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*ST. MATTHEW XXVIII. 16-20.*<sup>1</sup>

THE Apostolic age appears to have possessed two independent traditions of the events which occurred between the Resurrection and the Pentecost. According to the tradition which is preserved by St. Luke, the Apostles continued at Jerusalem, and the appearances in the Holy City and its neighbourhood culminated at the end of forty days in the final vision of the Ascension. According to St. Matthew, the appearances at Jerusalem were limited to Easter Day; the scene then shifts to Galilee, where the narrative leaves us.

St. Matthew's tradition was probably derived from St. Mark. Though the genuine ending of the Second Gospel has been lost, there are sufficient indications, as we shall see, that it ended nearly as the first Gospel does, carrying the reader into Galilee immediately after the events of the Resurrection Day; so that we may provisionally call this the Marcan tradition. To some extent the Marcan tradition has also the support of the Fourth Gospel, for though St. John detains the Apostles at Jerusalem until the Sunday after Easter, he describes a subsequent meeting between the Lord and certain of the disciples at the sea of Galilee. Lastly, the second century Gospel of Peter, which, like the genuine St. Mark, is broken off by the loss of a leaf, seems to have blended St. Mark's account with St. John's, for its last extant words represent Peter and Andrew as fishing in the sea, and Levi the son of Alphaeus with them. St. Luke

<sup>1</sup> This exposition was read to a gathering of past and present members of the Cambridge Clergy Training School, held at Westcott House, July 7-9, 1902.

therefore stands alone in ignoring the return to Galilee. His trustworthiness is above suspicion, but his opportunities were scarcely equal to those of St. Peter's interpreter. His narrative, however, is not irreconcilable with the Marcan tradition; and in the present state of our knowledge it is reasonable to regard the two accounts as complementary and not mutually exclusive.

Turning now to St. Matthew's story, we observe that it is linked to the preceding narrative by two predictions which foretell a return to Galilee after the Resurrection. On the night before the Passion the Lord had said (xxvi. 32), "After I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee (*προάξω ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν*). On the morning of the resurrection day the angel at the tomb bade the woman tell the disciples (xxviii. 7), "He goeth before you into Galilee" (*προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν*). Both these sentences occur in the corresponding passages of St. Mark, and in precisely the same words. The verb which is common to both is a suggestive one. It is used also by St. Mark in chap. x. 32, where the Lord leads the Twelve on the way to the cross, and in both connexions it reminds us of John x. 4, *ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν πορεύεται καὶ τὰ πρόβατα αὐτῆ ἀκολουθεῖ*. The Good Shepherd led his flock from Galilee to the cross, and when all was finished, back to the scene of the ministry.

If it may be asked without presumption why the Lord led the Eleven back to Galilee when He purposed to ascend from the Mount of Olives, the answer seems to be that nowhere but in Galilee could a great concourse be gathered together to be witnesses with the Apostles of His resurrection, and to receive His last instructions to the Church. No such assembly could have been held near Jerusalem, unless indeed in the wilderness of Judaea, the wild rolling country between Hebron and the Dead Sea; and even if privacy could have been secured there, it would not have been

possible to bring together in the south so large a number of disciples as were within reach in Galilee. At the Pentecost the disciples who were gathered at Jerusalem in expectation of the promised Paraclete numbered only about one hundred and twenty. In the north the three years' ministry had doubtless borne more fruit.

In Galilee, then, the Lord chose to meet His disciples. He had appointed the place in a previous interview with the Eleven; the words *οὐ ἐτάξατο αὐτοῖς* can mean nothing short of this (cf. 2 Regn. xx. 5, *τοῦ καιροῦ οὐ ἐτάξατο αὐτῷ*), and the express mention of "the Eleven" seems to point to an interview subsequent to the resurrection. There is much to be said for the picturesque suggestion of the late Master of Trinity Hall, that the order was given after the meal on the shore of the lake described by St. John, and that the news of the meeting was carried by St. Peter and St. John—why not also by St. Thomas and Nathanael and the rest?—to the villages round the lake, wherever brethren were to be found. All this presupposes that the occasion was the same as that to which St. Paul refers in 2 Cor. xv. 6, when more than five hundred brethren at one saw the risen Lord. Mr. Latham has argued this point with much ingenuity, and he has made a strong case for the identity of the meetings. The matter does not admit of demonstration, but the probability is great, and I shall venture to assume that he is right.

The day for the meeting (for a day had doubtless been fixed) has come, and the Eleven are at the appointed place, in Galilee, and on the line of hills indicated (*εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν εἰς τὸ ὄρος*, where the *εἰς* limits or further defines the first, as in Mark xi. 1 *εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα εἰς Βηθφαγή*). *Τὸ ὄρος* is not necessarily a particular isolated hill, such as Tabor, or Hattin; rather it is the hill country, whether west or east of the lake, but probably that upon the west shore, which had been the principal scene of Christ's

preaching and prayer, and was in proximity to the towns which He had evangelized. There the Eleven have now taken their stand, and with them there is an eager crowd of Galileans who have left their farms or their merchandise at the call of the Master. How long they waited we do not know; but at length the form of a man was seen crossing the hills and coming towards them, and we can hear the exclamation passing from mouth to mouth, 'Ὁ κύριός ἐστιν —“it is the Lord.” At once the assembly prostrated itself *προσεκύνησαν*, not *ἐγονυπέτησαν*: the *προσκυνητής* falls upon his face and not upon his knees only; the *γονυπετών* of the New Testament usually has a favour to ask, the *προσκυνών* simply pays homage to his superior. As performed by a great concourse of disciples, this act of homage expressed the consciousness of a relation between the Lord and His followers which was either new or had been but scantily realized before. Perhaps it could not be realized so long as men knew Christ after the flesh; certainly the occasions were rare upon which His disciples prostrated themselves before Him during His ministry, and I remember only one instance in which the Apostles did this as a body, at a moment when the presence of the supernatural came home to them with unusual strength (Matt. xiv. 33). The resurrection naturally deepened immeasurably their sense of awe, and three times during the forty days it is noticed by the Evangelists that prostration was offered to the risen Lord (Matt. xxviii. 9, 17; Luke xxiv. 52)—by the women at the tomb, by the Eleven after the Ascension, and on the occasion which we are now discussing. On the present occasion the prostration could hardly have amounted to an act of worship directed to a Divine person—the majority of the Galilean disciples would not have been prepared for that—but it was at least an acknowledgment of the claims of One who had proved His supernatural character by overcoming death.

Some there were, however, among the crowd who held

aloof from this act of homage, because they were not convinced that the person they saw was indeed the Lord. *Οἱ δέ* makes an exception to the general statement *ἰδόντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν*, while *ἐδίστασαν* does not, I think, imply a doubt of the fact of the resurrection, but rather whether the form they saw was indeed that of the risen Christ. On more than one occasion the risen Lord was not recognized at first. Mary Magdalene supposed Him to be the gardener of Joseph's paradise; to the disciples on the way to Emmaus He appeared "in another form," and seemed to be an ordinary wayfarer; "their eyes," St. Luke says, "were holden that they should not know Him." Yet in both cases He was close at hand. What wonder if, when He was seen at some distance across a stretch of hill-country, some hesitated at first to admit that it was the Lord? *Ἐδίστασαν*, St. Matthew is careful to write, not *ἠπίστησαν*, for doubt of this kind is not unbelief, and may be the precursor of the deepest faith.

But the Lord would not keep them in suspense. He came near and spoke to them. *Προσελθεῖν* is in the Gospels constantly used of approaches to Christ's person: e.g. *προσελθὼν ὁ πειράζων εἶπεν αὐτῷ* (Matt. iv. 3), *προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ* (v. 1), *λεπρὸς προσελθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτῷ* (viii. 2), *προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ἡ μήτηρ τῶν υἱῶν Ζεβεδαίου* (xx. 20). Here it is the Lord who approaches to His disciples, coming near to them to remove their doubt, as He came near to the Three on the Mount of Transfiguration, to dispel fear (xvii. 7). They saw Him now close at hand, and it was not a mere vision. For He spake: *ἐλάλησεν λέγων*, the equivalent, as Dalman reminds us,<sup>1</sup> of a phrase common in the Hebrew Bible (*וַיְדַבֵּר לְאָמָר*), yet perhaps not without a special fitness here, for *λαλεῖν*, like *דַּבַּר*, is to speak or talk, to address or accost another rather than to deliver a formal oration. The Lord drew near and spake to them in that

<sup>1</sup> *Words of Jesus*, i. p. 25 f.

half colloquial manner which He had ever used. It was the familiar voice to which these very disciples had listened so often among these very hills; and as His "Mary!" had drawn from the Magdalene the response *Rabboni*, so now the sound of His words must have set at rest the doubts of any who still hesitated.

But if the voice and manner were reassuring, the first words were words of awful majesty. Never before in the history of the world had a human being treading the earth and speaking with man's voice dared to say, "All authority hath been given to Me in heaven and upon earth." The nearest approach to such a claim had been made by the Lord when alone with the Twelve in one or two rare moments of self-revelation, as when He had said *Πάντα μοι παρέδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς μου* (Matt. xi. 27), or *Ἔδωκα αὐτῇ* (sc. *τῇ νιῶ*) *ἐξουσίαν πάσης σαρκός* (John xvii. 2). Here, however, there is a directness and explicitness never reached before; and if I am right in postulating the presence of the five hundred brethren, no such words had ever been spoken to a great concourse of disciples. It was a proclamation *urbi et orbi* of a tremendous fact hitherto hinted only to the inner circle of his friends.

Let us look more closely at the words. It is of *ἐξουσία* that the Lord spake, not of *δύναμις*, of authority rather than power, of right rather than of might. No doubt *ἐξουσία* usually carries with it *δύναμις*; nevertheless the two are separable in idea, and the distinction should be kept in view. *Ἐξουσία* is the right to act which may exist even when no action follows or can follow immediately. It is not necessarily delegated authority, for *ἐξουσία* is used in reference to the supreme authority of God in Acts i. 7, Jude 25, Apoc. xvi. 9. But the verb which goes with *ἐξουσία* here shows that the authority which Christ claims is communicated and not self-constituted. *Ἐδόθη μοι*, "it was given to Me," He says; as He had previously explained, it was His

by the Father's gift—*παρεδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς*. The Son of God is what He is by the communication of the Father's life; the Son of Man has what He has from God. Christ is, as Hooker writes in his scholastic way, "by three degrees a receiver," by eternal generation, by the hypostatic union, by unction. But it is not easy, perhaps it is not safe or right, to endeavour to restrict *ἔδόθη* to any one of these Divine communications. The aorist simply takes us back to an indefinite past, and leaves us there; it may refer to the eternal purpose of God, to the very necessities of the Divine essence, or to the economies of the Incarnation. Two things only stand out clearly—the Lord's authority is His by the Father's gift, and the resurrection gave Him occasion for asserting and exercising it as He had not done before.

It is *πᾶσα ἐξουσία* that He claims, not *πᾶσα ἡ ἐξουσία*, and the distinction is not unimportant. *Πᾶσα ἐξουσία* does not lay stress upon the comprehensiveness of His authority as the sum total of all possible rights and powers, but rather upon its manifoldness; it is authority in all and every one of its many forms and types. During His ministry He had asserted His authority to forgive sins, to cast out unclean spirits, to cleanse the Temple precinct, to lay down His own life and to take it again, even to execute judgment upon the world. But these are all so many particular *ἐξουσίαι*, whereas *πᾶσα ἐξουσία* includes not only these, but all other spheres and acts of authority that can be conceived. All Divine rights are His, to be exercised at His pleasure. And the field in which He may exercise them is no less unlimited than the authority itself. He had been charged with blasphemy when He declared His right to forgive sins on earth; He now declares His right to do what He will, whether on earth or in heaven. *Ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς*—the words sweep the whole empire of God, and in their flight bound away into regions far



beyond our knowledge. Our Lord anticipates the new relation between the Mediator and the universe which began with the ascension. St. Paul's words are our best comment upon His claim, when he teaches that Christ has been set in the heavenly spheres far above every authority and power and every name that is named, not in this world only but in that which is to come (Eph. i. 20 f.); that He has been made Head over all things to the Church (*ib.* 22 f.); that God granted Him a Name above every name, that in the Name of Jesus (i.e. before the authority of Jesus) every knee should bow of things celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue utter the confession, "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. ii. 9 ff.); that it pleased the Father through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens, and that He is the Head of all rule and authority (Col. i. 20, ii. 10). All this the risen but not yet ascended Lord anticipates and proclaims. It has been His by the Father's gift from the beginning, and the resurrection has now placed it in His hands. He is on the eve of His coronation to the lordship of the universe, and no failure or delay can intervene.

Yet there is some strangeness in His interview with these simple brethren gathered on the wild hills of Galilee being opened with so magnificent a proclamation of unlimited authority. We expect some tender words of greeting, some new gift of love, some parable or proverbial teaching, as of old. But there is none of these; only this great proclamation of the vast gift He has received. What does it mean in such surroundings? What connexion has it with the fresh call which immediately follows?

Some good MSS. seek to establish a connexion by inserting a conjunction, but in the choice of the conjunction they are not agreed. While cod. B reads *πορευθέντες οὖν*, cod. D has *πορεύεσθε νῦν*, and some MSS. of the Latin

versions combine the two, *euntes ergo nunc*. Under these circumstances we may perhaps venture to follow cod.  $\aleph$  in striking out both *οὖν* and *νῦν*, and reading *πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε*. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that *οὖν*, if it be a gloss, gives a true index to the train of thought. *Ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία* is the preamble, *πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε* the commission based upon it. The Lord begins by reciting the fact of His possession of universal authority, in order to supply the strongest possible incentive to a world-wide and age-long mission. It is as if He had said: "Nothing on earth or in heaven can prevent you from carrying out My purpose. No authority which you may require in the prosecution of your task can be wanting to you henceforth. You have an open field and the largest powers, for you go in the Name of One whose word is law in both worlds. Go in the strength of this knowledge, and work." Thus the aim which the Lord has in view is an eminently practical one. Here as always the teaching of Christ, even when it seems most remote from human affairs, translates itself into a call to present duty and an inspiration of vital energy.

"Go and disciple all the Gentile nations" of the world: *πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*. The verb *μαθητεύειν*, in the active sense of "making a disciple," was perhaps a creation of primitive Christianity. Outside this Gospel, it is found only in the Acts of the Apostles, where we read that Paul and Barnabas (xiv. 21) evangelized the city of Derbe, and "made a good number of disciples" (*μαθητεύσαντες ἱκανούς*). St. Matthew has *μαθητεύειν* three times in the same sense. Christians in the earliest days were conscious of having entered by baptism into two new relations; they had become *ἀδελφοί* in relation to each other, and *μαθηταί* in relation to Christ. Of the two, discipleship was the more fundamental; men became brothers by virtue of their acceptance of Christ as their common Teacher. The

brotherhood could be extended only by extending the discipleship. To do this, then, was to be the aim, almost the *raison d'être*, of those who were disciples already; all *μαθηταί* were to become, if I may coin the word, *μαθητευταί*. The aorist *μαθητεύσατε* sums up the whole evangelistic work of the Church in one great effort; as interpreted by the light of history it cannot be distinguished from *μαθητεύετε*, but as foreseen by Christ the work is one. He does not contemplate periods of failure or suspended energy; His foreknowledge foreshortens the long course of events; seen *sub specie aeternitatis* it is but one act. Yet from our point of view the task, as He paints it, is erroneous, for it is nothing less than the bringing of all nations into the Christian society. During a ministry of three years the Lord Himself had gathered out of Galilee, as it seems, but five hundred disciples, and at Jerusalem He had not quite a fourth of that number. How must the hearts of the disciples have sunk within them at the call to disciple in their turn the whole habitable world, even if they thought only of the countries washed by the Mediterranean.

But their new task offered a further difficulty. According to Jewish conceptions, the disciples of a great Rabbi were pupils attached to his person, and learning from his lips. Such had hitherto been the position of the disciples of Jesus. But how was such a discipleship to be extended to the great world? "Disciple all nations" was surely a paradox, an impossibility, as their conceptions of discipleship went. The next words anticipate this difficulty. The discipleship of the world was to rest on a common initiation, a common faith, and a common life of obedience. The first disciples would have done their work if they started a great movement upon these lines: "Go, disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to keep all things whatsoever I enjoined upon you."

*Βαπτίζοντες αὐτούς*—or shall we read, with codd. B D, *βαπτίσαντες αὐτούς*? The difference is slight, but not negligible. If the present participle is read, it will range with the following *διδάσκοντες*, the two describing the long series of baptisms and instructions by which the discipling of the nations would be translated into fact; if the aorist, the work of baptizing is closely connected with discipling, so that *μαθητεύσατε βαπτίσαντες* relates to what is regarded as practically one action, the baptismal rite being the visible counterpart of the preliminary discipling. The documentary evidence for the aorist is weighty, since B and D unite their testimony in its favour. But they stand alone, and it is quite possible that they represent an earlier correction.

But whichever reading we follow, the general sense is the same. The Lord appoints baptism as the universal and only normal mode of admission into the Christian brotherhood. It was by baptism that John had made disciples, and it was thus that in the early days of the Judaean ministry the disciples of Jesus had, evidently with His approval, received believers into their own company (John iii. 23, iv. 1 f.). Of baptisms during the Galilean ministry we hear nothing, and it seems likely that the practice was dropped for the time. Now, however, the Lord formally revives it, making it henceforth the universal badge of discipleship. But it is baptism under quite new conditions that He now ordains—a baptism which is not merely *εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*, but *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος*.

The words are remarkable in every way. They bring together scattered fragments of Christ's earlier teaching, combining them in a single formula which has no exact parallel in the New Testament. The Father and the Son are correlated in Matthew xi. 27, xxiv. 36; the Holy Spirit is separately mentioned in xii. 32; in the Fourth Gospel

the Holy Spirit is said to proceed from the Father, and to be sent by the Father in the Son's Name, and by the Son from the Father. But nowhere else in the Gospels are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit co-ordinated as three distinct Persons, while a certain unity is ascribed to them by the preceding *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*. What is the exact meaning of this last phrase? The name of a person stands for the person himself, especially in his relation to others; and this is true not only in Hebrew and Biblical Greek, but, as Deissmann has shown,<sup>1</sup> a similar use of the phrase occurs occasionally in the papyri and the inscriptions; thus *τὸ τοῦ βασιλέως ὄνομα* is found more than once in the sense of "the King's majesty," whilst the formula *εἰς τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ὄνομα* seems to have been used by pagans in connexion with property dedicated to sacred purposes. It is safer perhaps to seek light from the usage of the New Testament itself, and light is not altogether wanting. Israel, St. Paul says, "received baptism into Moses" (1 Cor. x. 2); Christians are "baptized into Christ" (Rom. vi. 3; Gal. iii. 27). A Corinthian Christian could not say *Ἐγὼ εἰμι Παύλου*, for he had not been baptized *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου*, but, as the Acts let us see, *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα* or *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*. Putting all this together, it seems clear that to be baptized into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is to be dedicated to the service of the Three, to become for life the Father's, the Son's, the Holy Spirit's liege, and at the same time to be admitted to fellowship and communion with Them. To become the disciple of Christ the Son of God is to be admitted into the Divine fellowship, to be inscribed with the Divine Name, to be henceforth only God's. Association with the Son is association with the Father and with the Spirit. This is St. Ambrose's explanation of the remarkable fact that the baptisms described in the Acts and Epistles are said to

<sup>1</sup> *Bible Studies*, p. 146 f.

have been administered in the Name of Jesus Christ: "qui unum dixerit, trinitatem signavit; si Christum dicis, et Deum Patrem et Filium et Spiritum sanctum designasti." Perhaps a truer account of the matter would be that the words *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς κτλ.* were not at first regarded in the light of a prescribed formula. Yet St. Ambrose is right when he claims that to admit men into fellowship with Christ is to consecrate them to the service of the Holy Trinity, and this is the essential truth in the form of words which from the second century the Church has invariably used.

But the baptismal formula not only consecrates; it reveals. Or rather, it sums up the whole teaching of Christ respecting the nature of God. The Christian theology is here expressed in a single clause. The One Baptism enshrines and gives permanence to the One Faith. This was rightly grasped by the makers of the early creeds: with wonderful unanimity they constructed them in such wise as to form three paragraphs, corresponding with the Threefold Name which is put upon all Christians in their baptism. Thus the words of baptism form the primary rule of faith; as St. Basil writes (Ep. ii. 22; Migne, xxxii. 552), *δεῖ ἡμᾶς βαπτίζεσθαι μὲν ὡς παρελάβομεν, πιστεύειν δὲ ὡς βαπτίζομεθα.*

A word may be said in passing as to the genuineness of the baptismal words. Did they come directly from the lips of Christ? or has the Evangelist put into the Lord's mouth words which by his own time had come to be connected with the administration of baptism and which sufficiently represented Christ's general teaching? The second view receives much support from modern scholars, but I trust that we shall hesitate before we accept it. The words as they stand are consistent with the majesty of the whole scene. Nor can I see the least improbability that they were actually spoken by the Lord on this occasion. It was one

of vast importance to the Church when she received from her Head her age-long commission—her “marching orders,” as the great Duke of Wellington is reported to have called it. What more likely than that the Lord would have seized this opportunity of gathering up in the fewest words the substance of all His earlier teaching concerning God, and connecting it for ever with the sacrament of initiation into the Christian brotherhood? Indeed, is it not almost certain that some such form of words was actually used by Christ before He left the earth? Is it possible on any other hypothesis to explain the frequent occurrence of trinitarian language in Christian writings of the apostolic age, and the steady and growing trinitarian belief of the early Church? What reasonable account can be given of the introduction of such a form of words into a document that is generally allowed to be as old as the eighth decade of the first century? Whence came the sudden change of front which led to the substitution of a trinitarian form for the simple words *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, which are *ex hypothesi* original? Questions such as these call for an answer before we set aside the plain and undoubted witness of so early a document as the First Gospel.

But to pass on. The Church is bidden not only to baptize those whom she discipled, but to instruct the baptized. Evangelistic work is implied in *μαθητεύσατε*: the writer of the appendix to St. Mark has rightly glossed St. Matthew's phrase by *πορευθέντες εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα κηρύξατε πάση τῇ κτίσει*. But *διδάσκοντες* has quite another reference, and contemplates the normal teaching of disciples. Christ Himself was at first an Evangelist; He began His ministry in Galilee by proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom, and the supreme proof of His Divine mission which He offered to the followers of John was this preaching of the Gospel to the humble and downtrodden classes of society (*πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται*). But as soon as men began

to receive His message He entered upon a further work ; He became their Teacher, their Rabbi, as they expressed it. "Ye call me," He reminds the Twelve, "the Teacher"—ὁ διδάσκαλος. Both these works were to be continued by the Church after His departure, and as a matter of fact "He gave some to be Evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." The teaching of the Church, however, differs in one material respect from the teaching of Christ; His was original, hers is derived: "teaching them to keep all that I enjoined upon you."

*Ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν.* Christ's teaching of His disciples had been wholly practical; such insight as He permitted them to gain into the secrets of the Divine essence or the constitution of the spiritual world was granted with a view to its influence upon their conduct and manner of life. This, I take it, is the reason why St. Matthew has written *ἐνετειλάμην* rather than *ἐδίδαξα* or *παρέδωκα*. Even in its outward form the Lord's teaching constantly took the shape of *ἐντολαί*—not that He laid down, like the scribes, a series of detached rules affecting small points of behaviour or of ritual, but He lost no opportunity of impressing upon His disciples the eternal principles of moral and spiritual truth, embodied oftentimes in parable or proverb, but at their heart fundamental rules of life. It was this which made the substance of our Lord's teaching, and which He delivered to the Church, to be handed on by her as a sacred trust throughout her generations. In His perfect foresight the Lord knew that His words could never be out of date, but would adapt themselves to the needs of every age until He came again. Experience has proved this to be so hitherto, and the twentieth century is not likely to be an exception. It is delightful to watch the fresh interest with which men are now returning to the Sermon on the Mount and other sayings of Christ to find in them guidance in the complicated problems of modern life. We do not, I trust, value



the teachings of Christ's Spirit in the Epistles of St. Paul less highly than they were valued half a century ago, but we have certainly learnt to form a juster estimate of the heritage which the Church has received in the four Gospels. Looking back over the way by which God has led the Church of England within our own lifetime, we can distinctly recognize a movement all along the line towards a fuller teaching of what Christ enjoined upon His disciples. It is this which has given new life to our use of the two great sacraments which He ordained; and it is the same happy tendency which has promoted amongst us the Christ-like spirit of service and sacrifice. The change is one for which we may well be profoundly thankful, notwithstanding any signs of human weakness by which it may have been accompanied. Yet there is room for still further growth in the direction which is indicated by our Lord's commission. *Πάντα ὄσα* opens a boundless field for Christian practice; it will be long indeed before the Church has fully taught all things whatsoever Christ enjoined upon her. The comprehensive words warn us against neglecting any of His instructions, as if they had been binding only for the time. In form they are often adapted to local or transient conditions, and these conditions call for careful study. I would mention in passing with thankfulness the help which such a work as Dalman's *Die Worte Jesu*, now translated into English, offers to those who wish to enter on this study. But when what is transitory in form has been removed, the words of the Lord will be found, I am convinced, to contain in every case matter of permanent value; they are words which, as He Himself has told us, "shall not pass away."

Lastly, this great commission ends with a promise commensurate with the responsibility it imposes. "And behold I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age." In the magnificence of its scope this final assurance

answers to the great preamble. In the one the Church is prepared for her task by the vision of a boundless authority; in the other she is cheered in her fulfilment of it by the hope of an age-long Presence.

As the preamble had been partly anticipated in Matthew xi. 27, so the promise is the expansion of the earlier saying in Matthew xviii. 20, where the Lord declares, "Where two or three are assembled in My Name, there I am in the midst of them." The Oxyrhynchus *logion* carries this a step further: "Where there are two, they are not without God; and where there is one alone, I am with him."<sup>1</sup> All such sayings have their root in the Old Testament promise that Jehovah will be with His people, both individually and as a body, when they are serving Him. To Jacob at Bethel God from above the ladder says, Ἴδού ἐγὼ μετὰ σοῦ, and the words are repeated to Moses at the Bush, to Joshua the son of Nun on the eve of the conquest of Canaan, to Joshua the son of Jehozadak at the rebuilding of the Temple (Hag. ii. 4). In the Gospel the words are taken up by Christ, who, as exercising the full authority of God, pledges His Presence to the Christian brotherhood, the new Israel. A faithful Christian is never ἄθεος ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, for he has Christ with him. As the Son was not alone because the Father is with Him, so the disciple is not alone because Christ is with him; and where Christ is, there are also the Father and the Paraclete. This assurance holds good ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος. Συντέλεια, though abundant in the LXX., is a rare word in the New Testament, and with one exception is restricted to St. Matthew; further, it occurs only in the phrase [ἡ] συντ. [τοῦ] αἰῶνος. Like many of the eschatological conceptions of the New Testament, this comes from Daniel; cf. Daniel xii. 4: ἕως καιροῦ συντελείας; *ibid.* 13, εἰς συντελείας ἡμερῶν. In St. Matthew's phrase ὁ αἰών

<sup>1</sup> *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, i. p. 3: λέγει Ἰησοῦς, "Ὅπου ἂν ὦσαν δύο, οὐκ εἰσὶν ἄθεοι, καὶ ὅπου εἷς ἐστὶν μόνος, ἐγὼ εἰμι μετ' αὐτοῦ.

is doubtless the course of the world considered as a whole ; while ἐπὶ τῇ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων in Hebrews ix. 26 looks back over the earlier ages consummated by the age of the Incarnation, the Evangelists' ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος points on to the completion of the whole post-Incarnation space of the world's history at the παρουσία. Πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας corrects the expectation of a speedy Return, and at the same time supplements τοῦ αἰῶνος; if ὁ αἰὼν sums up human history, πᾶσαι αἱ ἡμέραι distributes it again into periods, and invites every generation as it passes and every believer during his own short life to claim the fulfilment of the Lord's parting word.

I have chosen this passage for examination because upon reflection I could remember none more stimulating to a body of men who are engaged in pastoral work. The great commission is commonly quoted as an incentive to missionary work, and such it certainly is. The immense field it opens—πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, the vast reaches of time it contemplates—ἕως τῆς συντελείας, the responsibility it lays on all Christian people—πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε, the infinite resources upon which it permits them to draw—πάντα ἔξουσία—such a combination of motives to missionary and evangelistic work is unparalleled. This aspect of the passage is, however, happily recognized on all hands. But it has another which though less obvious not less certainly belongs to it. The commission includes the pastoral work of the Church as well as her missionary work. Both kinds of work are not usually given to the same worker, but both have an equal claim on all the support and encouragement which this great word of Christ supplies. Our own daily task is that of teaching the baptized to keep all that the Master enjoined upon His Church at the first. Teaching is the primary work of the English parish priest; teaching in a great variety of forms and under many names; teaching children and adults; teaching publicly and from house to

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house, by the voice, by the pen, by the example of our lives. We are not apostles, we are not prophets, but teachers we all are, set by God in the Church, given to the Church by the ascended Lord, as truly as the apostles and the prophets were given, and not less entitled to claim our share in the fulfilment of His great promise. In each sermon we preach, in each catechizing, in each Bible-class lesson, in each simple exposition of Holy Scripture, in each effort to interpret the Gospel to young or old, by word or by example, in each and every ministerial act, there is behind us the authority and there is with us the presence of the victorious Christ, until the end of our brief share of "all the days" which span the interval between the Advents.

H. B. SWETE.