purer, and more direct; and hence it finds its way into regions into which faith of a grosser kind could never penetrate: it rises up, with a buoyancy all its own, into a higher atmosphere, disentangled from the things of earth. Like a being without a body to clog it, it moves more at will, and rejoices in a liberty to which faith of a more material kind is a stranger. IV. THEY TAKE FEWER FALSE STEPS, AND MAKE FEWER MISTAKES. Simple faith sees, as it were, everything with God's eyes, and hears everything with God's ears; and thus comes to no false conclusions, and is kept from the continual mistakes into which sense is falling. It not only sets the right estimate on the evidence of sense and feeling, but it puts the true interpretation upon all the facts and phenomena coming under the eye or sense. Exercising simple faith on the bare word of Him who has given me the record respecting His crucified, dead, buried, risen Son, I see myself crucified, dead, buried, risen with Him. Though seeing in myself the chief of sinners, I know and believe that there is no condemnation for me. Thus I believe not only without, but against seeing; and put the right construction upon things seen and temporal, looking at everything with the eyes of God. V. THEY ARE THUS SUBJECTED TO DISCIPLINE OF THE BEST AND MOST EFFECTUAL KIND. This life of believing keeps the body under, while it lifts up the soul; it loosens us from the earthly, and fastens us to the heavenly. It calms us, too, in a stormy world. It awakes us and keeps us awake, amid scenes fitted to lull us asleep. It makes us more truly "children too of the light and of the day," by transporting us beyond this world of night and darkness, into the kingdom of the unsetting sun. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *Dr. Arnold's death*:—When Dr. Arnold was suddenly stricken with his mortal agony, he was seen, we are told, lying still, with his hands clasped, his lips moving, and his eyes raised upwards as if in prayer; when all at once he repeated, firmly and earnestly: "And Jesus said unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen," &c. (*Bp. Westcott.*)

Vers. 30, 31. **And many other signs truly did Jesus.**—*The Evangelic record*:—I. ITS PARTIALNESS (ver. 30). 1. Christ was a worker. He had a wonderful mission to discharge within a brief time. Every day was crowded with deeds. 2. These deeds were signs—(1) Of His preternatural might. (2) Of His matchless philanthropy. (3) Of His immeasurable possibilities. 3. The recorded signs were only a small portion of what He accomplished; but—(1) They are sufficient for our purpose. (2) They suggest a wonderful history for future study. II. ITS PURPOSE (ver. 31). The facts of Christ's life are written in order—1. To reveal Him. (1) His power. (2) His love. (3) His transcendent excellence. 2. That men may believe in Him. How could they believe in Him of whom they have not heard. Faith in Him is at once—(1) The most essential, and—(2) The most practicable of all faiths. It is easier to believe in a person than in a proposition, and to believe in a transcendently good person than in any other. 3. That through faith men may have the highest life. What is this? Supreme sympathy with the supremely good. Man lost this at the Fall, and the loss is his guilt and ruin. The mission of Christ is to resuscitate it, and to fill souls with the love of God. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The miracles of Christ*:—1. "Signs" are miracles—a branch of evidence to which our religion appeals. The sufficiency of this evidence appears from universal acknowledgment. That the authors of all false religions have pretended miracles to establish their authority does not weaken the argument; for there could be no counterfeit coin were there no genuine mintage. 2. But what is a miracle? Not every extraordinary event, although popularly so denominated. There may be extraordinary floods, droughts, earthquakes, meteors, &c., and yet all may be resolved into natural laws operating under peculiar circumstances, without any special interposition of Deity. Hence, not every portent which an ignorant people call miraculous, is to be clothed with that character; nor every occasional remarkable effect which cannot be resolved into some known natural law, as the force of imagination in curing certain kinds of diseases and infirmities. But a miracle is the effect of the immediate interposition of God, contrary to or above the ordinary laws of nature, and that for the confirmation of some doctrine or message as from Himself. 3. The miracles of Jesus are presented to our consideration. I. AS BEARING THE UNEQUIVOCAL CHARACTER OF REAL MIRACLES, AND THEREFORE AUTHENTICATING THE MISSION AND CLAIMS OF CHRIST. Consider—1. Their number. A solitary instance might be accounted for by mistake, deception, exaggeration, or coincidence. But the number "of the signs which Jesus did" shuts out this objection. Many instances are

recorded with names, places, times, &c.; whilst we have instances in which our Lord healed "multitudes." 2. Their publicity. They were wrought in the sight of multitudes in broad day, and under the eye of a whole nation for nearly four years. 3. The character of the witnesses. Even the disciples were not over credulous; for Christ was the opposite of Him whom their imaginations had depicted as the true Messiah. In the multitude there was no eagerness to proclaim a lowly peasant, the Son of David, the King of Israel. And even the Pharisees and Sadducees, whose eye was sharpened by the mixed passions of hatred, envy, and fear, never denied the facts, and had to account for them by Satanic agency. 4. The nature of the works themselves. No class of events could bear stronger evidence of a supernatural character. They are not of a nature to be referred to the effects of imagination, occult laws of nature, never till then developed, nor to fortunate coincidences. "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind." 5. In the very age and places where these "signs" were wrought, multitudes believed on Christ who had motives for unbelief but none for credulity; and their conversion can only be accounted for from the overwhelming evidences of the real occurrence of the miracles upon which Christ placed the proof of His Divine mission. II. As accompanied with interesting circumstances, and as ministering points of important instruction. In the works of Christ there are—1. Miracles which declare His Divinity. (1) He wrought them, not in the name of another, but in His own. "I say unto thee, Arise," &c. This distinguishes Him from prophets and apostles. (2) He associates a miracle of healing with His authority as God to forgive sins. (3) When He drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple, He claimed as His own that Temple in which He often appeared as a common worshipper. (4) And when He cast out devils, they are sometimes constrained to confess Him as the Son of God. 2. Miracles of impressive majesty. He was to appear among men in the utmost lowliness of condition, yet He was to gather a people who were to receive Him as "the Son of God." Such a task had been too difficult for the strongest faith, had there not been "signs" which should manifest His "glory." The cloud which enveloped Him was dark; but it was the cloud of the Shechinah. Under His benediction bread multiplies, and thousands are fed; He walks upon the sea, and the yielding element sinks not beneath His footsteps; amidst the uproar of a storm He utters His simple command, "Peace, be still!" and the winds hear, and die away. At the mouth of the sepulchre He cries, "Lazarus, come forth!" And when finally He, the Conqueror of death in His own dominion, appears, Thomas naturally exclaims, "My Lord and my God!" 3. Miracles of tenderness. The works of our Lord were uniformly benevolent; but some of them were characterized by circumstances of peculiar compassion, *e.g.*, the feeding of the multitudes; the healing of the nobleman, and the raising of the widow's son, &c. 4. Miracles designed to impress upon our minds some important doctrine. When our Lord provided for the tribute-money, He intended to teach subjection to fiscal laws. When He drove the traders from the Temple, He taught that the places and the acts of worship are to be kept free from the intrusions of secular things. The miraculous draught of fishes was designed to indicate the success of the apostles in their work of evangelizing all nations, &c. 5. Miracles involving the duty and necessity of faith; that is, a personal trust in His power and mercy, as in the case of the leper, the centurion's servant, the child tormented with an evil spirit (Mark ix.), and the Syro-Phœnician woman. 6. Typical miracles, which symbolize something higher than themselves, great and illustrious as they were. (1) Our Lord's absolute power over nature indicated that the government of the natural world was placed in His hands as Mediator. (2) Devils were subject to Him, which showed that He came to establish a dominion which should finally subvert the empire of Satan. (3) When He was transfigured, He exhibited a type of that glory into which He was Himself about to enter, and into which He purposed to introduce His disciples. (4) When the band came to apprehend Him, and He by putting forth a supernatural power arrested the arresters, He showed with what ease He can confound His adversaries. (5) When, whilst in the act of dying, He rent the earth, and opened the graves, so that many of the saints came forth, He gathered the first-fruits of His people from the grave. And the miracle of His own resurrection was the type and pattern of our triumph over death. Conclusion: Learn—1. The practical character of the holy Scriptures. "These are written that ye might believe"; but many other works were done "which are not written in this book." Enough, however, is recorded for practical uses; the rest are reserved to the revelations of a future state. Let us remember that we are rather to improve what is recorded, than repine that not more has been written to gratify

our curiosity. 2. The end for which they are written, "that ye might believe", &c. These are the chief foundations of the Christian faith. "The Son of God" is the Divine designation; "the Christ" is the official name of the Redeemer of the world. 3. The consequence of a true faith in Christ is life. A mere doctrinal faith, however correct, cannot of itself lead to this result; but the personal trust which is exercised by a penitent heart obtains the life which is promised in Christ. The sentence of condemnation is reversed; and spiritual life, the result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, becomes the subject of present, daily, and growing experience. By this let us try our faith. (*R. Watson.*) *The silence of Scripture*:—It is a very good old canon that "in every work" we are to "regard the writer's end," and if that simple principle had been applied to this Gospel, a great many of the features in it which have led to some difficulty would have been naturally explained. But this text may be applied very much more widely than to John's Gospel. I. We have here THE INCOMPLETENESS OF SCRIPTURE. 1. Take this Gospel first. It is not meant to be a biography; it is avowedly a selection, under the influence of a distinct dogmatic purpose. There is nothing in it about Christ's birth, baptism, and selection of apostles, ministry in Galilee, parables, ethical teaching, and the Lord's supper. Nearly half of it is taken up with the incidents of one week at the end of His life, and of and after the Resurrection. Of the remainder—by far the larger portion consists of conversations which are hung upon miracles that seem to be related principally for the sake of these. 2. And when we turn to the other three, the same is true. Why was it that after the completion of the Scriptural canon there sprang up apocryphal gospels, full of childish stories of events which people felt had been passed over with strange silence? Is it not strange that the greatest event in the world's history should be told in such brief outline? Put the Gospels down by the side of the biography of any man that has a name at all, and you will feel their incompleteness as biographies. And yet, although they be so tiny that you might sit down and read them all in an evening over the fire, is it not strange that they have stamped on the mind of the world an image so deep and so sharp, of such a character as the world never saw elsewhere? 3. And then, if you turn to the whole Book, the same thing is true. The silence of Scripture is quite as eloquent as its speech. (1) Think, *e.g.*, how many things are taken for granted which one would not expect to be taken for granted in a book of religious instruction: the Being of a God; our relations to Him; our moral nature, and the future life. Look at how the Bible passes by, without one word of explanation, the difficulties which gather round some of its teaching: the Divine nature of our Lord, *e.g.*, the three Persons in the Godhead; the mystery of prayer; or of the difficulty of reconciling the Omnipotent will of God with our own free will, or of the fact of Christ's death as the atonement for the sins of the whole world. Observe, too, how scanty the information on points on which the heart craves for more light: *e.g.*, the future life! (2) Nor is the incompleteness of Scripture as a historical book less marked. Nations and men appear on its pages abruptly, rending the curtain of oblivion, and then they disappear. It has no care to tell the stories of any of its heroes, except for so long as they were the organs of that Divine breath. It is full of gaps about matters that any sciolist or philosopher or theologian would have filled up for it. II. THE MORE IMMEDIATE PURPOSE WHICH EXPLAINS ALL THESE INCOMPLETENESSES. 1. To produce in men's hearts faith in Jesus as the Christ and as the Son of God. (1) The Evangelist avows that His work is a selection determined by the doctrinal purpose to represent Jesus as the Christ, the Fulfiller of all the expectations and promises of the old Covenant, and as the Son of God. And so it is ridiculous in the face of this statement for "critics" to say: "The author of the fourth Gospel has not told us this, that, and the other incident therefore, He did not know it, consequently this Gospel is not to be trusted"; and others might draw the conclusion that the other three Evangelists are not to be trusted because they do give it us; a blunder which would have been avoided if people had listened when he said: "I knew a great many things about Jesus Christ, but I did not put them down here because I was not writing a biography, but preaching a gospel." (2) But that is just as true about the whole New Testament. The four Gospels are written to tell us these two facts about Christ, and the rest of the New Testament is nothing more than the working out of their theoretical and practical consequence. (3) As for the Old Testament whatever may be the conclusion as to dates and authorship, and whatever a man may believe about verbal prophecies, there is stamped unmistakably upon the whole system an attitude towards "good things to come," and of a Person who will bring them. "They that went before, and they that followed after, cried,

Hosanna! Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord." That Christ towers up above the history of the world and the process of revelation, like Mount Everest among the Himalayas. To that great peak all the country on the one side runs upwards, and from it all the valleys on the other descend; and the springs are born there which carry verdure and life over the world. 2. Christ, the Son of God, is the centre of Scripture; and the Book is a unity, because there is driven right through it, like a core of gold, either in the way of prophecy and onward-looking anticipation, or in the way of history and grateful retrospect, the reference to Christ, the Son of God. (1) And all its fragmentariness, its carelessness about persons, are intended, as are the slight parts in a skilful artist's handiwork, to emphasize the beauty and the sovereignty of that one Central Figure on which all lights are concentrated, and on which the painter has lavished all the resources of his art. (2) But it is not merely in order to represent Jesus as the Christ of God that these things are written, but that representation may become the object of our faith. Had the former been its sole intention, a theological treatise, *e.g.*, would have been enough. But, if the object be that men should rest their sinful souls upon Him as the Son of God and the Christ, then there is no other way to accomplish that but by the history of His life and the manifestation of His heart. And so let us learn the wretched insufficiency of a mere orthodox creed, and on the other hand, the equal insufficiency of a mere creedless emotion. III. THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF THE WHOLE. Scripture is not given to us merely to make us know something about God in Christ, nor only in order that we may have faith in the Christ thus revealed to us, but that we may "have life in His name." 1. "Life" is deep, mystical, inexplicable by any other words than itself. It includes pardon, holiness, well-being, immortality, Heaven; but it is more than they all. 2. This life comes in our dead hearts and quickens them by union with God. That which is joined to God lives. You can separate your wills and your spiritual nature from Him, and thus separated you are "dead in tresspasses and in sins." And the message which comes there is life "in His name"; *i.e.*, in that revealed character of His by which He is made known to us as the Christ and the Son of God. 3. Union with Him in His Sonship will bring life into dead hearts. He is the true Prometheus who has come from Heaven with the fire of the Divine life in the reed of His humanity, and He imparts it to us all if we will. He lays Himself upon us, as the prophet laid himself on the little child in the upper chamber; and lip to lip, and beating heart to dead heart, He touches our death, and it is quickened into life. 4. The condition on which that great Name will bring to us life is simply our faith. Do trust yourself to Him, as He who came to fulfil all that prophet, priest, and king, sacrifice, altar, and temple of old times prophesied and looked for? Do you trust in Him as the Son of God who comes down to earth that we in Him might find the immortal life which He is ready to give? If you do, then the end that God has in view in all His revelation, has been accomplished for you. If you do not it has not. You may admire Him, be ready to call Him by many appreciative names, but unless you have learned to see in Him the Divine Saviour of your souls, you have not seen what God means you to see. But if you have, then all other questions about this Book, important as they are in their places, may settle themselves as they will; you have got the kernel, the thing that it was meant to bring you. Many an erudite scholar, who has studied the Bible all his life, has missed the purpose for which it was given; and many a poor old woman in her garret has found it. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Things not written and things written:—Among thoughtful readers biography is the most popular branch of literature. It is popular in the best sense. It does not captivate the intellect of sensuousness at the expense of the reflective mind. Nor does it stimulate a fugitive moment to be followed by a lapse into deadness of sensibility. But it is popular by virtue of a genuine human quality that delights in a knowledge of others, and passes from their fellowship into a truer and wiser communion with its own private heart. Books are the best interpreters of the race, and biographies are the best of books. No wonder, then, that the basis of Christianity, as a revelation of infinite wisdom, is laid in the biography of the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice—I. The statement THAT THE RECORD OF OUR LORD'S LIFE IS FRAGMENTARY, AND, AS TO ITS DETAILS, INCOMPLETE. The narrative, though four minds wrought on it most sympathetically and skillfully, is not exhaustive. Obviously, the limitation was a part of the plan, for it is uniform, no one of the evangelists transcending a boundary tacitly acknowledged. Nor is this restraint arbitrary as to its mode of action. Observe, then, that this restraint is not isolated as to one class of facts or to any special phase of Christ's varied ministrations. It

covers all. If we instance the miracles, only thirty-two are given, while we have many allusions to miraculous acts in such words as "He healed many" and "healing every sickness and every disease among the people." We have the Sermon on the Mount, the discourses reported by St. John, and numerous parables, but His preaching is frequently spoken of in a general way, as "He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee." Of His private instructions, few examples are mentioned, while His domestic life during the three years of His ministry is dimly outlined. The eyes of those who "beheld His glory" saw more than they reported; and the hand of vigorous description, held in check by a higher Power, was allowed only such freedom of sweep as was consistent with the basic principle of New Testament literature. And what was that principle? Stated in a general way, it was the principle of biography as distinct from history. Biography proposes to interest us in a character. Everything is subordinate to that ruling idea. On this ground, then, we see the philosophy involved in the constructive art of the evangelists. They have but one end in view, and that is to describe a character. By reason of this end, their art must be exclusive no less than inclusive. Exclusive it must be, so as to shut off every divergence in the direction of history. Inclusive it will be, in order to do justice to the character portrayed. But this view may be expanded to a much wider reach. Not only had the evangelists to represent a very unique character in its human relations and aspects, but also the Divine nature underlying this character and imparting a peculiar significance to each and all its manifestations. If the Lord Jesus was the perfected type of humanity, He was also the image of God, the "express image" of the Father and "the brightness of His glory." We are so constituted as to need images. Without them, the mind is inert. The sense-organs are inlets to certain images. Taken into the imagination, they are elaborated into endless shapes of beauty and splendour. Not a faculty, not even the conscience, is independent of them, and the most subtle of all mental operations—a process of abstraction—is an ultimate refinement of some concrete and pictorial idea. To this law of mind, Christ conformed when He appeared amongst men as the image of the Father. This being assumed, the evangelists come before us in a new attitude as biographers. Must the ordinary and accepted art-conditions of biography be fulfilled? Yes; for Christ is a man among men. But He is also a perfect man, an ideal of the human race. If so, the skill of biographical portraiture must be enhanced to meet the exceptional requirement. Is that all? Nay: He is not only an ideal man, but the Divine Man. St. John states the generic idea of them all when He says: "Not written" and "these are written." Inspiration in them reveals itself in two ways: first, they carry the human heart of composition to its highest attainable point, and, secondly, they advance beyond the line of supreme human excellence. "Not written" applies to whatever would over excite the senses and the intellect acting through the senses. "Not written" refers to all that would address curiosity, the love of Novelty, and the strong proclivity to sensational gratification. "Not written" includes every activity of the imagination that terminates in self-luxury and expends itself in emotions that vanish when the thrill of treacherous nerves has subsided. "Not written" embraces that plethora of argument and logic by means of which no choice is left to the self-determining power of the soul, and its beliefs are created for it and not by its own freedom. "Not written" asserts the truth, that the inner eye may be dazzled, confused, irritated, and, at last, blinded, till it is "dark with excessive light." And, hence, the art of the evangelist fell back into the previous method of the Lord Jesus, who uniformly acted on the law involved in "not written." Therefore it was that He who spake as never man spoke adhered so rigidly to the wisdom of moderation. But, on the other hand, St. John says that certain things "are written," and, hence, we inquire why are "these" written? The answer is—II. THAT THE LORD JESUS IS PRESENTED BY MEANS OF "THESE" THINGS AS THE OBJECT OF SAVING FAITH. St. John is clear and full: "That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." The object of the evangelists was not to give the history of Christ, but the personality of Christ as seen in His Divine character. A fixed principle of selection governs the evangelists in the incidents they narrate. The type of facts so chosen is invariable. There is not a solitary exception. All these facts are typical of Him as the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Divine Redeemer of our race; and they ever converge to one point—faith in Him as the Saviour of sinners. So then in the things "not written" and in those "written;" in the spirit and mode of the

narration; there is one end to which every fact is relative and necessary; viz., faith in Christ. Study Christ's life in order to see how wisely and beneficiently He uses the acts of others to commend faith in Himself. This is one of the highest charms of His biography for this feature makes it our biography as well as His. Does He heal the centurion's servant? Jesus stands aside, as it were, and puts the centurion's faith in the foreground of the scene. "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matt. viii. 10). So in the case of the Syro-Phœnician woman: "O woman, great is thy faith" (Matt. xv. 28). One of the most striking chapters in the Bible is the eleventh of Hebrews, which exhibits in a historic collocation the wonders of faith. Its illustrations, taken from successive ages of the Church, follow in stirring rapidity, and the summons, "By faith," allow no break or lapse in attention. See, then, His complete adaptedness to man as the object of saving faith. If we believe in God surely we may and can believe in Him. Nor can we wonder that He reserved (see chap. xiv.) this special mode of address to consummate the teaching of faith in Himself. The basis of faith had been laid, the superstructure built up, and now the final touch of strength and beauty is added: "Ye believe in God; believe also in Me." Say you, that man is wrecked and ruined? So He is; utterly and hopelessly crushed by sin. But the grandeur of His place in the universe survives, the idea of humanity attests its imperishability in the midst of overthrow, and man walks forth from the gates of Eden a sublimer possibility than when he entered on its magnificence. Ages before the atonement was a fact it was a truth; and one of its glorious characteristics—the most indicative indeed of its Divineness, next to the Godhead of the atoning sufferer, was the power of the doctrine in anticipation of the accomplished reality. How shall we explain this phenomenon? It is to be accounted for by the position that faith occupies in the scheme of redemption. On this ground we see why the Abraham of a rude and idolatrous age could become the father of the faithful, and why Moses should transcend all statesmen and legislators. Through the senses to the soul was the law of Adamic life. Exactly in accord with this economy, "the tree of knowledge of good and evil," forbidden to their taste, was "good for food," "pleasant to the eyes" and "to be desired to make one wise." The temptation was on the level of Adam's dignity and it addressed itself directly to the foremost peculiarities of his constitution. So thus the law in Christ is through the spirit to the soul and its companion senses. Necessarily, therefore, faith is the instrumental means of salvation, since faith is the only possible organ through which the higher nature in man can act, and by which it can be developed. And hence the declaration of John (1 John v. 4.): "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." It overcomes the senses, wherein dwells in a fastness as old as Eden and as mighty as "the god of this world," the tyranny of evil. It overcomes their lusts and appetites. If we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, we "have life through His name." To believe in Him is to believe in His Sonship as divinely, eternally, exclusively His Sonship, and in His humanity as "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." The two natures met and united in Him; they formed one Person; and that Person, after a life of humiliation exceptional in the records of humanity, and a life of service and ministration in all the offices of intelligence, philanthropy, and goodness, still more remarkable in the annals of the race, died as differently from all other deaths as His life had been unlike all other lives. To believe in Him is to believe that His death was vicarious, propitiatory, and satisfying as to all the needs of fallen man, and all the requirements of infinite truth, justice, and holiness. To believe in Him is to believe in the unabated sovereignty of law. Love is never supreme above law, but supreme through law. To believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, is to believe, not in mere truths and sentiments, nor simply in doctrines and duties, but in Him whose gracious and ever-blessed personality is the fount whence flows the force of all truth; the charm of all beauty; the wisdom of all knowledge; the tenderness of all benevolence; the sweetness of all sympathy; the largeness of all magnanimity, and the loftiness of all heroism, in the currents of this world's arteries, and in each and every one of the channels of this new-made universe. To believe in Him is to render repentance efficient to its end, so that they who mourn find a beatitude in their tears. (*A. A. Lipscombe, D.D.*) *The main matter*:—I. THE DESIGN OF ALL SCRIPTURE IS TO PRODUCE FAITH. There is no text in the whole book which was intended to create doubt. Doubt is a seed self-sown, or sown by the devil, and it usually springs up with more than sufficient abundance without our care. Holy Scripture is the creator of a holy confidence by revealing

a sure line of fact and truth. Observe, no part of Holy Scripture was written —1. To magnify the writer of it. Many human books are evidently intended to let you see how profound are the thoughts of their authors or how striking is their style. The inspired authors lose themselves in their theme, and hide themselves behind their Master. A most striking instance of this is found in St. John's gospel. John was a man above all others fitted to write the life of Christ; and yet he has left out many interesting facts which the others have recorded, who did not actually see the facts as he did. He is silent because his speech would not serve the end it aimed at. And the most striking point is this—he omits, as if of set purpose, those places of the history in which he would have shone—the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus, the Transfiguration, &c. What a lesson is all this to us who write or speak for God! 2. To present a complete biography of Christ. Observe the difference between John and an ordinary biographer. I can point you to biographies stuffed full of letters and small talk, which might as well have been forgotten. How different here! The signs and wonders which Christ did are not written to make a book; they are not even written that you may be informed of all that Jesus did; these are written with the end—"that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Matthew leaves out everything that does not bring out Christ in connection with the kingdom. Luke brings forth Jesus as the man; but when John brings forth Jesus as the Son of God he omits numbers of details that show our Lord in other aspects. 3. For the gratification of the most godly and pious curiosity. I would like to have acted to our Lord as Boswell did to Johnson. But the Holy Ghost did not send his servants to gather up interesting details and curious facts. You shall be told that which shall lead you to believe Christ to be the Son of God, but no more. 4. With the view of setting before us a complete example. It is true that the gospel sets before us a perfect character, and we are bound to imitate it; but that was not the first or chief design of the writers. Good works are best promoted, not as the first, but as the second thing. They come as the result of faith. See how John all through keeps to his design. His book contains a series of testimonies borne by persons led to faith in Jesus as the Christ. It begins with Andrew's confession—"We have found the Messias," and ends with Thomas's—"My Lord and my God." II. THE GREAT OBJECT OF TRUE FAITH IS JESUS CHRIST. The text does not say, "These are written that ye might believe the Nicene or the Athanasian creed." First, I am to believe in Jesus that He is the Christ, promised Messiah, anointed of God to deliver the human race. Next that He is the Son of God—not in the sense in which men are sons of God, but as the only begotten Son of God. Put the two together, that He, the Divine One, became man and was sent into the world to redeem us, and we have the right idea of Immanuel—God with us. 1. Believe this to be a matter of fact. 2. Accept it for yourself. 3. Yield yourself up to the grand truth which you have received. 4. Receive Jesus as being the Christ and the Son of God on the ground of the written Word. "These are written," &c. "Oh," says one, "I could believe, but I do not feel as I ought." What have your feelings to do with the truth of the statement that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God? Experience cannot make a thing true; and frames and feelings cannot make a thing to be a lie which is in itself true. III. THE TRUE LIFE OF A SOUL LIES IN CHRIST JESUS AND COMES TO THAT SOUL THROUGH FAITH IN HIM. 1. When a man has been found guilty of death, if by any means that sentence is removed, he obtains life, life in its judicial form. That is the first form of life that every man has who believes. 2. This judicial life is attended with an imparted life. God the Holy Spirit is with believers, breathing into them a new, holy, heavenly life. 3. This life grows. It continues to gather strength, and as it increases it is life "more abundantly." 4. This life never dies; it is a living and incorruptible seed which abideth for ever. The life of saints on earth is the same as that of saints in heaven. 5. This life comes with believing. (1) One person complains, "I cannot tell exactly when I was converted, and this causes me great anxiety." Dear friend, this is a needless fear. Turn your inquiries in another direction—Are you alive unto God by faith? The date is a small matter. (2) "Well," says another, "but I hardly know how I was converted." That again is minor matter. Our text does not state that the Bible was written that you and I might trace our faith in Christ to John, or to any one else. If you believe sincerely the mode in which you gained your faith need not be inquired into. (3) "But I have such conflicts within," cries one. Ah, there are no conflicts in dead men. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The quickening works*:—Every man may be compared to a book, and every day adds a fresh page

to it. Notice—I. THE RECORD. "These are written." 1. The subjects of the publication are the wonderful works and sayings of our Lord. His deeds were such as no human power could accomplish. The miracles were performed—(1) As proofs of His Divinity. (2) As acts of humanity. (3) As illustrations of the works of salvation. Their publicity is particularly mentioned in the text. They were done in the presence of the disciples. Imposture seeks concealment. The miracles said to every doubter, "Come and see." Their number is also noted. "Many other signs." And not only are the miracles recorded, but the sayings. With what dignity, authority, power, does He speak! 2. The way by which the Divine will has been revealed has been by inspiring certain men to record it in writing. Many advantages are derived from this method—the advantages of—(1) Universality. A man's writings reach further than his voice. (2) Appeal. "To the law and the testimony" we appeal. This is the judge that ends strife. (3) Security and permanence. The uttered word perishes; the letter written remains. What do we know of ancient history but through books? Let us be thankful, then, for two great blessings—the Book written in our own tongue, and for ability to read it. II. THE REASON. "These things are written that ye might believe"—1. In the real existence of Jesus. Some have been so sceptical as to doubt whether such a person ever lived. They never doubt the existence of Cæsar or Mahommed. But have we not much stronger proof of the existence of Christ? 2. In the true character of Jesus. (1) As the Christ. (2) As the Son of God. III. THE RESULT. Some write books for pecuniary ends. John wrote that we might have life—not animal or intellectual, but spiritual and eternal. There are five signs of life—sensibility, activity, appetency, appropriateness, superiority to gravitation. Have we these signs spiritually? (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ, the source of life*:—I remember once conversing with a celebrated sculptor, who had been hewing out a block of marble to represent one of our great patriots—Lord Chatham. "There," said he, "is not that a fine form?" "Now, sir," said I, "can you put life into it? Else, with all its beauty, it is still but a block of marble." Christ, by His Spirit, puts life into a beauteous image, and enables the man He forms to live to His praise and glory. (*Rowland Hill.*) *The development of spiritual life*:—I plant many seeds in my garden from which I do not look for blossoms the year that I plant them. Yet I nourish them and transplant them; and when the days of November commence to cut them down, I take them up, roots and all, and hide them in a dark frost-proof dwelling for the winter. There they rest till the spring comes, when I go and take those buried roots and stems and bring them forth out of their grave, and put them into a better soil. And before September comes round in the second year of their growth, they will do what they had not time to do in the first. It takes two summers to get a blossom on many plants. It takes I know not how long a series of summers to develop the highest blossoms and the truest fruit that we can bear. God takes us from this life and hides us in the grave; and then, in His good time, transplants us in another soil. The work is not done in this life. It is not done when you are converted, or even when you have gone on for forty years. Such is the pattern of that work which God is carrying forward, such is the majesty of that manhood which He means shall yet flame in glory in us, that He cannot accomplish His purpose in the narrow compass of our present life; so He buries us over the winter of death, and then puts us in a better soil and a better summer to take our next growth. And what there is beyond these, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive;" but doubtless there are to be serial developments, infinite and endless. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Trusting in Christ a sign of life*:—Suppose there is a person here who does not exactly know his age, and he wants to find the register of his birth, and he has tried and cannot find it. Now, what is the inference that he draws from his not being able to tell the day of his birth? Well, I do not know what the inference may be, but I will tell you one inference he does not draw. He does not say, therefore, "I am not alive." If he did, he would be an idiot, for if the man is alive he is alive, whether he knows his birthday or not. And if the man really trusts in Jesus, and is alive from the dead, he is a saved soul, whether he knows exactly when and where he was saved or not. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith, the sign of life*:—See you yonder battle-field strewn with the men who have fallen in the terrible conflict! Many have been slain, many more are wounded, and there they lie in ghastly confusion, the dead all stark and stiff, covered with their own crimson, and the wounded faint and bleeding, unable to leave the spot whereon they had fallen. Surgeons have gone over the field rapidly, ascertaining which are corpses

beyond the reach of mercy's healing hand, and which are men faint with loss of blood. Each living man has a paper fastened conspicuously on his breast, and when the soldiers are sent out with the ambulances to gather up the wounded, they do not themselves need to stay and judge which may be living and which may be dead; they see a mark upon the living, and lifting them up right tenderly they bear them to the hospital, where their wounds may be dressed. Now, faith in the Son is God's infallible mark, which He has set upon every poor wounded sinner, whose bleeding heart has received the Lord Jesus; though he faints and feels as lifeless as though he were mortally wounded, yet he most surely lives if he believes, for the possession of Jesus is the token which cannot deceive. Faith is God's mark, witnessing in unspeakable language, "This soul liveth." Tenderly, ye who care for the broken-hearted, lift up this wounded one. Whatever else we cannot see, if a simple trust in Jesus is discernible in a convert, we need fear no suspicions, but receive him at once as a brother beloved. (*Ibid.*) *Faith in Christ*:—Look at that locomotive as it snorts like a giant war-horse to its place in the station at the 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 that saves us. (*A. B. Grosart, D.D.*) *Saving faith*:—It is not the quantity of thy faith that shall save thee. A drop of water is as true water as the whole ocean; so a little faith is as true faith as the greatest. A child eight days old is as really a man as one of sixty years; a spark of fire is as true fire as a great flame; a sickly man is as truly living as a well man. So it is not the measure of thy faith that saves thee, it is the blood that it grips to that saves thee; as the weak hand of a child that leads the spoon to the mouth, will feed as well as the strong arm of a man; for it is not the hand that feeds thee, but the meat. So if thou canst grip Christ ever so weakly, He will not let thee perish. (*T. Adams.*) *Application of faith*:—As it is no advantage for a wounded man to have the best medicine lying by his side unless it is applied to his wound, so little do the mercies of God profit us unless we have faith to apply them to our sinful hearts. (*Cawdray.*) *The gospel must be applied by faith*:—The other day a poor woman had a little help sent to her by a friend in a letter. She was in great distress, and she went to that very friend begging for a few shillings. "Why," said the other, "I sent you money yesterday, by an order in a letter!" "Dear, dear!" said the poor woman, "that must be the letter which I put behind the looking-glass!" Just so; and there are lots of people who put God's letters behind the looking-glass, and fail to make use of the promise which is meant for them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Son of God*:—God has many sons. The children of Israel were called His sons, the judges of the theocracy and angelic existences; but Christ is called the Son of God in a unique sense. He was unique—I. IN HIS AGE. He was "from everlasting," "in the beginning with God," "the First-born." II. IN HIS CONSTITUTION. He was God in a human personality—God-Man. God is in all intelligences, in all creatures; but He was in Christ in a sense in which He is in no other, giving omnipotence to His arm, omniscience to His intellect, ubiquity to His presence. III. IN HIS MISSION. He is the Mediator between God and man; the only Saviour. "There is none other name," &c. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XXI.

Vers. 1–14. **After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias.**—*The Sea of Tiberias*, twelve full miles in length by nearly seven in breadth, formed by the widening of the river, and lying almost seven hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean; is a beautiful expanse of clear, shining water, transparent to considerable depths. Viewed from different points and at different times, it is now a deep blue mirror among the mountains, now lustrous and glittering in the sunbeams like molten silver, now a sea of glass, as it were mingled with fire, now varying under every changeful gleam like an opal set in emeralds. In shape it is rather harp like—hence called "Chinnereth"—from the Hebrew word for "lyre" or "harp"—than oval. The beach is in parts pebbly—flint, jasper, chalcedony, and agate; in parts sandy, and of pearly whiteness, owing to the presence of innumerable fine shells; elsewhere it is covered with big, rough stones. The silent shore behind, stretching out here and there into small, irregular plains, is belted with a jungle of oleanders and other shrubs and bushes, and contains some rich corn-lands. On the eastern side the treeless hills, scarred with ravines, have a desolate and mournful look. Those on the west swell up pleasantly from the shore; and if they are not bold and romantic, neither are they tame. The snowy top of the Hermon range rises majestically in the distance like a mighty guardian of the northern frontier. Orange, citron, myrtle, and date-trees, are still to be found; and the wandering foot crushes fragrance from many a lonely herb. Birds of bright plumage frequent the shores, and over the waters of the lake many sea-fowl dip the wing. Visitors tell how, as night gives place to morning, the sudden note of a lark will ring out, silvery and joyous, as if from the very midst of the stars, waking a concert all along the shore and back to the hills. The sunrise and sunset tints, opal and purple, are wonderful; and so are the contrasts of light and deep shadow. "God," said the Rabbins, "loved that sea beyond all other seas." All around there now broods (to use Gibbon's phrase) "a mournful and solitary silence." But in New Testament days the stir of busy life was everywhere. Villages nestled in the green valleys, were perched upon the heights, lay scattered along the shores; everywhere "great multitudes of people" might readily be gathered together. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *Tiberias*, west of the lake, nearly facing Gerasa, and about four miles south of Magdala. Antipas Herod was building a new city to outshine Julias, built by his brother Philip: which city he proposed to call Tiberias, and make the usual residence of his court. His plan was laid at the base of a steep hill, around the waters of a hot spring, among the ruins of a nameless town and the graves of a forgotten race. A great builder, like all the princes of his line, Antipas could now indulge his taste for temples, palaces, and public baths, conceived in a Roman spirit and executed on a Roman scale, while flattering that capricious master who might any day send him to die as his brother was dying in a distant land. The new city grew apace. A castle crowned the hill. High walls ran down from the heights into the sea. Streets and temples covered the low ground which lay between these walls. A gorgeous palace rose high above the rest of these public works: a palace for the prince and court, having a roof of gold, from which circumstance it came to be known as the golden house. A port was formed: a pier thrown out: a water-gate built: and a fleet of warships and pleasure boats placed on the sparkling wave. Towers protected, and gates adorned a city which Antipas dedicated to his master, inscribed on his coins, and made the capital of his province, the residence of his court. This city was waxing great and famous. When the first stones were being laid near the sea, St. John was a little child playing on the beach at Capernaum with his father's nets; yet so swift was its growth, so wide its fame, that before he composed his Gospel, Tiberias had given its name to the waters on which it stood, like Geneva to Lake Leman, and Lucerne to that of the four cantons. When St. Matthew wrote his Gospel, the city was still young, and a Jew of Galilee might speak of Gennesareth: forty or fifty years later, a man who was born on its shores and had fished in its waters, spoke of the lake most familiarly by its Roman name. (*Dixon's "Holy Land."*) *The second miraculous draught of fishes:*—The differences between the two miracles are mainly three. I. THAT NOW IN THE DISPENSATION OF THE ASCENSION, THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST WITH HIS PEOPLE IS TO BE KNOWN NOT BY THE SIGHT OF HIS VISIBLE PERSONALITY, BUT BY INFERENCE FROM THE EFFECTS PRODUCED BY HIS WORKINGS AMONG THEM. **As He stood on the shore, they knew not that it was He, but when John felt**

the weight of the net with the fishes, he said, "It is the Lord." So we find that in the book of the Acts the author represents the things wrought by the apostles as a continuance of those which before His death Jesus began both to do and to teach (Acts i. 1). The apostles recognized that their miracles were wrought not by their own power or holiness (Acts iii. 13), but by Him whom the Jews had crucified, but whom God had raised up. "Tried by the ordinary process of reasoning, the conclusion was precarious. But there is a logic of the soul which deals with questions of the higher life, and John trusted that he recognized the insight, the power, the love which belonged to one only. And when the truth found utterance, the others acknowledged it." In the same way we are now to recognize the presence of the Lord Jesus with us. When our hearts burn within us as we study the sacred Scriptures; when our spirits are soothed, refreshed, inspired, and strengthened as we turn in prayer to God; when the words which we speak in His name are followed by results as astonishing to ourselves as they are to those who behold them,—then we too may say with John, "It is the Lord," and rejoice in the assurance that He is in the midst of us indeed. II. THAT THE ASCENDED CHRIST SENDS US ON NO UNSUCCESSFUL ERRAND WHEN HE BIDS US GO AND PREACH HIS GOSPEL TO ALL NATIONS. Bear witness Judson among the Karens, Moffat among the Hottentots, Lindley among the Zulus, Scudder among the men of Arcot, and Morrison and Burns, and many more, among the Chinese. No faithful worker who is obedient unto Christ and faithful to his calling, will go without his netful at the last. This word, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find," stands for all time, and will surely be made good. The success of the missionary enterprise is no mere peradventure. It is as sure as promise and prophecy can make it. The power of the Saviour is not now a thing to be put to the test of experiment; it is a matter of experience. III. THE REWARD OF THOSE WHO ARE OBEDIENT TO CHRIST, IN LABOURING FOR THE SALVATION OF MEN. Not only are they successful in that labour, which itself is a great joy, but Christ prepares for them a feast when their work is done. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The second miraculous draught of fishes*:—As St. John alone records the "beginning of miracles" in Cana, it is fitting his Gospel should close with this idyllic scene of more than human beauty. The open-air picture, the morning freshness, the naturalness of the incidents and characters, the simplicity of the narrative, stamp it with an incomparable grace. I. THE MANNER OF HIS COMING. How like themselves are both these disciples. John is the first to perceive Jesus. The eagle-glance of faith is quick to see the Divine. With instinct of the loving heart, the bosom-friend is first to detect his Divine Friend's presence. He imparts the calm, quiet recognition to his brother apostle. How precious this faculty to note and point out the Divine in life, though it may be others that act. John is the seer, the lover, the teacher; but Peter is the doer. It is Peter that plunges into the waves and gets first to Jesus' feet. So it always had been between these two. John was the first to reach the sepulchre, Peter the first to enter it; John the first to believe that Christ is risen, Peter the first to greet the risen Christ. Thus ever have we these two classes—the men of faith, the men of action; the men of thoughtful wisdom, and the men of loving zeal. The Church's eyes and the Church's hands,—all helpful to one another and needful for the body. John says to Peter, "It is the Lord," which Peter would not have perceived. Peter casts himself into the sea, which John could not have done. Well! the others get to the beach too in time, in such slow way as men in general do get in this world to its true shore, much impeded by that wonderful dragging the net with fishes. "None durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord." But why wish to ask Him? Where was the need? Plainly because the mere bodily sense cannot identify Him. His comings and goings, His interviews with them all through the forty days, are not according to the ordinary laws of body. Consequently it is upon the evidence, not so much of the senses, as of the mind and heart, that they know Him to be their risen Saviour. His words, His actions, and the love that shines through all, tell them it is Jesus, and no one is so faithless and blind as to say, Who art Thou that appearest thus in the guise of a stranger? And this is all significant. He is preparing them to live by faith in a world where Jesus shall no more be with them in the flesh. II. THE MEANING OF THE MIRACLE. It is easy to see that the purpose is different from that, for example, which appeared in the raising of Lazarus. After His own resurrection there was no need of any mere act of power to convince the disciples of His Godhead. That would have been taking the less to prove the greater. 1. It proved in a very striking way that their own Jesus it was who rose from the dead. He addressed their memory and their

faith: You may be sure I am your own Lord, when I do again exactly as I did before, on this very lake, the works none other man could do. To repeat the miracle of the Draught of Fishes was to prove His identity in the most convincing way. Some great tone-poet comes to you, and performs one of his masterpieces, and goes his way. The composition, let us suppose, has never been written out; no one could repeat it but the composer himself. Vainly would any pretender appear and say, "I am he," for he would not produce the proof you would be sure to seek. You wait years, perhaps. A stranger comes. He says, I am your former friend; do you not recognize me? Time and travel have changed his countenance, the senses refuse to identify him in the usual way. "I will prove it," he says, seats himself at the instrument, calls out the marvellous and well-remembered strains. No other could so thrill you but himself. Yes, you say, it is beyond a doubt. I know him by his work. This must be Jesus; no phantom in His likeness, no delusive appearance, but the same Christ of God, at whose command are all the treasures of nature and providence, and under whose feet are also the fish of the sea, for He is head over all things, to His body the Church. 2. It was not only a seal of their Lord's resurrection, it was also a symbol of their future work. Henceforth He would stand upon the heavenly shore. Many a night, dark and dreary, they would have to toil profitless; but as oft as He should command, the net would be filled. At last they would draw it to land, the success of His kingdom would be complete and glorious beyond all expression. His faithful servants would share His triumphs, and inherit the fruit of their labours, enter into their rest followed by their works, and on the resurrection morning they would sit down to meat with Him in His everlasting kingdom. One is tempted to dwell on this attractive allegory a little longer, there are so many things suggested by the details of the charming story. (1) Here are seven fishermen, well equipped, well acquainted with the waters they fish in, toiling all night, and nothing caught. The servants of the kingdom may be well furnished, well placed, well acquainted with their work outwardly, yet not thereby is their real success secured. It is the Lord's presence and the Lord's command that makes it sure. An activity based upon mere human impulse and sympathy—"I go a fishing, We also go with thee"—was fruitless. That which drew its inspiration from the word of Christ had immediate success. (2) A conversation about non-success opens the way for better things; so the Lord oft begins the blessing with His Church and servants when He makes them feel and be concerned about the want of blessing. (3) The blessing and the success come by casting the old net in a new way, in a new direction. It is the unchanging gospel that we are to preach; but in each age and time it needs new castings, fresh forms, and it is the ever living Spirit that will keep us right with His progressive indications. The meal on the shore, too, is suggestive of many things besides the final feast of heaven. It is, indeed, more strictly suggestive of "times of refreshing" upon earth, for it is early in the day, fitting for more labour. Where Jesus got the fish and bread and fire of coals we are not told, but there it was ready; and how like the gracious surprises He prepares for His faithful servants! Surprising success followed by surprising satisfaction and soul comfort. (*J. Laidlaw, D.D.*) *The second miraculous draught of fishes*:—I. THE APPEARANCE AT THE LAKE (vers. 1-3). 1. The scene of operation: the Galilean Sea. (1) Endeared by early associations. Many a time had the disciples plied their craft upon its waters (Matt. iv. 18–22). (2) Hollowed by sacred memories. Across that lake they had often sailed with their Master (chap. vi. 16; Matt. vii. 18-23). Here they had thrice witnessed the display of Christ's power (Luke v. 1-11; Matt. viii. 26: xiv. 22, 23), and had heard Him preach to crowds on the shore (Luke v. 3; Matt. xiii. 2). Around it they had travelled with Him in His wanderings. (3) Recommended by past experience. A water famed for multitude, variety, and excellence of its fish. 2. The company of fishermen. (1) Their number. Seven: the perfect number, the symbol of completeness, and thus representative of the infant Church. (2) Their names. Simon Peter, the man of rock, the symbol of energy and zeal. Thomas, the man of doubt, typical of prudence, caution, timidity, reason. Nathanael, the guileless, emblematic of transparent sincerity, and sweet simplicity. The two sons of Zebedee, once sons of thunder, now men of love and self-sacrifice. Two other representatives of the great army of unknown, undistinguished, to be found in every age and country in the train of Christ. Together they shadow forth varieties of character and endowment in the Church. 3. The proposed expedition. (1) Its proposer—Peter. The Church, no less than the world, needs men of action to lead the way, pioneers to open up new paths, persons of imagination and enthusiasm to devise and impress others with

the practicability of what they suggest. (2) Its accepters. Started by Peter, the notion was taken up by his companions. The mass of mankind in religion, as in politics, not only require to be led but are ready to follow. The capable man never wants instruments. He who can rule will find subjects. (3) Its commencement. It began well. Everything augured hopefully. The reputation of the lake was high; the time the best possible for fishing; the company ardent and experienced. They lost no time, spared no pains, and were not soon disheartened. Whatever Christ's people do they should act so to deserve if they cannot command success. (4) Its result. (*a*) Nothing at least as to appearance. They caught no fish. (*b*) Something, yea, everything in one. They met with Christ, found what they expected not, returned with what they had not gone to seek. So Christ defeats His people's schemes that He may the better carry out His own, disappoints their hopes that He may give them immediate fruition, and leave them to themselves that they the more readily welcome and enjoy Himself when He comes. II. THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT (vers. 4–8). 1. The Stranger on the beach. (1) The time of His appearing—morning; *cf.* the Angel of Jehovah (Gen. xxxiii. 26); Christ in the days of His flesh (Matt. xiv. 25), and after His resurrection. So Christ still appears to His people in the morning, because it is morning in every soul when He appears. (2) The circumstance of His non-recognition. They "knew not," as Mary and the Emmaus travellers, and perhaps for similar reasons. Christ may now be beside His people when they are not aware. (3) The unexpected question, cheerily put and with friendly solicitude, "Lads, have ye aught to eat?" *i.e.*, Has your cast been successful? Put also not for information, but to arrest attention and excite expectation. (4) The disappointed reply. They had failed, as three of them had once done before (Luke v. 5); they had spent their strength for nought (Isa. xlix. 4); as gospel fishers often seem to do (Gal. iv. 11; 1 Thess. iii. 5). (5) The proferred counsel. The *right* side always the side Christ appoints. He who does not what Christ bids fishes on the *wrong* side. (6) The prompt obedience. It is never wise to be above taking advice; much less when advice comes from Christ (Col. ii. 3). (7) The marvellous success. The royal road to success in religion is obedience to Christ's commands (Eph. iii. 20). 2. The recognition from the boat. (1) By whom made. By the disciple in whose heart glowed a pure flame of love for Jesus. The heart rather than the intellect the organ of spiritual apprehension. John had been the first to perceive that Christ was risen (chap. xx. 8). Now he is the first to recognize His Person. (2) How expressed—"It is the Lord!" Concentrating in the exclamation love, joy, adoration, desire, a world of thought, an ocean of holy feeling, a heaven of spiritual aspiration. (3) With what followed. Instantaneous recognition by Peter, and startling activity (*cf.* Matt. xiv. 28). 3. The landing of the net. (1) The labour of it. (2) The success of it. (3) The wonder of it. Neither will the gospel net fail till it has landed all Christ's people. III. THE MYSTERIOUS BANQUET (ver. 12–14). 1. The heavenly provision (ver. 9). Emblematic of the reward Christ's servants will enjoy at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. xix. 9). 2. The earthly contribution (ver. 10). A large part of the future reward of Christ's servants will consist in beholding the fruit of their labours (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20). 3. The royal invitation (ver. 12). So will they be welcomed when they reach the heavenly land (Matt. xxv. 34). 4. The solemn distribution (ver. 13). A picture of the higher entertainment (Matt. xxvi. 29), of which Christ gives the foretaste in the Lord's Supper. Lessons: 1. The fruitlessness of labour even in the Church, apart from the presence and power of the glorified Redeemer (chap. xv. 5). 2. The certain and abundant success of those who work in the way and along the lines suggested by Christ. 3. The blessed recompense awaiting faithful labourers in Christ's service. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The appearance of Christ at the Sea of Tiberias*:—Note—I. THE POVERTY OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES. 1. We find them working to supply their temporal wants at one of the humblest of callings. Silver and gold they had none, and therefore they were not ashamed to return to business. 2. This poverty goes far to prove the Divine origin of Christianity. These very men who found it necessary to work hard in order that they might eat, were the first founders of the Church, which has now overspread one-third of the globe. These were the unlearned and ignorant men who boldly confronted the subtle systems of ancient philosophy, and silenced it by the preaching of the cross. These were the men who, at Ephesus, and Athens, and Rome, emptied the heathen temples of their worshippers and turned them to a better faith. II. THE DIFFERENT CHARACTERS OF DIFFERENT DISCIPLES OF CHRIST. 1. Once more we see Peter and John side by side and behaving in different ways. John was the first to perceive

Christ, but Peter was the first to struggle to get to Him. John's love was quickest to discern, but Peter's impulse was quickest to stir. 2. Let us, then, not condemn others because they do not see or feel exactly as we do (1 Cor. xii. 4). God's gifts are not bestowed precisely in the same measure. Some have more of one, and some more of another. Some have gifts which shine more in public, and others those which shine in private. Martha and Mary (Luke x. 39, 40; John. xi. 20-28), were both loved by our Lord. The Church of Christ needs servants of all kinds, and instruments of every sort; penknives as well as swords, axes as well as hammers, chisels as well as saws. Let our ruling maxim be Eph. vi. 24. III. THE ABUNDANT EVIDENCE WHICH SCRIPTURE SUPPLIES OF OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION. Here, as in other places, we find an unanswerable proof that our Lord rose again with a real material body. That Peter was convinced and satisfied we know (Acts x. 41). (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The seven who saw the risen Lord:*—I. THEY WERE TOGETHER. How did they come to hold together, instead of seeking safety by flight, which would have been the natural thing after the death of their Leader? And yet here we find them where everybody knew them to be disciples of Jesus, holding together as if they had still a living and uniting bond. There is only one explanation, viz., that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead. You cannot build a church on a dead Christ; and of all the proofs of the Resurrection there is none harder for an unbeliever to account for than the simple fact that Christ's disciples held together after He was dead. II. THE COMPOSITION OF THIS GROUP. 1. Of the five men who made the Primitive Church (chap. i.), there are three who reappear here, viz., Peter, John, and Nathanael, and two unnamed men, who, I think, are "Philip and Andrew, Simon Peter's brother," both of them connected with Bethsaida, the place where probably this appearance of the risen Lord took place. So then the fair inference is that we have here the original nucleus again—the first five—with a couple more, "Thomas, who is called Didymus," and the brother of John, one of the first pair. 2. There, along the beach, is the place where four of them were called from their nets three short years ago. On the other side is the green grass where the thousands were fed. Behind it is the steep slope down which the devil-possessed herd rushed. There, over the shoulder of the hill, is the road that leads up to Cana from which little village one of the group came. 3. Look at the list, having regard to the individual members that make it up. (1) Foremost stand the two greatest sinners of the whole—Peter and Thomas—singularly contrasted, and yet alike in the fact that the Crucifixion had been too much for their faith. The one was impetuous, the other slow. The one was always ready to say more than he meant, the other always ready to do more than he said. The one was naturally despondent, the other never looking an inch beyond his nose, and always yielding himself up to the impulse of the moment. And yet both of them were united in this, that the one, from a sudden wave of cowardice, and the other, from giving way to his constitutional tendency, had both of them failed in their faith, the one turning out a denier and the other turning out a doubter. And yet here they are, foremost upon the list of those who saw the risen Christ. There are two lessons there. Let us learn—(*a*) With what open hearts and hands we should welcome a penitent when he comes back. (*b*) Who they are to whom Christ deigns to manifest Himself—not immaculate monsters, but men that, having fallen, have learned humility and caution, and by penitence have risen to a securer standing, and have turned even their transgressions into steps in the ladder that lifts them to Christ. And the little group welcomed them, as it becomes us to welcome brethren who have fallen and who repent. (2) Nathanael, a guileless "Israelite indeed," so swift to believe that the only thing that Christ is recorded as having said to him is "Because I said . . . thou believest? Thou shalt see greater things than these." A promise of growing clearness of vision and fulness of manifestation was made to this man, who never appears anywhere else but in these two scenes, and so may stand to us as the type of that quiet, continuous growth, which is marked by faithful use of the present illumination, and is rewarded by a continual increase of the same. If the keynote to the two former lives is that sin confessed helps a man to climb, the keynote to this man's is that they are still more blessed who, with no interruptions or denials by patient continuousness in well-doing, widen the horizon of their Christian vision and purge their eyesight for daily larger knowledge. There is no necessity that any man's career should be broken by denials or doubts; we may "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour." (3) The two sons of Zebedee—sons of thunder—who were eager, energetic, somewhat bigoted, not unwilling to invoke destructive vengeance, all for the love of Him

touched with ambition which led them to desire a place at His right hand and His left. But by dwelling with Him one of them, at least, had become of all the group the likest his Master. And the old painters taught a deep truth when they made John's almost a copy of the Master's face. To him there was granted a place amongst this blessed company, and it is surely a trace of his own hand that his place should be so humble. Any other but himself would certainly have put James and John in their natural place beside Peter. (4) "Two other of His disciples" not worth naming. Probably the missing two out of the five of the first chapter; but possibly only disciples in the wider sense. What does it matter? The lesson is that there is a place for commonplace, undistinguished people, whose names are not worth repeating in Christ's Church, and we too have a share in the manifestation of His love. We do not need to be brilliant, clever, influential, energetic, anything but quiet, waiting souls in order to have Christ showing Himself to us as we toil wearily through the darkness of the night. III. THE PURPOSE OF THIS GROUP IS SIGNIFICANT. What did they thus get together for? "Simon Peter saith, I go a fishing. They say, We also go with thee." So they are back again at their old trade, which they had not left for ever, as they once thought they had. 1. What sent them back? Not doubt or despair; because they had seen Jesus Christ up in Jerusalem, and had come down to Galilee at His command on purpose to meet Him. It is very like Peter that he should have been the one to suggest filling an hour of the waiting time with manual labour. John could have "sat still in the house," like Mary, the heart all the busier because the hands lay quietly. But that was not Peter's way, and John was ready to keep him company. Peter thought that the best thing they could do till Jesus chose to come, was to get back to their work, and he was sensible and right. The best attitude to be found in by Christ is doing our daily work, however secular and small it may be. A dirty, wet fishing-boat, all slimy with scales, was a strange place, but it was the right place, righter than if they had been wandering about amongst the fancied sanctities of the synagogues. 2. They went out to do their work; and to them was fulfilled the old saying, "I being in the way, the Lord met me." Jesus Christ will come to you and me in the street if we carry the waiting heart there, and in the shop, and the kitchen. For all things are sacred when done with a hallowed heart, and He chooses to make Himself known to us amidst the dusty commonplaces of daily life. He said to them just before the Crucifixion, "When I sent you forth without purse or scrip, lacked ye anything?" And they said, "Nothing." And then He said as changing the conditions, "But now he that hath a purse or scrip, let him take it." As long as He was with them they were absolved from these common tasks. Now that He had left them the obligation recurred. Keep at your work, and if it last all night, stick to it; and if there are no fish in the net, never mind; out with it again. And be sure that sooner or later you will see Him standing on the beach and hear His voice, and be blessed by His smile. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *A night and a morning by the lake of Galilee*:—1. "SIMON PETER SAITH UNTO THEM, I GO A-FISHING" (ver. 3). 1. We are inclined to wonder at the smallness of this memorandum. The very same thing might have been said yesterday by many a simple trawler at Teignmouth, or any other fishing station, yet this saying has been made an organic part of the Book of books. The writer leaves out the momentous events that were stirring millions at that moment, and puts into it this! Some critics have thought the thing too trivial, but we believe that so small a thing could not have been set down unless it held some great significance. 2. Notice a remarkable slowness of spiritual apprehension. "I go," says Peter. Well, whither? to "the mountain in Galilee" whither Christ commanded His disciples? "No, to the sea, of course." Call to mind that when Jesus instituted the Supper, when every word should have been taken to heart with double distinctness, He said, "After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." The angel at the sepulchre said, "Go quickly, and tell His disciples . . . that He goeth before you into Galilee, as He said." Then He followed up the angelic message with one to the women on the road; still they were slow to move, but still He had compassion on their infirmity, and appeared to them in Jerusalem on the two first days; then his manifestations ceased for a while. At length they came to Galilee, but only to their old station, and, as it appears, with no thought of seeing Jesus, otherwise all would have been on the spot at the earliest possible moment. But we only see seven, and Peter says, "I go!" not to the mountain, but to the sea. 3. The announcement seems to have been made in a fit of despondency. Christ had told Peter and his companions to give up fishing when they became His disciples, and they instantly

left all and followed Him. Peter made emphatic reference to this when he said, "Lord, we have left all and followed Thee!" And Christ's reply taken with the words of the disciple, seem to speak of the forsaken fishing-boat as the sign of a final and consummated act. We never hear of them working at their old craft for a living again. We picture the apostles as waiting at Jerusalem for another Divine visit, but this had not been granted. Then, solemnly and sadly, they came back to the familiar place, and there they waited. Every night Peter's heart would say, "He will come to-morrow;" but to-morrow, and to-morrow came, and no Jesus. Then that heart cried out, in a burst of passionate sadness, "I give up, for He will not come any more." II. "THEY SAY UNTO HIM, WE ALSO GO WITH THEE." Certain men seem to be naturally and unaccountably influential. When your spirits touch theirs, you feel a fascination that holds or moves you like a hand. Peter had this kind of electricity. We can imagine the exchange of such words as: "I go to the mountain." "We go with thee." "I give up." "We give up." "I go a fishing." "We also go with thee." Great leaders have a "going" power peculiar to themselves; but more or less, for good or evil, every man must be influential, and what he does others will do. We can imagine such interchange of language between a parent and his children: "I am going into the ways of the world." "We also go with thee." "I believe, and am going to cast in my lot with those who believe." "We also go with thee." III. "THEY WENT FORTH, AND ENTERED INTO A SHIP IMMEDIATELY; AND THAT NIGHT THEY CAUGHT NOTHING." 1. Here is one instance, out of many, of Christ not allowing His disciples to prosper while in a wrong course. It is an evil omen when Christians prosper while in a course of practical unbelief. This omen is not seen in lives that are to reach a high standard. In such cases love blights prosperity and tangles schemes. 2. On the other hand, sensitive consciences will need to be reminded that want of success is not in every instance from something wrong. A ship may be manned by good Christians, yet founder; a concern in which none are embarked but disciples may toil all night, and catch nothing. And so, faithful heart, losses will be gain to you. In the darkest hour of outward affliction there may be the dawn of a morning of rich discovery. "The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." IV. "BUT WHEN THE MORNING WAS NOW COME, JESUS STOOD ON THE SHORE," &c. Weary and dispirited they saw a shape that was dim in the mist; they "knew not that it was Jesus." His voice pealed out, but it woke within them no answering echo of memory. It was like Him to come after them when they would not go after Him, and to call them His children after all! "Have ye any food?" He asked. Wherever disciples toil the Lord looks on; if they suffer failure, let them know that the watchful eye sees, that the great heart feels. He has taught His children the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," and therefore is not likely to let them starve. In answer to this inquiry they only said "No;" the short word of cross, aching, disappointed men. Then said He, "Cast the net on the right side," &c. It was the advice of One who was slow to take offence, and whose precept usually implies a promise; of One whose infinite grandeur does not keep Him from interest in our commonest callings. V. "THEY CAST, THEREFORE, AND NOW THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO DRAW IT FOR THE MULTITUDE OF FISHES." 1. This startling wonder was to remind them that they had been consecrated "fishers of men." The Divine Symbolist delighted to clothe the spiritual work of His servants in language borrowed from their worldly employments. Obviously, it suggests—(1) Downright hard work. The word "minister," like the word "fisherman," is not simply the name of an office or diguity, but of a toiler. (2) "Diversity of operations." It is a mediæval notion that the only way of taking the fish is by the net, which is understood to be the one true Church; but when Christ appointed His followers to be fishers of men, He specified for their use no particular mode. A fisherman has to go through great varieties of experience; he may be out on a stormy sea, or he may have to creep, or hide, or watch in the leafy covert or reedy river. Some kinds of fish are to be taken by spear, some by line, some by net—hand-net, or draw-net, or basket-net. He must never angle for a whale, or harpoon a trout. "You must," says Izaak Walton, "be the scholar of the fish before you can be his master." (3) And the work of the spiritual fisher is rather one of skill than of violence—he must draw, not drive. (4) That our spiritual work must be done by ourselves, and not by proxy. When, for instance, a man is called to be a preacher, let him preach his own sermons—"Fish with your own hooks." 2. The act may also have been intended to cheer them, and all desponding workers, by foreshowing the final success of all work done for Christ. Regarding the two miracles as signs, the scene of

fulfilment in the one case is earth, in the other, heaven. In the first miracle the "nets broke"; the fishers did not therefore take all the fish, and there was no attempt to count the number taken. In the second case no nets were broken, and when the toilers reached the land they brought their richly-laden nets with them. Soon shall we strike upon the eternal shore; then all who have laboured in the great cause shall rejoice in the sea-harvest of souls; then, for the first time in all history, will the statistics of the Church be complete and trustworthy—"one hundred and fifty and three." VI. "THEREFORE THAT DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED SAITH UNTO PETER, IT IS THE LORD." It was owing to a mysteriousness of look, perhaps, that Jesus was not at once identified. The Greek verb used in the account of His first miracle is used also in this. In the first, it is said that He "manifested forth His glory"; in the second, "Jesus manifested Himself," &c. Two things are taught by the use of this word—1. That the discovery was the act of Jesus, not that of His disciples; they did not of their own will see Him, but He, by a distinct act of His will, showed Himself to them. 2. It was a spiritual manifestation, and He was seen not so much by the eyes of the body as by the eyes of the soul. John was the first seer. Even in human friendship, and not less in the Divine, love has the quickest ear, the sharpest eye, and the surest faculty of interpretation. Then there was a plunge. "Steady, Peter," we cry, if no name had been given, we should have known that it could be no other. IV. "JESUS SAITH UNTO THEM, BRING OF THE FISH WHICH YE HAVE NOW CAUGHT." Soon as they had touched land there was a new wonder. "The beach had been bare a moment before, but now they saw a fire burning with a little fish on it, and bread at hand. They seem to pause, unable to obey; and so "Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes." When these were counted, Jesus said, "Come and break your fast." All knew Him now; but not a word could they speak. Formerly they would have asked many questions. Taking first the bread, and then the fish, He divided them just as He had done while He was yet with them. He who marshals in their sweep the grand army of the stars, and who holds in His hand this globe, stood there in human form waiting on these tired boatmen. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *The risen Christ and His disciples*:—I. THE SELF-MANIFESTATION OF JESUS AFTER HIS RESURRECTION. We now come to a new term in the narrative: "He showed Himself," or "He manifested Himself," or "He was manifested to His disciples." This shows that He was not seen except by an act of His own will, overcoming His natural invisibility. He can only manifest Himself to our hearts when we are ready for Him, and just so He could only appear to those who were ready for the sight. We must always remember that there were moral reasons for the manifestation of Jesus after His resurrection beyond the necessity of proving the fact of His victory over death. He rescued the apostles from despair and unbelief and recalled them to their tasks and to a holier intimacy with Him than was possible before He was crucified. II. THE DISCOVERY OF JESUS BY HIS DISCIPLES. There are disciples in all ages of the Church who see the presence of Jesus by the intuition of love. And such was John. He saw without beholding. He knew, not so much by faith, as by the love that believeth all things and never faileth. And yet this John was not of a sluggish, indolent nature. We have known souls who were the first to detect the presence of Jesus in the Church and to say "It is the Lord!" They feel, while others are asking for evidence. There are others, like Peter, marked by their obedience to faith. John said: "It is the Lord!" When Peter heard that it was the Lord, he hastened to find Him. It does not appear that Peter saw Him any more than John did. He believed the word of John, and moved forward at once to verify it. John could wait; not so Peter. No doubt it will be found that both these temperaments are essential to the progress of the kingdom of heaven and to the bringing of the people of God to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, who united perfectly the active and the contemplative elements of character. (*Edward N. Packard.*) *The risen Christ and His disciples*:—The last chapter of the Gospel of John is an appendix, and not a supplement. The story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection closed somewhat hurriedly with the preceding chapter. But now what about the future? What about the disciples' work for the world? This chapter answers. The relation between the Gospel of John and this appendix is the same as that between Luke's Gospel and his book of the Acts. The latter is the sequel of the former. Hence this twenty-first chapter is concerned about work, and about the disciples' future until Jesus comes again. I. JESUS GUIDES THE DISCIPLES IN THEIR WORK. The work was commonplace—fishing; the story is simple, but the feelings of the actors must have been profound. The feast at Jerusalem is over. The disciples have made the journey of a long

week's travel back to Galilee. It is not the Galilee of a few former months. There is no assembling of crowds for instruction, no miracles of mercy, no loved leader to keep the disciples in one body. Four are lacking on this fishing excursion. He has been seen alive after His passion, but not here in Galilee; it was away in Jerusalem. Galilee doubtless thinks that Jesus is no more. The atmosphere surrounding the eleven is oppressive; they are lonesome, idle, restless. The active spirit of Peter must find something to do. He proposes to go a-fishing, and six more of them accompany him. There is a minute particularity about the story. We are told who and how many composed the company, and how they came to "go a fishing." They noted that Jesus "stood" on the shore. The distance of the ship from the land is given, &c. These details, whatever other value they may have, certainly show how the hearts of the seven fishermen were wrought upon. Impressions, feelings, move men. Thought is born of them, and the whole course of life may be changed by them. Whence came that fire of coals, and the fish laid thereon, and the bread? This very wonder must have intensified the whole scene for them. Intensity was necessary. From the feelings of this hour they were to find not only the course of their own life, but also the wisdom to direct the world's. In the Transfiguration they saw His divinity; in the foot-washing they perceived His humility; and now, in this hour of fishing, they had set before them the lesson of their coming leadership of the world. Left to themselves, their labours were abortive, but under His direction many fish were taken. In a word, His guidance was necessary to future success. The work in hand was a parable of the glorious work which they were to do. These who were winning fish were to win men—an office as much greater as a man is better than a fish. II. JESUS IS REVEALED TO THE DISCIPLES IN THEIR WORK. That net full of fishes was such a revelation of the Christ to them as they had not reached in the more wonderful miracles of feeding the multitude, casting out demons, or raising the dead; for in these He did His own work, but in the draught of fishes He helped the disciples in theirs. Though the power was still all His own, He became a fellow-helper with them. Henceforth He will work mightily through them and with them. This revelation was to serve the disciples in two ways. It was necessary to convince the world of the fact—1. That the "Christ should suffer and rise from the dead." The Resurrection is the key-stone of the Christian religion. But what a stupendous tax on men's minds, to lay it upon them to believe that One who died was now alive again, and alive for evermore! Yet to establish this fact in the world there must be indisputable testimony. The witnesses must be so qualified that they could go forth with "many infallible proofs," so that they could say, "We did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." 2. Of His activity in the affairs of men. For Jesus' death and resurrection do not take Him from His friends, but give Him to them. They needed this revelation of Him in work; for men are most of all sceptical on the point of the Lord's active participation in their efforts and needs. One says, "If thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean;" another cries, "If Thou canst do anything;" but the true heart alone says, Thou wilt, Thou canst, Thou dost—so that the apostles afterward reported not what they had done, but what "God had done with them;" and Mark sums up their history with similar words, "The Lord working with them." Christian faith is more than to believe historic Biblical facts. It believes God in Christ to be the one present, working Agent in the world to-day. III. JESUS EATS WITH THE DISCIPLES AFTER THEIR WORK. This breakfast is every way beautiful. It seems to be Jesus' aim in this whole morning's scene—its climax; for as soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire glowing on the beach, and food in preparation. With this the disciples had had nothing to do. Still they have a share in providing the meal, for He says, "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught." He graciously ascribes the capture to them. When all is ready He asks them to "come and dine." The end of the Incarnation, the Cross, and the Resurrection is to bring God and man into family relationship. It was one who sat at this breakfast this morning who afterward wrote, "And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." The breakfast was also a prophecy of the time when the saint and the Saviour shall meet together to rejoice in the fellowship of a completed work. Paul wrote to those whom he had won to the Lord, "What is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ?" (*History, Prophecy, and Gospel.*) *The relation of Christ to the secular life of His disciples:*—This narrative is purely secular, but is none the less religious. I. CHRIST DOES NOT RELIEVE HIS DISCIPLES FROM THE

NECESSITY OF SECULAR LABOUR. He does not exempt His disciples from the law "He that doth not work shall not eat." Were He to do so it would be an injury rather than a blessing to physical health. Intellectual vigour and moral development depend upon it. Inaction when there is power of action is a crime, and since the Infinite Lawgiver is infinitely benevolent, what is contrary to His will must be injurious. 1. The individual himself is injured. Muscular inactivity enfeebles the body; mental inactivity the intellect; moral inactivity the soul. Look at those who "stand all the day idle." They are your feeble mothers, delicate sisters, nervous fathers, lackadasical sons, simpering women and moody men. 2. The idle man injures others: he is a social thief, and should be punished like every other kind of thief. II. CHRIST ALLOWS THE POSSIBILITY OF FAILURE IN THEIR SECULAR ENDEAVOURS. They "caught nothing." A different result might have been expected: but the settled laws of nature pay no particular deference to piety, and exemption from failure would not always be a blessing. It would tend to nourish worldliness, self-sufficiency, and religious neglectfulness. Liability to failure is a spur to industry, and a motive for prayerful dependence on heaven. Let not therefore any unfortunate Christian tradesman conclude that Christ has deserted him; and let not society conclude that he is ungodly because he has failed. The disciples toiled all night and caught nothing. III. CHRIST IS DEEPLY INTERESTED IN THEIR SECULAR CONCERNS. 1. His eyes are ever on them in their work, though they may be unconscious of Him (ver. 4). He knoweth the way you take. 2. He sometimes so signally interposes for their help or demonstrates His presence among them (ver. 6). IV. CHRIST OFTEN MAKES THEIR SECULAR TRIALS THE MEANS OF A CLOSER FELLOWSHIP WITH HIMSELF (ver. 12). Here we have a display of—1. His merciful condescension. (1) He prepared the food. (2) He ate with them, and thus identified Himself with their physical necessities. 2. His remedial wisdom. His eating enlisted their social sympathies and heart-confidences. He who would follow Him in His saving mission must go and do likewise. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The reward of faith*:—John's Gospel, which seems to come to a close with the end of the preceding chapter, is here re-opened. You can see John laying down his pen and rolling up his scroll, when he has put in the last sentence of the preceding chapter. But that Holy Spirit brought these things to his remembrance, and he eagerly unrolled his scroll and added them. It is thus not inaptly described as "a postscript to the Gospel." And it is not over curious in us to ask why John should have put in this chapter. 1. It might be sufficient to say that these things were added because of their interest. That is the reason underlying our own postscripts. Indeed, with certain correspondents, it has become a bye-word that the P.S. is really the letter. 2. It might be said that John added these things to tell a good story of Peter. John loved Peter, and Peter's character has never been any the worse for this chapter. You know some one like Peter. He is under a dark shadow to-day, and he deserves it. But you know something to his credit, and when all people are running him down, shame to you that you are not telling it. 3. But I rather think that John added these things because of their bearing upon his purpose in writing a Gospel, viz., to show the Divinity of that Man from Nazareth. Now, this stands or falls by His resurrection, which this chapter proves in its very first line. "After these things Jesus showed Himself again," and again, and again. Here is proof upon proof of what can never be over-proved, that Jesus rose from the dead. Let us look at—I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISCIPLES. 1. Certainly they were strange circumstances. About two or three years ago they had been called into fellowship with Christ, and with each other, and that had meant for them a time of perpetual excitement. The fellowship of Christ to-day may be a humdrum affair, but it was not so then. And I would say if you want an exciting life, don't kick over the traces and go off as did the prodigal son—that is the flattest kind of life ever tried; but if you want a racy, bracing life, come and be a whole-hearted disciple of Jesus. For the last two or three weeks this excitement has been of the intensest kind. They had seen their Master betrayed, crucified, buried. But He had risen from the dead, and had said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." Yet here they were away up in Galilee, as idle as a harrow in the frost. 2. This waiting for Jesus to come to them was doing them good, and Peter's speech is the proof of it. We see them grouped together, and talking with one another about what they knew of Jesus and what they expected from Him. "Ah! He will be sure to come, and come soon." Thus at times would they utter the wish of their hearts; but at others, with minds burdened with a great fear, they would ask: "But what if He should not come?" Under these circumstances I can

imagine Peter suddenly assuming a brave and determined look, and saying, "Well, come He soon or late, or not at all, our families are here, and there is plain, honest, homely work to do." Now that, I think, is a token that Simon Peter was improving, and that this time of waiting was a training, intended to strengthen faith. He is not now the blustering coward of the judgment-hall, whipping out his sword, and striking the wrong man in the wrong place. Peter could have done far better with an oar than a sword. But now Peter is sobered; our Lord's prayer and hopes for him are to be realized after all. "Satan hath desired to have thee. Thou wouldst make a splendid devil's servant. Thou wast born to lead men either from God or to God. I need men like you." His faith has not failed. He strengthens his brethren, and they say unto him, "The thing is good. We also go with thee." May God send back to His Church to-day a good score of Peters. 3. Now our Lord makes no mistake when He calls a man like this to Himself and to His service. God deliver the Church from the paralysing power of men "Who never say a foolish thing, and never do a wise one." The Church to-day has far too many men ready to put breaks on her progress—cautious men—but far too few men of steam power, men to tell us what to do, and who go and do it. II. THE MIRACLE IN RELATION TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES. The miracle has a lesson, one face of which looks towards our work-a-day life, while the other looks towards one's spiritual work for Christ. 1. Let us deal with the worldly aspect. These men were taught very sharply that success in catching either fish or men must come from Christ. Christ told them: "You cannot get fish without Me, and you cannot go back to your secular life—you are spoiled for that." Ah, dear backslider, you need to hear this! A man who is a fisher or a fishmonger may become an apostle, but an apostle can never return to his old worldly calling. You will either be exceedingly miserable until Christ forgives and restores you, or the name and doom of castaway shall be thine. But the night's failure and the morning's miracle surely taught them that Christ is Master in all departments of life, and must be looked to with a single eye for all success that is worth having. Remember that these men were born and bred to fishing. Have you ever tried to advise a fisherman? You had better not, for if you do you will very likely get an answer a great deal plainer than polite. Somehow Peter had grace and sense enough to check the word that was rising to his lips, and to do as he was told. And it was well that he did so, for soon the pull upon the back rope made John draw his breath and dart the look and the word into Peter. "This is the Lord." So still does the Lord visit His people at their work. But we draw a hard and fast line, on one side of which we are Christian workers, and we are all for faith and prayer; but then, on the other side, we are tradesmen or their wives, and the world, the flesh, and the devil take it out of us right round the week. The Lord wrought this miracle in order to obliterate that dividing line, and to teach that all success worth having will come from Him. Then what a grand religion ours must be for working people! In these days, when the word "unemployed" is continually in our ears, and the dismal thing perpetually in front of us, what a splendid religion is that of Christ! What a difference it makes between the unemployed man who believes in Christ, and the unemployed man who has no such belief! The feet of both are in the gutter, but the head of one is in heaven. Both alike must go round seeking for work; but he who loves the Lord, before he starts on his weary journey, goes down upon his knees before Him at whose girdle hang the keys of shops and yards and offices, and prays: "Lord, Thou hast done the great thing for me; wilt Thou see me lack a covering and a crust?" and such a man cannot be unemployed—he is glorifying God, and verily he shall be fed. 2. The other face of this miracle looks toward that spiritual work in which, from the very fact of our being disciples of Christ, we must engage. Do not raise the plea that now I am speaking of ministers and those who are actually under some kind of ordination. Nay, if your fishing is not capable of being spiritualized from mere bread-winning and fish-catching into soul-saving, then it is the worst for you. If you cannot take Christ into your business, and so serve Him there, that you should spread abroad such an influence of Christ's grace and presence as shall serve as a bait to entangle in the meshes of a net those who come in contact with you, then wash your hands of it, and have done with it for ever. Only remember that in this fishing for men we must look to Christ for our orders, and serve Him implicitly. How many boats are plying on the dark waters of London, and yet how few fish are caught, how few souls saved! What is the reason? It cannot be that there are no fish; the waters are seething with what we profess to be seeking. Then why should the net come empty to the boat so often? Is not this the reason—that we believe in Christ in a sort of dumb

way, but we are not looking at Him and we are not getting His orders? If any of us lack wisdom, let us ask of God, and it shall be given us. He that winneth souls is wise, but it is with a wisdom that cometh straight from above. (*J. McNeil.*)

Ver. 3. **Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing.**—*I go a fishing*:—1. A sudden inspiration. 2. A prompt resolution. 3. A hopeful expedition. 4. A laborious occupation. 5. A fruitless speculation. 6. A happy termination. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Leaders and followers*:—I. LEADERS. In Church and State these, like Peter, should be men of—1. Prompt resolution. 2. Self-reliant action. 3. Cheery expectation. 4. Contagious inspiration. II. FOLLOWERS. Like Peter's companions, these should be—1. Unbroken in their ranks—"We." 2. Hearty in their co-operation "also." 3. Simultaneous in their movement—"Go." 4. Unenvious in their dispositions—"With thee." (*Ibid.*) *Night and nothing—morning and Jesus*:—I. A PERSONAL DETERMINATION—"I go." The Church and the world need such men. Men with will and energy, who dare to strike out a course of action for themselves and face opposition. Where would the Church be to-day but for such men as Luther, and Knox, and Wesley? And where the world? We especially need such men now. We have got into the lazy, slovenly habit of waiting for one another. We see things that need to be done, but we wait until some one should take the lead. And so our Church life has little vitality and force. II. THE FORCE OF EXAMPLE. "We also go with thee." These men were not prepared for anything, they had no plans, but were just waiting for some one to "break the ice." You have no idea how much good you would do if you would speak decidedly for Jesus; many would be prepared to listen, and to follow. Men are always influenced by truth, spoken with calmness and determination. III. IMMEDIATE ACTION. "They went forth," &c. They did not talk about going, and stand still after all. This again is a want. We meet with men who have plenty of directions to give, but they never act. "Ah!" says one, "there ought to be more teachers in that school." Quite right; but do you teach? "What a pity there are not more tract distributors." So it is; but are you one? Let us learn to act as well as speak. IV. THE FISHERMEN'S FAILURE. We determine; we sometimes act upon the determination; and the result is simply—failure. "Night and nothing." I have said, "I will preach from such a text; I will give my soul to it," and then, what a failure it has been, and I have gone home and vowed I would never preach again. Has it not been so with you, teacher? Christian worker? V. THE FISHERMEN'S SUCCESS. Throughout the darkness do we toil until the morning comes—and we see Jesus. Then success attends all we do, and our souls are filled with joy. 1. Jesus is often near to us when we little think it. We have only to stretch out our hand through the darkness, and we shall find Him. 2. We often see Him, but yet we do not know Him. Love only can recognize and realize the Lord. VI. WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES ALL THIS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAILURE AND SUCCESS? 1. The presence of Jesus. 2. Listening to the voice of Jesus (ver. 5). 3. Obeying the command of Jesus (ver. 6). (*A. F. Barfield.*) *Catching nothing*:—I. A COMMON EXPERIENCE. Not the first time this had happened in the history of three out of the seven (Luke v. 5). Nor were these the first or the last who have spent their strength for nought (Isa. xlix. 4). II. A SORE DISAPPOINTMENT. Considering—1. The high expectations with which men usually start on their enterprises; and—2. The great labour they often expend on them. III. AN EXCELLENT DISCIPLINE—1. Teaching personal humility. 2. Suggesting the need of heavenly assistance. 3. Preparing for ultimate success. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Fishing on the Sea of Galilee*:—Nowadays there is very little navigation on the lake of Galilee,—we might almost say, scarcely a boat; but in the days of the Gospel narrative, and for many years later, there were craft of all sorts there, and many of considerable size. The fishing-boat of to-day, as seen on the Mediterranean, is a long, broad, and deep affair, usually pointed at each end, and large enough to carry a crew of from four to a dozen men, with their nets, and the fish they may capture. Usually these larger boats fish in the night, in companies of two or three, but sometimes a larger boat goes alone with a small boat; and sometimes a small boat accompanies two or more larger ones. The smaller ones are like a skiff, while the larger ones might pass for freight boats. As here, it is nothing uncommon for the fleet (if the two or three boats can be called so) to toil all night and take nothing. In the Mediterranean, on the Syrian and Palestinian coasts, there are few places where there is a "beach" upon which the net can be drawn. The net encloses the fish, and then they are drawn in as if in a bag, or picked out of the

net without hauling the latter into the boat. Rarely one sees a gill-net, such as our fishermen use in deep water. Accordingly, the small boat is not so much of a necessity there as it would be where the seine was drawn to land. (*S. S. Times.*) *Fish in the lake:*—The Sea of Galilee now, as in the days of our Saviour, is well stocked with various species of fish, some of excellent flavour. One species often appears in dense masses which blacken the surface of the water, the individual fish being packed so closely together that on one occasion a single shot from a revolver killed three. These shoals were most frequently seen near the shores of Gennesareth: perhaps not far from the place where the disciples let down their net into the sea, and enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. (*Recovery of Jerusalem.*) The place soon asserted its right to the name Bethsaida by the exceeding abundance of the fish we saw tumbling into the water. The hot springs flowing in here over these rocks, and a little farther on in larger volume over a clean brown sand, warm all the ambient shallows for a hundred feet from shore, and, as much vegetable matter is brought down by the springs, and probably also insects which have fallen in, all these dainties are half cooked when they enter the lake. Evidently the fish agree to dine on these hot joints, and therefore in a large semicircle they crowd the water by myraids round the warm river mouth. Their backs are above the surface, as they bask or tumble and jostle crowded in the water. They gambol and splash, and the calm sea, fringed by a reeking crowd of vapour, has beyond this belt of living fish, a long row of cormorants feeding on the half-boiled fish as the fish have fed on insects underdone. White gulls poise in flocks behind the grebes or cormorants, and beyond these again ducks bustle on the water or whirl in the air. The whole is a most curious scene, and probably it has been thus from day to day for many thousand years. I paddled along the curved line of fishes' backs and flashing tails. Some leaped into the air, others struck my boat or paddle. Dense shoals moved in brigades as if by concert or command. (*MacGregor's Jordan.*)

Ver. 4. **But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore.**—*The risen Saviour on the shore:*—Note—I. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR TO HIS PEOPLE. And we see at once that—1. That is the same as before. Jesus miraculously supplying their food, calling them to eat with Him—that is what He had been doing ever since they had known Him. Death had not altered what was essentially Himself. Our friends on the other side of death are the same as before! What a revelation to those who now think they are uncared for! Let them read what He was to His servants before He died, and remember that "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." 2. It is continued with greater power. Jesus was "on the shore;" not in the boat, as in the former miracle. For Him the tossings of life were over, "I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee." Wonderful power was His before; by miraculous energy, and wisdom, He cared for and protected them, but whatever He had then, He had more when "all power was given unto Him in heaven and on earth." It was indeed much to have Him with them in the dripping, heaving boat, but it is more, whilst we are in the boat, to have Jesus for us on the shore. 3. In fulfilling this relationship the risen Saviour may be recognized by His people. It is possible to go through life ever seeing Jesus on the shore or knowing that He is invisibly there. But the opposite is possible. "The disciples knew not that it was Jesus." Even when the meshes strained with the fishes enclosed at His bidding, only one of them was quick to detect the stranger. The state is to be watched against; it is great impoverishment. No doubt He adopts disguises still, coming to help us through human speech and effort, but to a heart trained to sympathy with Christ, the living Saviour is seen within the disguise. We cannot estimate the joy and strength which would fill our life, if in our cares and toils we had the assurance that He is near. II. THE INFLUENCE OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR ON THE WORK OF HIS PEOPLE. We mostly think of other aspects of our Lord's resurrection life. Its bearing, for instance, on the Atonement as proof of the Father's acceptance of it, and of the consequent acquittal of those whom He represents; or its bearing on His mediatorial work, admitting Him to that state in which "He ever liveth to make intercession for us," securing the permanency of the salvation He bestows. But there is another aspect. Life is much like that Sea of Galilee, sometimes dark and turbulent, sometimes bright with the quiet reflection of heaven; now rewarding us with success, and now mocking us with disappointment; the seven disciples were but symbols of each of us, we are all toilers on the sea, but in our case, as in theirs

Jesus is watching, guiding, helping the toilers. It remains to recognize this to be blessed. 1. His interest in our work is its sanctification. What does Christ upon the throne mean but that what transpires in our lives is His appointment? It may be arduous, common, unrecognized, but it comes within the rule that the Master gives to every man his work. So Christ, then, takes the deepest interest in the home cares of the mother, the lessons of the child, the toil of the bread-winner, the duties of the servant, the burdens of the sufferer. Whether our net be full or empty is nothing to the world, but it is much to Him. 2. His guidance of our work is essential to success. What is Christ King for but to guide us, so that there is nothing we ought to do but we may say, "Lord, show us how to do it!" But we do not unreservedly follow His guidance, nor believe that He understands our business better than we do, and that only He knows the road to success. What knows He about the right side of the ship? He is no fisherman, is He aware that we were born by this lake, and have fished its waters for twenty years, what can He teach us? But they cast, and "now they were not able to draw," &c. Only that work will prosper which is guided by the risen Saviour from the shore. 3. His blessing on our work makes it a constant means of grace. That blessing is most manifest where anxiety comes in. If those disciples had filled their boat that night, they would not have known the Divine power of the Stranger on the beach, and might have passed Him by. We have tried to succeed, we say, but can only look for failure; then sudden success has come, and we could only exclaim, "It is the Lord!" We have much to do and bear, we say that we shall sink beneath it; but a secret power has upheld us ("for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken"), we have borne and done it all; then we could only say in wonder, "This must be one of Christ's miracles; it is the Lord!" It is a great blessing when thus the tasks of life are an opportunity of discovering the nearness, the faithfulness, the tenderness of Christ. III. THE COMMUNION OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR IN THE WEARINESS OF HIS PEOPLE. For He was not there merely to watch and help, but also to give them rest. "Come and dine." Our weariness may be removed by the supply which He provides. Busy people, after a day when things have gone wrong and their spirit is vexed, feel like those disciples. But on the beach yonder—the beach of the quiet seclusion of their closet—Jesus is standing then, and He has a hidden fire and fish laid thereon and bread. (*C. New.*)

Ver. 5. **Jesus said unto them, Have ye any meat?**—*The tender love of the risen Christ:*—The question pertained to the wants of the body. Christ's resurrection body was still in sympathy with theirs. The higher He rose the deeper and more perfect were His sympathies. He could hunger no more, be weary no more: yet this made Him more keenly alive to the privations of His brethren. He did not need to put the question: yet He wishes to speak to them as a human friend interested in their welfare. He awakens their confidence as a stranger, but soon drops the stranger's dress. Blessed surprise! Such as that of Mary and the Emmaus travellers; as if He delighted in the surprises of love. I. THE WATCHFULNESS OF THE RISEN CHRIST. He marks each sheep and lamb of His flock with more than a shepherd's eye. The glory with which He is surrounded does not make Him unwatchful. Amidst His plenty He remembers the penury of His own. You never lacked a meal but Jesus asked this question to supply it. You never lacked a spiritual meal but He puts the same question for the same purpose. He watches the hunger of every congregation, and asks, "Children, have ye any meat?" II. THE PITY OF THE RISEN CHRIST. "I have compassion on the multitudes," He once said. Such was His pity after His resurrection; and we are sure that the throne has not lessened that pity. He pities His Church's and each saint's hunger and leanness. Let us learn this and imitate it. III. THE BOUNTY OF THE RISEN CHRIST. His is no empty pity. He does not *say* merely, "Be ye warmed and filled": He opens His treasure-house and supplies us. His stores are boundless. He delights to dispense them; nay, to provide channels for them, as in the case of the disciples when He filled their nets, kindled the fire, and prepared the meal. He fills the cruse and barrel of His widowed Church, and feeds us with the finest of the wheat. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*)

Ver. 6. **Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.**—*Old instrumentalities, but new method, an emblem of Christ's redemptive method:*—Christ commanded the disciples to cast the old net in a new way. Thus He ever does in redeeming souls. I. HE EMPLOYS OLD INSTRUMENTALITIES. There are many of them, but

they are all old. 1. The same old natural facts. He employs the phenomena of nature to quicken, educate and elevate souls. We have nothing more of nature than the men of remotest generations. 2. The same old gospel principles. Biblical truths are His redemptive forces, but the youngest of them is eighteen hundred years old. 3. The same old mental faculties. In regenerating men Christ does not create a new intellect, memory, imagination. He brings out the new moral creature with the old mental idiosyncrasies. II. HE EMPLOYS OLD INSTRUMENTALITIES IN A NEW WAY. He directs men—1. To a new method of studying natural facts. Thoughtfully, inductively, devoutly—regarding them all as mirrors of the Divine. 2. To a new method of dealing with gospel truths. Not desultorily, speculatively, controversially, but inductively, systematically and practically. 3. To a new method of employing mental faculties. Turning the mental powers away from time to eternity, from the creature to the Creator. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Ministerial encouragements*:—It was quite natural that this miracle should carry their thoughts back to that draught when their nets brake—the type of those poor tentative trial missions which alone these men had been capable of when they knew Christ only after the flesh. This one was a type of the works greater than His own which Christ promised. Note—I. THE ASSURANCE THAT THERE IS A DIRECTING VOICE AND A GUIDING HAND. The disciples did not yet know the voice, and we do not always discern it; for Christ speaks in many tones—by circumstance, character, influence. What a relief and comfort this is! II. It is no play on the words to say that there is A RIGHT AND A WRONG SIDE OF THE SHIP FOR THE CASTING OF THE NET. When Christ says the right side we must not choose the left. There is an awkward, clumsy, inappropriate way of offering truth and love to men as well as a way that is suitable, winning—to use the figure here, adroit, dexterous, and therefore Christ's way. III. WHAT IS CAST MUST BE THE NET, THE GOSPEL NET. 1. A prophet speaks of those who sacrifice to their own net. We may have a net of our own, and take great pains with it in making and mending, and think highly of it as an instrument for catching, and even fancy that it has caught, because there is a thronging and pressing to hear, and because men praise the thing heard—and lo! there is what God calls nothing in the net. 2. The great elements of gospel revelation must find place in all teaching—sin, the Divine Saviour, the Holy indwelling Spirit, sanctification, &c.—these things, not rawly or roughly flung out, but tenderly and sweetly impressed, must never be thrown behind in comparison with topics of the day. IV. YE SHALL FIND. He does not say, "All at once," nor "all you would," nor "so as to see it now;" but He puts no limit to our hope and prayer. Not one earnest sermon falls to the ground. Some conscience is quickened, some sorrow comforted, or some life guided. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Fishing for souls*:—Many men there are who make fishing rods who never use them. To make fishing rods is one thing, and to catch fish is another. Many men can make good lines who never think of going out to fish. There are plenty of mechanics that stand by the stithy and make all sorts of hooks who never catch fish. Many of the men who make reels and baskets do not catch fish. The man who, having these things at his command, knows where the trout lie, and how to throw his line, and how to draw back when the fish rises to the hook, he after all is the fisherman. Now there are hundreds of men who, when they go into the pulpit, make rods and lines (very long lines), and hooks, and reels, and baskets. They take this or that doctrine and pound it out into a hook, bending it and kinking it just so, and stick it up on a paper, and label it, and that is the end of it. And this is called preaching! To know how to make rods and lines, &c., is called sound, regular, and approved preaching; but Christ says that is preaching which catches men. And, so far from teaching you that you have no right to introduce into the pulpit anything but the substance of doctrines, I affirm that the man who does not do it will never catch men. God's sovereignty may, out of the literal foolishness of his preaching, catch some men; but the commission of Christ to every man that undertakes to preach is, "Follow Me, and I will make you a fisher of men." The business of a preacher is to catch men—proud, wicked, worldly men: and to catch them out of temptations, out of snares, out of wealth, out of poverty: for men are in more pools, ten thousand times than fishes are. And that man who knows all kinds, and what sort of bait each loves, and how to coax him, and how to catch him, knows how to preach; but the man who does not know these things—though he knows everything else—lacks a knowledge of the very thing he was sent to do. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The two draughts of fishes* (Text, and Luke v. 4):—The whole life of Christ was a sermon. The miracles attest

His mission; but a higher reason for them is to be found in the instruction which they convey. Some ministers have often preached from the same text, but never the same discourse. The like may be said of Christ. The two miracles seem to the casual observer to be alike; but though the text is the same in both, the discourse is full of variations. Note—I. THE POINTS OF UNIFORMITY. They are both intended to set forth the way in which Christ's kingdom shall increase; viz., that —1. The means must be used. In the first case, the fish did not leap into Simon's boat, nor in the second, did they lay themselves down upon the coals. No, the fishermen must go out in their boat, cast the net, and then either drag it ashore, or fill the boats with its contents. It is a miracle, but human agency is not ignored. In saving souls God works by means. So long as the economy of grace shall stand, God will by the foolishness of preaching save them that believe. God works by means of men whom He specially calls to His work, and not as a rule without them. The outcry against the "one man ministry" comes not of God, but of proud self-conceit. The new ways of catching fish without nets, and saving souls without ministers, will never answer. I know not a church that has despised instrumentality but it has come to an end within a few years either by schism or decay. 2. Means of themselves are utterly unavailing. In both cases there was failure—why? They were no raw hands; they had toiled, and toiled all night. There was no deficiency of fish, for as soon as the Master comes there they are by shoals. What, then, is the reason? Because there is no power in the means apart from the presence of Christ. Without Christ we can do nothing. "Not by might," &c. Put no dependence upon societies, committees, ministries, &c. Let us work as if all depended upon us; but let us depend upon God, knowing that it rests with Him alone. 3. It is Christ's presence that confers success. It was His will that drew the fish to the net as He sat in Peter's boat. It was His presence on the dry land that drew the fish to the right side of the ship. Christ's presence in the midst of the Church is the Church's power. 4. The success developed human weakness. In the first instance the net breaks and the ship began to sink, and Peter says, "Depart," &c. The very abundance of God's mercy made him feel his own nothingness. In the last case, they were scarcely able to draw the net because of the multitude of fishes. If the Lord gives us success in winning souls we shall soon find out what nothings we are. Little increases such as have been common in our churches for years, are quite consistent with great self-congratulation, and so is utter barrenness; mark the pompous carriage of many a fruitless preacher. The man humbles himself in the dust when hundreds are ingathered, for this cannot be the minister; this is the finger of God. II. THE DISSIMILARITY. The first picture represents the Church of God as we see it; the second as it really is. Luke tells us what the crowd see; John, what Christ showed to His disciples alone. 1. There is a difference in the orders given. In the first, it is, "Launch out into the deep," &c. In the second, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship." The first is Christ's order to every minister; the second is the secret work of His spirit in the Word. The first shows us that the ministry is to fish everywhere. The preacher is not to single out any particular character. Those who preach only to the elect should remember this. What if we be in town, or city, or village? what if we be among the rich or poor, learned or illiterate? we have nothing to do with that—our duty is to "launch out into the deep, and let down the net." Christ will find the fish. The secret truth is, that when we are doing this, the Lord knows how to guide us, so that we "cast the net on the right side of the ship." That is the invisible work of the Spirit, whereby He so adapts our ministry that He makes it particular and special. 2. In the first instance there is a distinct plurality. The fishermen have nets and boats, and each man comes out distinctly. In the next, they are all in one boat, and unitedly drag one net. This is the visible and the invisible. (1) To us the means are various. We are in one boat but there is another over yonder, and whenever our boat gets too full, we should beckon to our partners in the other ship to come and help us. We ought not to look upon those brethren who differ from us, as though they were emptying the sea and rivalling us. The plurality of agency involved in denominations is a great blessing. We stir one another up, and do far more good then if there were only one nominal church. There will always be a Paul and a Barnabas, who cannot get on together. (2) But let us look to the inward. In John they are all on one boat fishing together, dragging one net. This is what is really the fact. We do not see it, but all God's ministers are dragging one net, and all God's Church is in one ship. It is no use striving after outward uniformity. Neither the texture of the human mind nor the will of God require it.

It is the unity of the Spirit in Christ Jesus, in love that God would have us regard. 3. In the first case a great multitude of fish were caught. In the second "a hundred and fifty and three." It were impossible to reckon how many have been taken in the outward net of the visible Church. But it is possible for it to be known of God how many shall be brought at last, and how many now are in the invisible Church. They shall be in heaven a number that no man can number, for God's elect are not few; but "the Lord knoweth them that are His." 4. The fish that were taken the first time appear to have been of all sorts. The net was broken, and therefore doubtless some of them got out again; there were some so little that they were not worth eating, and doubtless were thrown away. "They shall gather the good into vessels and throw the bad away." In the second case, the net was full of great fishes; they were all great fishes, all good and worth the keeping. The first gives us the outward and visible effect of the ministry. We gather into Christ's Church a great number, and there will always be some that are not good, and not really called of God. Sometimes we have Church-meetings in which we have to throw the bad away. Let no man be surprised if the tares grow up with the wheat—if there be wolves in sheep's clothing—it always will be so. There was a Judas among the twelve. Not so in the invisible Church. In that there is none to throw away. No; the Lord who brought them into the net brought the right sort in. 5. In the first case, in the visible Church the net breaks. No doubt it is a bad thing for nets to break; but you need not wonder at it. It is the necessary consequence of our being what we are. Instead of having some one denomination, we have twenty or thirty? I do not grieve over it. For until you get a set of perfect men, you never will have anything but these divisions. But the net does not break in reality, for the invisible Church is one. Take care of the fish and leave the net alone, but still maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of perfectness. 6. In the first case, you see human weakness; there is the boat ready to sink, the net broken, the men all out of heart, begging the Master to go away. In the other case, they are made strong, dragging the fish to shore. So in the visible Church you will often have to mourn over human weakness: but in the invisible Church God will make His servants just strong enough to drag their fish to shore. 7. In the first case, in the visible Church they launched out into the deep. In the second case, they were not far from the shore. So to-day our preaching seems to us to be going out into the great stormy deep after fish. We appear to have a long way to reach before we shall bring these precious souls to land. But in the sight of God we are not far from shore; and when a soul is saved, it is not far from heaven. To us there are years of temptation, and trial, and conflict; but to God, it is finished. 8. In the first case, the disciples had to forsake all and follow Christ. In the second, they sat down to feast with Him at the banquet which He had spread. So in the visible Church we have to bear trial and self-denial for Christ, but the eye of faith perceives that we shall soon sit down and feast in the kingdom of God. III. THE LESSON WHICH THE TWO NARRATIVES IN COMMON SEEM TO TEACH. In the first case, Christ was in the ship. Christ is in His Church, though she launch out into the deep. In the second case, Christ was on the shore. Christ is in heaven. But whether He be in the Church, or in heaven, all our night's toiling shall, by His presence, have a rich reward. This is the lesson. Mother, will you learn it? You have been toiling long for your children. It has been night with you as yet. Your night's toiling shall have an end; you shall at last cast the net on the right side of the ship. Sunday-school teacher, minister, church, the night is far spent, and the Master shall soon appear; and His advent shall bring success. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 7. **Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said unto Peter, It is the Lord.**—*Variety in unity*:—I. LOVE RECOGNIZING JESUS. John was distinguished for his clear and far-reaching vision. Peter was the embodiment of zeal, John of love. 1. Love can recognize where mere earnestness fails. You did not hear anything as you sat in your friend's house, and you were rather surprised when she broke off her sentence with "Excuse me" and hurriedly left the room—the fact was the mother had heard the cry of her child. You would have been earnest enough in doing good to the little one; but only the mother's ear could hear its voice. And so in the case before us: let Peter but get half an idea that Jesus is standing on the shore, and nothing will keep him in the boat; but Peter, with all his earnestness, would perhaps have never said, "It is the Lord." 2. Love communicates good. John could not keep the good tidings to himself. Whether in temporal or spiritual blessings, love invites others to share. II. IMPETUOSITY AND ZEAL ENDEAVOURING TO HOLD COMMUNION WITH

JESUS. 1. Consistency of character. The same Peter who once before walked upon the sea—who said, "Though all men forsake Thee yet will not I"—who ran into the sepulchre, and compelled John to follow, casts himself into the sea to go to Jesus. 2. Naturalness. Had any one else but Peter attempted this, it would have appeared awkward and ungraceful; had he refrained from rushing off to Jesus we should have felt that it was not like Peter. We believe in individuality. It would be better for the Church and the world if men would be themselves. III. THE WISDOM OF CAREFULNESS. The other disciples took care of the fishes and came to land by the boat, and they were right; for—1. They were preserving what Jesus had given them. 2. They were showing that they appreciated His blessings. IV. VARIETY IN UNITY. That little ship contained the infant Church, yet in that Church you find various types of character. There is the loving John, the go-ahead Peter, and the quiet, careful people who take care of the necessaries of life. And so in the Church. We need men who can stand upon the watch tower and point to Christ; we need others full of fire; and the plodding men who never do anything out of the way, but nevertheless do a great deal of necessary work. Thus—1. God distributes His gifts in various ways and infinite variety. 2. We should beware of jealousy. 3. We ought not to judge each other. As Matthew Henry says, "Some are useful as the Church's eyes, some as the Church's hands, and others as the Church's feet; but all are for the good of the body." (*A. F. Barfield.*) *It is the Lord*:—It seems very strange that these disciples had not, at an earlier period, discovered Christ, inasmuch as it was so manifestly a repetition of that former event by which they had become "fishers of men." We are apt to suppose that when once again they embarked on the lake it must have been with many a thought of Him. Yonder—perhaps we fancy them thinking—is where we saw Him coming out of the mountains, when He walked on the water; yonder is where He made them all sit down whilst we bore the bread to them: there is the very spot where we were mending our nets when He came up to us and called us to Himself—and now it is all over. "We trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel." But there does not seem to have been any such sentimental remembrance. John takes pains to show them as plain, rough men, busy about their night's work, and thinking a great deal more of their want of success, than about old associations. Then through the darkness He comes, and speaks as once before, and repeats the old miracle, and their eyes are all holden excepting the eyes of him who loved, and *he* first says, "It is the Lord." I. THEY ONLY SEE ARIGHT WHO SEE CHRIST IN EVERYTHING. 1. No man will understand the world aright, who cannot say about all creation, "It is the Lord." (1) If we would pierce to the deepest foundations of all Being, we cannot stop until we get down to the living power of Christ, by whom all things were made, and whose will is the sustaining principle which keeps it from decay. (2) What did Christ work His miracles for? Not solely as proof of His Messiahship, but that for once He would unveil to us the true Author of all things, and the true Foundation of all being. Christ's miracles interrupted the order of the world in so far as they struck out the intervening means by which the creative and sustaining word of God acts in nature. We are then to take all these signs and wonders as a revelation of the real state of things, and to see in them tokens that into every corner of the universe His loving hand reaches, and His sustaining power goes forth. Into what province of nature did He not go? He claimed to be the Lord of life by the side of the boy's bier at the gate of Nain, &c. He asserted for Himself authority over all the powers and functions of our bodily life, when He gave eyes to the blind, &c. He showed that He was Lord over the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, &c. And He asserted His dominion over inanimate nature when the fig-tree withered, and the winds and waves sunk into silence. He let us get a glimpse into the dark regions of His rule over the unseen, when "with authority He commanded the unclean spirits, and they came out." (3) All these things He did, in order that we, walking in this fair world, should be delivered from the temptation of thinking that it is separated from or independent of Him. Let "It is the Lord" be on our lips, and nature will then be indeed to us the open secret which "The Lord will show to them that fear Him." 2. The same conviction is the only one to explain or make tolerable the circumstances of our earthly condition. Either our life is the subject of a mere chaotic chance; or else it is put into the mill of an iron destiny, which goes grinding on, regardless of what it grinds up; or else, there is the will which is love, and the love which is Christ! I understand not how a man can front the future knowing all his vulnerable points and all the ways by which disaster may come down upon him, and retain his sanity, except he believes that all is ruled, not

merely by a God who may be as unsympathizing as He is omnipotent, but by His elder Brother, the Son of God. But the riddle of Providence is solved, and the discipline of Providence is being accomplished, when we have grasped this conviction—All events do serve me, for all circumstances come from His will and pleasure, which is love; and everywhere where I go—be it in the darkness of disaster or in the sunshine of prosperity—I shall see standing before me that familiar and beloved shape, and shall be able to say, "It is the Lord." That is the faith to live by, and to die by; and without it life is a mockery and a misery. 3. This same conviction should guide us in all our thoughts about the history and destinies of mankind and of Christ's Church. The Incarnation and the Crucifixion are the pivot round which all the events of the ages revolve. "They that went before and they that came after," when He entered into the holy city were a symbol of history. All the generations that went before Him, though they knew it not, were preparing His way; and all the generations that come after, though they know it not, are swelling His triumph. The tangled web of human history is only then intelligible when that is taken as its clue, "From Him are all things, and to Him are all things," and when all is finished, it will be found that all things have tended to His glory who is King of kings and Lord of lords. 4. Such a conviction living and working in our hearts would change for us the whole aspect of life. See Christ in everything, and be blessed; or miss Him, and be miserable. It is a waste, weary world, unless it be filled with signs of His presence. If you want your days to be true, happy, manly, and Godlike, it will only be when they all have flowing through them this conviction, "It is the Lord." II. ONLY THEY WHO LOVE SEE CHRIST. John, the apostle of love knew Him first. 1. In religious matters, love is the foundation of knowledge. There is no way of knowing a person except love. A man cannot argue his way into knowing Christ. Man's natural capacity within its own limits is strong and good; but in the region of acquaintance with God and Christ, the wisdom of this world is foolishness. "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." 2. Love will trace Him everywhere, as dear friends detect each other in little marks which are meaningless to others. Love's quick eye pierces through disguises impenetrable to a colder scrutiny. Love has in it a longing for His presence which makes us eager and quick to mark the slightest sign that He is near, as the footstep of some dear one is heard by the sharp ear of affection long before any sound breaks the silence to those around. Love leads to likeness to the Lord, and that likeness makes the clearer vision of the Lord possible. "It is the Lord" is written large and plain on all things, but like the great letters on a map, they are so obvious and fill so wide a space, that they are not seen. They who love Him know Him, and they who know Him love Him. 3. And is it not a blessed thing that this glorious prerogative does not depend on what belongs to few men only, but on what may belong to all? 4. But we cannot love by commandment. The only way is to see the lovely. The disciple who loved Jesus was "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Generalize that, and it teaches us that—III. THEY LOVE WHO KNOW THAT CHRIST LOVES THEM. Our love can never be anything else than the echo to His voice of tenderness, than the reflected light upon our hearts of the full glory of His affection. "We love Him, because He first loved us." The fountain that rises in my heart can only spring up heavenward, because the water of it flowed down into my heart from the higher level. Oh, then, look to Christ, that you may love Him! Think of that Saviour who has died for us, and lives for us! Do not ask yourselves, to begin with, the question, Do I love Him or do I not? If a man is cold, let him go to the fire and warm himself. If he is dark let him stand in the sunshine, and he will be light. If his heart is all clogged with sin and selfishness, let him get under the influence of the love of Christ, and look away from himself and his own feelings, towards that Saviour whose love shed abroad is the sole means of kindling ours. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **Now when Simon Peter heard that . . . he girt his fisher's coat unto him.**—*Peter's reverence* for the Lord is indicated by the careful observation, even in such a moment of excited feeling, of the petty proprieties of clothing. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) **And did cast himself into the sea.**—I. REGARDLESS OF PERSONAL COMFORT. II. ABANDONING HUMAN COMPANIONSHIPS. III. DESPISING TEMPORAL GAIN. IV. EAGERLY SEEKING JESUS. (*S. S. Times.*)

Vers. 9–11. **As soon as they were come to land they saw a fire of coals there.**—*The two fires—a contrast* (Text, and chap. xviii. 18):—I. THE FIRE IN THE PALACE COURT. 1. A scene of sorrow—the Saviour's trial. 2. A place of temptation—in the company of Christ's enemies. 3. A witness of sin—the denials of Peter. II.

THE FIRE UPON THE SEA-SHORE. 1. A scene of glory—the presence of the risen Lord. 2. A place of safety—the society of Jesus and His friends. 3. A witness of grace—Peter's restoration. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The fire on the shore*:—1. You cannot fail to be impressed with the sense as of something strange and unearthly. You feel that, like Moses in Horeb, you must put off the shoes from your feet, ere you approach this mysterious fire. (1) One explanation of the fire and repast, of course, is that they were provided to supply the bodily wants of the disciples. (2) Another makes the whole transaction refer especially to St. Peter. The thrice-repeated question reminded him of his three-fold denial; the miraculous draught called to mind his office from which he fell; and the fire of coals would recall that other fire by which he denied his Master. 2. But these explanations do not meet the whole of the facts. We have, then, to seek one which shall satisfy all parts of the narrative: and this is to be found in the progress of the Gospel, and the connection between the Old and New Dispensations. I. THE FISH. In one parable the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a net, which "gathered of every kind;" so that we have Christ's authority for considering that the miraculous draught represented the bringing of multitudes into the Church through the instrumentality of the preachers of the gospel. It is observable also that Simon Peter is said to have drawn the net to land: there may have been a reference here to the fact that Peter was entrusted with the opening the Church to the Gentiles. For there can be no doubt that there was a special reference to the combining of all nations in the visible Church. The number of fishes is to be carefully noted. It appears that one hundred and fifty and three was exactly the number of varieties of fish then known, so that we may most justly conclude that the number was an indication that persons of all nations and conditions should enter into the Church. And then the remark as to the net not being broken must be considered as prophetic of the capacity of the Christian Church; unlike the Jewish, which was not constructed for enlargement and extension. II. THE FIRE OF COALS AND THE PREPARED REPAST. 1. You are to observe that the Jewish and the Christian Dispensations are not so truly distinct economies, as component parts of one great plan. There have never been two ways in which sinners might be saved. In the New Testament, indeed, we have the clearer exposition of the great scheme of mercy; but there is no difference whatsoever in the doctrine propounded. This great truth is figuratively taught here. There was already a fire kindled, and on the fire there were fish already laid; and when the newly-caught fish were placed on the same fire, was it not shown that the Church, before and after the coming of Christ, was virtually but one and the same? that its members had to be brought to the same altar, and to be purified by the same flame? I know not why we should not think that that strange fire, mysteriously kindled on the lonely shore, was typical of the propitiatory work of the Redeemer, through whom alone the men of any age can be presented as a sacrifice acceptable unto God. There is no altar but the one Mediator, and no fire but that of His oblation, which will answer for those who seek to consecrate themselves, a whole burnt offering to God. And what could be a more lively parable of this fact than that, when standing on the margin of the sea, the separating line between time and eternity, Christ caused an altar to rise, mysterious as Himself, and crowned it with burning coals, which had not been kindled by any earthly flame; and then placed on it representatives of the one visible Church as it had subsisted before His incarnation, and as it was to subsist till He should come to judgment? It seems to have been a lesson peculiarly needed by the apostles, that they were not to consider themselves as going forth on a new mission, of which no notices had been previously issued. Accordingly Christ had forcibly reminded them that "One soweth, and another reapeth." And now He repeats something of the same lesson. 2. But, further, the Evangelist is careful in noting that our Lord took bread as well as fish and gave to His disciples. Now, Christ had fed a great multitude with a few loaves and fishes, typifying how the truth of His religion should suffice for the spiritual sustenance of the world. The disciples would naturally be reminded of this miracle here, and that the food which Christ delivered to them as spiritual pastors would be an abundant provision for all men. In conclusion, we would show you into how beautiful an allegory some of the facts may be wrought, when a broader view is taken, one which shall more distinctly comprehend ourselves. 1. It is an appropriate simile which likens life to a voyage which has variety of terminations—sometimes in calm, sometimes in storm; the vessel, in one case, casting anchor in placid waters, so that the Spirit has but to step gently ashore; in another, suffering shipwreck, so that there is fearful strife and peril in escaping from the waves. Of all it will have to be said, as of

those with St. Paul, some by swimming, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship—"it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land." 2. Let it satisfy us that whatever the mode in which the soul of the righteous is dismissed—whether that mode be imagined in Peter's casting himself into the sea and struggling to the land, or whether it be represented in the quieter approachings of the boat with the other disciples—the soul will find preparation for its reception: Christ stands upon the shore, expecting His faithful servants; and of all of them it will have to be said, "As soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread." This may well shadow out that, to the faithful in Christ, the moment of being detached from the body is the moment of being admitted into happiness. "As soon as they were come to land"—no delay, no interval—all that was needed was found ready; the fire kindled, and the banquet spread. 3. Yet who doubts that the righteous will not only find the material of happiness prepared, but that they will carry with them additions to that material, and make heaven all the richer? It is "the communion of saints;" and whilst each saint shall draw cause of rapture from those who have gone before, they also shall draw cause of rapture from Him. Ah, then, how beautifully apposite the direction, "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught!" The marriage-supper of the Lamb shall be furnished from the contributions of every generation. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," &c. They "rest from their labours," in that, as soon as they come to land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread: "their works do follow them," in that they are then bidden to bring of the fish which they have caught. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Materials for the banquet:*—Mineral coal is still a thing of uncommon use or knowledge in the East, except on the steamers. But charcoal is the "coal"; it is made and used everywhere, and is sold by weight. Upon the coals the "bread" or "loaf" is baked, either on a pan or piece of metal; or directly on (or under) the coals themselves, protected by a layer of ashes. The variety of modes of baking, and of bread, which one sees at an Oriental camp-fire, are many. The picture here is doubtless that of both bread and fish cooking at the fire; not of baked bread waiting for the fish to be done. The "loaf" was, or is, a flat cake. (*S. S. Times.*) **Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.**—*Christ requires human co-operation:*—Jesus had no need of the disciples' help in providing fish for His breakfast or for theirs; but He asked their help just as if He did need it. If they had refused to bring the fish, He would have been no loser; but the loss would have been theirs. So it is always in every sphere of Christian activity. Jesus never needs help; but Jesus constantly calls for help. The gain through responding to that call, or the loss through refusing, is to the disciple, not to the Master. Jesus can get on without your money or your services in the Sunday-school, in the church, in the community about you, or in the missionary field; but you cannot get on as you might if you refuse your help in any one of these fields. Jesus asks for a share of all the fish you catch, of all the crops you gather, of all the money you get, of all the time and strength you have. If you refuse to render it to Him, the loss is yours. How great that loss may be only eternity can disclose. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) **Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land.**—*Pulling in the net:*—If you are always mending and setting the net, you won't catch many fish. Whoever heard of a man going out to fish, and setting his net, and then letting it stop there, and never pulling it in. Why, everybody would laugh at the man's folly. There was a minister in Manchester who came to me one day and said, "I wish you would tell me why we ministers don't succeed better than we do." So I took up the idea of pulling in the net, and I said, "You ought to pull in your nets. There are a great many in Manchester who can preach much better than I can, but then I pull in the net. A great many people have objections to inquiry-meetings;" and when I had pointed out the importance of them, the minister said, "I never did pull in the net, but I will try next Sunday morning." He did so, and eight persons, anxious inquirers, went into his study. The next Sunday he came down to see me, and said he had never had such a Sunday in his life. The next time he drew the net there were forty, and when he came to see me at the Opera House, the other day, he said, "Moody, I have had eight hundred conversions this last year. It is a great mistake I did not begin earlier to pull in the net." So, my friends, if you want to catch men, just pull in the net. If you only catch one it will be something. It may be a little child, but I have known a little child convert a whole family. Why, you don't know what's in that little dull-headed boy in the inquiry-room, he may become a Martin Luther—a reformer that shall make the world tremble. (*D. L. Moody.*)

Vers. 12, 13. **Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine.**—*Loving invitation* (*cf.* chap. i. 39):—Here is—I. NEARNESS familiar and domestic. While we are sinners faith brings us into a justified state by simply looking to Christ; but after believing faith then assists us to enjoy Christ. Some expect to enjoy Christ first and believe Him afterwards; but you must take God's mercies in their order. You will not find "Come and dine" in the first chapter of John—there it is, "Come and see." Believe Jesus first, and you shall feed on Him afterwards. "Come and see" gives peace, but "Come and dine" gives heaven, for it gives Christ. II. UNION WITH JESUS, because the only meat that we can eat when we dine with Christ is Himself. We do not provide the supper. Christ found the fish, the fire, and the bread, and then said, "Come and dine." The fire that warms our heart when we have fellowship with Him comes from Himself, and the fish that we eat is His own, and the wine that we drink flows from His own heart. Oh, what union is this! III. FELLOWSHIP WITH THE SAINTS. You are not to eat your morsel alone, but in company. We sit down in heaven with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, and no small part of the hereafter bliss is connected with the fellowship of the saints. So here we enjoy the company as well as the feast. The Supper of the Lord is the table of communion, not only with the Master, but also with all who love Him. Hungry men are sure to be quarrelsome, but if you would have sweetest fellowship with each other, live on Christ. We do not expect to see all Christians agreeing, but we are sure that one of the most likely plans for cultivating a brotherly spirit is to listen to Christ's words, "Come and dine." IV. THE SOURCE OF STRENGTH FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN. To look at Christ is to live, but for strength to serve Him you must come and dine. We need as much food for the soul as for the body, and unless we eat we shall be fainting by the way. If you want to be as Mr. Feeblemind, take only a small modicum of spiritual food in your closets; neglect family prayer; never attend a prayer-meeting; on no account speak about religious matters during the week; go late to the house of God, and fall asleep when you get there; as soon as you leave the place of worship talk about the weather. All your strength depends upon union with Christ. Away from Him you must wither as a branch severed from the vine. Feeding on Him you will be like the branch which is drinking up the sap from the parent stem; you will be strong enough to bring forth fruit. V. GROWTH AND PROGRESS IN SPIRITUAL THINGS. To see Christ is to begin the Christian's life, but to grow in grace we must "come and dine." The early history of the first disciples is by no means satisfactory. They were evidently only babes in spiritual things. They had seen Jesus, and loved Him, and followed Him, but they were far from possessing the Spirit of Christ. Now after they had reached this stage of living on Christ they became new men. It is no longer mere sight, but an inward appropriation, and the consequences are manifest. Many Christians remain stunted and dwarfed. They exist but do not grow. The reason is evident, they are not taking of Christ, and they neglect to appropriate to themselves the blessing which He is waiting to bestow. VI. PREPARATION FOR SERVICE. Before the feast is concluded, Christ says to Peter, "Feed My lambs;" "Feed My sheep;" "Follow Me." All the strength supplied by Christ is for service. Some Christians are for living *on* Christ, but are not so anxious to live *for* Christ. Heaven is the place where saints feast most and work most. Now, earth should be a preparation for heaven; come and dine, and then go and labour. Freely ye receive, freely give; gather up all the fragments of your feast, and carry the loaves and fishes to others, as did the disciples. We are not to hold the precious grains of truth like a mummy does the wheat, for ages, without giving it a chance of growing. No, feed yourself, and then go forth and bid others come and eat and drink. Why does the Lord send down the rain upon the thirsty earth, and give the sunshine and the genial refreshing breeze? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The dinner on the Galilean shore: an emblem of redemption*:—I. THE TIME WAS OPPORTUNE. The disciples had tried all their resources for means of a livelihood that night and had failed. They were no doubt tired, hungry, and dejected. The dinner came just at the right time. It is just so with the redemptive system. After the world had tried everything for its salvation—poetry, philosophy, religion, civilization—and grew worse, Christ came "in the fulness of time." II. THE PROVISIONS WERE DESIRABLE. The fish they caught they had been toiling all night to obtain. They were craving for such food. The provisions of the gospel are both suited to man's needs and urgently required. They are—1. Renovating. 2. Cleansing. 3. Developing. 4. Harmonizing. 5. Perfecting. In Isa. xxv. 6 we have a description of the great Spiritual banquet. How rich, varied, abundant the viands!

III. THE HOST WAS CONDESCENDING. What a sight!—the Son of God preparing a feast for poor fishermen, and dining with them. Thus He has done in redemption. He descended into the "lowest parts of the earth," unto the lowest grades; "made Himself of no reputation." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *A feast with Jesus*:—I. Our Lord is careful of bodily wants. Twice in the days of His flesh He fed the people with bread and fish, and now He has risen He still thinks of the hungering bodies of the disciples. This may be a warrant to the churches to feed, not to try and proselytize. 2. If any of you are needy catch at this. He who said to the seven, "Come and break your fast," will not forget you. I cannot tell how the fire was lighted, &c., but some way or other you will be fed. 3. If Jesus is thus careful of bodily wants, much more will He be careful of your souls. After He had supplied the one He proceeds to supply the other. I. THE IMPORTANCE OF A FEAST WITH JESUS. It was important to these men—1. For they were wet and cold; so a fire was provided where they could dry their jerseys and warm their hands. They were hungry too, and here is the old food, light and easy of digestion. Christ does not like to see us wet, and cold, and hungry, because it is not good for us. If, therefore, you feel uncomfortable and unhappy Jesus does not want you to be so. Many a battle has been lost because the soldiers were not in good condition. 2. They were weary with the night's fruitless toil; and when Christ's modern workers feel discouraged He invites them to come and break their fast with Him. 3. They were likely to forget their bodily wants in their sudden success. It is hungry work now to live on catching and counting. Successful workers are prone to forget their own spiritual wants. 4. Christ was about to overhaul them. It is needful that Christ should feed us before He searches us. 5. They were about to receive a commission. Christ does not send people to feed His sheep and lambs without feeding them first. 6. They were about to enter on a perilous path. Wonder not that you are called to endure fiery trials, but see that you are first fed on heavenly bread. II. JESUS ACTING AS HOST. Is not this wonderful? Jesus communing with Thomas, who doubted Him, and Peter, who denied Him. Notice Jesus our Host—1. Preparing the feast. It was an act of creative power. Your soul can ever feed on what Christ creates, but on nothing else. 2. Waiting on the feasters. Sometimes a host will say, "Help yourselves," but we cannot help ourselves; so "Jesus cometh and taketh bread and giveth them." There is good spiritual food in the Word, but sometimes we cannot get at it; so Jesus puts it into our hearts. 3. Showing Himself. Giving them food was the most effective manner of doing this. When the Word nourishes most, then is the time of the clearest vision of Christ; and that vision is the most satisfying thing on earth or in heaven. III. THE PROVISIONS. 1. What He had mysteriously prepared. Feed now on the mysteries of—(1) Everlasting love. (2) The covenant of grace. (3) The brotherhood of Christ. (4) Atoning efficacy. 2. What He had graciously given. God's mercies are like the hundred and fifty and three—an odd number, but very exact. Has not your net, too, been full of answers to prayer? IV. How THE GUESTS BEHAVED THEMSELVES. 1. They only spoke one word—"No;" which betrayed the emptiness and hunger of their souls. You may say to your Lord, "I am a negative, nobody and nowhere without Thee." The devotion which shows itself by bawling may be genuine, but it is very superficial. Deep waters are still. It takes a wise man to hold his tongue. 2. They asked Christ no questions. People who have no religion are fond of religious questions. But when you get near Christ there is no questioning. We believe in the Bible because we know the Author, and are therefore not troubled with sceptical doubts. They were lost in wonder at His amazing condescension, and His majestic presence. What could they do but hold their tongues? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Communion with Christ*:—This chapter has a sacramental character, and the words, "Come and dine," are a summons to communion. Note—I. THE ENTERTAINMENT. 1. There is already fish prepared when Jesus says, "Bring of the fish now caught." Host and guest must each contribute. "If any man will hear My voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with Me," *i.e.*, I with him as his Guest, and he with Me as Mine. It is so here. Communion implies reciprocity. When Christ meets His people at the holy feast He is there as the Host who furnishes the fire and the fish, the bread and the wine, the supplies of grace and of the Spirit. But He is also the Guest. We partake of Him, but He looks to partake of us, though we know that He can find nothing that can give Him pleasure till He puts it there. This fish which we must bring He guided into the net. Christ having first given the grace comes to receive of it. He is spiritually present to

receive as well as communicate that highest joy which is the interchange of conscious feeling and trusted love, to partake of us as we of Him. 2. If this be the case can we come thoughtlessly, with defiled hands, or with self-righteousness to offer ourselves for Christ's participation? Nay, but let us come with what He craves, the love on receiving which here or anywhere He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. II. THE FEELING. "None durst ask Him." Why should they if they knew? The saying expresses that almost new converse with which the disciples after the Resurrection regarded their Lord. One there had previously presumed to question, "Be it far from Thee, Lord." It was not so now. Think with what instinctive awe we should regard a similar manifestation of Christ now. Questioning would have been impertinent. They must wait for Him to speak now. It would also have been mistrusting. Well enough did they know it was the Lord, notwithstanding the changes which the three days had wrought. There is a familiarity in words, hymns, meditations, in these times which befits not our intercourse with the Risen. Let the feeling which reigns around the Lord's table be one of reverence. This is not dread, distance, bondage, but adoring love. III. THE CONVERSATION. Some have found it difficult to maintain a spirit of prolonged communion at the Lord's table; but let them learn from this to commune about—1. Their sins. Who can doubt that Peter's three denials were uppermost in his heart? Yet you will note that there was no remorse for an irrevocable past, and no excuses for inexcusable guilt. Be guided by this in your communion, and this one topic will provide enough for an hour's profitable discourse. 2. Their work. This communion brought reinstatement for Peter in his apostolate, and a particular designation to his future employment. Converse, then, about thy work, its past deficiencies, and thy need of present and future strength to do it. 3. Their future. Peter's was here revealed, and if thine is not in such particularity, yet the words, "Follow Me," will hearten thee to meet it, whatever it may be. 4. Their friends, "What shall this man do?" (*Dean Vaughan.*)

Vers. 15–17. **So when they had dined, Jesus saith . . . Simon son of Judas, lovest thou Me more than these?**—*Peter's restoration:*—I. THE LORD'S QUESTION. 1. The question itself. (1) The feeling inquired about. Other feelings there are which often move the soul; but love surpasses them all. Every one knows what is meant by love. (2) The object of the love to which the question relates. The question is not, dost thou love at all? Perhaps there never was a heart so hard as to be entirely a stranger to it. The question is, among the various objects thy love embraces, is that object to be found whose claim is paramount? We say not that unrenewed persons do not love at all; but they love other objects in place of Christ. But the new birth carries up the dear emotion to the object that best deserves it. (3) The degree of this love to Christ. The question may mean, either, "Lovest thou Me more than these men?" or "more than these things," and calls upon us to say, not that we love the Lord, but how much we love Him. Does it prevail over the love we feel for inferior objects? 2. The circumstance that Christ puts the question. It is often put by Christ's friends and ministers; but it comes with deeper meaning and greater power from Christ. It implies—(1) That Christ considers He has a claim to the love of His people. What are the grounds of this claim? We ought to love Him—(*a*) For what He is. What saith the law? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart," &c., "and thy neighbour as thyself." God and man, as Christ is, in one Person, both tables of the law command Him to be loved—(*b*) For what He has done: long ago as God the Son in the council of peace, and in human history as the Man Christ Jesus. (2) That He sets a value on His people's love. When another asks you, "Lovest thou Christ?" you cannot gather from it that Christ Himself cares whether you love Him or not. But Christ's own inquiry shows that the matter is not indifferent to Him. Despise His people's love! He reckons it a portion of His reward. And, when He sees its fruits, He sees of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied. (3) That He is concerned for the prosperity of His people's souls. The love of Christ is inseparably connected with the love of God. (4) Let us advert to some of the occasions when Christ puts the question. (*a*) The occasion of showing His own love. Such was the present. He was fresh from Calvary. "Lovest thou Me? See how I have loved thee!" Such is the occasion when a sinner is converted. Then, for the first time, a sense of Christ's love breaks in. (*b*) When He gives His people special work to do. (*c*) In the day of temptation, and suffering for His sake. Trials bring our love to the proof. 3. The circumstance that Christ repeats it. The gospel ministry puts it

from week to week. Why? Because—(1) Love to Christ is of vital importance. (2) There is a spurious love to Christ, a feeling of sentimentalism, which is called, by some, love to Christ. There are some, too, who love a Christ of their own, who, they fancy, takes away the sting from sin. As if that were possible, or that God's holy Son would do it if He could! II. THE DISCIPLE'S ANSWER. We cannot say that believers are always able to reply as Peter did. There are times when they think that they do not love the Lord. And there are times when the utmost length they can go is, "Lord, I can scarcely tell if I love Thee or not." Yet there are times when they can use Peter's language. Secret seasons of enlargement, when the Lord unveils His face to them, and they see the King in His beauty. Words are good, but not essential; and there is an answer in the heart which the Lord can interpret right well. 1. Who does not know that true love can proclaim its existence through the eyes when the tongue says nothing? The soul has eyes as well as the body. And, when God's people are meditating on Christ, what are they doing but feasting the eyes of their souls, and involuntarily declaring their love to Him? 2. There are acts of memory also, which are the consequences of love. In the long absence of loved ones how fondly do we call to mind what they said to us, and cherish the particulars of the interviews we had together! And how natural is it to prize the messages they send us! Thus works the love of believers towards Christ. They take pleasure in remembering past fellowship. 3. The way, too, in which Christ's approaches are received is a declaration of love. It makes their heart leap when tidings that He is near is brought to them, and when the sound of His footsteps is heard. III. THE LORD'S COMMAND. 1. Its nature. Christ has a flock, of which He is the owner; for it was given to Him of the Father, and He bought it with His blood. He is its Shepherd; for it was committed to His care, and He accepted the charge of it. This flock He commends to the good offices of all that love Him. Private disciple though you be, you may help to feed Christ's flock. Though you cannot dispense the bread of life by public ministrations, you may dispense it by private intercourse, prayers, and contributions. 2. Some important principles which it involves. (1) That love needs an exercise as well as an object. The first thing is to fix it on Christ. That being done, "Now," says the Lord, "thy love must not be idle. If thou lovest Me, go work for Me. Only thus can thy love continue and increase." (2) That love prepares us for the service of Christ. It is a motive inciting to that which is well-pleasing to Him, the doing of His will. (3) That love must extend to His people. "Feed My lambs—feed My sheep." (4) That love ought to show itself to the world. The feeding of Christ's lambs and sheep implies publicity. It is, therefore, a confession of Christ before men. Thereby we tell the world that we love Him, and prove that we are not ashamed of His cause. (*A. Gray.*) *The grand inquiry*:—The question is—I. REASONABLE. Because we *ought* to love Him, and the affection is *just*. Contemplate—1. His Person. He is altogether lovely: comprising in Himself all the graces of time and of eternity; all the attractions of humanity and of Deity. Bring forward all the excellences the world ever saw; add as many more as the imagination can supply: all this aggregate is no more to Him than a ray of light to the sun, or a drop of water to the ocean. 2. His doings. (1) Look backward, and consider what He has done. (2) Look upward, and consider what He is doing. (3) Look forward, and consider what He will do. 3. His sufferings. To enable Him to be our best friend, He submitted to a scene of humiliation and anguish, such as no tongue can express, or imagination conceive. Never was there sorrow—and, therefore, never was there love—like thine! But we must observe, not only what He suffers for us, but what He suffers from us, and suffers in us. "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He that toucheth us toucheth the apple of His eye. "O, for this love, let rocks and hills," &c II. IMPORTANT, because we must love Him: and the affection is not only just but necessary—1. To our sanctification. Love is a transforming principle. By constant residence in the mind, the image stamps and leaves its own resemblance. 2. To give us delight in all our religious services. It is the nature of love to render difficult things easy, and bitter ones sweet. What was it that turned the seven years of hard bondage that Jacob served for Rachel into so many pleasant days? What is it that more than reconciles that mother to numberless nameless anxieties and privations in rearing her baby charge? But there is no love like that which a redeemed sinner bears to his Redeemer; and, therefore, no pleasure can equal that which he enjoys in pleasing Him. 3. To render our duties acceptable. The Lord looketh to the heart; and when this is given up to Him, He values the motive,

though we err in the circumstances. 4. To ascertain our interest in the Saviour's regards. His followers are not described by their knowledge, their gifts, their creed, their profession; but by their cordial adherence to Him. His love produces ours; but our love evinces His—"I love them that love Me." III. SUPPOSES DOUBT. Is there nothing in you to render this love suspicious—1. To the world? You are not only to be Christians, but to appear such. Have you risen up for Him against the evildoers, and never denied His name, nor concealed His truth? 2. To the Church? There are many of whom, as the apostle says, "We stand in doubt." But your ministers and fellow-members are entitled to satisfaction concerning, if not the degree, the reality of your religion. 3. To yourselves. "'Tis a point I long to know," &c. If I loved Him—could I ever read without pleasure the Book that unveils His glories—could I ever fear to die—could I feel so impatient under those afflictions that make me a partaker of the fellowship of His sufferings? 4. To the Saviour. There is a sense in which this is impossible. We are all transparency before Him. But we are to distinguish the question of right from the question of fact. With regard to right, He may, and He often does, complain in His Word, as if He was disappointed and surprised at the conduct of His professing people. Estimating our proficiency by our advantages, ought He not to have found in us what He has yet sought for in vain. IV. ADMITS OF SOLUTION. It is not only possible, but comparatively easy, to know whether we love another. And here it will be in vain for you to allege that the case before us is a peculiar one, because the object is invisible. For many of us never saw Howard, but who does not feel veneration at the mention of his name? How, then, will this love show itself? 1. By our thoughts. These naturally follow the object of our regard, and it is with difficulty we can draw them off. David could say, "I love Thee, O Lord, my strength." And what was the consequence? "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God!" 2. By our speech. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." 3. By desire after intimacy. Separation is a grief. Distance is a torture. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks," &c. 4. By devotedness to the service and glory of its Master. Nothing can authenticate the existence of this principle in our hearts, detached from this regard to His will. "He that hath My commandments," &c. (*W. Jay.*) *The supreme question*:—A lad named Hoopoo, a South Sea Islander, was sent to America to be trained, that he might be useful in the Mission. One day he was in a large company, and was asked many questions about his birthplace. The lad spoke wisely, but some of his sayings made a gentleman laugh. "I am a poor heathen boy," said Hoopoo; "it is not strange that my blunders in English should amuse you, but soon there will be a larger meeting than this, and if we should then be asked, 'Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?' I think I shall be able to say, 'Yes.' What will you say, sir?" The gentleman felt the force of the words, and found no rest till he also could say, "Yes" (*J. L. Nye.*) *Lovest thou Me?*—St. Peter's first answer was easy and light-hearted; it came only from the surface of his mind; it was little better than "Of course I love Thee." But Christ's close and penetrating way of putting the question a second time overawed the disciple, and brought an answer from much deeper down. The third time, Jesus sent the question like a sword down to the bottom of the soul, where it drew blood, and the answer was a groan of pain out of the depths. He puts the question to us thrice, because there are three storeys in our nature; the uppermost is feeling, the middle one is intellect, and the basement is will; Jesus opens the door of each, and asks, "Lovest thou Me?" I. FEELING. This is the most superficial of the three; and here He first puts the question. Our feelings have had many objects. We cannot remember when we began to love some of those whom we hold dear. Other passions we remember distinctly the genesis of. Now, among the objects we have loved is Christ one?—the principal one? Has our love to Him formed one of the colours which can be distinctly traced in the pattern of the past? Has it a history, and is it a distinct part of our history? II. INTELLECT. A man who has been wise and fortunate in marriage will say, "I loved you at first, because my fancy was taken with you, and there was a blaze of feeling. But now, besides that, my calm judgment approves my choice; the experience of many years has made me only the more satisfied with it." Happy the man who can say this and the woman who hears it! Do we love Christ with such love? Perhaps our religious life began with excitement and ecstasy. This is past; but every day we are more and more convinced that in choosing Christ we choose wisely; we have a hundred times more reason for loving Him than we had then. III. WILL. The will is the part of our nature out of which resolutions and actions

come, and on this specially wishes to have a hold. Love's real trial comes when it is called upon to endure and to sacrifice. No man knows how strong his own love to any one is till it has gone past the stage at which it is a delightful feeling, and the stage at which it is sensible of deriving advantages from its object, and has arrived at the stage when it has to give everything, bearing burdens, practising self-denials for the sake of the person it loves. Cowper's lines to Mary Unwin are a perfect example of such love. Have we a love to Christ which makes us slay besetting sins because He wills it, devise liberal things for His cause, confess Him fearlessly before men, and rejoice to suffer for His sake? (*J. Stalker, M.A.*) *Lovest thou Me?*—1. The inquiry is not concerning his love to the kingdom or the people of God, but to the Son of God. It deals with a personal attachment to a personal Christ. 2. Our Saviour questioned Peter in plain set terms. There was no beating about the bush. As the physician feels his patient's pulse to judge his heart, so Jesus tested at once the pulse of Peter's soul. 3. This question was asked three times, as if to show that it is of the first, of the second, and of the third importance; as if it comprised all else. This nail was meant to be well fastened, for it is smitten on the head with blow after blow. 4. Jesus Himself asked the question, and He asked it until He grieved Peter. Had he not made his Master's heart bleed, and was it not fit that he should feel heart-wounds himself? I. LOVE TO THE PERSON OF CHRIST MAY BE ABSENT FROM OUR BOSOMS. This inquiry is not rendered needless by—1. Outward religiousness. Do we enter very heartily into all the public exercises of God's house? Yes, but there are hundreds of thousands who do that, and yet they do not love Christ! It will be vain to reverence the Sabbath if you forget the Lord of the Sabbath, vain to love the sanctuary and not the Great High Priest, vain to love the wedding-feast but not the Bridegroom. 2. Highest office. Peter was an apostle, and in some respects a foundation stone of the Church, and yet it was needful to say to him, "Lovest thou Me?" The name of Judas should sound the death knell of all presumptuous confidence in our official standing. 3. Enjoyment of the greatest Christian privileges. Peter was one of the most favoured apostles, who beheld Christ on the mount of transfiguration and in the garden of Gethsemane. 4. The greatest warmth of zeal. Peter was a redhot disciple. You are earnest in the Sunday school, or preach in the streets, or visit the poor, and are full of warmth in all things which concern the Redeemer's cause; but for all that the question must be put. For there is a zeal which is fed by regard to the opinions of others, and sustained by a wish to be thought earnest and useful; which is rather the warmth of nature than the holy fire of grace, and which makes a man a mere tinkling cymbal, because he does not love Jesus Christ. 5. The greatest self-denial. Peter could say, "Lord, we have left all and followed Thee." 6. The highest mental attainments. Peter went to college three years, with Christ for a tutor, and he learned a great deal; but after he had been through his course, his Master, before He sent him to his life-work, felt it needful to inquire, "Lovest thou Me?" It is, therefore, a healthy thing for the Lord to come into the study and close the book, and say to the student, "Sit still a while, and let Me ask thee, 'Lovest thou Me?'" II. WE MUST LOVE THE PERSON OF CHRIST, OR ALL OUR PAST PROFESSIONS HAVE BEEN A LIE. It is not possible for that man to be a Christian who does not love Christ. Take the heart away, and life is impossible. 1. Your first true hope of heaven came to you, if it ever did come at all, by Jesus Christ. You heard the Gospel, but the Gospel apart from Christ was never good news to you; you read the Bible, but the Bible apart from a personal Christ was never anything more than a dead letter to you. The first gleam of comfort that ever entered my heart flashed from the wounds of the Redeemer. 2. Nor do we merely begin with Him, for every covenant blessing we have received has been connected with His Person—pardon, righteousness, adoption, &c. 3. Every ordinance of the Christian Church has either been a mockery, or else we have loved Christ in it. Baptism—what is it but the mere washing away of the filth of the flesh unless we were buried with Christ in baptism unto death? The Lord's Supper, what is it but a common meal unless Christ be there? And so it has been with every approach we have made towards God. Did you pray? You could not have done it except through Jesus the Mediator. 4. If you have made a profession of religion, how can it be a true and honest one unless your heart burns with attachment to the great Author of salvation. 5. You have great hopes, but what are you hoping for? Is not all your hope wrapped up in Him? 6. Since, then, everything that you have obtained comes to you direct from His pierced hand, it cannot be that you have received it unless you love Him. Now, when I put the

question, recollect that upon your answer to it hangs this alternative—a hypocrite or a true man—"Lovest thou Me?" III. WE MUST HAVE LOVE TO THE PERSON OF CHRIST, OR NOTHING IS RIGHT FOR THE FUTURE. 1. For a true pastor the first qualification is love to Christ. Jesus does not inquire about Peter's knowledge or gifts of utterance, but about his love. And what is true of a pastor is true of every useful worker for Christ. 2. If your heart is not true to Christ, you will not be able patiently to endure for His Name's sake. Before long, the time came for Peter to glorify God by death. Love makes the hero. When the Spirit of God inflames love He inspires courage. 3. If we have no love for Christ's Person our piety lacks the adhesive element, it fails in that which will help us to stick to the good old way to the end. Men often leave what they like, but never what they love. 4. Love is the great inspiriting force. In serving Christ you come across a difficulty far too great for judgment, for prudence, and unbelief weighs and calculates, but love laughs at the impossibility and accomplishes it for Jesus Christ. 5. Without love you are without the transforming force. Love to Christ is that which makes us like Him. 6. Without love to Christ we lack the perfecting element. We are to be with Him soon; but if we have not love to Jesus we shall not be where He is. IV. IF WE DO LOVE HIM, WHAT THEN? Let us do something for Him directly, for He said, "Feed My sheep." He knew from His own heart that wherever there is love there is a desire for activity. What are you doing? Attending the means of grace and getting a good feed. Well, that is doing something for yourself. Many people in the world are very busy at feeding, but I do not know that eating a man's bread is any proof of love to him. A great many professing Christians give no proof of love to Christ, except that they enjoy sermons. But now, if you love Him as you say you do, prove it by doing good to others. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Lovest thou Me?*—I. THE PECULIAR FEELING OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN TOWARDS CHRIST—he loves Him. 1. A true Christian is not a mere baptized man or woman, a person who only goes, as a matter of form, to a church on Sundays; he is one whose religion is in his heart and life, and its great peculiarity is love. Hear what St. Paul says (1 Cor. xvi. 22; Eph. vi. 24). Hear what Christ says (chap. viii. 42). Would you know the secret of this peculiar feeling (1 John iv. 19)? 2. A true Christian loves Christ—(1) For all He has done for him. (2) For all that He is still doing. 3. This love to Christ is—(1) The inseparable companion of saving faith. A faith of devils, a mere intellectual faith, a man may have without love, but not that faith which saves. (2) The mainspring of work for Christ. There is little done for His cause from sense of duty. The heart must be interested before the hands will move. The nurse in a hospital may do her duty, but there is a vast difference between that nurse and a wife. (3) The point which we ought specially to dwell upon in teaching religion to children. Election, imputed righteousness, &c., are matters which only puzzle; but love to Jesus is within reach of their understanding (Matt. xxi. 16). (4) The common meeting point of believers of every branch of Christ's Church (Eph. vi. 24). (5) The distinguishing mark of all saved souls in heaven. Old differences will be merged in one common feeling (Rev. i. 5, 6). II. THE PECULIAR MARKS BY WHICH LOVE TO CHRIST MAKES ITSELF KNOWN. If we love a person, we like—1. To think about him. We do not need to be reminded of him. It is just so between the true Christian and Christ! Christ "dwells in his heart," and is thought of more or less every day (Eph. iii. 17). 2. To hear about him. We find a pleasure in listening to those who speak of him. So the true Christian likes those sermons best which are full of Christ. 3. To read about him. What intense pleasure a letter from an absent husband gives to a wife, or a letter from an absent son to his mother. So the true Christian delights to read the Scriptures, because they tell him about his beloved Saviour. 4. To please him. We are glad to consult his tastes and opinions. In like manner the true Christian studies to please Christ by being holy both in body and spirit. 5. His friends. We are favourably inclined to them, even before we know them. And the true Christian regards all Christ's friends as his. He is more at home with them in a few minutes, than he is with many worldly people after an acquaintance of several years. 6. To maintain his interests and his reputation. We regard the person who treats him ill as if he had ill-treated us. And the true Christian regards with a godly jealousy all efforts to disparage his Master's Word, or name, or Church, or day. 7. To talk to him. We find no difficulty in discovering subjects of conversation, nor does the true Christian find any difficulty in speaking to his Saviour. Every day he has something to tell Him, and he is not happy unless he tells it. 8. To be always with him; and the heart

of a true Christian longs for that blessed day when he will see his Master face to face and go out no more. Conclusion: 1. Look the question in the face and try to answer it for yourself. It is no answer to say—(1) That you believe the truth of Christianity. The devils believe and tremble (James ii. 19). (2) That you disapprove of a religion of feelings. There can be no true religion without some feeling towards Christ. If you do not love Christ, your soul is in great danger. 2. If you do not love Christ, let me tell you what is the reason. You have no sense of debt to Him. There is but one remedy for this state of things—self knowledge and the teaching of the Holy Ghost. (1) Perhaps you have never read your Bible at all, or only carelessly. Begin to read it, then, in earnest. (2) Perhaps you have never known anything of real, hearty, business-like prayer. Begin the habit, then, at once. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Lovest thou Me?*—I. A SOLEMN QUESTION, not for His own information, but for Peter's examination. It is well, especially after a foul sin, that the Christian should well probe the wound. Note what this question was. 1. It was concerning Peter's love. He did not say, "Fearest thou Me?" "Dost thou admire or adore Me?" Nor was it even a question concerning his faith. That is because love is the best evidence of piety. He that lacks love must lack every other grace in proportion. If love be little, fear and courage will be little. 2. He did not ask Peter anything about his doings. He did not say, "How much hast thou wept? How often hast thou on thy knees sought mercy?" Though works follow love, yet love excelleth the works, and works without love are not evidences worth having. 3. We have very much cause for asking ourselves this question. If our Saviour were no more than a man like ourselves, He might often doubt whether we love Him at all. Let me just remind you of sundry things which give us very great cause to ask this question. (1) Hast thou not sinned? "Is this thy kindness to thy Friend?" (2) Does not thy worldliness make thee doubt? Thou hast been occupied with the shop, the exchange, the farmyard; and thou hast had little time to commune with Him! (3) How cold thou hast been at the mercy-seat! II. A DISCREET ANSWER. Jesus asked him, in the first place, whether he loved Him better than others. Simon would not say that: he had once been proud and thought he was better than the other disciples. There is no loving heart that will think it loves better than the least of God's children. But Peter answered not as to the quantity but as to the quality of his love. Some of us would have answered foolishly. We should have said, "Lord, I have preached for Thee so many times; I have distributed to the poor; Thou hast given me grace to walk humbly, faithfully, and honestly, and therefore, Lord, I think I can say, I love Thee." We should have brought forward our good works as being the evidences of our love. That would have been a very good answer if we had been questioned by our fellow-man, but it would be foolish for us to tell the Master that. The Master might have said to Peter, had he appealed to his works, "I did not ask thee what are the evidences of thy love, I asked the fact of it." Very likely some would have said, "Love Thee, Lord? Why, my heart is all on fire towards Thee; I feel as if I could go to prison and to death for Thee!" But that would have been very foolish, because although we may often rejoice in our own feelings, it would not do to plead them with our Lord. In such manner Peter had spoken before; but a sorry mess he made of it. But no, Peter was wise; he did not bring forward his feelings nor his evidences. But, as though he shall say, "Lord, I appeal to Thine Omniscience: Thou knowest that I love Thee." Now, could we give such an answer? There is a test. If thou art a hypocrite, thou mightest say, "Lord, my minister, the deacons, the members, my friends think I love Thee, for they often hear me talk about Thee." But thou couldst not say, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee"; thine own heart is witness that thy secret works belie thy confession, for thou art without prayer in secret; thou art niggardly in giving to the cause of Christ; thou art an angry, petulant creature, &c. But thou, O sincere Christian, thou canst answer with holy fear and gracious confidence. Such a question was never put to Judas. The response is recorded for thee, "Lord, Thou knowest," &c. III. A DEMONSTRATION REQUIRED. "Lovest thou Me?" Then one of the best evidences is—1. To feed My lambs. Have I two or three little children that love and fear My name? If thou wantest to do a deed, which shalt show that thou art a true lover, and not a proud pretender; go and feed them. In the ancient Churches there was what was called the catechism class—I believe there ought to be such a class now. The Sabbath school, I believe, is in the Scripture; and I think there ought to be on a Sabbath afternoon a class of the young people of this Church, who are members already, to be taught by some of the elder members. 2. But we cannot all do that; the lambs cannot

feed the lambs; the sheep cannot feed the sheep exactly. Therefore allow me to say to some of you, that there are different kinds of proof you must give. "Lovest thou Me?" Then preserve that prayer-meeting; see to thy servants that they go to the house of God. Do something to prove thy love. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The risen Jesus questioning Peter's love:*—I. We gather from OUR LORD'S INQUIRY —1. That He takes pleasure in the love of His people towards Him and in their avowal of it. And herein He discovers His human nature. We are all conscious that whenever we have real affection towards any object, we desire the same affection towards ourselves, and are gratified by any manifestation of it. Jonathan shared in this feeling. Now our Lord's heart is, in all sinless things, like ours. He found gratification there, not only in Peter's love, but in these reiterated assurances. 2. That Christ has now a special claim on our love. Previously to His final sufferings and death, He does not appear to have ever put this question. But when for their sakes He had gone to Calvary He felt and acted like one who had now earned a claim on a sinner's affection, and such a claim as even a sinner's heart could not resist. Place the cross in whatever light we may, there is no exaggerating its importance or its power. As the basis of love nothing even in heaven is like it. 3. That real love for Christ is of the very utmost importance to us. Love is nothing more than a feeling. Its importance arises from the place it holds in the mind, and the influence it exercises over every other feeling, thought, and movement. No wonder, therefore, that when Christ brings a sinner to His feet, the first thing He asks him for is his heart; one of the first things He takes is his love. Love for Him is not an ornament; it is religion itself, its foundation, its spring, its strength, its perfection, its glory. 4. That our love for Christ is sometimes questionable and ought to be questioned. II. THE ANSWER WHICH PETER GAVE TO THE INQUIRY. From this we infer at once that it is a question which may be answered. Thrice said Christ to Peter, "Lovest thou Me?" and thrice Peter answered with promptitude and firmness that he did love Him. How then, under similar circumstances, may we come to a similar answer? We love Christ—1. When we mourn bitterly for our sins against Him. Nothing pains a feeling heart more than to offend causelessly a heart it loves. Forgiveness cannot wear our pain away, kindness cannot dissipate it; they sometimes rather aggravate than remove it. 2. When we are especially on our guard against a repetition of those sins wherewith we have dishonoured Him. 3. When no sin, no sorrow on account of sin, no state of mind whatsoever can keep us from His feet. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *Jesus questioning Peter's love:*—Christ never unnecessarily injured the feelings of any one; yet when necessary He did not hesitate to inflict pain. Jesus did not flatter and call Peter a rock now—"Simon, son of Jonas." I. THE INFERENCES FROM CHRIST'S QUESTION. 1. That Jesus, after the Resurrection, was desirous to be loved by man. Do not make the mistake that you must win His love; see that you love Him. 2. That Jesus wants an avowal of love. How the lover, although he has the love of his loved one, rejoices in the avowals of that love. Jonathan made David sware twice that he loved him. Christ did not ask this before the Crucifixion. But now He had given His life He had a right to expect the heart's deepest love. 3. That love is the important thing. Christ did not catechise Peter as to his faith. II. THE INFERENCES FROM PETER'S ANSWER. Peter was conscious of his love. What are the proofs that we love Christ? 1. We have a deep feeling of bitterness when we have come short of love. 2. True love will not allow us to commit the same sin twice over. 3. True love brings the sinner back to Christ. III. PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS. 1. There is no religion without the love of Christ, and no heaven. Intellect, wealth, positions, friends cannot make up for the lack of it. Paul holds a man accursed without it. 2. By loving Christ we place ourselves where He can do us the most good. (*C. J. Deems, D.D.*) *Peter's confession of love to Christ:*—There are times which reveal to us the mysterious identity of our ever-changing lives; when we read old letters, visit well-remembered scenes, grasp the hand of old friends, or indulge in the silent luxury of their presence. You know the subtle influence of such seasons; with what reality they recall the past. The coincidences of life are designed by God to reveal us to ourselves and to show what is God's guidance of our life. These verses record such a period in the life of Peter. The past was with him; what were its memories for Peter? Of eager haste and painful failure; of love for Christ so true and yet so powerless; of self-confidence and of unfaithfulness. With chastened, humble spirit he must have sat and pondered; feeling that not in his devotedness to Christ, but in Christ's love to him, lay his hope that he might be

faithful to his apostleship, if he should be reinstated in it. And to these, his thoughts, Christ at length gives expression: "Simon, son of Jonas," the name by which Christ had first called him, and which He had so often used in tender solemnity, "lovest thou Me more than these?" I. PETER'S LOVE TO CHRIST. 1. There is a beautiful order in Christ's questions. There is a difference between the two Greek verbs translated "lovest." It is not a difference in the warmth, but in the character of affection. The one signifies the love based upon appreciation of another; the other simple personal attachment. The one might be represented if we said, "I am thy friend;" the other if we said, "Thou art my friend." (1) It is the former of these words which Christ here uses: "Simon, son of Jonas, *esteemest* thou Me more, art thou more My friend than thy fellow disciples?" This was just what Peter had professed, "Though all should be offended," &c. "I am ready to go with Thee, both in prison and to death;" "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee." (2) You can now understand Peter's reply. Once he would have said, "I know that I am Thy friend;" he was sure he was to be trusted. But he has lost his self-confidence. He will not profess esteem for Jesus. He chooses the humbler, trustful word: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." (3) Again Christ asks him, "If not more than these, yet art Thou My friend at all?" And still the same humble, clinging answer comes from Peter. (4) Now Christ takes Peter's own word; let it be as Peter would have it, the trusting affection of the disciple. "Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me?" Surely Jesus cannot doubt that. Christ must know that He is all in all to Peter. "Thou knowest that under all my boasting, all my mistakes, there was love for Thee, and that it remains." And this confession Christ accepts, and ever will accept. 2. Distinguish between the profession of love to Christ and the confession of it. In profession the person most prominent in our thoughts is "I who make it;" in confession, "He whose name I am confessing." It is not in what we are to Christ, but in what Christ is to us, that our rest and security lie. 3. Observe, too, the period of Peter's life when this confession is made. It is not his earliest confession; he has been brought to it through painful self-knowledge; it is the utterance of a tried maturity. To set young converts on an estimate of their feeling towards the Saviour, instead of encouraging them to trust in Him, is full of peril. Christian discipleship sometimes begins with love to Christ; and singularly blessed are they with whom it does. But in other ways souls are drawn to Christ; the weary go to Him for rest, the guilty for pardon, the helpless for succour. Such will say, "I trust in Christ," "I have found Christ," "I am following Christ;" but the words, perhaps, halt on their lips, "I love Christ." It is not for us to insist on their utterance. They are not for our ears, but for His. And He knows how, from the trusting, the obedient, and the earnest, to draw at length the full confession, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." II. THE PROOF AND MANIFESTATION OF LOVE TO CHRIST. 1. In giving Peter the charge, "Feed My lambs; feed My sheep," Christ was guarding him against a danger to which he was at this moment liable; the danger of sinking down into an indulgence of sentiment. We feel in a self-assertive world, from the strife for mastery, the restlessness of ambition, how blessed to retire to self-abasement before the Lord; how sweetly then from lowly lips falls the confession, "Thou knowest that I love Thee." To cherish this life alone is very dangerous. Hence comes the pride that apes humility. Christ sends Peter from confessing, as He sent Mary from adoring Him, to do His work. It was in separating himself from the other disciples, in supposing himself better than they, that Peter displayed the self-confidence which he now so bitterly repented. He was not free from the temptation even in his penitence. It is possible to separate ourselves from others in our very consciousness of self-distrust. One of the saddest sights is that of men whose humblest words are a vaunting of themselves, whose very lowliness is sentimental and insincere. 2. A higher work is now committed to Peter than when Christ said, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." The pastoral office is higher than that of preaching the gospel of the kingdom; to watch over the flock is higher than to add to its numbers. 3. Here, too, would Peter have an opportunity for the constant exercise of lowliness. He would grow meek and gentle as he fed the lambs and shepherded the sheep; he would be humbled by every lesson he learnt of men's impatience and folly and self-deception. Sympathy is the way to self-knowledge; our own penitence deepens as we know a brother's sins. 4. They would serve, too, to deepen his love of Jesus; every brother's fall would remind him of his own restoration. There is nothing which so deepens our love to Christ

as the larger knowledge of His grace which we gain as we see souls saved by Him. 5. In this work which Christ assigns to Peter, Peter may see the meaning of the struggle of contrition through which he is made to pass. He will be better able to bear with the flock because he knows himself. The heart broken with penitence will scarcely harden itself against a sinful brother. III. THE CROWN AND PERFECTING OF LOVE TO CHRIST IS THAT FULL SELF-SURRENDER BY WHICH WE SHALL GLORIFY GOD (ver. 18). 1. When he was young he girded himself and walked whither he would. How often he wandered, how far astray his hasty will led him! But when he could no longer go whither he would, when another girded him and carried him whither he would not, he accepted the appointment and the surrender of himself was complete. In one way or other, this privilege that we glorify God is given to every one who loves Jesus. Not all need the struggle and the martyrdom. There are meek souls whose whole life is sacrifice, whose will is ever submissive. Others require a sharp discipline. Whatever is needed will be given. And death seems appointed as the completion of all; the chequered, troubled life is vindicated as a Christian life by the death that glorifies God. 2. "And when He had spoken this He saith unto him, Follow Me." It was the first call again repeated. When Peter had first heard it he thought that to obey it would lead him near a throne; now he knows it will conduct him to a cross. Yet he draws not back; for meanwhile he has been with Jesus, and love of Him now fills his soul. What dreams possess us of the honour and triumphs of the Christian life when first we rank ourselves as disciples of Christ! Rarely indeed are these hopes fulfilled; we grow wiser with sad self-sacrifice as we become holier men. The boundless prospect narrows before us; we are well content "to fill a little sphere, so He be glorified." (*A. Mackennal, D.D.*) *Christ loved from gratitude*:—You remember the tale of Androcles and the lion. The man was condemned to be torn to pieces by beasts; but a lion, to which he was cast, instead of devouring him, licked his feet, because at some former time Androcles had extracted a thorn from the grateful creature's foot. We have heard of an eagle that so loved a boy with whom he had played that, when the child was sick, the eagle sickened to; and when the child slept, this wild, strange bird of the air would sleep, but only then; and when the child awoke, the eagle awoke. When the child died, the bird died too. You remember that there is a picture in which Napoleon is represented as riding over the battle-field, and he stops his horse, as he sees a slain man with his favourite dog lying upon his bosom doing what he can to defend his poor dead master. Even the great man-slayer paused at such a sight. There is gratitude among the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air. And, surely, if we receive favours from God, and do not feel love to Him in return, we are worse than brute beasts. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Love a good augury*:—When the heathen killed their sacrifices in order to prophesy future events from the entrails, the worst augury they ever got was when the priest, after searching into the victim, could not find a heart; or if that heart was small and shrivelled. The soothsayers always declared that this omen was the sure sign of calamity. All the signs were evil if the heart of the offering was absent or deficient. It is so in very deed with religion and with each religious person. He that searches us searches principally our hearts. (*Ibid.*) *Love before its judge*:—I. THE HISTORY OF THE QUESTION. 1. The writer, in continuing his account of what was said and done, goes on to say: "Now, when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith," &c. Here we have a most interesting note of time. It was delicately characteristic of Jesus to see that all were strengthened and quieted before the questioning. No one who had not been present would have shown the sense of mingled homeliness and solemnity which this verse shows. When we read, "When Jesus sat thus on the well," we say these two lines are by the same writer. 2. This question is a question to a believer. Faith goes before love. It is impossible to love one whom you do not even trust. Perhaps Christians have put you wrong by their unscientific way of telling you that all you have to do is "to give your hearts to Christ"; but you have no heart to give to Him, until by faith you receive the heart He gives to you. Believing is receiving; and when the love of Christ is received, the recipient loves Him back again. 3. This question reminds us that the great test of faith is love. "Faith worketh by love." Sometimes faith and love are practically so much alike that we can hardly distinguish them. Talk to that true teacher of theology, a Christian child, and, while perhaps she will not say a word about faith, she will be sure to tell you that she "loves Jesus." "Wrong!" says a hard old doctrinist, "we are justified by faith." "Right!" say we; "for in the consciousness of that little heart love and faith are one." A man may be true to Christ, yet if Christ were to say, "Understandest thou

Me?" or "Followest thou Me?" or, "Confessest thou Me?" he could not always establish the fact of his discipleship. There is, however, no Christian heart but quivers to the question, "Lovest thou Me?" We set our seal to Wesley's words, "We may die content without the knowledge of many truths, but if we die without love, would the knowledge of many truths avail us? Just as much as it would the devil. I will not quarrel with you about your opinions . . . only see that you love the Lord Jesus Christ." 4. This question was asked in the spirit of reproof. There was reproof—(1) In the very appellative, "Simon, son of Jonas," and the sound of it must have struck upon him like a bolt of ice, making his burning soul suddenly freeze. On the day of his introduction to Christ, it was predicted that he should be called "Peter"—that is, a stone. This prophecy was fulfilled on the day of his memorable confession. It is written of a certain caliph, that he used to give each of his principal officers an honourable surname suited to his qualities; and that, when he wished to show dissatisfaction, he used to drop it, calling him by his original name, which caused great alarm. This helps us to enter into the meaning of the Simon, son of Jonas, here. The startled disciple might have thought that this was as much as to say, "Thou hast nothing in thee answering to the name 'Rock'; a rock does not run away, and does not ebb and flow; thou art not worthy of thy new name; until thou art cleared in this court, give it up." (2) In the reference to the other disciples—"More than these." But how did they prove their love? By language? No; for they were dumb. By obedience? No; for when the Master said, "Bring of the fish that ye have caught," they stood stock still, gazing. By work? No; they could not even haul the net up the strand; Simon did it. While a thought of satisfaction in the comparison of himself with them might have shot across his mind, the question sternly broke in upon it, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" (3) In the plain allusion to his boastful speech, "If all shall be offended," &c. "Now, Simon, what do you say?" 5. In reference to his most recent action. On the night before the Crucifixion, Jesus had said, "Simon, Satan asked to have you . . . when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren." Had he done so? Not if we have correctly interpreted the words, "I go a fishing; we also go with thee." He did wrong, and by his super-abundant vitality and eager life drew the others along with him; and this was not to "establish" his brethren. It was "a threefold hammer-stroke," and had reference to his threefold sin of denial. 6. Think of the question in connection with the greatness of the questioner. Love to God is set forth in the "first and greatest commandment." Christ claims the very same, "He that loveth father and mother more than Me," &c. What John thought of Christ's greatness appears from the words at the opening of his Gospel, which pulse all through the succeeding narrative; the writer does not once forget this, nor must the reader, any more than the singer must forget his key-note, or the builder that which he builds upon. 7. Think of the question in connection with Christ's love to the disciple to whom He puts it. His love is great, because He Himself is great. As the ocean holds more water than the tiny lakelet, has more force, carries more weight, and can be wrought up into a grander storm, so does the heart of God hold more than the heart of man. 8. Notice the personality of the question. He deals with us one by one lovingly, each soul with a distinct love; asking each soul for a distinct response; to each speaks personally as when He said, "Adam, where art thou?" "Abraham, Abraham!" "Samuel, Samuel!" "Martha, Martha!" "Saul, Saul!" "Simon, son of Jonas." English names are on His lips as well as Jewish names; answer to your name—it is spoken now—silently to the ear, audibly to the soul—"Lovest thou Me?" II. THE HISTORY OF THE ANSWER. 1. It was an answer given after deep searchings of heart. (1) The Searcher of hearts had so ordered the process of questioning as to compel this. The first sentence of it slashed right through the conscience just where it had been last wounded, and where it was still on fire. "Lovest thou Me more than these?" What does he answer? does he simply say, "Yes I do"? No! for the word for love which Christ employs is beyond him. Does he say no? No! Does he take up the challenge of comparison? No! never again. He is now done for ever with heroics, comparisons, consequential airs. Does he say out from black despondency, "I have been a self-deceiver, and what I thought was love was not love"? No! Was he silent? No! speak he must. He therefore looks up, and, with tumultuous throbs, whispers, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest Thou art dear to me." (2) The searching eye is still upon him; still using the same word for love which Simon had humbly put aside for a weaker word, and giving this word greater emphasis, the Judge repeats the question. Six months before, Simon would have been ready

to say, "Lord, dost Thou doubt me? Love Thee? Only try me! See if I will not gladly die for Thee!" But now, not daring to own such a lofty love as Christ's word indicates, he still says, "Thou art dear to me." (3) Then the King of Grace comes down to him, accepts the humble word that Simon had chosen, and asks, "Am I dear to thee?" In the lightning of that instant, he looked round for something to which he should make his appeal in proof of the sincerity with which he could say this; and to what could he make it? Poor man! he thought just then, that if he looked to himself for a proof of his love, he could find little better than lies, and oaths, and treachery. With tears in his heart, in his tones, if not in his eyes, he burst out, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that Thou art dear to me!" Could any of us settle this question by an appeal to ourselves? Have we been satisfactory disciples? For all that, many a man, who is forced to answer "No," may add, "Jesus, I am sure that I love Thee. Oh, see Thyself if I do not!" How does your child prove his love to you? Does he not sometimes give you trouble? Does his face never redden with sullen temper or with passionate flash? And are not these signals contradictory of love? They may seem so, yet when the proud little heart seems to be full of rebellion, the young rebel wishes you could but see into it. He is quite unable to prove it from facts, but he knows that he loves you, and you know it. Sometimes we have no proofs to give in verification of our love to God. The love is in our heart, but it is possible to be known, not by its doings, but by itself; and the love itself only God can see. 2. The question had to be answered, not verbally alone, but practically. Where there is love, there will be the ministry of love. This ministry is work for souls before conversion and after it. The first is described under a metaphor taken from the vocation of a fisherman, the other from that of a shepherd. When souls are drawn out from the sea of spiritual death, and "captured for their life," the metaphor of "fishing" breaks down: and the metaphor of "shepherding" is substituted. 3. Such an answer as that of Peter may include in its consequences much that will go against natural inclination (ver. 18). This oracle darkly told of coming events that would strike at all his natural loves and likings. He liked the free, impetuous joy of living. He was to be "bound." He liked to take the lead. He was to "be carried," he liked to have his own will; he was to be carried "whither he would not." He liked the glory of heroism: he was to die on a cross. He liked rapidity of movement: he was to plod on to old age without the promise of a brilliant career. Before a man's life can fully answer the question, "Lovest thou Me?" he must be ready to give up his own choice as to the way of showing it, and passively accept or actively obey the will of God alone. 4. A disciple is to make the answer to this question the one great business of his life (vers. 20, 21). A Christian may prosecute endless questions into the mysteries around him; and while he does so in season, with due regard to proportion and perspective, taking care to subordinate each to its own place in relation to the one great question. Christ will not say of any such thing, "What is that to thee?" There was, however, a reason why His rejoinder to this question should have in it something of the nature of a reprimand. Some sin, or dangerous infirmity, must have been waking up. Jesus, therefore, instead of answering him, said, "What is that to thee?" and repeated His charge, "Follow thou Me," placing emphasis on the word thou. "Mind your own business; put all your soul into it; this is as much as you can do." As it was with Peter then, so it may be with you now. You may be at a crisis and in a condition making it perilous to have your attention divided by, the most fascinating subject that lies outside the soul's great business; and Christ may be saying, with reference to what is most exciting your speculative interest, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Love to Christ*:—At first sight this appears a singular question to Peter. You would expect expostulation and reproof. But Jesus had no need to ask Peter whether he had repented. He had "turned and looked upon Peter;" and Peter's heart broke. He had seen the former affection of Peter to his Master return with a full tide. He who knew all things knew that Peter loved Him; and gave Peter an opportunity of thrice declaring it in the presence of his fellow-disciples. When our Lord asks a disciple three times whether he loves Him, he teaches us that to love Christ is essential to our discipleship. It is "the first and great commandment," without it we are but as "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." I. THE REASONS ON WHICH OUR OBLIGATION TO LOVE CHRIST RESTS. 1. The supreme excellency of the object. We are under a kind of natural obligation to love that which is excellent. We are certainly under a moral one. In Christ all good meets; it exists in absolute perfec-

tion, and can have no addition. (1) Do the condescensions of superior wisdom attract us? In him we see the wisdom of God, speaking to man, in words clear as the light of the intelligence from which they proceeded. (2) Are we affected by disinterested benevolence? Behold His life of labour, given freely without an exacted return. (3) Does humility, connected with great virtues and great actions, command the homage of the heart? It was said of Him, "He shall not strive nor cry," &c. He often said, "See thou tell no man." (4) Is there a charm in the noble passion of patriotism? For His country our Lord lived. His heart clings to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." (5) Does friendship move us? Think of the family of Bethany; the disciple whom Jesus loved; and his kind regards for the whole body of his disciples. (6) All moral virtues were in Him. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled." And all the stronger virtues of religion; such as meekness, patience, resignation, devotion. 2. The generous interposition of our Lord in the great work of our redemption (Rom. v. 7, 8; 1 John iv. 10). 3. The benefits which we are constantly receiving from His hands. Do we think of life? We owe it to His intercession. Of ordinary mercies? They are the fruits of His redemption; for we deserve nothing. Of the ordinances? They are visitations of His grace. Do we regard the future as well as the present? We expect His kingdom. Do we anticipate death? We have the victory by Him. Judgment? We have justification through His blood. Do we think of heaven? We view Him as the grand source of light, love, and joy. Should constant benefits excite love? Then surely our love ought to be constant. Should benefits of the highest kind excite the highest love? Then our love ought to be supreme. And are they never to cease? Then ought our love to be eternal. II. THE GREAT OFFICE OF THIS GRACE IN EXPERIMENTAL AND PRACTICAL RELIGION. 1. It is this which gives the true character to evangelical obedience. None but this is acceptable and rewardable. Man is in three states—unawakened, penitent, believing. In the first he can have no love to Christ, because he loves the world. In the second he has no love, because he has the "fear which hath torment." In the third, only, he loves, because this "love is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him." From this principle obedience derives its character. In unawakened man some acts of obedience may be apparent; but these may spring from natural temperament, from a respect to man's opinion, or even from Pharisaism. In the penitent there is the obedience of the slave: in the believer obedience is filial; his love is the "fulfilling of the law; and God graciously accepts what is done for His name's sake. 2. It is the great instrument of high and holy attainments. It produces trust, as that reciprocally produces love; it produces prayer, and so receives blessings from God; it produces the love of every thing that is like Christ. Holiness is the element of love; and it bears the soul into it. 3. It is the grand antagonist-principle of the love of the world (1 John ii. 15). They cannot co-exist. 4. It is the root and nutriment of charity to man (1 Cor. xiii.). 5. It removes terrors from futurity. Futurity discloses the world where Jesus is. That is the heaven of heavens to a Christian. (*R. Watson.*) *Love to Christ*:—Love to Christ is the commanding and crowning grace of a Christian. As all life, movement, force in man depend on the action of the central organ, the heart, so all graces, each one having its own function and power, have their spring and strength from the grace of love. Express it another way: All life, and growth, and power, and bloom in nature depend on the vital air. A plant grows indeed from its root; it lives by the air; it breathes and blossoms into beauty by the air. The plant of faith grows, the flower of faith blooms, the fruit of faith ripens in the genial atmosphere of love. Yes, love is the heavenly air in which all the graces of the Christian character "live and move and have their being." Why love Christ? For what He is, and for what He has done, including under this last point the continuation of His work of love, its triumph in His atoning death being carried forward into the present, and to be consummated in the future. How should we love Christ?. "Lovest thou Me?" 1. Evidently our love to Christ is personal. 2. Love to Christ should be positive. Simon Peter answered, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." 3. For it will be practical. The Christian life springs at the heart, but it works, it must work, outwards. This, a necessity of its nature. If the blood be not pulsing even to the fingertips, I am dead or dying. We see the practical effect of such loves, as the love of gold, of fame, of pleasure. The Christian's love to Christ will prove itself. (*D. S. Brunton.*) *The Christian's love for Christ*:—And why should Christ ask that question? Did not He know whether Simon loved Him or not? Certainly He did, for He knew all things. Then what could be His object in thus catechising Peter? Evidently, He

wished to teach him a lesson of some kind or other. He wished to remind him of his former denial, and admonish him never to do the like again. Mark the reply. Peter has learned his weakness by that ignominious fall which he had, and dares not say he loves Jesus more than others; he is not willing to repeat his former assertion, "I will lay down my life for Thy sake;" he can only say, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." The question being put the second time seems to have this import—"Are you sure, Simon, son of Jonas, that you love Me; for, you remember, you once professed that attachment, and then belied your words." What bitter recollections of his former treachery must have rushed at that moment over Peter's mind! No wonder Peter was grieved and humbled. I. Concerning THE NATURE OF THE BELIEVER'S LOVE TO CHRIST. 1. In the first place, it is of Divine origin. It is a truth which the Christian ought never to forget, that he is indebted to God for everything good that he possesses: for every emotion of penitence, for every ray of hope, for every exercise of faith, for every heavenly aspiration, for every throb of love. Man made man a sinner, but man never made man a saint. That belongs to God. I know there are some who maintain that natural man is not so bad after all. Some say that regeneration is not a new creation, but only the development of an old, inward germ, which was left after the fall. That may be the teaching of pride and reason, but it is not that of Scripture or of human experience. If we had no other argument to prove that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit, that is sufficient—that man, in his natural state, hates Christ, and yet is brought sometimes to love Him. The power that can produce such a change must be Divine. 2. But, again, the believer's love to Christ is unquenchable; the same power which creates it, sustains it in existence, just as those same forces in nature, warmth, and sunlight, and gentle showers, which cause the seed to burst, also nourish it, and carry it forward from bursting to budding, from budding to blossoming, and from that to the yielding of the golden fruit. I do not say the believer's love is never feeble; in some instances, alas! it is never anything more. I do not say it is always in healthful exercise. Even Peter may deny his Lord. I do not say that it never grows dim, for, just as the ancient crown of Scotland once lay so long under ground that it lost its lustre, so all religious graces, by too much contact with sin and worldliness, lose their brightness. Are you mourning, because your love is faint? It is right for you to mourn, but not to despond, for, if the plant be genuine, it will not die, however much it may droop. 3. The Christian's love for Christ, once more, is superlative. He loves Jesus more than anything else; he loves Him more than he loves all things else. What, then, shall we say of that man who manifestly loves the things of the world more than Christ? Do you call such a man a Christian? Why, he lacks the grandest element of Christianity, which is that love for Jesus which absorbs and controls every other love. Why, Brutus loved justice so much, that he would not spare his own son when he had forfeited his life. The Spartan mother loved bravery so much, that she said to her boys, as they went out to the wars, "Bring back your shields, or be brought upon them;" and shall the believer be unwilling to make a sacrifice for Christ, equally great? A man must love Him, so as to be willing to do that for Him which others can do from a worldly motive, before he can be a true Christian. II. In the second place, let us notice SOME OF THE REASONS WHY THE BELIEVER LOVES CHRIST. 1. One good reason, I think, is because Christ loves him. Concerning His affection for His people, there can be no mistake; they are so dear to Him, so much a part of Him, that they are said to be the branches of which He is the vine. 2. Again, the Christian loves Christ by reason of His lovely character. The patriarchs and prophets were men of great virtues, but none of them could be said to be perfect. All suns have their spots, except that Sun of Righteousness; we shall find no blemish there. Have you never noticed how Scripture labours to set forth the beauties of Christ's character; the fairest objects in nature are employed to symbolize it. There is the rose; other flowers are beautiful, but, after all, she is the queen. Could the most cunning workman contrive anything half so beautiful? Why, no artist can paint it, in all its fairness. What tender leaves! What exquisite colour! What variety of tint! What a wealth of fragrance! How it fills the air with perfumes, and fairly charms the senses! Christ is called the Rose of Sharon. Oh, what humility was His. This was His most prominent trait. He never did anything for display; He was not fond of shows. Man must have his jewels, and his glitter, and his trinkets, his gilded equipages, and triumphal processions. Not so with Christ; His palace was a cottage; His royal bed was a manger, His state carriage was an ass's colt; His body-guard were

poor fishermen. If man had been going to make a world, he would have had all the beauties visible to the naked eye. Not so with God. He has concealed much more than He has brought to light. The dew-drop perched upon the morning flower is a fine little gem, but what has it concealed from the naked eye? Put it under the microscope and see. In that single drop, a thousand million living creatures swarm, each one of them as much the object of God's regard as the largest world that rolls in space. The human frame is wonderful to look at; dissect it, and you find such beauty and harmony in its mechanism, such skill and contrivance, as astonish the philosopher as well as the savage. Let a sunbeam be shot into a dark room, and if, just then, the eyes of a blind man could be opened, the sight of that golden ray of light would fill him with joy. "What a beautiful thing!" he would exclaim. A beautiful thing! So it is; but what do you suppose God has concealed in that sunbeam? Pass it through a prism, and lo! what revelations! Why, you get the seven colours of the rainbow! And thus is it generally in nature: the dross is on the surface; if there are any gems, humility conceals them. In the character of Christ how much is manifest, and yet how much more must be concealed! If His love, His humility, His meekness, His patience, His forbearance, His consistency were such as could call forth the admiration even of His enemies, how much must there be behind these to confirm and strengthen the affection of His friends! And yet we are told the time is coming when we shall see Him as He is. All the seraph tongues in heaven could not describe it, and eternity will not give us half time enough in which to admire and adore it. 3. The last reason why we should love Christ, is because of His sufferings and death, and the blessings procured thereby. And now, as the result of His mediatorial work, what do we have We, who believe, have justification, for one thing; and what does that mean? It means that the sinner is free from the curse of the law. And we have adoption, for another thing; and what does that mean? It means that we can cry, Abba, Father! and feel that God is our Father, and that we are His children. We have sanctification, for another thing; and what does that mean? It means that we are free from that which blasted Eden and the world, which ruined man and unchained the forked lightnings of Divine justice, which brought death into the world and every pang of woe. It means that we are dying to sin, and living unto righteousness. Such are some of the blessings procured by Christ for His people. It is not strange, then, that they love Him; but oh, sinner, it is the strangest thing in the world that you do not love Him too. III. Finally, THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THIS PRINCIPLE OF LOVE. 1. It will show itself, in the first place, by communion with Christ. 2. Love to Christ will manifest itself again, in a desire to be like Him. "O that I were a Wellington, or a Bonaparte!" says the warrior. "O that I were a Praxiteles!" says the sculptor. "O that I were an Angelo, or a Correggio!" says the painter. "O that I were a Homer, or a Milton!" says the poet. But what says the Christian? "O that I could be very unlike myself, and very much like Christ! O that I could put off this old man, and put on the Lord Jesus!" 3. Love to Christ will show itself in a disposition to serve Him. 4. Let me, then, say, in conclusion, that love to Christ will manifest itself in a willingness to suffer for Him. (*H. D. Northrop.*) *Love to Christ*:—I. ITS NATURE. It must be—1. Sincere, in opposition to that which is hypocritical, like Joab's or Judas's. In many instances, where love to Christ is not feigned it may be only professional. There may be a respect for the religion of Christ where there is no love to its Divine Author. 2. Habitual, in opposition to occasional. 3. Supreme, in opposition to subordinate, and which may be lawfully exercised to the creature. Jesus is to be loved without a rival. "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me" (1 Cor. xvi. 22). II. THE CLAIMS WHICH CHRIST HAS UPON IT. Consider—1. The infinite dignity of His Person. He is the "chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." 2. The work He has accomplished, and the sufferings He has endured, on the behalf of sinners. 3. The excellency and importance of the blessings which He has purchased for us. 4. The manner in which the Saviour employs His recovered life. He now pleads for those for whom He once suffered. In answer to His prevailing intercession, spiritual life is communicated unto and maintained in the souls of men. III. HOW THIS LOVE SHOULD BE EXHIBITED. Show your love to Christ—1. By an entire surrender of yourselves, and all you have, into His hands. 2. By a public profession of His name and devout attendance on His ordinances. 3. By fervent and practical love to His people (1 John ii. 14–19). 4. By a patient endurance of opposition for His sake (1 Pet. ii. 19, 20). 5. By unwearied endeavours to advance His cause. (*Congregational Remembrancer.*)

Love to the Saviour:—I. THE NATURE OF TRUE LOVE TO CHRIST. Love is an affection resulting from the perception of excellences in the persons beloved, causing us to desire the most intimate communion with them, and making us enjoy from an intercourse with them the sweetest pleasures. And hence it follows, that love to Christ is that grace whereby, upon a discovery of the Redeemer's matchless excellences, the souls of believers are caused to thirst after a more intimate union with Him, and they esteem an intercourse with Him their chief joy. 1. What is the foundation of this love? In order that we should love any object, three things are requisite: this object must have certain excellences; these excellences must be perceived by us; and there must be a conformity between these excellences and the inclinations of our hearts. (1) The Saviour has those excellences which render Him lovely. In Himself, He is the perfection of beauty. Every excellence is concentrated in Him in an infinite degree, so that the eternal Father always beholds Him with delight, and the splendid host of heaven gaze upon Him with wonder and love. He moreover has precisely those graces which fit Him to be the Saviour. (2) But even these excellences, till they are presented to us, cannot be effectual in moving our love. The diamond may have a dazzling brightness, yet we shall not admire it till it is presented to our view. God has therefore been pleased in the Scriptures to unveil to us the beauties of Immanuel, that so we might perceive how deserving He is of all our love. (3) Still, however, this is not sufficient to kindle the holy fire. However brightly the sun may shine, yet as long as the eye is distempered, its light will afford, not pleasure, but pain, because there is not a correspondence between these two objects. In like manner, as long as the soul is distempered by sin, the revelation of Christ will excite enmity, not love, because there is no correspondency between it and the corrupt inclinations of the sinner's heart. It is evident, then, that a correspondency of heart is requisite to produce true love to Christ; and this correspondency can be produced only by the mighty operation of the Holy Ghost renewing our minds. 2. Its properties. It is—(1) Enlightened; it knows and delights in the real character of the Saviour. (2) Ultimate. It terminates on this Saviour as its end, and does not regard Him merely as a means to further blessedness. (3) Supreme, and predominates over every attachment to the objects of earth. (4) Permanent. It is not like those streams in the desert, which sometimes rush forward in an impetuous torrent, and at others, entirely dry up; it resembles rather a mighty stream, steadily rolling its waves along, and growing deeper and wider, till it empties itself in heaven, the ocean of love. 3. Its effects. (1) A cheerful, constant, and universal obedience to His commandments. "If any man love Me, He will keep My words." (2) A love to everything whereby Christ is displayed. If Christ be loved, the Holy Spirit who "takes of the things of Christ," &c., will be loved also; and His scriptures, His ordinances, His children, His cause and interest. (3) A longing for His presence. II. SOME MOTIVES TO THIS LOVE. Love to Christ is—1. Reasonable. (1) Because He has incomparably greater excellences. Accumulate, heap one upon one another all the qualities that can captivate a feeling heart, they are all perfectly combined in Him. On what article will you institute a comparison between these idols who possess your affection, and the mighty Saviour? On that of power? His arm upholds the universe; upon it universal nature fixedly hangs. On that of wisdom? His eye at one glance pervades all being, and runs through the past, the present, and the future. On that of permanence? "From everlasting to everlasting He is God." On that of mercy? Angels confess that their faculties are too weak to comprehend His goodness, and their tongues too feeble worthily to celebrate it. (2) Of what He has done for you in creation, providence and grace. (3) Of what Christ can and will do, if you give Him your affections? Others can bestow only trifling gratifications whilst you are on earth. While Jesus alone affords a felicity commensurate with the faculties, coeval with the existence of the soul. 2. It is pleasant. In every situation of life the exercise of love to Christ affords the purest satisfaction; but its effects are more especially seen in those seasons when earthly loves can profit us little—in affliction, in death, in judgment. (*E. Griffin, D.D.*) *Love to Christ*:—I. LOVEST. The question cleaves down to the very core of Peter's being. He does not ask after his speculative faith, his conscience, his profession: but, Is thy heart Mine? Is My kingdom enthroned in the soul as its central, governing power? Christ puts the same pointed, radical, searching question to every disciple. Nothing short of the supremacy of the heart will satisfy Him. He has loved us with an infinite love even unto death, and He demands our heart's best affections in return. The sum and essence of Christianity is love. II. THOU. Not John, or Matthew,

or the disciples collectively; but thou, Peter. Jesus' eye fastens on him, and again and again, and yet again He presses the question. How the words searched and tested and grieved the disciple! There was no escape for him. It was as if he stood before the burning throne of judgment. So will it be with every disciple. Religion is pre-eminently a personal thing. The faith and virtue of others will save no man. Each for himself must heed, believe, obey, love our Lord Jesus Christ, or die in his sins. "Thou!" How the eye, and voice, and penetrating words of Jesus on the judgment throne will search and test every soul of us! III. ME. Not My doctrines, only, but My Person, My character—Me, the Divine Son of God, the crucified and risen Jesus, the Way, the Truth, the Life of the world. A speculative faith, orthodoxy, the sacraments and ordinances, and church relations will not save Simon Peter or any other sinner; nothing but faith in and supreme love to a personal Saviour, such as is revealed and proffered to us in the gospel. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *Of loving Jesus:*—I. A CHRISTIAN'S LOVE TO CHRIST OUGHT TO BE UNRIVALLED IN CREATION. 1. For closeness, because there is betwixt these twain such an intimacy that the one is everything to the other. 2. For tenderness, because this is not an equal love, but the love of the little for the Great, of the enemy disarmed and won over through the sacrifice of his wronged and offended Lord. 3. For strength. If there is strength in men at all, and love is, as people say, the strongest thing in men's hearts, then surely this must be the strongest of known loves. For it is the deepest. We love others with a part only, but Christ with the whole heart, &c. We are attached to others only surface-wise; but it is the very inner being which is given to Him in love. II. BEING CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CHRISTIAN, THIS LOVE FORMS THE MOST DELICATE TEST OF EACH PERSON'S RELATION TO JESUS. 1. Born with the birth of the new creature, it is one of the earliest graces to come to strength. Just as in a little child, long before trust becomes intelligent, or will is disciplined into obedience, or experience has taught patience or self-control, there rushes up the first-born virtue, even love for her who bare and nurseth it: so in very young Christians, we see the flush of first love kindle their early experience. Apply any other test. Their knowledge is rudimentary, their faith untried, their works not yet reduced to orderly holiness, their passions far from subdued. By any other test they seem to fail; but try them with our wise Lord's own question, and you will see how the eye kindles and the voice deepens with the answer, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee!" 2. Throughout a Christian's life this continues to be the most sensitive test. In all, holiness is gradual; in many, slow; in some, fitful, broken by falls and declensions. But this test, if it could be fairly applied, never would fail. No unconverted man can answer that to satisfaction; there is no converted man who cannot. Hence Paul girdles the Church of God with: "Grace be with them all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." That shuts none out who should be in. Again, he fences off the Church with: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." That leaves none in who should be out. III. A TEST SO PERFECT IS TO BE USED THE MORE DELICATELY IN PROPORTION TO THE DIFFICULTY OF USING IT AT ALL. 1. Outward conduct is tolerably patent to the eye of every outside observer; but this question is to be asked only by the Lord Himself, and only answered before his own truth-compelling presence. We must take care not to judge of ourselves in excited moments, or to depend on the satisfaction with which we turn to religious thoughts when the heart is sad. We must be scrupulously honest, and judge ourselves in solemn hours, when our sins are in our memory, and we feel God's eye to be on us. 2. Even under such cautions one ought not to institute this examination often. Love is a shy thing, which thrives best when no one thinks about it. It grows up of its own sweet will. It never bears rough handling, and sometimes will bear none at all. Besides, the love that must be questioned cannot be very strong. No man could preserve a deep attachment for any friend who should be for ever taking his heart to pieces and curiously asking if he loved him. When Christ's Spouse should have come to her perfect state of assured affection, she will hear no more the searching question. 3. Meanwhile, we are both feeble and faithless lovers. We do many unlovely and unloving things to grieve and wrong Him whom we call our Highest, Dearest, Best. It was after three denials that Jesus asked His first apostle three times over, "Lovest thou Me?" Each denial had cast fresh doubt on his oft-repeated protestation of peculiar and invincible affection. The suspected one had to be probed, and deeply, and often, for assurance sake, after such foul wrong done. IV. FOR THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION, WE ARE SENT, EACH OF US, IN UPON HIMSELF. 1. It is true that, practically, this love works as the motive-power in

Christian holiness; that deeds are to be the last test by which our love, like our faith, is to be tested. But our Lord questioned a disciple who had nothing to show but lies, and oaths, and treachery. It is possible, therefore, to know love, not by its doings, but by itself. Put a mother where she shall neither see her infant nor be able to do for it one office of motherly duty, will it be so hard for her to know she loves? Will not the power of her affection betray itself all the more by yearnings to be with her child? Bring her back her babe, and, after the first gush of endearment has spent itself, ask her as she looks down on its sleeping face in the blessed calm of absolute content, ask her if she loves! I know of loved ones who shall never more be seen on earth, whom wide seas have severed; yet love keeps its hold on the long-lost, unforgotten image, and feeds inwardly on itself, and cannot die. 2. Now, why should not a Christian man be as sure that he loves the Lord Jesus? Our feeling towards Him is quite as personal as to any other friend. We never saw Him, and shall not, perhaps, for a few years to come. But what of that? Some of our brothers have seen Him, and their accounts set Him before us in a lively way. We know what He has been and done for us. Besides, no Christian is without experience of Him. V. OUGHT ONE NOT TO SHRINK FROM SO BOLD A DECLARATION? 1. There are people, and these not the worst, who are too conscious of the weakness of their love and of their falls to allow even within themselves that they love Christ at all. But suppose a man is conscious, to do himself justice, of still really loving Him, whom he grieves to have denied, and to whose blood he looks for pardon; is he not to say so? Must one stifle the heart's cry of affection, and do violence to one's own feelings, and deny with the lips what the soul affirms? Yet before we can get the length of saying that truly, there is one thing to be observed. Repentance must have wrought its perfect work. Peter wept bitterly on the night of the denial. Through penitence is love purged. Spare not the sorrow, therefore. (*J. O. Dykes, D.D.*) *Love to Christ unique*:—Among men who are beloved? Among warriors? Is it Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne? Among sages? Aristotle or Plato? Name me one, a single man who has died and left love upon his tomb! Mohammed is venerated by Mussulmans, he is not loved. One man alone has gathered from all ages a love that never fails. Jesus is the sovereign Lord of hearts as He is of minds. (*Lacordaire.*) *Supreme love for Christ*:—A Karen woman offered herself for baptism. After the usual examination, I inquired whether she could give up her ornaments for Christ. It was an unexpected blow. I explained the spirit of the gospel; I appealed to her own consciousness of vanity; I read to her the apostle's prohibition (1 Tim. ii. 9). She looked again and again to her handsome necklace; and then, with an air of modest decision that would adorn beyond all ornaments any Christian in the land, she took it off, saying, "I love Christ more than this." (*D. Judson, D.D.*) *Conscious love for Christ*:—Peter gave the best answer when he said, "Thou knowest," &c. Mere professions of love and devotion amount to but little at any time. Peter had already overdone the business of professing his unfailing affection for Jesus. Yet he was sure that, in spite of his failure under peculiar trial, he was known of Jesus as at heart a loving disciple of Jesus; so he put himself back, as it were, into the care of Jesus, appealing to Jesus to recognize the love which was underneath all his surface-swaying of conduct. A loving heart is always its own best witness. It will speak as no words can speak in its own defence, when doubted. And when a loving heart is pained at being called in question because of some seeming failure, it cannot do better than to trust itself to the consciousness of the one toward it outreaches in love. If, indeed, every human friend should fail to recognize the love of another's loving heart, Jesus never so fails. The Lord knoweth them that are His—whatever be their shortcomings. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *Conscious love for Jesus*:—When Dr. Waddell was preaching at Portsmouth, Va., a ship came into port of which the master and two of the men were Christians. Learning that the blind preacher was to conduct a service that night, they made their way to the place. The discourse was on these words of Christ to Peter. Towards the close the preacher appealed to the audience repeatedly, "Who of you can say, 'Lord, Thou knowest all things,'" &c. The deepest silence prevailed; but the heart of one of the sailors was full; he could not restrain himself, and bursting out he exclaimed in thrilling tones, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." The congregation was melted to tears. (*Dr. Thompson.*) *The realm of love the sphere of religion*:—Some put religion—1. In the realm of sensuousness. The mere excitement of the senses, by paintings, sculpture, music, gorgeous rites, and tragic anecdotes, is regarded as piety; tears of mere animal sympathy are regarded as the expressions of "godly sorrow," &c. 2.

In the sphere of logic. It is in some system of human thought which men call orthodox, and nowhere else. 3. In the realm of external performances. If you attend your place of worship, pay your secular debts, subscribe to charities, you are a religious man. Now, the text suggests, what true reason and the whole Bible teach, that, in the deep moral love of the heart, religion has its seat. Note that this love—I. IS A SUPREME AFFECTION DIRECTED TO CHRIST. 1. Religion is a supreme affection. It is not an ordinary feeling, which flows in the regular current of emotions, and sometimes rises to fervour, and then passes away. It is the master-passion of the soul, or nothing. 2. Religion is supreme affection to Christ. Lovest thou—not merely My ideas, or works, or heaven, but Me. Why should Christ demand this? Because—(1) It is right in itself. Who ought to have the highest gratitude? The greatest Benefactor, who "gave Himself for us." Who ought to have the highest esteem? The Most Perfect Excellence; Christ is the embodiment of infinite excellence. (2) It is indispensable to man. Man must love something supremely, and his supreme affection makes him become like the object. If the object is imperfect, unhappy, degraded, he will sink into crime, dishonour, and misery. Hence the necessity of having one like Christ to love. II. MUST BE A MATTER OF CONSCIOUSNESS. Both the question and answer indicate this. A man cannot be ignorant of the spring of his action, and the central fact of his experience. The object of supreme affection is ever—1. The chief thought in the intellect. 2. The chief theme in the conversation. 3. The chief end in the design. 4. The chief object in the desire. All the laws of mind must be reversed before it can be otherwise. III. IS THE QUALIFICATION FOR OFFICE IN CHRIST'S EMPIRE. After Peter's confession—which was sincere, solemn, and thrice repeated—Christ gave Him a commission, which implied—1. That he would meet with the spiritually needy—hungry sheep, and feeble lambs. The world abounds with these young, inexperienced, undisciplined hungry souls. 2. That he would have at his disposal the suitable supplies for the needy—the doctrines he had received from Christ. 3. That he had the capacity so to present the supplies as to feed the needy. Nothing can qualify a man to help souls but love for Christ. Learning, genius, eloquence—all will not avail without this. This is the only true inspiration. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep.—*Feed My sheep:*—This was a sort of ordination of Peter to the pastorate. Note, then—I. THE EXAMINATION. 1. Christ does not admit any without examination, and this should encourage us to examine ourselves. 2. The examination touched the heart of the man and the very heart of religion, for if love be absent all is vain. 3. The examination dealt not with mental or spiritual qualifications, important as they were, but only that which is the supreme endowment of the pastor. It was necessary, because—(1) Love keeps us in Christ's company, and so we work under His immediate supervision. (2) Love to Christ kindles love for souls, and love gains almost absolute control over them. (3) Love enables us to bear with the sheep's infirmities without discouragement. What is it that sustains the mother in her weary watchings? (4) Feeding the sheep is a proof of love. Peter would have liked a more brilliant proof, and so should we; but this is the real test. (5) Pastoral work is the craving of love. Loving Christ we want to do something for Him. (6) It is also the stimulus of love. The more we do at it the more we are loved by Christ and man. (7) It is a sphere of communion. If we go among Christ's sheep we shall be with Him. II. THE PERSON WHO WAS EXAMINED. 1. Christ examined Peter because he wanted re-ordination. Had He not done so doubt would have been cast on his apostleship in after years. What blindness has seized the Church of Rome, which thinks that Christ spoke to Peter because he was the greatest, whereas it is plain that he was the least. The others had not denied Him and therefore were not reordained. 2. Christ took Peter off what might have grown into morbid sorrow. "Peter, My dear fellow, I know you are sincerely penitent; do not fret about it, but go and feed My sheep." 3. Then was not Peter in danger of getting too big? In the case of some men an early breakdown was the making of them. They began from that time self loathing, and the Master used them. 4. This feeding sheep would benefit Peter. You did not know what a fool you were till you had to deal with fools; how quick tempered till you deal with the quick tempered. It was by feeding Christ's flock that the Peter of the judgment hall became the Peter of the Epistles. 5. Why "Simon son of Jonas?" (1) The weak name was used to remind him of his weakness. If you cannot come as Peter, come as Simon. (2) This was his name when he was converted. Nothing will help you to feed the flock of God like the memory of your conversion. (3) This was the name that Jesus called him when he made his

memorable confession. Recollect in addition to your conversion the seasons in which Christ has manifested Himself to you as He does not to the world. III. THE WORK. "Feed." 1. The middle word is "shepherdize," but the first and last is "feed." When you preach give a hearty meal: the sheep will put up with many defects if you only feed them. You may dress them, and lead them about, but this will not satisfy them. What a quantity the sheep eat in the clover field! They won't leave it and wander down the barren road. God's people hunger and thirst after righteousness, and it is promised that they shall be filled, not have a nib and a bite. Never be afraid of giving them too much doctrine. Some want to drive them, but that won't do. You say you will lead them, but first feed them. Don't lead lean sheep. You want to govern them according to the middle word: but give two doses of feeding to one of governing. You have not to invent a new food. God has appointed the proper food; and though you might concoct a new food and get your name up, that is no business of yours. That great shepherd, the Pope, how much does he govern? how much does he feed? how much are the sheep nourished by his hallowed cursings? 2. The work begins with the "little lambkins." Put the food, therefore, where they can get at it. "Bless the Lord," said a farmer, after a sermon from a substitute for his minister, a very high, classical gentleman, "the hay was put in a low crib." Some preach as though the Lord said, "Feed My camelopards." Nothing but giraffes would be able to reach it from the lofty rack in which they place the food. "Oh," say you, "I want to get them to work." Feed them up to it, then. You cannot get much work out of a starving horse. And whatever you do, feed yourself. A lean preacher makes a lean people. 3. What does this involve? (1) Watchfulness. No shepherd can afford to sleep at certain times. When you have a lambing time on—a blessed revival—you must keep your eyes open. And the devil goes about as a wolf, you must watch lest he devour the flock. (2) Patience. The sheep are prone to wander. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The flock must be fed, not amused:*—From the deck of an Austrian gunboat we threw into the Lago Garda a succession of little pieces of bread, and presently small fishes came in shoals, till there seemed to be, as the old proverb puts it, more fish than water. They came to feed, and needed no music. Let the preacher give his people food, and they will flock around him, even if the sounding brass of rhetoric and the tinkling cymbals of oratory are silent. (*Ibid.*) *Shepherding:*—I. How DID THE APOSTLES GATHER THE SHEEP OF CHRIST? A man must gather a flock before he can feed it. And the apostles, we know, had a very small one at first (Acts i. 15). All men are represented in the Word of God as sheep which have gone astray. Therefore the commission of our Lord to His apostles is, to seek out His sheep (Ezek. xxxiv.). And our Lord tells us that His own mission was "to seek and to save that which was lost." So His commission to His apostles is, "Go ye into all the world," &c. Now the apostles fulfilled our Lord's command by the free and full proclamation of the glorious gospel of Christ (Acts ii.). Now look at Acts xiii. and you will see the same means used by Paul. Look again at Acts x. and xvi. The apostles went to sinners, they proclaimed to them their guilt, and pardon through the blood of a crucified Saviour. You see the effect. Those who "gladly received their word" instantly became the disciples of the Lord, and joined themselves to the flock of Christ. II. How THE APOSTLES FED THE SHEEP OF CHRIST when they had gathered them to the fold. They fed them with Christ Himself. "I am the Bread of Life." 1. As proclaimed in His salvation. 2. As revealed in His Word. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." 3. As exhibited in His ordinances. 4. As teaching in His commandments. 5. As coming in glory. (*R. J. M'Ghee, M.A.*) **Feed My lambs** (A Sabbath-school Sermon):—Read the whole chapter, and observe the change of scene. First, they are on the lake fishing, and dragging to land a multitude of fishes. They have all come on shore, and their faces are turned to the pastures on the hillside. Herein lieth a parable. The first work of Christ's servants is comprised in that commission, "Go ye into all the world," &c.; or, parabolically, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." After this is done, souls converted, and brought up from the depths of sin, the scene changes: we see a flock, "the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood." This shepherd work is so important that three times the Saviour bids us attend to it. We must never so evangelize the outside mass as to forget to fold and feed those within. Concerning this shepherdizing let us note—I. THE SPHERE. To whom does He refer? 1. To such as are little in grace. They have but a grain of mustard seed of faith as yet: their love is not a flame, but a spark apparently in danger of being suddenly blown out, and there-

fore needing great care. 2. To the weak in grace. All such as are doubting, slenderly instructed, easily bewildered, cast down in spirit. If our kindness should neglect the strong it would be a sad pity, but it might not entail so much damage as if we neglect the weak. "Comfort the feeble-minded; support the weak." I think the reason why the weak were committed to Simon Peter was because he had been very weak himself. He who is himself compassed with infirmities knows the heart of the weaklings. 3. To the young in grace. They may be old in years, and yet they may be mere babes as to the length of their spiritual life, and therefore they need to be under a good shepherd. As soon as a person is converted and added to the Church he should become the object of the care and kindness of his fellow members. Young converts are too timid to ask our help, and so our Lord introduces them to us with an emphatic command. This shall be our reward, "Inasmuch as ye have done it," &c. 4. To those who have been converted while young in years. How much there is of brightness and trustfulness about children which is not seen in elder converts! Our Lord evidently felt deep sympathy with children, and he is but little like Christ who looks upon them as a trouble, and treats them as if they must needs be either little deceivers or simpletons. 5. These are to be fed because —(1) They need it. The second "feed" means exercise the office of a shepherd, but this means distinctly *feed*, and it directs teachers to the duty of instructing children in the faith. The lambs do not so much need keeping in order as we do who know so much, and yet know so little. Christian children mainly need to be taught the doctrine, precept, and life of the gospel. If there be any doctrine too difficult for a child, it is rather the fault of the teacher's conception of it than of the child's power to receive it. A child has not only to live as you and I have, but also to grow; hence he has double need of food. Whether we teach young Christians truth or not, the devil will be sure to teach them error. The only way to keep chaff out of the child's little measure is to fill it brimful with good wheat. (2) They are so likely to be overlooked. Our sermons often go over the heads of the younger folk. Blessed is he that can so speak as to be understanded of a child! (3) This work is so profitable. Do what we may with persons converted late in life, we can never make much of them. Train up a child, and he may have fifty years of holy service before him. It is also most beneficial work to ourselves. It exercises our humility and trains our patience; let those who doubt this try it. II. THE MAN. Not Peter only, but those who are like Peter. Christ selected him as—1. A leading man. He was one of the triumvirate that led the van. But though a leading man, he was to feed the lambs, for no man may think himself too great to care for the young. The best of the Church are none too good for this work. 2. A warm-hearted man. Simon Peter was not a Welshman, but he had a great deal of what we know as Welsh fire. He was just the sort of man to interest the young. Children delight to gather round a fire, whether it be on the hearth or in the heart. Certain persons appear to be made of ice, and from these children speedily shrink away. 3. An experienced man. He had sinned much and had been much forgiven. We want experienced men and women to talk to children, and to tell them what have been their dangers, their sins, their sorrows, and their comforts. The young are glad to hear the story of those who have been further on the road than they have. 4. A greatly indebted man. He owed much to Jesus Christ, according to that rule of the kingdom—he loveth much to whom much hath been forgiven. III. THE PREPARATION. Peter was prepared for feeding Christ's lambs—1. By being fed himself. The Lord gave him a breakfast before giving him a commission. It is quite right for you to be teaching a great part of the Lord's Day; but I think a teacher is very unwise who does not come to hear the gospel preached and get a meal for his own soul. 2. By being with his Master. I commend the study of instructive books, but above all the study of Christ. An hour's communion with Jesus is the best preparation for teaching either the young or the old. 3. By self-examination. "Lovest thou Me?" Often the vessel wants scouring with self-examination before the Lord can fitly use it to convey the living water to thirsting ones. Mainly that examination should be exercised concerning our love; for the best preparation for teaching Christ's lambs is love—love to Jesus and to them. We cannot be priests on their behalf unless like Aaron we wear their names upon our breasts. A shepherd that does not love his sheep is a hireling and not a shepherd. Our subject is the love of God in Christ Jesus. How can we teach this if we have no love ourselves? IV. THE WORK. Every lesson should be a feeding lesson. It is of little use to thump the Bible and call out, "Believe!" when nobody knows what is to be believed. I see no use in fiddles and tambourines; neither

lambs nor sheep can be fed upon brass bands. Feed the lambs; you need not pipe to them, nor put garlands round their necks; but do feed them. This feeding is—1. Humble, lowly, unostentatious work. Shepherds are generally quiet, unobtrusive people. They are never made knights or peers, albeit they do far more useful work than those who are floated into rank upon their own beer barrels. So in the case of many a faithful teacher of young children; you hear but little about him, yet his Master knows all about him, and we shall hear of him in that day; perhaps not till then. 2. Careful work; for lambs cannot be fed on anything you please. You can soon half poison young believers with bad teaching. It is careful work the feeding of each lamb separately, and the teaching of each child by itself the truth which it is best able to receive. 3. Continuous work. Lambs could not live if the shepherd only fed them once a week; therefore good teachers of the young look after them on week days, and are careful about their souls with prayer and holy example when they are not teaching them by word of mouth. 4. Laborious work. Nothing so exhausts a man as the care of souls; so it is in measure with all who teach—they cannot do good without spending themselves. You must study the lesson, &c. 5. All this has to be done in a singularly choice spirit; the true shepherd spirit is an amalgam of many precious graces. He is hot with zeal, but not fiery with passion; gentle, and yet rules his class; loving, but does not wink at sin; he has power over the lambs, but he is not domineering or sharp; he has cheerfulness, but not levity; freedom, but not license; solemnity, but not gloom. He who cares for lambs should be a lamb himself; and there is a Lamb before the throne who cares for all of us, and does so the more effectually because He is in all things made like unto us. V. THE MOTIVE. 1. The motive was to be his Master's self. Had Peter been the first Pope of Rome, surely Christ would have said to him, "Feed *your* sheep." The work that you have to do is in no sense for yourselves. Your classes are not your children, but Christ's. 2. Yet while this is a self-denying occupation, it is one of the noblest forms of service. How wonderful that Jesus should commit them to us! Jesus in effect says, "I love you so that I trust you with that which I purchased with My heart's blood." 3. We are to feed Christ's lambs out of love. (1) As a proof of love. If ye love Me, feed My lambs. (2) As an inflowing of love. If you love Christ a little when you begin to do good, you will soon love Him more. Love grows by active exercise. (3) As an outflow of love. A person may go home and sit down and groan out, "'Tis a point I long to know, Oft it causes anxious thought," &c., but if he will rise up and work for Jesus, the point he longs to know will soon be settled. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Feed My lambs*:—I. WHY ARE CHILDREN COMPARED TO LAMBS? 1. The first idea suggested is that of innocence. There is something inexpressibly pure and inoffensive in these little creatures. Not in allusion to His sacrifice only, but to His character also, Jesus is described as the "Lamb of God," "a lamb without blemish and without spot." And little children are thus lamb-like. We do not forget the sad fact of man's degeneracy. But we are not to make our theology hideous by violating nature and common sense in regarding children as great sinners. Look at this new born infant. It has no power to exercise repentance, nor has it any guilt of which to repent. The attempt to induce remorse for imaginary faults renders more difficult the task in the case of faults which are actual. And as regards these, we should treat little children in accordance with fact and not with theory. When they cease to be infants and actually do wrong, it should be borne in mind that they are still necessarily incapable of many kinds of sin. Comparatively they still are "lambs." Let them not be induced to make confessions which in their lips are absurd; to sing hymns or say prayers which to them are untrue; to profess emotions which it is impossible for them to feel. Let us also keep them ignorant of sin as long as possible. Very injurious are many books, pictures and exhibitions which render children familiar with evil before the time. We should be cautious even in selecting their Bible lessons. Rather let us adapt our teaching to their innocence. Let us not tell them how attractive are the forbidden pastures, and run the risk of impressing them more with the charms than the perils of going astray. Rather let us show them the beauty of the pastures where the Shepherd is now leading them, the security of the fold, the happiness of the flock. Let the positive teaching of goodness fortify them against the evil when it comes. 2. This thought reminds us that they are errant. Lambs venture from their mother's side, and in playful troops wander hither and thither. However innocent at first, children have within them the seeds of evil which only need favouring circumstances to develop. Inclination within is responded to by opportunity without.

"A roaring lion" watches for the lambs. Look at these little children to whom robbery and adultery and murder are words without a meaning. Think now of the criminals in our gaols. They were once innocent as lambs. Alas! how thoughtless, or heartless, or both, are some parents. Young girls and boys of the poor rove through the streets as if no danger threatened them; and the children of the wealthier are often sent to schools without any caution respecting associates already old in sin. 3. Lambs are playful. What sight is more pleasant in the spring-time than the merry gambols of a young lamb. How kind is the Creator! He has made all things to be glad! Children, too, are joyous. How quickly they dry their tears! How little delights them! Religious teachers should cultivate this gladness. They will have sadness enough some day. Let them be merry while they can. Let not religion frown on their happiness. God made laughter as surely as He made tears. Joyfulness, too, should characterize their religion. Nature, God's open book, is full of delight for them. The Bible is stored with amusement for them. Guide the lambs through the green and pleasant pastures, not up craggy rocks too steep for their tiny feet. Especially let Jesus, in all the loveliness of His human character, be the teacher's constant theme. Let the hymns they sing be joyous like themselves, and let the tunes express their own gladness of heart. Let the public services to which they are taken not be so long and unsuitable to their comprehension as to link ideas of weariness with worship. And let Sunday be a day of special pleasure. 4. A lamb is an emblem of weakness and gentleness. The Good Shepherd was Himself brought "as a lamb to the slaughter;" and He is represented as gathering the lambs into His bosom. He gently leads those that need gentle treatment. Be gentle with the lambs. They cannot run far nor run long. They may be seriously injured "if men should over-drive them one day." Some good people are not wise in this respect. They may be very conscientious in bringing up their children; but they are very strict. What wonder if such children have been repelled rather than attracted! It is so mysterious that they have gone wrong? II. THESE LAMBS ARE CHRIST'S. 1. The "Word," who became "flesh," created every little lamb. Their Maker who knows all their wants bids us care for them as His own. 2. They are Christ's because He redeemed them. If Jesus died for the whole world who will venture to exclude those to whom He said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven?" Born into a redeemed world, they are the purchased possession of its Lord. 3. Children are Christ's peculiar treasure. A large proportion of His own life was spent in childhood. He often showed His love for children. Children loved Him, and sang hosannah to Him when Scribes and Pharisees insulted Him. He took their part and said, "Have ye not read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise." He said to Peter, "Feed My lambs." How richly has His grace been often poured forth on children! And in heaven children constitute the greatest portion of its multitude and the brightest jewel in the mediatorial crown. Let us treat them as such. They are not the devil's, and must not be left to him. III. CHRIST'S LAMBS ARE TO BE FED. 1. They must be taken to the only true pasture. Jesus is "the Bread of Life." They will starve on mere ceremonies and Church rules. Even doctrine, however scriptural, is not enough. 2. They are to be fed; not taken to the pasture merely that they may see it; nor driven to it and over it and then from it; but induced to lie down there and make it their home and the habitual nourishment and joy of their souls. They are to be fed, not crammed; but the truth is to be given them in such measure and at such times that they may digest it and grow thereby. 3. They must be fed while they are lambs. The first infant-class should be at home, and the mother the first teacher. The instructions of the church and the school are subsequent and auxiliary. (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *Christ's sympathy with the lambs of His flock:*—I. THE OBJECTS OF THE SAVIOUR'S CARE—"My lambs." 1. Young Christians. By these we mean all, in youth or riper years, who are young in Christianity. Are you such? Then you are wise to salvation, and walking in wisdom's "ways of pleasantness," and "paths of peace." Your knowledge, however, is not perfect, and your faith is not yet confirmed and steadfast. 2. Mourners in Zion. Penitent sinners seeking salvation, with hearts "broken and contrite." The Good Shepherd loves you, seeks you, saves you. "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." 3. Little children. How great their number! How important their position! How perilous their circumstances! How lovely, lively, tender, erring, sinful! Think of—(1) Their hereditary guilt and depravity. (2) Their capacity and need. (3) Their position and influence. (4) Their danger and duty. (5) Their redemption and recovery. (6) Their destiny. II. THE IMPORT OF THE SAVIOUR'S CHARGE.

1. Food is provided and prepared. Are they ignorant, and in a state of intellectual destitution? This is met in the Bible. Are they condemned, and in a state of judicial destitution? This is met by the Atonement. Are they depraved, and in a state of spiritual destitution? This is met in the gift of the Spirit. Are they sinners, and in a state of moral destitution? This is met in the provision of the Gospel. Are they in a state of physical destitution? This is met in "the resurrection of life." Are they, in short, in a state of destitution which nothing less than Deity can satisfy? Here is food—(1) Suitable and sufficient. (2) Exhaustless and free. (3) Satisfying and sustaining. (4) Near and necessary. 2. The food provided and prepared is to be given to lambs. (1) Teach them "the Holy Bible" and all you can of its genuineness and inspiration; its doctrines, duties and institutions; its Author, origin, and end. Here is the School Book, the manual of children, the treasury of young men, and the profound text-book of fathers, the "Encyclopedia" of salvation. The Bible is the oldest, wisest, best book in the world. (2) Train and tend them—(*a*) In the regular habit of reading, revering, believing, and loving the Bible. (*b*) To believe, and trust, and rest in the atonement of the Saviour. (*c*) To receive and obey, to follow and honour, the Spirit of Christ. (*d*) In the duty of submission to the gospel law. (*e*) To live in reference to the judgment. 3. But how is all this to be accomplished? We venture to propose the following system: Let it be—(1) Various in adaptation. (2) Uniform in tendency. (3) Kind, but firm, in application. (*J. Mood.*) *Tending the lambs*:—Many years ago, when taking my morning walk along the base of Schiehallion, one of our loftiest Highland mountains, I met a Shepherd, a regular attender at my sabbath meetings. He had his plaid closely wrapped round him, and had evidently something in it that he was carrying with unusual care. After a friendly salutation, I said, "What is this, Malcolm, that you have in your plaid?" He answered, "It is a poor forsaken lamb. When I was going my rounds this morning, I found it lying on the cold ground, its mother had left it, and it would soon have died." "And what do you intend to do with it?" "I will feed it," said the kind shepherd, "and it will soon be one of the flock." He did so. The poor forsaken lamb, revived, grew, and become one of the liveliest and strongest of the fold, while it must have pined and died but for the compassion of the shepherd. (*Union Magazine.*) *The shepherding of the lambs*:—I. CHRIST THINKS OF THE CHILDREN AS LAMBS. Of all the flock the lambs are most carefully kept within the fold. The sheep may be allowed to stray, but not the lambs. In such a land as Palestine a lamb outside the fold would soon fall a prey to wild beasts. Christ ever regarded children as a part of the kingdom. He might say to His disciples, "I will make you fishers of men," but He never told them to be fishers of children, they were to be shepherds to the children, who were already in the fold. Now, that has a very deep meaning both for the lambs and the shepherds. To the lambs—it means that Christ loves you—that you are in His great fold—He is your Shepherd. If you only knew how much He loved you, you would say, "I love Him because He first loved me." But it has a meaning for those who feed them. We must treat them as lambs. They are not yet on the dark mountains of unbelief, or in the far country of sin. We have not to bring them home, but to keep them at home. If we are to do this, we must always speak of God as their best friend. If thus they think of Him, then they will never desire to leave the blessed enclosure. II. CHRIST SAYS THEY MUST BE FED. Do not think they are too young to be fed. They will soon be sheep. The flocks of the future will be largely determined by the treatment the lambs now receive. We see this clearly enough in other realms. If a child be stinted in food, he will suffer in body all his days. No after plenty will remedy the neglect. If a child be not taught the elements of knowledge, it will be difficult to acquire them afterwards. But we do not see so clearly (would that we did!) the immense importance of providing spiritual food. Neglect of this can never be remedied. Later in life the child may be brought to the knowledge of the truth, but even then the character will not be what it might have been if it had been in early days fed after the manner of Christ. You may take a tree which has grown for some years in one place or direction, and move it to another place or give it another direction; but it will never have the vigour or grace of a young tree planted in the right place, and trained from the first in the direction you wished. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God," &c. It is easy to see why it should be so. The bent of life is determined in early days, then habits are formed, and the general tone and character of the soul are fixed. III. THEY MUST HAVE FOOD CONVENIENT FOR THEM. Hidden in the word is surely

the idea that the food must be simple. Lambs will not thrive on the food of the sheep. They need the milk, and not the hard hay, the tender herb, and not the coarse roots. It is almost as bad to give them what they cannot digest as to give them nothing to digest at all. There is in this book an abundance of provision, but we must see to it that we make a right selection therefrom. Many parts of Holy Scripture are not suited to the capacity or calculated to meet the wants of a child. They will only puzzle and perplex. Our Lord's words are best suited to the children. He so often spoke in parables that there is nearly always a picture for them to look upon as they read His words. Then, too, our Lord is ever telling of a Father, and His great love; ever revealing Him in words of tenderness and grace. Now, the main thing is for the child to be drawn to God—to know Him in Jesus Christ—to think of Him as the best Friend. If we can fix the young heart upon God, then our work is well-nigh done. IV. THEY MUST BE FED BY THOSE WHO LOVE THE GOOD SHEPHERD. The naturalist must do his work by keen observation; the philosopher by the dry light of reason; the poet's chief ally is imagination; but love is the supreme thing in the kingdom of God. Our Lord's anxiety is all concerning Peter's love. If his heart be right, Christ knew that all else would come right. (*W. G. Horder.*) *Care for the children*:—President Harrison taught for several years in a Sabbath school on the banks of the Ohio, and the Sunday before he left home for Washington to assume the duties of chief magistrate of the nation, he met his Bible class as usual; and his last counsel on the subject to his gardener at Washington, it may be hoped, will never be forgotten by his country. When advised to keep a dog to protect his fruit, he replied, "Rather set a Sunday-school teacher to take care of the boys." (*W. Baxendale.*) *Care for children*:—An Englishman, visiting Sweden, noticing the care taken in that country for educating children, who are rescued from the streets and placed in special schools, inquired if it was not costly. "Yes, but not dear. We Swedes are not rich enough to let a child grow up in ignorance, misery, and crime, to become a scourge to society as well as a disgrace to himself." (*Preacher's Lantern.*) *Ministering to children*:—It was beautifully said of one minister, "With the youth he took great pains, and was a tree of knowledge, with fruit that the children could reach." (*J. Houghton, D.D.*) *Claims of children*:—Edmund Burke once was obliged to oppose in Parliament an unfortunate marriage law. He closed a passage of marvellous eloquence by these words: "Why do I speak of parental feeling? The children are parties to be considered in this legislation. The mover of this Bill has no child." (*Joseph Cook.*) *The claims of children*:—Could I climb to the highest place in Athens, I would lift up my voice and proclaim, "Fellow citizens, why do ye turn and scrape every stone to gather wealth, and take so little care of your children, to whom you must one day relinquish it all." (*Socrates.*) *Children a trust from God*:—The son of a man very eminent in the legal profession was once standing in a felon's dock awaiting a sentence of transportation. Said the judge, who knew his parentage and history, "Do you remember your father?" "Perfectly," said the youth. "Whenever I entered his presence he said, 'Run away, my lad, and don't trouble me.'" The great lawyer was thus enabled to complete his great work on "The Law of Trusts;" and his son in due time furnished a practical commentary on the way in which a father had discharged the most sacred of all trusts committed to him in the person of his own child. (*Dr. Potter.*) *Importance of children*:—A gentleman was walking over his farm with a friend, exhibiting his crops, herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep, with all of which his friend was highly pleased, but with nothing so much as his splendid sheep. He had seen the same breed frequently before, but never such noble specimens, and with great earnestness he asked how he had succeeded in rearing such flocks. His simple answer was: "I take care of my lambs, sir." (*Family Treasury.*)

Vers. 18–23. **When thou wast young thou girdest thyself.**—*Light on Peter's way*:—I. PETER'S FUTURE DESTINY DISCLOSED (vers. 18, 19). 1. The manner of the disclosure. (1) Solemnly—"Verily, verily." (2) Authoritatively. "I," who know all things, "say unto you." (3) Feelingly. There can be small question but that Christ was deeply moved. 2. Its form. Not in literal but in veiled speech. 3. Its import. (1) Indirectly a promise that Peter would attain a ripe old age, fulfilled in his death in A.D. 64. (2) Directly a prediction that his career would terminate in martyrdom. 4. The reason for it. Perhaps—(1) To indicate the necessity of maintaining the love he had just professed. (2) To furnish him with an opportunity of

wiping out his disgrace by doing as he declared he was willing to do (chap. xiii. 37). (3) To set before him the highest honour he could win—fellowship with Christ, not only in publishing, but also in dying for the truth (Matt. v. 10–12; Luke vi. 22; Acts v. 41; Rom. viii. 17; Phil. i. 29; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Heb. xiii. 13; 1 Pet. iii. 14). II. PETER'S PRESENT DUTY DECLARED (ver. 19). 1. The symbolical action. On saying, "Follow Me," Christ probably suited the action to the word, by turning and making as if to depart. 2. The spiritual significance. If this suggestion be correct, it is still true that Christ intended more than to invite Peter aside from the company. His summons was a call to follow Him—(1) In official service. (2) By personal imitation. (3) As far as to death. (4) Through the agonies of martyrdom. (5) Into the world of glory beyond. III. PETER'S CHARACTERISTIC IMPETUOSITY RESTRAINED (vers. 20–23). 1. Peter's question, "Lord, and this man! What of him?" (1) The occasion of it. Seeing John following, attracted, no doubt, by Christ's love for him ("the disciple whom Jesus loved"), and impelled by his love for Christ ("who also leaned," &c.). (2) The motive of it. Not jealousy, perhaps natural curiosity, most likely friendly interest in John. (3) The wrong of it. Not irreverent towards Christ ("Lord"), or unkind towards John, or sinful in itself (chap. xiv. 13); it was irrelevant, having no bearing on the subject in hand, which was Peter's duty, not John's destiny; and inquisitive, manifesting a concern in the affairs of others not required by brotherly love, if not bordering on the presumptuous, as seeking to be informed of secret things which belong to God. 2. Jesus' reply (ver. 22). (1) What it meant to Peter—rebuke. It did not belong to him to arrange, nor ought it to concern him to know (Acts i. 7). All this might be left with Christ. His duty was to follow Christ. (2) What it signified for John. Not that he should not die; merely that it *might* be Christ's will that he should tarry long upon the field of labour till Christ came again, not that it was; and that if it was it was a matter exclusively for John. Learn—1. To Christ alone pertains the prerogative of appointing to His servants their respective spheres and experiences. 2. The future destinies of Christ's servants, as well as their present duties, are arranged by and known to Christ. 3. For the happiness of Christ's servants it is enough to apprehend present duty. 4. "Secret things belong to God," &c. 5. While Christ's servants may be bold in making known their requests, there are limits to their asking. 6. The strongest propelling power is love to Christ. 7. Christ's people are not exempt from misinterpreting His words. 8. When Christ's words are partly dark it is wise to keep to that in them which is plain, and to wait for further light. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **When thou art old another shall gird thee, and carry thee.**—We are none of us to choose how we will serve Christ. We may seem to have the choice, but sooner or later we shall find we cannot go on doing just the work that suits us best. Something will be asked of us we did not expect, something that tries our strength and constancy just where we are weakest. There are many active, earnest, true-hearted men who are moved with a very real desire to do something to advance their Master's kingdom on earth. They would like perhaps, to preach and teach at home, or to go out as missionaries to foreign lands; and home duties, their way of life, the circumstances in which God's providence has placed them, puts it out of their power to serve God in the way of their own choice. And they feel as if they could do nothing high or noble, as if Jesus was holding them back, and letting them have no opportunity of serving Him. But if in no other way they may serve Him as Peter had in the end to do, by patient suffering and self-denial for His sake. Then there are many who, from old age or from sickness and infirmity, are cut off from the life of active usefulness they loved. Instead of girding themselves to wait on others, to lead and guide and help them, they must have others to gird them, wait on them, attend to them. To such people it is the most painful thought possible that they are of no use. When they are told that they must never expect again to go forth to labour, when, perhaps from some bodily affliction, they are so helpless as not to be able even to wait on themselves, they feel that it would be better, easier, to die at once. They do not wish to rest till they reach the rest prepared for the people of God, and they have been accustomed to regard all work for the Lord as active stirring work. Let such remember that for His dear servant and friend the Lord appointed a rest-time, a prison rest-time, before the last rest of all, and that he so ready to do had to learn also quietly to suffer. I remember a good old clergyman, who for more than fifty-six years, first as a curate, and afterwards as a vicar, ministered in the Church of God. In all those years, except for a short rest in summer, his life had been one of constant activity. When a young man he had thrown himself earnestly into the effort then being made to extend to the

children of the poor the blessings of Christian training. Busy in his own parish, he had still found time to help forward many a good work in other parts of the country, by his counsel and presence. He had written books that have brought comfort to many a weary heart. When near eighty he was still working in his own parish as of old, visiting the sick, comforting the sorrowing, leading back gently those who had gone out of the way, preaching the gospel to the poor. As he began to feel his strength grow less, his one desire was that he might be able to go on being useful in his day and generation till the Master's call should come. One day he met with an accident—serious at his time of life—and which would have proved fatal to one of less temperate habit and brave heart. But though he to a certain extent recovered, and lived for nearly a year after, he was never able again to minister in the church, or visit in his parish. At first when he realized that his active life was ended, his bright and cheerful spirit seemed as if it would fail him. He could not bear the thought of being a burden to others, though even in his then feeble state few men of his age required or would receive less attention and waiting on. But soon he recovered his wonted cheerfulness. He found much that he could still do for Him he had served already with the best years of his life. No sermon he ever preached, no book he ever wrote, so clearly bore witness for his Lord as did that last year of patient waiting for the call. Oh, my friends, blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He comes shall find girding himself to work; but no less blessed is he who, patiently enduring sickness, weakness, forced inactivity, shall be found by his Lord —waiting. (*S. Hobson, M.A.*) *The leading of Peter*:—The other, who was to lead Peter against his own will, is God with His powerful hand. This leading we trace in the Acts of the Apostles. Peter is forced to give up his ardent desire to gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel into the fold of Christ; Israel becomes not Israel; Peter is obliged to leave the holy city, which has only imprisonment and the sword to give to the servants of their King; to Samaria his sovereign Leader leads him, and into the house of the Gentile Cornelius, and at length to Rome, the new Babylon, from whence he strengthened the elect strangers of the dispersion whom Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, had brought into the fold of Israel, strengthened them in the enduring of persecution, and against the seductions of false prophets. From Jerusalem to Babylon—it went against nature. And this offering up of his own life, this becoming free from all will of his own, was to be crowned and to have its perfecting in the martyr's death, by which he should glorify God: then would he stretch out those hands which had been so active in his youth, to be bound to the cross; instead of the girdle of his youth, an executioner's rope would tuck up his garments (*cf.* Acts xxi. 11); instead of walking whither he would from one Pentecostal harvest to another, he should be lead whither he would not, to the painful and ignominious death of the cross. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) *The true service of Christianity to man*:—There is no question so generally discussed as this, and three classes give a wrong answer. 1. Those who maintain that Christianity has injured, rather than benefited, the race. They tell us that it has warped man's judgments, nurtured morbid sentimentality, sectionized society, and served the ends of superstition, priestcraft, and tyranny. 2. Those who maintain that it is one of the many elevating forces at work in society. They tell us that it is generally of service to man in a low stage of civilization; that, like the theories and superstitions of old times, it has its mission, which it will fulfil and then become obsolete, to be left behind as the race advances in intelligence and manly virtue. 3. Those who maintain that it does everything for man. They say that there is nothing good in the world but Christianity—none in nature, science, and the feelings of man without it; and that if a man has it, he needs nothing more. These conflicting sentiments raise the question, "Of what real use is it?" Let us look at this—I. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE. This incident suggests—1. That Christianity does not counteract the natural changes to which man's physical life is subject. "When thou wert young," &c. Peter was a genuine disciple; but, nevertheless, Christ tells him, in effect, that Christianity in his soul would not prevent time wearing out his body, and that age incapacitates a man from executing his volitions. "When thou wert young thou couldst ply the oar, roam the fields, scale the hills; there was energy and flexibility in thy frame, by which thou couldst readily execute thy desires. But when thou shalt be old, although thy will shall be vigorous, thy executive power will be gone." Christianity will not prevent the bloom fading from the cheek, the brightness passing from the eye, the strength dying out of the limb. Christianity neither offers resistance to the regular course of nature, nor any atonement for her violations. This fact shows—(1) That physical sufferings are

no criterion for individual moral states. Some of the best men are the greatest sufferers, and some of the most useful die in the zenith of life. (2) That Christianity respects the ordinances of nature. However you drink in the spirit of religion, and however consecrated you may be to its service, if you rebel against nature you must suffer. (3) That if the disciples of Christ would be physically happy, they must attend, like other men, to physical laws. If you are in want of physical comforts, it is of no use for you to sing, "The Lord will provide," and sit down in sloth. 2. That Christianity does not guard a man from the social oppressions of life. It is here foretold that Peter should die of crucifixion. His religion rather exposed him to the malice of men. Christianity teaches that if we will live godly, we must suffer persecution. This fact shows—(1) That Christianity can do without the favour of the world. It does not authorize the compromise of its principles to gain worldly patronage; but requires us to carry them out in their fulness and force, even against a world in arms. (2) That Christianity can do without the lives of its most devoted followers, rather than without their fidelity. 3. That Christianity does not solve the speculative problems of life. "Why am I thus to be dealt with? What is to become of John? Is he to be crucified also? or will he live the natural term of life?" To this Jesus replies, "What is that to thee?" There are many pressing questions to which Christianity offers no response but this, and for good reasons. (1) The encouragement of the sequestions would strengthen the speculative tendency rather than improve the heart. One answer would lead to another question, and so on interminably. (2) An answer would create emotions which would paralyze moral action. Supposing we knew what would happen to us and ours! (3) An answer would multiply the forces that divert us from practical godliness. 4. That Christianity does not invest us with an infallible judgment in this life (ver. 23). The disciples fell into a wrong interpretation of the Saviour's meaning. Christianity does clear and strengthen and guide the judgment, but does not render it infallible. If these "brethren" could make this mistake, much more their successors. II. THE POSITIVE SIDE. 1. The incident suggests that it enlists Christ's interest in the history of His disciples. How do the Gospels display this? and it is now displayed in the prophecy of Peter's future, and his preparation to meet it. Is it nothing to enlist the interest of the Governor of the universe? Nothing that you have the interest of One—(1) Who knows the whole of the past, present, and future of your inner and outer life? (2) Who has ample power so to control the events of the outward life, and supply the aspirations of the inward as to crown your existence with perfect blessedness. What thought can be more soul inspiring and uplifting than this? 2. The incident suggests that it brings glory to God in the death of His disciples. It illustrates—(1) The mercy of God. Visit the death-bed of the genuine disciple; mark the calmness, resignation, and sometimes the triumphant rapture amidst physical anguish. It is mercy that sustains the spirit amidst the mysterious sufferings of dissolution. (2) The fidelity of God, who has promised to be with His people in the last hour. Is this nothing? To glorify God, to illustrate His perfections, is the end of creation, the duty and supreme aim of the holy in all worlds. Is it nothing for Christianity to enable poor, depraved men to do in death that which is the highest aim of the highest seraph. 3. The incident suggests that it gives a definite unity and attraction to all the duties of His disciples. What theories of human duty ethical sages have propounded. How voluminous legal codes! But Christianity reduces all duties to "Follow thou Me." Christianity presents duty, not in dry propositions, but in a fascinating life. In Christ we see it in the most perfect, attractive, and practicable forms. Is this nothing? (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The prophecy and its main lesson:* —In His old age the Apostle was to be crucified—made to stretch forth his hands upon the transverse beams of the cross, and girded (or lashed round the waist) to the instrument of torture by a cord. Tradition says that he was crucified, at his own request, with his head downwards; in that case, the girding, or tying tightly, to the cross would probably be necessary, by way of keeping the body of the sufferer in its right position. This is in all probability the reference of the words, "another shall gird thee," though perhaps some will prefer to see in them nothing more than an allusion to the binding of the Apostle previously to his being led away to execution. But putting aside their original and literal meaning, the words lend themselves very well to a secondary application. They may be regarded as a striking parable of human life in its two great periods of youth and old age. Youth is full of enterprize, energy, hope, vigour, prompt in forming schemes, and active in carrying them into execution; when emancipated from the restraints of boyhood,

it exults in its independence, and feels that it is the master of its own destiny. "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldest." But old age is the season of helplessness and dependence; "another is called in to perform the most necessary offices, and to supply our lack of service towards our own failing frames; the very old have to be led, fed, apparalled by others, and the end is, that they are carried whither (according to the flesh) men cannot but shrink from going." (*Dean Goulburn.*) **These words spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God.**—*God glorified in the Christian's death:*—I. DEATH IS INEVITABLY CERTAIN. All men must submit to its destroying stroke; for "it is appointed unto all men once to die." Christians themselves are not exempted from it. Peter and Paul and John died. Death is certain. 1. In consequence of the original sentence which has been pronounced upon our apostate race. 2. The constant reiteration of this fact demonstrates the certainty of man's mortality. 3. Constituted as human nature now is, it is impossible that we should enter upon the spiritual employments and blessedness of the heavenly world. The mind in its disembodied state is capable of entering upon the enjoyments and employment of heaven; but the body made up of decaying and material particles, requiring the constant refreshment of sleep and food, and occasionally of medicine, would not be a meet companion for the mind in future bliss, unless it should undergo a previous process of dissolution and resurrection, so that it may become fitted to take its part in the worship, and felicities of a spiritual heaven. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Either then there is the necessity of dying, or there is the necessity of undergoing a change, which is fully tantamount to dying. 4. The certainty of death will appear, if you consider the conformity which must be preserved between Christ the Head, and all the members of His mystical body. Jesus has died, and there is something of especial propriety that where the head has laid, there the members should lay. II. THE SPECIFIC FORM AND MANNER OF OUR DEATH IS WISELY PREDETERMINED AND ARRANGED BY GOD. 1. There is a great variety of forms and modes in which the life of man is terminated. Some quit the world naturally, and others violently; some suddenly, and others by lingering steps. This depends very much on the particular conformation of the frame, on the habits of life, and a variety of incidental circumstances. Some are called to depart by diseases of the lungs, other by affections of the heart. Amidst all this vast variety of liabilities, it is wonderful that our frame exists as we find it, and that we are so long kept from the grasp of death. 2. This is not left to the choice of the subjects of this great change, nor to the volition of others, nor to mere chance and accident. God knows and God predetermines, not only the event of your death and the time, but the exact form and character. "My times are in thy hand." He could signify it to you but it is wisely concealed. "We know not at what hour the Son of Man cometh." Man may talk of certain constitutional predisposing causes, of primary organization, habits of life, accidents of infancy, &c., as all having a bearing and relation to the manner of our removal out of the world. But these are only so many of the minuter links in the great chain of cause and effect; and the first link of that chain is fastened to the throne of Deity. III. HOW IT IS THAT THE CHRISTIAN DOES GLORIFY GOD IN HIS DEATH, IN WHATEVER PARTICULAR FORM IT MAY OCCUR. 1. He meets the first intimation of approaching dissolution with tranquility and resignation. There is an hour coming when he will observe no equivocal indications of the decay of the outward man; then does he not glorify God when he can say, I have no will of my own; here I am; let the Lord do with me as seemeth good in His sight. 2. By the avowal of a penitent mind. The sentiment of the publican becomes us in our last hour as well as in our initial moments—"God be merciful to me a sinner." 3. When he is enabled to exemplify a firm and unshaken confidence in the Redeemer as the object of his sole and undivided reliance. "I know whom I have believed." &c. 4. By their manifest detachment and disengagement of heart from the objects and interests of the present world. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" &c. 4. When they are enabled to exemplify unwearied patience and submission amidst the pains and the sorrows of declining years. 5. By the devout spirit which he breathes while he lies upon the bed of death, waiting for his great change: for he who has lived much in the air of devotion while active, will carry the same spirit to the bed of death. 6. By the spirit of sweet and fervent charity which he is enabled to exemplify in his departing hours. In conclusion, permit me to ask you, Are you thus prepared to glorify God? In order to answer this let me propound another—Are you concerned to glorify God while you live?—for this is the best pledge and

presage that you will glorify him when you come to die. (*G. Clayton.*) *Glorifying God in death:*—When dying of consumption the saintly Samuel Pearce of Birmingham remarked to his friends—"It was never till to-day that I got any personal instruction from our Lord's telling Peter by what death he should glorify God. Oh! what a satisfying thought it is that God appoints those means of dissolution by which He gets most glory to Himself. It was the very thing I needed; for of all the ways of dying, that which I most dreaded was by a consumption. But oh! my dear Lord, if by this death I can most glorify Thee, I prefer it to all others, and thank Thee that by this means Thou art hastening my fuller enjoyment of Thee in a purer world." (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) **Follow Me.**—*Following Christ:*—These were Christ's first words to Peter (Matt. iv. 19), and His last. They form the beginning and the end of Christian instruction, and on them hang all the law and the prophets. Moreover, the lesson was so continually enforced that when Peter came to write to his brethren he said, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps." Consider—I. SOME OF THE PREREQUISITES to compliance with this precept. 1. The will must be subjected to the will of Jesus. Many do not follow Christ, and the secret is they do not wish: they want to have their own way. A little relative of mine was being taught the Lord's prayer, and when he came to "Thy will be done," he said, "Why cannot I say 'my will instead,'" and so do many older children. We have a remarkable illustration of this in the case of Saul of Tarsus. Before the Damascus incident it was ever "My will." But the key-note of his whole after-life was struck when he said, "What wilt Thou?" &c. 2. The eyes must be opened. Blind Bartimæus could not follow Jesus till He said, "Thy faith hath saved thee," &c. But "immediately" after he did so. So there are multitudes spiritually blind, who cannot tread in Christ's footsteps. Christ must open their eyes to see Him and whither He would lead them. 3. The affections must be aroused. "Lovest thou Me?" "Thou knowest that I love Thee." II. THE FORCE OF THESE WORDS, especially as connected with the case of Peter. They were words of—1. Solemn admonition. (1) Peter was a restored backslider; and part of the meaning to him would be, "All thy mistakes arose from not following Me." So the words have a retrospective use. Who can fail to trace his declensions to the same cause? But Christ would admonish us with regard to the future, "As all thy mistakes arose through not following Me, henceforth, therefore, follow in My steps." You know how often we have stood at the cross-road of life. Shall we go to the right or to the left? And what have we done? Trusted to our own judgment? Leant on the council of friends? Or thrown the reins on the neck of the steed of circumstances and let him guide us whithersoever he will? Or have we sought counsel of the Lord? (2) "But," you say, "how is a man to know the Lord's will?" Listen: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." Those who fear Him are those who fear to grieve Him by the slightest deviation from the path He has marked out for them. God does not tell His secrets to everybody, nor do you. But there is such a thing as walking with the Lord so that He may direct our steps. "Shall I hide from Abraham, My friend," &c. Still how? In Isaiah xi. 2 it is promised that the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon us and make us of a quick understanding—scent or smell, as it is in the margin, just like that hound who can follow the game past this difficulty and that. So with the believer dwelling in close communion with his Lord. You know how the North American Indian can trace the trail of one who has passed through the forest. To us it would be nothing. There is the print of the mocassin upon the tender herb, or a slight displacement of the brushwood, and to the trained eye there is the path that has been trodden. So there is such a thing as having what Paul calls "our senses exercised to discern"—quick of sight to see the way, quick of ear to hear "this is the way, walk ye in it." 2. Gracious encouragement. They were spoken to a man who had been probed and tested. How many misgivings he must have had till this invitation was given! It was like the father encouraging his child to take the leap having first jumped himself, and then on the hither bank saying, "Follow me." Thus Jesus speaks through our doubts and fears. So in regard to work. Never mind what the Mrs. Grundy's say, "Follow Christ." 3. Faithful warning. One of the most striking evidences of Christianity is its honesty. When the recruiting officer goes into the villages he talks of the glories of a soldier's life, of the prospect of promotion, but never of the work in the trenches, the marches under a burning sun, and the agonies of the battlefield. But hero comes a new religion seeking to win men and promising them persecution, trial, conflict—nothing concealed. So

the Lord says to Peter, "Follow Me, but remember that you will die a martyr's death." The application to us is—Christ does promise us things inestimably dear, but He bids us count the cost. No cross, no crown. "If any man will come after Me," &c. (*W. P. Lockhart.*) *Love the motive for following Christ*:—Francis I. of France had not reached his twentieth year when he was present at the celebrated battle of Marignan, which lasted two days. The Marshal de Trivulce, who had been in eighteen pitched battles, said that those were the play of infants; but that this of Marignan was the combat of giants. Francis performed on this occasion prodigies of valour: he fought less as a king than as a soldier. Having perceived his standard-bearer surrounded by the enemy, he precipitated himself to his assistance in the midst of lances and halberts. He was presently surrounded; his horse pierced with several wounds; and his casque despoiled of its plumes. He must have been inevitably overwhelmed, if a body of troops detached from the allies had not hastened to his succour. Francis hazarded this battle against the advice of his general; and cut short all remonstrance by the celebrated expression, which became afterwards proverbial, "Let him that loves me follow me." (*Percy Anecdotes.*)

Ver. 20. **The disciple whom Jesus loved.**—*The beloved disciple*:—Our Lord loved all His disciples: "I have called you friends." And yet within that circle of love there was an innermost place in which the beloved John was favoured to dwell. Those who display an extraordinary love to one are all the more capable of great affection to many; and therefore, because Jesus loved John most, I have an enhanced estimate of His love to the other disciples. John was raised, and they were not lowered, but raised with him. Be thankful to be among the brotherhood who can each say, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me," but strive to rise to the highest point of love. Why should you not ere long be styled like Daniel, a "man greatly beloved"? or like John, "that disciple whom Jesus loved"? Consider—I. THE NAME ITSELF. 1. It is a name which John alone gives to himself. He repeats it five times, and all the early writers recognize him under that title. Do not suspect him, however, of egotism. With a sweet *naïveté* which makes him quite forget himself, John took the name which he knew most accurately described him. Often there is more pride in not witnessing to what God has done for us than in speaking of it. Everything depends upon the spirit which moves us. 2. It is a name in which John hides himself. He would travel through his own gospel "incognito." We find him out, however; he wears His Master's love as a veil, though it turns out to be a veil of light. 3. It is a name in which John felt himself most at home. No other title would so well describe him. Jesus doubtless treasured him, His Jonathan, His John, His "God-gift"; but John does not so much think of his being of any service to his Lord, as of that which his Lord had been to him. 4. This name was very precious to him, because it evoked the sunniest memories of his life. Those years in which he had been with Jesus must have been looked upon by him in his old age as the crown and glory of his earthly existence. 5. That name was a powerful spring of action to him as long as he lived. How could he be false to Him who had loved him so? 6. It was a name which was never disputed. You do not find any one complaining of John for thus describing himself. The apostles tacitly acknowledged that their Lord was perfectly right in His choice. The truly loved one of God generally receives the love of his brethren, ay, and when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. II. THE CHARACTER WHICH LAY BELOW IT. Let us look at—1. His personality as an individual. (1) His was a large and warm heart. Perhaps his main force lies in the intensity of his nature. His whole soul was engaged in His Lord's cause, for he was a deep thinker, a silent student, and then a forceful actor. (2) He was exceedingly vivid in his beliefs. Read his epistle and see how many times he says "we know." There are no "ifs" about him. (3) Putting all together that we know about his personality, we look upon him as a man who was the reverse of your cold, calculating, slow-moving son of diffidence. He was quite the reverse of those dried, juiceless brethren who have no human nature in them—men who do no wrong for they do nothing at all. 2. His relation to his Lord. Jesus loved him as a "disciple." (1) If we teach we love teachable people: such was John. He was a man quick to learn; not like Thomas, slow, argumentative, cautious. (2) He was a disciple of very keen eye, seeing into the soul of his Instructor's teaching. His emblem in the early Church was the eagle which soars and sees from afar. John saw the spiritual

meaning of types and emblems. His first master was the Baptist, and John was so good a follower of the Forerunner that he immediately followed the Lord Himself, to whom the Forerunner introduced him. (3) He was full of faith to accept what he was taught. He believed it thoroughly. He did not believe as some people do, with the finger-ends of their understanding, but gripped the truth with both hands. His faith wrought in him a strong and enduring love, for faith worketh by love. (4) John had great receptiveness. He drank in what he was taught. He was not a great talker. His only recorded utterance, if we except his mother's request, and the "Lord, who is it?" which Peter put into his mouth, is "It is the Lord." (5) John had intense love for his Teacher; he not only received the truth, but he received the Master Himself. A true heart may as well be seen in its weakness as in its excellence. John's intolerance with those who cast out devils but followed not Christ, and with the Samaritans only showed his burning love for Jesus. If he gives way to ambition it is an ambition to reign with the despised Galilean. He does not want a throne unless it be at his Leader's side. Moreover, what faith there was in that request of his mother's. It reminds one of the courage of the Roman who when Rome was in the hands of the enemy purchased a house within the walls: John heroically asks for a throne at the side of One who was about to die on the cross, for he feels sure that He will triumph. 3. As an instructed person—(1) He grew to know more and more, and doubtless our Lord loved Him because of the tenderness which was produced by grace out of his natural warmth. How tender he was to Peter after that apostle's grievous fall, for early in the morning John goes with him to the sepulchre. (2) He was a man who under the tutorship of Christ grew to be very spiritual and deep. The words he uses in his Epistles are mostly monosyllables, but what mighty meanings they contain! The other evangelists give us Christ's miracles, and certain of His sermons, but His profound discourses, and His matchless prayer, are reserved for that disciple whom Jesus loved. (3) Of all the disciples John was most Christlike. Jesus loved John for what He saw of Himself in him, created by His grace. III. THE LIFE WHICH GREW OUT OF THIS EXTRAORDINARY LOVE OF CHRIST. It was a life of—1. Intimate communion. John was wherever Christ was. When all the disciples sit at the table, even Peter is not nearest the Lord, but John leans his head upon His bosom. If you are a man greatly beloved, your fellowship will be with Christ from day to day. 2. Special instruction. He was taught things which no others knew, for they could not bear them. They shall see most who love most. 3. Amazing depth. If he did not say much he was taking it all in for future use. He was a son of thunder, because, as a thunder-cloud is charged with electricity, so had he gathered up the mysterious force of his Lord's life, love, and truth. When he did break out there was a voice like the voice of God. What a flash of lightning is the Apocalypse! What awful thunders sleep within the vials and the trumpets! 4. Special usefulness. He was entrusted with choice commissions involving high honour—the care of Christ's mother, *e.g.* When you love Jesus much He will trust His mother to you; I mean His Church and the poorest people in it, such as widows and orphans, and poor ministers. 5. Extraordinary heavenliness. They call him John the Divine, and he was so. His eagle wings bore him aloft into the heavenly places. The Lord's Day found him in the Spirit, waiting for Him that cometh with clouds—so waiting that He who is the Alpha and Omega hastened to reveal Himself to him. He had lovingly followed the "Lamb of God," and therefore he was made meet to see Him as the Lamb in the midst of the throne. IV. LESSONS: 1. You who are young begin soon. John was converted when quite a young man. Youthful piety has the most profitable opportunity of becoming eminent piety. 2. Let us give our heart's best thoughts to spiritual things. The Lord takes no delight in broad phylacteries and superstitious observances. The Father seeketh those to worship Him who worship Him in spirit and in truth. Be spiritual, and you are among those who are likely to be men greatly beloved. 3. Cherish a holy warmth. Do not repress your emotions and freeze your souls. Some brethren are gifted with refrigerating power. When you shake hands with them, you would think that you had hold of a fish. These chilly mortals have never traversed the sunny regions of heavenly love. Pray for earnest, eager, intense affection. 4. Let your nature be tender and kind. The man who is habitually cross and frequently angry cannot walk with God. A pitiful, compassionate, unselfish, generous heart is that which our Lord approves. 5. Rise to heavenliness. Do not be miserable money-grubbers, or sordid earth-worms; do not be pleasure hunters and novelty seekers. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 21-23. **Peter seeing John saith to Jesus, Lord, what shall this man do?** *The individuality of Christian life*:—Christ had just foretold to Peter that he should in his old age die a martyr, and with that before him, the apostle left the thought of his own suffering and inquired respecting the destiny of John. 1. It is not easy to determine the spirit of the question. Some suppose that Peter argued from Christ's silence that John's course would be free from fierce trouble, and inquired with a kind of envious dissatisfaction. Not so. Peter's generous nature would prompt him to forget his own troubles in devotion to his friend, and remembering the recent incident it is hard to infer discontent here. Most probably the question sprang from earnest anxiety. Having learned the glory of his Saviour's cross, he was concerned lest John should lose the honour. It is easier for such impetuous souls to trust their own lot to God than their brother's. 2. It is not easy to explain the reply. Some have emptied the words of all their meaning by referring them to the moment of death. But Christ would "come" as truly to Peter as to John. Rather are the words to be referred to the coming of Christ at the fall of Jerusalem, when His kingdom began its world-wide supremacy. And that day in Patmos John saw visions of Christ's future dominion. Learn that—I. GOD APPOINTS A COURSE OF LIFE FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN. No words could mark the difference which was now to mark the paths of those two men who had as yet followed Christ side by side. 1. Taking their characters we find the Divine meaning of their separate courses. Peter, the man of impulse and energy—first everywhere—his training was to be labour crowned with suffering. Unless he worked, he would fall into depression. John, calm, loving, profound—his discipline was patient waiting—a course not less hard, but how different. 2. Look at their work. Each was wanted in Christ's kingdom. Peter is the apostle to the doubter, the sufferer; the earnest preacher of fidelity and supporter of the distressed. Would not the prospect of his own suffering deepen his sympathy and kindle his zeal? John's mission was to declare Christ the Eternal King, the foundation of the new earth and the new heaven. Therefore he waited till the Temple was destroyed and the Jews scattered; then amid the ruins of the old he saw the unchanging One. 3. So each of us has our appointed course, and both experience of life and faith in providence teach it. Our sorrows, temptations, work, are peculiarly our own. We are each of us souls to be trained—the practical like Peter, the contemplative like John. To one God sends action and often crowns it with suffering; to another God says, "Wait and watch!" Let not the one despise the other. II. BY WHAT LAW IS THAT COURSE FULFILLED? The answer is, "Follow thou Me." Like Him, obey whenever God's will is clear and be patient when it is dark. There are circumstances to which no other law applies, under which no experiences of other men can help us. Do the duty that is nearest you, and challenge results: "Although another shall gird thee, &c., follow thou Me." III. THE STRENGTH THAT WILL HELP US TO FULFIL OUR COURSE. "If I will." It is the will of Christ which gives us power, for it implies knowledge and sympathy. Our deepest nature is only won by individual sympathy. There are depths of power in every soul which are unknown until it is made to feel that someone understands its joys and cares for its sorrows. Hence one great purpose of the Incarnation. Christ's life abounds with proofs that His love was personal. He has chosen our path and that fact alone is a mighty impulse to obedience. Conclusion: Herein lies the grandeur of Our Christian life. We are in a world of mystery. We dare not choose for ourselves. The merest trifles affect our destiny. But the thought that Christ has bidden us follow Him, and that by His grace we can do so clothes us with power sublime. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *Individual responsibility*:—Each one must answer for himself. The account is kept between God and each individual. There must be no impertinent curiosity as to God's dealings with others—the heathen, children—those possessing few privileges. In a sense we are not our brother's keeper. God communicates direct, seldom by the way of other souls. He did not convey His message to John through Peter. Christ wished to hold Peter's mind to his own sin and responsibility. See that *you* follow Me, whatever John or others do. Yet this he was to do in a way that did not prevent his seeking the welfare of others. The thrice-repeated command of Christ was still ringing in his ears—"Feed My sheep;" "Feed My lambs." Observe—1. What this individual responsibility is. 2. The sin of neglecting it. 3. Our only escape if we have neglected it in the past, immediate repentance and acceptance of the proffered pardon. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *Personal responsibility*:—It is good to know the principles of Christianity, it is better to practise them. One of these is that the conduct of others towards Christ

ought not to govern our own. Peter felt a great interest in John, and was anxious to know what department he was to occupy in the new kingdom. Peter meant no wrong: but Christ said, What is that to thee? Thy work is to echo My doctrine, to tread in My steps. By "If I will" Christ intimates that we are not to be or do what we like, but what Christ wills. The doctrine is, that it is important to think more about Christ Himself than about any fellow-agents in spreading His religion. Because—I. CHRIST HAS A PERSONAL AND ESSENTIAL PRE-EMINENCE. 1. He is what others are not and cannot be. If we want to come in contact with the most agreeable truths, let us rise above the agitation of the Church in its present state of imperfection, and fix our minds on the Redeemer Himself. 2. He is the Revealer of God to man, and I look at Him to see all I need. 3. He has a peculiar relation to me—Brother, Teacher, Priest, King. My all depends on Him. My fellow-man may be very valuable, but I can and must do without him; but I cannot live without Christ. II. OUR ENGAGEMENTS TO CHRIST ARE INDEPENDENT OF OUR FELLOW-BEINGS. Anything they may or may not do cannot affect our individual obligation to Him. We perceive this if we consider that every one has his own work. The Church has its work, and it cannot be done by schools of philosophy; and each member has his, and if he neglects it he will be rebuked in the presence of the universe. But, you say, my ability is small and my sphere contracted. Never mind; God has called you to that; be faithful in the least, and He will make you ruler over many things. Does the scholar or business man say, Because such a man is indolent I may be? I can love many of my fellow agents, but I would not stand before the love of God in the place of any one. "Each must give an account to God," and "bear his own burden." III. BY THINKING OF JESUS WE CAN MAINTAIN AN EMINENT STANDARD OF MORAL ACTION. There is a tendency in individuals and churches to imitate one another, but since none is perfect this may be injurious. It is right and safe, however, to imitate the perfect Redeemer. Then imitate—1. His cordiality in religion. Whatever Christ did He did with all His heart. 2. His wonderful triumphs over obstacles. It would be useful to be acquainted with Christ's methods with His enemies as well as His friends. 3. His devotion. (*Caleb Morris.*) *Misplaced anxiety*:—Our Master encouraged His followers to come to Him with all their difficulties. But He exercised a Divine discretion in the answers which He gave. Sometimes, as in the case of the blind man, He gave a direct reply, which removed error. Sometime, as after the parables, He entered into the fullest explanation. But when their questions sprang out of curiosity, He turned them aside either with quiet reproof or practical admonition, as when they asked Him, "Are there few that be saved?" and "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Beneath all this class of answers is the principle that we should not allow the difficulty of questions, for the solution of which we are not responsible, to keep us from doing the plain duty that is at our hands. In my student days I had a friend who was pre-eminently successful in gaining prizes by written competition. In general work he did not appear to be any better than his neighbours. I asked him to explain this, and he said, "You take the questions in the paper as they come; hence, if the first question is a very hard one, you spend, perhaps, the whole time upon that; but I pick out those that I can answer at once, and then having disposed of them, I go on to the harder ones." There was great wisdom in the plan, and in the college of life more of us would come out prizemen if we were to let speculation alone until we have performed plain duties. Much more does this hold of those things which are insoluble by mere human reason. Take—I. THE MYSTERIES THAT LIE OUTSIDE OF REVELATION ALTOGETHER. Many of those things in revelation which perplex men have already emerged in another form in nature and providence. There is—1. That great enigma, the existence of evil under the government of a wise, holy, and loving God. Revelation did not make that; it found it; and while it shows us a way of escape from evil, it does not attempt to solve the mystery of its existence. Neither can we solve it. But then we are not asked to do so, and we are not responsible for it. How it came is not our affair; but how we may rid ourselves of its defilement, that is for us the question of questions. Just there, however, the Lord Jesus comes with His salvation. What madness, then, to turn away from the remedy to find out the origin of the disease! When you have extinguished the fire, inquire the cause; but while it is blazing, "All hands to the fire-engines!" When we have rescued the drowning man, we may examine how he came to be in the water; but our present duty is to throw him a rope. 2. Akin to that great difficulty is the perplexity occasioned by the anomalies presented by God's providence—the prosperity of the wicked and the adversity

of the good. That old debate which waxed so hot between Job and his friends has emerged in every successive generation. Yet virtually they left it where they found it. Jehovah appeared to them at the close, asking them to leave the matter in His hands. And what farther can we get than that? We are not responsible for the government of the world. God will take care of His own honour. Meanwhile for us there is the lowlier province of working out our own salvation, under the assurance that "it is God who worketh in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure." To us the Saviour has said, "Follow Me," and for the answer we give to that we shall be responsible. We cannot unravel the perplexities of providence, but we can see the way of life. Let us work in the light we have, and as we follow it we shall be led to the fountain of light. 3. Very dark many occurrences around us seem to be. The vessel goes to pieces, and hundreds are hurried to a watery grave; the little child is battered to death by a brutal ruffian; the devout worshippers in a crowded church are burned or trampled to death. "These things happen," we say, "under a God of mercy and love and justice! Why do they occur?" And then there comes the answer, "What is that to thee?" In the long run God will be "His own interpreter, and He will make it plain"; meanwhile follow Christ. II. THE MYSTERIES WHICH SPRING OUT OF REVELATION. 1. To the superficial thinker it seems anomalous that in a communication from God there shall be any difficulties. But when we go deeper it will appear that mystery is inseparable from a revelation given by a higher to a lower intelligence. Your child asks you for an explanation of something, and you give him an answer suited to his comprehension; but your reply, perfectly intelligible from your stand-point, starts in his mind a whole crop of new perplexities. Now something like that occurs in our reception of the revelation which God has given us. The cry of our humanity was, "How shall man be just with God?" and in reply God has pointed us to Him whom He "hath set forth to be a propitiation," &c. This is a precious declaration; but how many new difficulties it has started! It brings us face to face with the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the innocent suffering for the guilty, and so working out their redemption, &c.; and many caught in the meshes of the perplexities which they have occasioned are to-day where they were years ago. They have not "followed Christ," they have not joined His Church, they have not begun to grow in nobility and holiness of character, because they have not been able to thread their way through the labyrinth in which such questionings have involved them. 2. Now, how shall we deal with such? In the spirit of the principle before us. These questionings are not in our department. They have reference to matters which belong to God. We are not responsible for them. It may be that it is just as impossible for God to make them plain to us, as it is for us to render something which is incomprehensible to our child intelligible to him. It is not required of us to understand the infinite. Only God can comprehend God. What we are commanded to do is to follow Christ. That is within our power. There is but one way out of a labyrinth, when we have become hopelessly involved, and that is to put our hand in that of a guide, and follow his leading. And there is only one way out of these spiritual perplexities, viz., taking all that Christ says in childlike faith. III. THE CONTINGENCIES OF THE FUTURE. We are all prone to pry into the years to come. Sometimes we are solicitous about ourselves. We cannot see what is to become of us; and if we have no cause for apprehension, we torment ourselves about our children, or our friends, or the Church, or the nation. Now to all our misgivings we have but one answer. The future is not ours. The present is. We are responsible for the present and not for the future, except only as it shall be affected by the present. Nay, we shall best serve the future, and secure it from those evils which we fear, by doing with our might the work of the present, and leaving the issue with God. "Follow Christ." In your business "follow Christ," by conducting it on His maxims, and leave the result with Him. In your household "follow Christ," by setting before them an example of faith and charity. In the Church let your endeavour be to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour, and do not distress yourselves about things that have not yet occurred. The Philistines will not carry off God's ark, or if they do, they will soon be made as eager to send it back as they were to take it away. So with national affairs. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Our own duty and our brethren's welfare*:—1. This is the last recorded dialogue between Peter and Christ, and it has therefore a touching interest. How many and how varied these dialogues had been! Had we no other fragments of Christ's life, we would still have a tolerably full indication both of Christian doctrine and duty. And now the interviews were to cease. Could there be a more fitting and consistent

close to the whole? "Follow Me," Christ said three years before by the lakeside, and now at the self-same spot He reminds him that the omega of his life is the same as its alpha, even the duty of personal discipleship, the word "Follow me." 2. Peter's question about John is a common one, and the answer Christ gave is fitting and final. There is nothing in it to discourage feeling for a brother's welfare. Yet mark, it may be one thing to say, "What shall I do for this man?" and another to ask, "What shall this man do?" Take the question as that of—I. LOVING BUT OVER-ANXIOUS SOLICITUDE. 1. Perhaps, as in this case, the relation is that of friendship. You stand with a neighbour at the outset of life. Your own track is laid down, be it attractive or difficult. And no sooner have you faced the disclosure than your thoughts revert to your friend, and the question starts up, "How shall life shape itself for him?" You may fear for that future, or you may envy it. But if your forecast of your friend be such as to affect your own present, deranging its plans or obscuring its claims, it is plain that you ask amiss. It is met with the rebuke, "What is that unto thee? Follow thou Me." 2. Or the tie may be the closer one of family. What shall that future yield for them? Some may be sick; shall it bring them health and long life? Some may be thoughtless and easily led; shall it give them wisdom and stability? Once more comes the message, "Leave their future in My hands; and for your own part, follow Me!" 3. Or, again, this question is asked by those who are burdened with the state and the prospects of the Church. And no doubt an interest in the Church is the token of a thriving Christian life. But there is a morbid apprehensiveness which is totally different, unbefitting belief in the Church's destiny and loyalty to its head. Most certainly these forebodings are amiss, if they are permitted to interfere with attention to the Church's claims, and lead to the toleration of a present evil on the score that a worse evil may follow its removal. Christ answers, Leave the future of the Church with Another, and do thou follow Me. And surely, if each took the lesson home, the problem of the Church's future would soon solve itself. For the Church will be just what its members are. 4. The question involves indirectly a care for oneself. It really meant much to Peter what was to become of his partner. If John was about to depart, his heart would be emptier, his life weaker, his path lonelier. And just so still. John's track in due time did diverge. But Peter found a better and a stronger by his side than his own loved John—even the Shepherd and the Bishop of his soul. The future hides many paths to-day, but whatever the paths, the guidance and example are the same. II. VAIN SPECULATION, which may sometimes be stirred by affection to a person, but often is curiosity towards facts. There are those whose present state and future prospects, religiously speaking, are matters of curious and perplexing interest. They have so much of the practical religious spirit, while, in point of saving religious doctrine, they diverge. May there not be fruitless and unwarranted guessing here. One dare not lay down the amount of light needed to make them Christians, and one cannot decide what light they possess. "What is that," says the Saviour, "unto thee? You who have attained to a clearer perception, are you acting up to it? You who have listened to a richer gospel, are you communicating and adorning it?" Pray for those of whose destiny you are doubtful; enlighten them as God gives you opportunity; above all, make it plain that the more tenacious your hold is on doctrine, the richer is your outcome in practice. III. SELFISH DISCONTENT. Your own post in life seems a hard one; and, as you brood on its burdens, you compare yourselves with others with whom God has dealt otherwise. "Lord," is the question, "what shall this man do? Is he always to succeed while I must fail? If so, 'verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency, for how doth God know, and is there knowledge in the Most High?'" The only answer is, "If I will that it be so, what is that unto thee? Trust the God of the earth to do right. Follow thou Me!" IV. INTENDED CONFORMITY. What many are keenest to settle is the mode of their neighbour's service, the extent of his sacrifices, not the question, "What do my own opportunities make possible, my own indebtedness impose, my Master require?" But if the question, "What shall this man do?" is to intrude on the sphere of our Christian principles, then farewell to the spirit of true consecration. For He who presides in the Church, by whose will your responsibilities are imposed, at whose bar your account must be rendered, is saying, "What is that unto thee?" and what really is it? Art thou scanning thy neighbour's conduct, waiting thy neighbour's lead? Nay, judge apart in these matters, as apart thou shalt yet be judged. Be true to the light of thine individual conscience and thine individual

commands. Follow thou Christ. Conclusion: 1. In matters of religious life—all the duties that pertain to discipleship—one's own things come first. And to give them anything else than the first place is to become practical idolaters by the preference of a neighbour's claim to God's. 2. This order is the best one for the interests of your neighbour himself. It is just this care for your personal salvation and duty that will further his prosperity, affording him the stimulus and allowing him the freedom he may happen to require. For the building of the city of God is like the building of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time. They who wrought wrought each at the portion of the wall that was opposite himself, and the issue was the steady growth of the whole. And had any slackened his efforts to ask what his neighbour was doing, he might have been answered in the spirit of the text: "What is that unto thee? See that thine own task is done!" Or the Church is like a battalion of soldiers, as they swarm a height, while the voice of their captain is calling them and his figure is leading the way. One may ascend by one path, another may ascend by another. Only let all hear the same ringing summons, and push steadily toward the same goal. And as all do the best for themselves, they will do the best for the troop, the success of its enterprise, the glory of its leader. Say not, therefore, "Lord, what shall this man do?" From the far heights above floats the answer of our Forerunner and King, "What is that unto thee? Follow thou Me." (*W. A. Gray.*) *Not to suffer a busybody*:—It is noteworthy that the apostle so reproved here should afterwards write for the instruction of the Church that excellent sentence, "Let none of you suffer . . . as a busybody in other men's matters." (*G. J. Brown, M.A.*) *The proper attitude towards Divine mysteries*:—"Well," says one, "it is very important to know about predestination and free will, you know." Yes, yes, and if you do not do anything good till you perfectly understand that, you have plenty of time to wait. "Yes, but how do those two things meet? Or is one true and not the other?" Well, I really do not know, and cannot tell you for the life of me whether I am predestinated to go to bed to-night or not; but I will tell you to-morrow morning. I am of the mind of poor Malachi down in Cornwall. A Wesleyan brother owed him some rent, and he said, "Malachi, I owe you five pounds, but I shall not pay you till you tell me if I am predestinated to pay it." "Oh," said Malachi, "put the money down there." With that Malachi put it in his pocket, and replied, "Yes, you are." I believe that the way to answer these questions is just to bring them to some practical test or other. But if any brother dwell upon that which angels cannot fathom, I say to him—in the words of my text I say to him—"What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Curiosity and neglect of knowledge*:—There are two great varieties in men with reference to knowledge. The one is a neglect to know what it is our duty to know. The other is a curiosity to know what it doth not belong to us to know. (*W. Burkitt.*) *An Old Testament parallel*:—I cannot help seeing a latent resemblance between this place and the well-known passage at the end of Daniel's prophecy. "Then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And He said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."—"Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." (Dan. xii. 8, 9, 13). (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Following Christ*:—1. Our children sometimes sing that they wish that they had seen Jesus and heard His gentle voice; and perhaps you and I have said "Amen!" But it appears that the words of Jesus were not very impressive upon Peter. He had said to him, "Follow Me," and one would have thought Peter would have done nothing else; for there was a day in which his Master had to say to him, "Thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt do so hereafter." But now we find Peter forgetting the following, and turning round to indulge his curiosity. Do not wonder that our people forget what we say, for even when Christ is the sower all the seed does not fall on good soil, and all good soil does not receive the seed. 2. How easily people are diverted from the best of things. Peter at once began to follow Christ; but he turned his head and caught a sight of John, and he began to ask questions. Our people do not attend when we preach as they should. We are telling them a story which ought to hold them spellbound, and yet some one faints in the gallery, and everybody looks round, and it takes a long time to get them back again. Now, we must not be vexed, for it was so even with the Saviour. 3. Since people are taken off from serious thought by little things, do not you be the cause of little things. Among the rest, never come in late and make people turn round to see who is coming up the aisle. 4. Whatever distractions there may

be in worship, nothing must be allowed to draw us off from duty. John was a great friend of Peter's, and it was most natural that Peter should want to know what was to become of his friend. But no love of friends may ever come in the way to prevent our doing what Christ bids us. I. THE MAIN BUSINESS OF OUR LIFE IS TO FOLLOW JESUS. We must follow Christ—1. By seeking from Him salvation. If you depart from Christ that is destruction. I hear it said that to tell men to be earnest about their own salvation is practically to make them selfish; but if I had to save a man from drowning, I should be selfish enough to learn to swim. If I had to be a soldier, I should be selfish enough to wish to be strong, that I might fight the battle well. I was present once at a street accident, and I fetched the doctor, and I noticed how very quietly and coolly he came. I was running and out of breath, I wanted to quicken his pace, but he said to me, "Why, if I put myself in a bluster, as you have done, I could not do any good at all." Was that selfishness? 2. That done, the next thing is the fashioning of the character according to the mode of Christ. There is no following Christ except by endeavouring to be like Him. Christ, though absolutely perfect, is an imitable character. You could not tell me what special phase of character Christ has. He is so good all round. It is all there, and nothing too much and nothing too little. Lives of Christ—they are in the market everywhere. Write one yourselves in your own life. The Church ought to be like those rooms where the whole of the walls are lined with looking-glass. Stand in the centre, and you see yourself there, there, there, there. Christ is the centre, and all the saints so many looking-glasses, showing Him from different points of view. Each will be different, yet all will be the same, and Christ will be glorified. I saw a little motto hung up in our infant school-room, "What would Jesus do?" Now, in every case, whatever Jesus would do in that case is what you and I should do. 3. Then the man saved and endeavouring to be conformed to Christ, must follow in His life service. We are committed to the Lord. You do not belong to yourselves, not a hair of your head. There is not one minute of your time that you have a right to call your own. A person of New York when baptised turned all the money he had into a certain form of scrip and had it all in his pocket, for he wanted to dedicate the whole of his substance, as well as himself. I never receive a member without asking him, "What are you going to do for the Saviour?" If he says he cannot do anything, I say, "Here is one who belongs to Christ, and Christ cannot make anything of him. He is dead stock." So the man begins to think, and, as a result, he finds there is something or other that he ought to do. Wherever Cook, the circumnavigator, landed he was seen to take little packets out of his pockets, throwing them out of his hand and circulating them. He belted the whole world with English flowers. That is how we ought to do—get some of the precious seed into your own soul, and carry it with you wherever you go. Have it with you on the trip to the seaside, for in this you will be following Christ, who "went about doing good." 4. We are to follow Christ by exhibiting an intense love to Him. This is the way to show that love—attentively listening to everything He has to say. 5. We must do all this—(1) Unreservedly. But some people have got one little reserve—some favourite sin, or thing. (2) Constantly—not sometimes. The enlistment in the army of Christ is not for a time long or short. You are called to eternal life. Not to the kind of life which, having lived six months or years, you then go on furlough to serve yourself. I heard of one who said that he did such and such a thing when he was off duty. Aye, a policeman may be off duty; but never a Christian. (3) Heartily. I hate the miserable way in which some people serve Jesus. I illustrate it sometimes by the mumbler at the prayer-meeting. I called at his shop and heard him say, in loud tones, "John, bring up that half hundred." I thought, "This is the man I cannot hear when he prays." I stepped into a shop the other day, and I noticed the ledger. Oh my! what a ledger! I thought of my own little pocket Bible. Dear me, when the ledger gets on the top of that, what a crush it is. 6. We must follow Christ in the vocation to which He has called us. Some think that if they follow Christ they must give up the shop. No—follow Him there. Another says, "I shall go to a nunnery, and I shall follow Christ there." You are better at home with your children. Another thinks that to follow Christ he must give up his employment and become a city missionary. It is a great pity to spoil a good carpenter to make a bad preacher. When Christ rode the ass through Jerusalem, the ass did its best to carry Him, and it succeeded. It did not take to flying. No, it was not such an ass as that. II. TO EFFECT THIS WE MUST AVOID ALL DISTRACTION, AND IF WE ARE GOING TO FOLLOW CHRIST, WE MUST GO IN FOR IT. A child was asked by a Sunday-

school teacher, "Is your father a Christian?" The girl said, "Yes, but he has not worked much at it lately." Often the reason is because they have turned aside to do something else. Then—1. Do not let distractions come in the form of reflections upon others. Peter wants to know about John. (1) He might have said, "Perhaps John is going to have a much easier post than I am." In working for Christ have you ever said, "Ah, ah, it is fine to be him. I wish I had his place; I could do something there." "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." Art thou the poorer because he is the richer? Leave the Lord as He pleases to deal with John, and let John escape the edge of the sword, even if thou go to the cross. (2) But some will say, as Peter might have said, though he did not, "Now look at that John. He is all contemplation," "I cannot bear those mystics. They are no use." Martha says of Mary, "Bid her come and help me." Oh, these Marys, what is to become of them, always sitting there at Jesus' feet? Now, Martha, what is that to thee—follow thou Me. What if one brother serve God one way and one in another? You follow Christ, and let him follow Him in his own way. (3) I heard say of a certain good sister, who does a good deal of work for Christ, by one who never did anything to my knowledge, "She is such a crotchetty woman." Yes, and I never met with anybody who did nothing that was not crotchetty. And if some of the crochets in God's people were taken away it would take away from them their power. God has fashioned them for His use. Now, the next time you see a friend who is not made quite so perfect as yourself, do you hear the Master say, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." (4) "Well," says one, "but I know a man that I am sure is very much overvalued." So do I, but what is that to thee? If the Lord is pleased to use him, pray God to use thee too. (5) "Still," says one, "we must correct the mistakes of some Christians." By all means; and whenever you see a crooked stick in the Lord's bundle, tell it it is crooked by being perfectly straight yourself. Get close alongside in loving fellowship, and the thing is done directly. I pray that you and I may not be so occupied with washing everybody else's doorstep that we may allow filth to accumulate in front of our own house. 2. Do not let us occupy our own minds about deep theological problems. (1) Some friends cannot save souls, because they do not know the origin of evil. When a thief comes into your house at night, do not ring the bell for the policeman—let him do exactly what he likes till you find out where he came in. And if you are a drowning man, and the life-buoy is thrown to you, do not touch it till you know who made it, and what it is made of. (2) "Well," says one, "it is very important to know about predestination and free will." Yes, and if you do not do anything good till you understand that, you have plenty of time to wait. Let your servant-maid refuse to-morrow to get up to prepare your meals, and say, "My dear sir, I cannot do it, for I cannot make out the doctrine of election." You would say, "Mary, I never engaged you for that." (3) And do not let prophecy lead you astray. There are some who make the coming of Christ an excuse for spending their time in speculation rather than in holy active service for Christ. I dropped in upon a member of my church some time ago, and I saw her upon the steps scrubbing the doorstep. She blushed all manner of colours, and said, "Sir, if I had known you were coming you would not have found me like this." I said, "But if my Lord was coming to-morrow that is just how I should like Him to find me, at my work." Follow thou me, whatever you have to do to-morrow. (4) There are certain terrible facts which I pray you never unduly to consider so as to be taken off from the service of Christ—*e.g.*, the condition of lost spirits, of the world and of the Church—and what is to become of it. Now look, if you are in a storm, and are set to pull a rope, if you begin to take the whole state and condition of the ship into consideration, all about the crew, the cargo, the compass, the currents, the winds, and do not pull your rope, I tell you, you would do better to know nothing about these things, and to go to your work. And I believe some of God's servants need to be talked to about this. You get fretting about the times being so bad. Well, you get and make them better. You were never meant to do everything, and God never constructed you to clean the world up. It went on pretty well before you were born, and it is just possible that it may after you are dead. (5) And sometimes the way of the Christian is so narrow, so dark, that his only safety lies in the clutching the hand of his great leader, as with trembling he says, "Master, the abyss, the darkness, the horror of the way!" He says, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." (6) "Oh God," says a poor soul, "my own child, I am afraid he will be lost." The Saviour says in reply, "Follow thou Me." Try to win him, but look not at the dire possibilities, so as to have thy mouth shut

and thy tongue silent within thee. (7) "We ought all to weep for Jerusalem," say you. Yes, but even Christ that did it did not do it every day. 3. Do not let us distract ourselves from our work with anything out of the line of practical religion. You remember Carey's words about Eustace, his son. "Poor Eustace has drivelled into an ambassador." When everybody else thought it high promotion, he thought it degradation for him to turn aside from the one work of the ministry. Now, you who love the Lord, are all called to some form of ministry, Stick to it. Better be poor and serve Christ than to grow rich and give it up. III. THE REASONS FOR THIS CONCENTRATION OF OUR LIFE. We are to do one thing and not twenty things. 1. We have not any too much power, and if we do not use what we have for the one thing we shall waste strength. When the miller has got only a certain stream let him pour that all over one wheel and he will grind. But let him not divert his water into many meandering streams, or else he will certainly waste his power. 2. It is only by taking one object that you can ever become eminent in it. 3. We have not much time in which to do the little we are going to do; let us pack it tight, get all into it that we can. Dr. Chalmers one night spent a very happy evening with some friends. Among the rest a Gallic chieftain was present, who was much amused with Chalmers' anecdotes and stories. They went to bed, and in the middle of the night the chieftain was suddenly taken ill and died; and Chalmers, writing of it afterwards, says, "How differently they would have talked if they had been aware of what was about to happpen." Let us live as though we knew that we might this evening finish our life. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die.**—*The tradition of St. John's immortality:*—The earliest recorded tradition respecting St. John had apparently sprung up, not like most of them after the Apostle's death, but during his lifetime, and professed to be founded on an express prediction of our Lord that "St. John should never die." In this case it was possible to confront the traditionary statement with the historical, and this chapter was added to the Gospel, apparently, to state the true fact that "Jesus said not unto him," &c. Whether a misunderstanding of our Lord's words was the sole origin of the tradition may be questioned; it is, perhaps, most likely to have been in the first instance occasioned partly by the Apostle's great age, and partly by the general expectation that our Lord's coming was near. Nor was the opinion without some ground of truth if we consider that the language in which our Lord's coming is identified, or at least blended with the images which equally describe the fall of Jerusalem. This last feeling, however, had evidently passed away before the time when the tradition assumed the particular shape specified in the text, and it now therefore took its ground on the supposed saying there referred to. The "coming of the Lord" was now to them, what it is to us, another expression for the end of all things; the next and natural process consequently was to limit the words to the new view. Yet neither the express caution of the Evangelist, nor the contradiction of the story by his death was sufficient entirely to eradicate it. The story of his being not dead but asleep in his grave at Ephesus was related to Augustine by persons who professed to have witnessed the motion of the dust by the supposed breath of the sleeper, and the notion that he was still living not only became a fixed article of popular belief in the Middle Ages, but has been revived from time to time by later enthusiasts, and is still partially commemorated in the Greek Church in the Feast of the Translation of the Body of St. John. Compare, amongst other instances the well-known story of the apparition of St. John to Edward the Confessor and the Ludlow pilgrims, and again to James IV., at Linlithgow, before the Battle of Flodden, the belief in Prester John in Central Asia, and the ancient legendary representations of the search for the body in the empty tomb. (*Dean Stanley.*)

Vers. 24, 25. **This is the disciple which testifieth of these things.**—*The Gospel of St. John*:—I. ITS TRANSCENDENT THEME.—"The things which Jesus did." 1. Their number—"many." 2. Their variety—"other." 3. Their importance. So deep had been the impression made by them that they were even then remembered and could have been written down. 4. Their significance. "The world would not contain," &c. II. ITS UNNAMED AUTHOR—the disciple whom Jesus loved. That this was John—1. The Gospel indirectly attests. 2. Ecclesiastical tradition confirms. III. ITS VERACIOUS CHARACTER. 1. The testimony of the author's consciousness, if ver. 24 be authentic. 2. The testimony of his contemporaries, probably the Ephesian Elders, if ver. 24 be non-Johannine. Lesson: Gratitude—1. To God for His Son, Jesus Christ. 2. To Jesus Christ for the things which He did. 3. To the Holy

Spirit for this sublime Gospel. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The revealed and the unrevealed in Christ's biography* :—I. VERY MUCH HAS BEEN REVEALED. His four biographers have said very much about Christ, and each has presented Him in some fresh aspect. II. MUCH MORE MIGHT HAVE BEEN REVEALED (ver. 25). What volumes it would have taken to record the deeds and words of Him who never spent an idle hour, but "went about doing good!" Conclusion: 1. We should fully appreciate the amount revealed. It teems with truths, and pulsates with inspiration. A larger amount, perchance, would have been obtrusive rather than helpful. 2. We may anticipate wonderful studies. All the unrevealed will be brought under our observation. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The authentic and apocryphal Gospels* :—There are very many things written concerning Christ which are believed by others, but which I do not believe. The evidence from without I care little for, regarding only the evidence from within. Therefore it is that the reading of the uncanonical Gospels is useful in showing what a fine instinct, what a spirit of good taste, what a divinely inspired knowledge of what Christ was, the men who wrote our Four Gospels had. Between the two there is that singular difference which strikes a man of fine taste between the consummate work of a true artist and the work of a dauber, between a work of art wrought in love and one wrought only for bread. For the spirit of an artist creeps into every stroke of his brush; and in the writing of the Gospels, in settling which are canonical, every stroke is a betrayal. The apocryphal Gospels are not only a curious picture of the floating traditions of the Church; they are earthen vessels full of earthly dregs. They gather about Christ the stains of human stupidity and ignorance. Just as a man of fine taste has no difficulty in judging in a moment between a Raphael and what a coarse picture dealer declares to be one; just as one accustomed to the fine aromas of the wine of Hamburg can distinguish it from the spurious rubbish that is brought to imitate it; just as those who know the ring of true gold are proof against being deceived by the counterfeit, so there need be no difficulty in judging of these writings, as compared with the four Gospels now in use. (*George Dawson, M.A.*) **There are also many other things.**—*The magnitude of Christ's life* :—Such words as these are called "strong language" and "exaggeration." But strong language is always true to the poet, natural to the passionate, truthful to the large-minded; and only obnoxious to the small, feeble, chill-blooded, to those who find human language big enough to live in. Human language is often felt to be like that bed of old, which was so short that a man could not stretch himself on it; and in trying to cover himself with the coverlid, found it to be too narrow. So as the next thing to having an adequate spoken language, men do what they can by extravagance to make it up. A great poet like Shakespeare presses the universe into his passion. He tells the woman he adores that her eyes outvie the brightness of the rising morning. One great ancient wished he was a star that he might look down always on her he loved. So these souls, feeling deeply, in order to say what they wish to say, since words won't do it, call upon all things to help them—the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley—all things are called in, that the beloved may be set forth in glory. Strong language is objectionable, is it? Yes, when it is but the emphasis of emptiness; when little people make a great noise, using language stronger than the occasion requires, the sin and shame of it is that they have no feeling adequate to it. But when the heart is all aglow, and the thing to be said infinite, then the most extravagant language is poverty stricken. To hear some commentations over the phrase is charming—"This passage must not be taken literally; of course the Apostle meant—'Oh, thank you for nothing! I want not your dry bread of sand.'" What John meant was that there were so many things that might be told about Christ, that the world could not contain it all. Beautiful expression! And how adequate! Now, what does it teach? If any man's biography were to be daily written down it would make a big book. One of the most charming books was written by a man on a tour round his chamber. Put some people in a room and they behold no more than a blind horse would. But not so with the instructed man. He would pause at every part of the room, and tell tales about the woodwork, tales of the trees from which the wood came, and of the climate in which they grew—tales that would run back to Adam. Franklin tells us that he "rose at six and washed." But if he had stopped to tell us all about "rose," what a volume would be wanted, and so on with "washed" and "dressed." And so one might come to think with the great poet, that the best portion of a man's life lies in the little nameless, unrecorded acts of kindness. It is the unwritten things of life that uphold the great things. So, when we think of Christ's life, and of the little that is said about Him, we know there must have been much that might

have been written. (*Ibid.*) *The many things which Jesus did*:—Does St. John end his Gospel with an exaggeration? What shall we say? I. THERE ARE SEVERAL SOLUTIONS. 1. That the passage has been interpolated. But this view has no foundation. The verse is only wanting in one MS. 2. That it is only St. John's way of expressing his sense of the immense diligence of Christ's life, and the unparalleled number of His good works; and that, to convey that idea, he uses language which is, indeed, after the Eastern language, hyperbolical; but which could not mislead. 3. That St. John is speaking of *all* which Christ had done, and is doing, and will do to all eternity—in which acceptation the words would be strictly true—for then we should be dealing with the Everlasting and the Infinite—which, of course, exceeds the compass of the universe. But the comment is strained and far-fetched. 4. That the word "contain" is ambiguous, and that it might be translated, "the world," *i.e.*, the ungodly world, "would not receive the whole of what Jesus did." 5. That St. John is speaking not of the mere outward actions, but of what they represented and involved. And this is none other than a literal truth that "if all these" were "written," *seriatim*, "the world itself could not contain the account which should be written." II. The last seems to be the only true understanding of St. John's words: THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE FULNESS THAT THERE IS IN THE MINUTEST PORTION OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY. 1. Remember—(1) It is the life of the Son of God who came to this earth for about thirty-three years, of which we have the history of only three, and in those three only a few leading, salient features. (2) That the object of this short visit was the salvation of the whole world. (3) That infinite love, wisdom, and power met in His every word and act. (4) That the record, which has been given us, has been left for His Church to read, and live upon for ever. There is enough to satisfy the whole intellect and affection of the race. And if the gospel be such as this—what a weight, what an infinity, there must be in every iota. If we waste a crumb, it must be at our peril, and with great damage! Here is our duty, and here is the great work of the Holy Ghost, to find the latent senses of each fraction of that portentous narrative. "The secret of the Lord,"—covered thoughts, intentions sealed except to the initiated—"the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." 2. You must consider also—(1) Every action of Christ was first a great beautiful fact, standing out to be admired. (2) It was an illustration of His character, in which we are to read out His sympathy, wisdom, power, faithfulness, &c. (3) We are to read, through Him, God—the only real delineation we have of the Invisible Father. (4) It is the illustration and the pledge of what Christ is and does now He is in glory. (5) It is our pattern and example that we may copy. (6) It is an allegory—a parable of spiritual things which always lie underneath it. 3. Now, take any one event in our Lord's ministry, and divide it into all these parts: see it in all its lights; and what a volume will be there! Regard, in this way, His baptism, or His temptation, or His transfiguration, or His death, &c., or any one of His miracles; or a prayer, a touch, a look; and into what masses and mountains of thought it all swells! What piles upon piles might be said and written! 4. Think of all that, for nearly nineteen centuries, has been said and written by the Church on those four Gospels; and yet it is not exhausted. New thoughts, new beauties, new comforts are coming up every day. And were the world to last nineteen thousand centuries more, it would be just the same! And will not these things be the themes of faculties infinitely higher, than now, throughout eternity? Do not "the angels" still "desire to look" on them? 5. Then, we must add to the account that there were "many things which Jesus did" which St. John knew but did not record; many more, which none knew, or could know. But all would bear the same development. 6. Then, when, for a moment, we try to draw these together and conceive the total of such an aggregate, is the language one whit too strong? III. LET ME GATHER SOME INFERENCES. 1. When we have to do with the life of Christ, we are dealing with the most solemn immensities. The more we study it, the more we shall feel with St. John—that we are standing on the shore of a boundless ocean; that what we see is nothing compared to what lies beyond the horizon. That all human intellect put together, and all the largest hearts of men of love, if that love could go on for ever, could not contain the half of what Christ did, and what Christ was. Is that too much to say? You will not think so if you love Him and know Him. 2. Therefore you must come to the contemplation of every part of Christ's life very modestly. There is much more than you have any idea of. If you think you know any verse of the Bible, you have yet a great deal to learn. You will never empty it. And, seeing it so exceeds all our proportions, you must pray for the enlargement of your own

soul, that you may be able to contain it. 3. For a heart enlarged by the Holy Ghost has a greater capacity than the universe. The universe could not contain it; but, by the working of the Holy Ghost, it is promised you shall be "able to comprehend with all saints, what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and know that love of Christ which passeth knowledge." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The unwritten sayings of Jesus*:—When I see how much has been written of those who have lived; how the Greeks preserved every saying of Plato's; how Boswell followed Johnson, gathering up every leaf that fell from that rugged old oak, and pasting it away, I almost regret that one of the disciples had not been a recording angel, to preserve the odour and richness of every word of Christ. When John says, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written," it affects me more profoundly than when I think of the destruction of the Alexandrian Library, or the perishing of Grecian art in Athens or Byzantium. The creations of Phidias were cold stone, overlaid by warm thought; but Christ described His own creations when He said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are life." The leaving out of these things from the New Testament, though divinely wise, seems, to my yearning, not so much the unaccomplishment of noble things, as the destruction of great treasures, which had already had oral life, but failed of incarnation in literature. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The sufficiency of the Gospels*:—Supposing a complete biography of Christ to have been written, let us consider—I. ITS MAGNITUDE. In every life there are many transactions which would add nothing to the completeness of a biography. There are many things in the experience of us all which are like blades of grass. To distinguish them in a picture would be to impair it and give us not the field but the grass. But things were otherwise with Christ. Every miracle, prayer, look, &c., was worthy of a picture by itself. And suppose instead of our present summary we had all the details what a library there would be. And then there are many things which it takes a longer time to describe than to do. II. ITS CUMBROUSNESS. 1. What life would be long enough to produce it. 2. What means could be adequate to disperse it. 3. What man could read, let alone remember it. Conclusion: Let us see the impossibility of making any improvement in God's Word. There is wisdom as well in its limits as in its matter and form. (*Mathematicus.*) *St. John's Gospel a collection of specimens*:—The materials which he has actually made use of are few in number compared with the store from which he might have drawn; he omitted many things, the record of which might have over-filled the world with books; with only a few selections from his rich treasury, he shows us the glory of the Incarnate Word—as if a painter should take a bit of grey rock, a tuft of maidenhair fern growing in a crevice, some patches of grass and heather, a tree or two, a human figure, a dim-seen mountain range, the infinite blue sky, and putting these into a picture should show us the glory of God in nature. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *Christ an inexhaustable treasure*:—Treasures many are contained in the Bible, but not all. There are more treasures in Christ than even in the Bible. He could not transfer all the treasures of His person into a book, "for if they should be written," &c. Blessed be God for the treasures contained in this precious volume before me, but the day will arrive when they shall be all exhausted. But after exhausting the treasures of the Book, the treasures of the Person will still remain. Blessed be His name for the treasures which have come *through* Christ, thrice blessed for the treasures that are *in* Christ. Dwelling in Him are treasures enough to make a dozen new Bibles, the Bibles of eternity. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*)

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