NOTE ON THE GREAT OMISSION BY ST. LUKE OF ST. MARK VI. 45–VIII. 3.

THE following note has reference to the section of Sir John Hawkins' essay on the subject in the *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem* (pp. 67–75), in which he gives reasons in detail why St. Luke may have intentionally passed over each of the nine sections of this division of St. Mark's Gospel.

On these reasons in detail for the omission of the separate sections I do not propose to offer any comment. But, accepting the presupposition that St. Luke was limited as to his space, and that, as Dr. Sanday says (*Studies*, p. 25), "he had to omit something," I am disposed to think that any reasons why each of the nine constituent parts of the section should be omitted still leave us desiderating some reason or reasons for the omission of such a *series* of incidents "*en bloc*."

Three such reasons may be suggested :—

I. The omission removes from the story of the Ministry a series of no less than six journeyings of our Lord, movings from place to place. They are—

(1) The crossing of the lake after the feeding of the five thousand ;

(2) The journey to the borders of Tyre and Sidon ;

(3) The journey round by the North to the East side of the Lake ;

(4) The crossing of the lake after the feeding of the four thousand ;

(5) The crossing back to the East side of the lake after the Pharisees' demand for a sign.

To these may be added—

(6) The journey north again to Caesarea Philippi, for when he returns again to St. Mark and proceeds to the question of our Lord which elicited St. Peter's confession, he gives no note of place.

This character of the section suggests that St. Luke may have deliberately omitted it because he was not interested in geographical details, with which he was not perhaps himself familiar,[1] and which would not interest his Gentile readers.

II. But a further reason for the omission suggests itself if we look at the probable motives of these journeyings.

Our Lord seems at this time

(i.) to be avoiding for Himself and for His disciples the enthusiasm of the multitudes. (Comp. St. John vi. 15, "they were about to come and take Him by force, to make Him a king," and His sending away of the disciples first, Mark vi. 48);

(ii.) to be avoiding the antagonism of the Pharisees, and avoiding, but for occasional brief visits, the Galilean dominions of Herod, perhaps, as Professor Burkitt suggests, because of the alliance of the Pharisees and Herodians.

He was engaged in training His disciples to recognise or to maintain their recognition of His Messiahship, in spite of His refusal to fulfil and act up to the popular expectations of the Messiah, and perhaps also in spite of His avoidance of the antagonism of His enemies.

No doubt also He was evangelising outlying districts which had hitherto been untouched by His Ministry.

The motives of the particular journeyings may therefore be conjectured to be as follows:—

(1) The crossing of the lake after the feeding of the five thousand; to escape from the multitudes;

(2) The journey to the borders of Tyre and Sidon; to

[1] As he was familiar with similar details in the Acts.

avoid further conflict with the Pharisees, whom He had just provoked by His decisive condemnation of them in the controversy as to "eating with unwashen hands," and to evangelise the North-Western borders;

(3) The journey round by the North to the East side of the lake; avoiding the dominions of Herod, and the neighbourhood of the Pharisees, to evangelise Decapolis;

(4) The crossing of the Lake after the feeding of the four thousand; to escape from the multitudes;

(5) The crossing back to the East side of the lake; to escape from conflict with the Pharisees, who had beset Him with the request for a sign, and to remove His disciples from the influence of this demand ("the leaven of the Pharisees"), which represented the very spirit from which He wished to wean them;

(6) The journey north to Caesarea Philippi; to evangelise the North-East, and to bring His disciples to a region away from alien influences, where the great question might be put to them.

It will be seen that one or other or both of the two motives noted above, avoidance of the multitude and avoidance of the Pharisees, probably helped to determine our Lord's movements in every case. It is quite possible that these motives and the air of flight which they carried with them did not appeal to St. Luke, and that the movements from place to place which they dictated seemed to him inconsistent with our Lord's dignity.

It may be observed that in the story of the Ministry up to the feeding of the five thousand, (in the part of the Gospel, i.e., which precedes the omission), St. Luke has slightly weakened St. Mark's record in regard to both the urgency of the multitudes and the antagonism of the Pharisees.

In St. Mark the healing of the leper marks the close of a period of preaching in the synagogues. When the leper

disregarded our Lord's injunction not to publish the matter, St. Mark says that "Jesus could no more openly enter into a city, but was without in desert places, and they came to Him from every quarter" (Mark i. 45). St. Luke substitutes: "But so much the more went abroad the report concerning Him, and great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed of their infirmities. But He withdrew Himself in the deserts and prayed" (Luke v. 15). He does not treat the popular enthusiasm as a thing to be avoided, and he gives a different colour to our Lord's withdrawal.

Again in St. Mark (iii. 1–7) the healing of the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day is marked as indicating a stage in the antagonism of the Pharisees which affected our Lord's movements. The story ends: "The Pharisees went out and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against Him how they might destroy Him." And then follows: "And Jesus with His disciples withdrew to the sea." St. Luke has: "They were filled with madness and communed with one another what they might do to Jesus." And, (transposing the gathering of the multitudes and the choice of the twelve,) He omits the withdrawal consequent on the conflict. It is true that he has noted the presence of the Pharisees earlier in the story, but here as, almost without exception, elsewhere he seems to be concerned rather with the condemnation of the moral temper of the Pharisees than with the development of the antagonism between them and our Lord as affecting His movements.

Generally it may, I think, be said that while St. Mark's narrative presents us with a series of stages in our Lord's Ministry conditioned by the urgency of the multitudes and the antagonism of the Pharisees, St. Luke's is the story of a progressive manifestation of our Lord's healing and forgiving power, the enthusiasm of the multitudes being one of the

means of the manifestation, and the contrasted temper of the Pharisees heightening the effect of the picture.

III. There is reason then for St. Luke's omission of this section describing our Lord's journeyings from place to place, because he may have been indisposed (i.) to record the journeyings as such, (ii.) to record a series of movements conditioned by the avoidance on the part of our Lord of publicity and conflict. But a third reason may be suggested, weightier perhaps than either of the other two, namely, that the story of the movements contained in this section tended to obscure the view of the crisis in our Lord's Ministry on which he wished to insist.

In St. Mark's Gospel there are *two* great changes in the tone of the story after the Feeding of the Five Thousand.

(1) The "unwashen hands" incident (Mark vii. 1–23) opens a period during which our Lord is definitely avoiding conflict and publicity. The avoidance of publicity has already in the previous section been the motive of withdrawal after the feeding of the five thousand. But this incident of the "unwashen hands" is in itself perhaps the most notable of those covered by the great omission. In St. Mark it is an epoch in the story, determining our Lord's departure from Galilee proper. It reads like a declaration of war. It is one of the two passages where our Lord's utterance is ushered in by the words, *προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον*. And it is immediately followed by *καὶ ἐξέλθων ἐκεῖθεν ἀνεχώρησεν κ.τ.λ.*

(2) The confession of St. Peter and the Transfiguration open a period during which our Lord is foretelling His Passion, and during which the tone of the teaching is such as to accord with this—humility, forbearance, self-denial,[1]

[1] The only exception is the section on Divorce (Mark x. 2–12). Professor Burkitt has suggested that the raising of this question at this time may have been due to the fact that Perœa was part of the dominions of Herod.

in general harmony with the tone of the great interpolation in St. Luke.

Now how do these two changes fare in the narrative of St. Luke ?

(1) The former change with all that belongs to it disappears from the story. The effect of this is that whereas in St. Mark the story of the ministry falls into *three* divisions—

(i.) The Manifestation in Galilee ;

(ii.) The Journeys in the North and East, a period of "flight" from the Pharisees and the multitudes ;

(iii.) The Approach to Jerusalem ; in Peræa (?) ;

in St. Luke there are *two* divisions—

(i.) The Manifestation, finding its climax in the confession and the Transfiguration ;

(ii.) The Approach to Jerusalem, from these events onwards.

(2) The latter change (to the foretelling of the Passion) becomes the dominant idea, presented on a much greater scale and with great amplification by the addition of "the Great Interpolation."

It seems natural to suggest that it was a positive object with St. Luke to disentangle from St. Mark's story and bring into relief what was to him the turning-point of the history of the Ministry, viz., the time at which our Lord began to face and to foretell the Passion, and so, not only to make space for, but to lead up to his own great addition to the record of this time in "the Great Interpolation."

The great omission thus takes its place as one of the means by which St. Luke presents His picture of our Lord as the Anointed, the Suffering Saviour. In the earlier division of His Gospel He has pictured the wonderful manifestation of the power of His healing and forgiving love. He passes from this to portray His mind in His approach to His Passion.

It has been indicated in the short corresponding section of St. Mark. It is fully set forth in the teaching of St. Luke ix.–xix., dwelling as it does almost exclusively on thoughts that accorded with or arose out of His own spiritual situation, thoughts of judgment, such as would be in His mind as He faced the judgment which Jerusalem was about to bring upon herself; of humility, the spirit of His own approach to the end; of the self-denial, the sincerity, the stern unworldliness which are exacted from those who are to follow in the steps of His great self-sacrifice; of love and pity and forgiveness, the spiritual driving-power of His deliberate movement towards the inevitable issue.

WILFRID RICHMOND.

THE DUTY OF SELF-LOVE.

THE duty of self-love is a strangely misunderstood and widely neglected duty. The main reason of this misunderstanding and neglect would seem to be that self-love is commonly used as a synonym for selfishness. But this common use of the term is an entire perversion of it. For self-love and selfishness, far from being identical or interchangeable terms, are terms essentially antagonistic. The truly self-loving man is always unselfish. The selfish man is always deficient in self-love, or even in proper respect. It is only when a man confuses a part of himself with his whole self, and loves one part excessively instead of loving all parts in their due proportion, that self-love is degraded into selfishness. Selfishness is fractional self-love; and self-love is the destruction of selfishness by the conviction that the whole is greater than any of its parts. Selfishness is a man's devotion to one part of himself to the exclusion of the other parts, while self-love is his devotion to his whole self in