

THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

SAINT LUKE.

COMMENTARY.

TITLE.

SAINT LUKE. Of St. Luke's history, except for the seasons during which he was the companion of St. Paul, scarcely anything is known. He was apparently of Gentile birth, for St. Paul in the salutations to the Colossians distinguishes between those who were "of the circumcision" (Col. iv. 11.) and those not, and places St. Luke among the latter, calling him "Luke, the beloved physician" (Col. iv. 14.), from which we learn what had been his former calling. He was the companion of St. Paul in his second missionary journey, from Troas (Acts xvi. 10.) as far as Philippi (Acts xvi. 12—17.). We can see at once where St. Luke formed one of St. Paul's party by his use of "we," instead of "they" or "he," in describing the travels. The Apostle of the Gentiles found St. Luke again at Philippi when, about five years afterwards, he was returning from his third missionary journey (Acts xx. 5, 6.), and they remained together till they reached Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 17.). Afterwards St. Luke joined St. Paul when he was sent as a prisoner to Rome, and shared in all the perils of his voyage (Acts xxvii. 1—xxviii. 16.). He remained with his friend in his imprisonment, as we learn from a passage already quoted (Col. iv. 14.), and was again with him some years afterwards in his last imprisonment, shortly before his death, when he alone seems to have dared to remain. On this occasion St. Paul mentions him together with his brother Evangelist St. Mark (2 Tim. iv. 11.). It is probable that St. Luke is meant by "the brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches" (2 Cor. viii. 18.), and that St. Paul calls him "true yoke-fellow" (Phil. iv. 3.). We thus see that St. Luke was the close friend, and very frequent companion, of St. Paul.

As St. Paul is the great Apostle of the Gentiles, so is St. Luke the great Evangelist of the Gentiles. He was not an eye-witness of what he relates, but gathered up, and arranged in order, the records of those who were. It is frequently said that, as St. Mark's Gospel owes much to St. Peter (See on Title "St. Mark"), so St. Luke's to St. Paul. This may probably be true, although St. Paul was no more an eye-witness than St. Luke, and both must have gathered their knowledge

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of our Lord's life on earth from other sources. It is remarkable that St. Luke relates the institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper almost in the same words as St. Paul, and the latter declares that he received his account direct from Christ (1 Cor. xi. 23.).

It is generally believed that St. Luke's Gospel was written after those of St. Matthew and St. Mark; and as there is nothing in his Gospel to show that he had seen them, it is probable that it was written very shortly after. It was certainly written before the Acts of the Apostles, in the first verse of which it is referred to; and as that book carries the history of St. Paul only to the end of his two years' imprisonment in Rome,—that is, probably to the year 63 A.D.—we may fairly infer that the Gospel was written before that year. It appears not unlikely that St. Luke may have written his Gospel between the time when St. Paul left him at Philippi on his second missionary journey (probably A.D. 53.), and the time when he rejoined him at the same place in returning from his third missionary journey (probably A.D. 58.). There is nothing to lead us to suppose that St. Luke remained at Philippi during this long interval, though he possibly made it his chief place of abode; and he may not improbably have been in the Holy Land during that time gathering the materials for his Gospel.

The Gospel of St. Luke is the most complete of all, as we might expect from his express purpose of setting forth his history "*in order*" (i. 1.), and he gives the fullest account both of the Birth of our Lord and also of His Ascension.

St. Luke wrote his Gospel in Greek.

This Gospel, though doubtless intended principally for Gentile Christians, seems less exclusively so than St. Mark's, Hebrew expressions not being explained as in that Gospel; which may be very easily accounted for by the fact that at Philippi, as well as in the other Towns of Northern Greece, there were many Jews, so that Hebrew words and customs would be readily understood.

St. Luke is said by ancient Church historians to have laboured in Greece for many years, and to have died a natural death.

In the emblems of the four Evangelists (Rev. iv. 7.) St. Luke is thought to be represented by the Ox, or Calf, as setting forth Christ's Atonement through sacrifice. Our Lord appears in this Gospel as the great High Priest, winning, by His great sacrifice, mercy and pardon for sinners.

The Collect for St. Luke the Evangelist's Day.

ALMIGHTY God, who calledst Luke the Physician, whose praise is in the Gospel, to be an Evangelist, and Physician of the soul; May it please Thee, that, by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him, all the diseases of our souls may be healed; through the merits of Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER I.

¹ *The preface of Luke to his whole gospel.* ⁵ *The conception of John the Baptist,* ²⁶ *and of Christ.* ³⁹ *The prophecy of Elisabeth, and of Mary, concerning Christ.* ⁵⁷ *The nativity and circumcision of John.* ⁶⁷ *The prophecy of Zacharias, both of Christ,* ⁷⁶ *and of John.*

FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

^a Heb. 2. 3.
¹ Pet. 5. 1.
² Pet. 1. 16.
¹ John 1. 1.

^b Mark 1. 1.
John 15. 27.

^c Acts 15. 19,
25. 28.
1 Cor. 7. 40.

^d Acts 11. 4.

^e Acts 1. 1.

² ^a even as they delivered them unto us, which ^b from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

³ ^c it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee ^d in order, ^e most excellent Theophilus,

CHAPTER I.

1—4. Introduction.

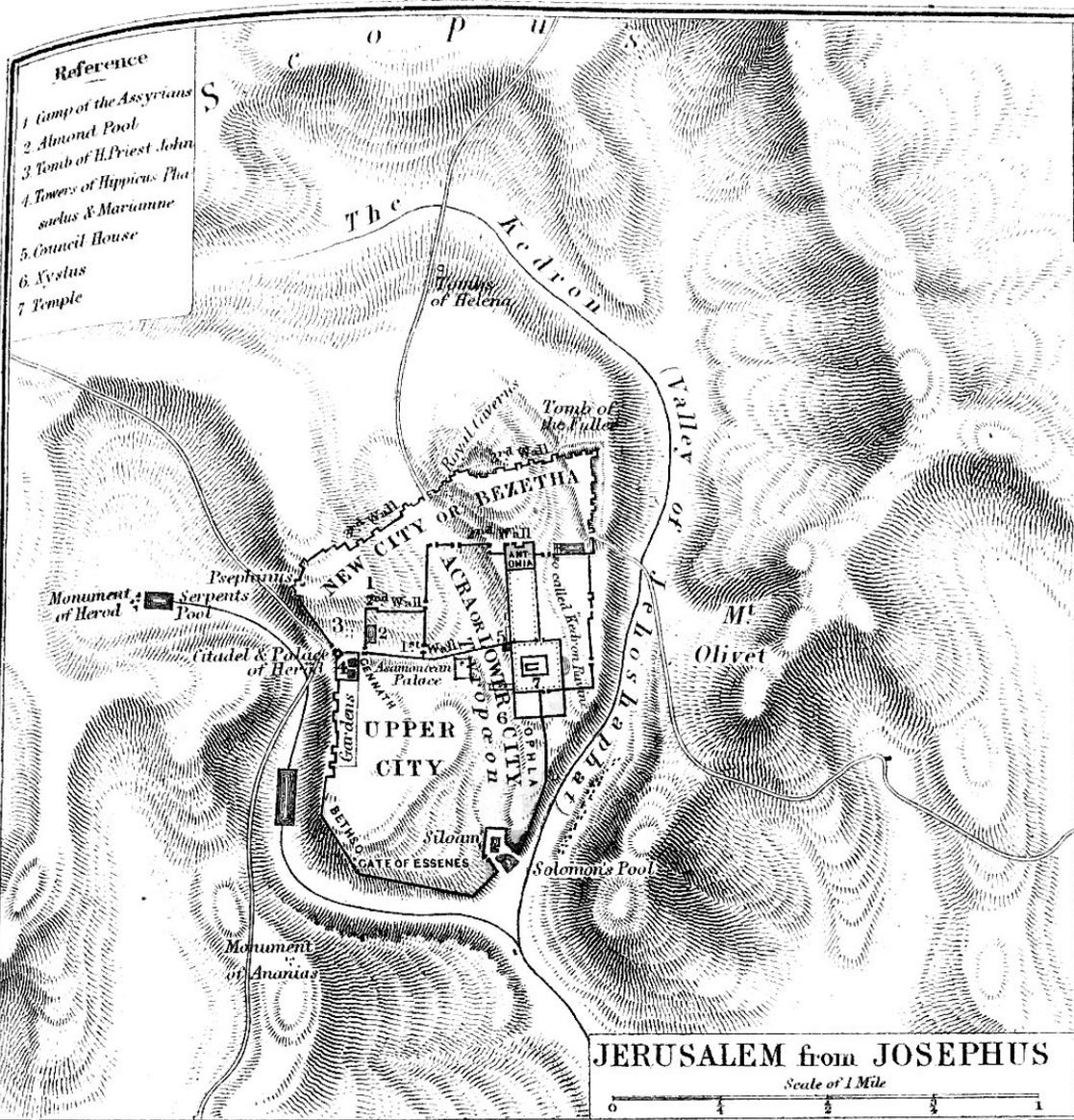
1. "Many." This does not refer to the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, although these were probably already in existence, but rather to a variety of imperfect accounts of our Lord's words and acts, taken down from the lips of those who had been "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," but not yet gathered into a sufficiently complete and orderly history. It seems probable that St. Luke had not seen St. Matthew's or St. Mark's Gospel.

2. "Which from the beginning" &c. This refers to "they" not to "us," and would be more clear if placed immediately after the "they," thus:—'even as they, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word delivered them unto us.' The "eye-witnesses" were the Apostles, and others who had known our Lord, a privilege St. Luke did not possess.

3. "Having had perfect understanding." This would be more exactly translated, 'having carefully traced out.' This no doubt St. Luke did by enquiring from various eye-witnesses, whose accounts he has, under the guidance of the Spirit of truth, cast into an orderly history.

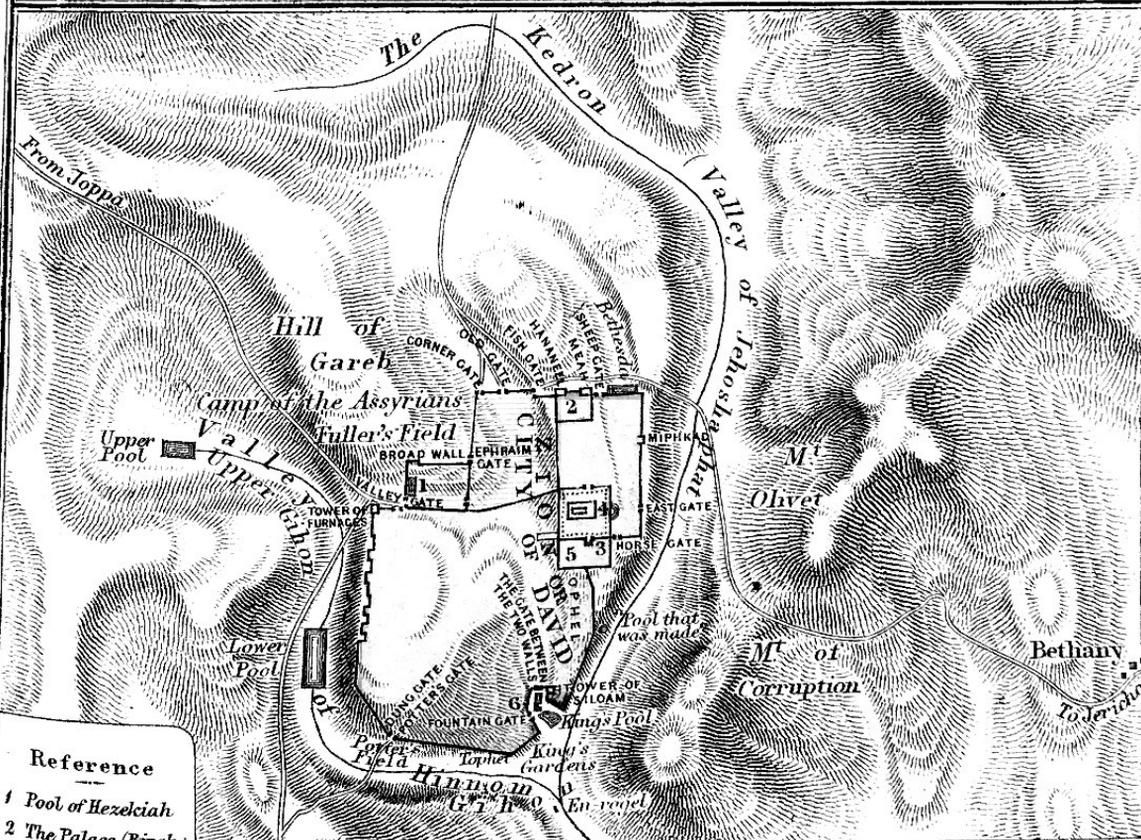
"In order." This gives St. Luke's design—that, namely, of supplying a full and orderly history of our Lord.

"Theophilus." There is no doubt that this was a *person*, although the name means 'Beloved of God,' and has by some been understood as a general address to all Christian readers. The word translated "most excellent" is the same which St. Paul uses in addressing the Roman governors Felix and Festus, where it is translated "most noble"; and from its use here we may probably gather that Theophilus was a person of some rank and importance, though it should be noticed that St. Luke omits the word in his opening of the Acts of the Apostles. Of course,



JERUSALEM from JOSEPHUS

Scale of 1 Mile



JERUSALEM from THE BIBLE

Scale of 1 Mile



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4 ^f that thou mightest know the certainty of those ^r things, wherein thou hast been instructed. ^r John 20. 31.

5 ¶ **T**HERE was ^s in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, ^h of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. The sixth year before the common date called Anno Domini 1. ^g Matt. 2. 1. ^h 1 Chron. 24. 10, 19. ⁱ Gen. 7. 1. & 17. 1. ¹ Kin. 9. 4. ² Kin. 20. 3. Job 1. 1. Acts 23. 1. & 24. 16. Phil. 3. 6.

6 And they were both ⁱ righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God ^k in the order of his course, ^k 1 Chron. 24. 19. ² Chron. 8. 14. & 31. 2.

although addressed to one particular person, St. Luke meant his Gospel for the Church at large. In these days books, meant for all, are frequently dedicated to some one person.

4. "Instructed." Literally, 'catechized' or instructed orally—that is, by word of mouth. Theophilus was evidently a convert to Christianity, and had been orally taught the truths of his adopted faith. The Evangelist would provide for him, and for all such, a *written* record to perpetuate, and secure from error, the oral teaching. This is one great object of the Holy Spirit in the fourfold Gospel record.

5—25. Announcement of the birth of St. John the Baptist.

5. "Herod." This was Herod the Great (See on St. Matt. ii. 1.).

"Of the course of Abia." The descendants of Aaron in the time of King David consisted of twenty-four families, and by the king's order (1 Chron. xxiv.) these families provided for the Temple services in turn, each undertaking them for a week. After the captivity only four of these families returned (Ezra ii. 36—39.), but these were again divided up into twenty-four, with the original names, so that the courses remained as before.

"Of the daughters of Aaron." The priestly families kept themselves very distinct, and did not intermarry much with others. Thus St. John the Baptist was, both by father and by mother, of the priestly race; and this was the only nobility among the Jews.

6. "Commandments and ordinances." These have been understood to mean the moral and ceremonial commands of the Law. When any are spoken of as "righteous" and "blameless," we must not understand it as meaning 'perfect,' but as having attained to such holiness as fallen human nature can by God's grace attain to.

7. "Well stricken." That is, 'far advanced.'

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9 according to the custom of the priest's office,
1 Ex. 30. 7, 8. his lot was ¹to burn incense when he went into
1 Sam. 2. 28. the temple of the Lord.
1 Chron. 23. 13.

10 ^m And the whole multitude of the people were
2 Chron. 29. 11. praying without at the time of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the
m Lev. 16. 17. Lord standing on the right side of ⁿthe altar of
Rev. 8. 3, 4. incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw *him*, ^ohe was trou-
o ver. 29. bled, and fear fell upon him.
Judg. 6. 22.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Za-
& 13. 22. charias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife
Dan. 10. 8. Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and ^pthou shalt call
ch. 2. 9. his name John.
Acts 10. 4.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and
Rev. 1. 17. ^qmany shall rejoice at his birth.
p ver. 60, 63.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the

9. "His lot was" &c. There being several priests of each family or course, the burning of incense, which was the most honourable of the priestly duties, was assigned to one of the number by lot. The incense was burnt morning and evening (Ex. xxx. 7, 8.), and was an emblem of prayer going up as a sweet savour before God (Compare Rev. viii. 3, 4.).

10. "The whole multitude." It is supposed from this that the day was the sabbath, or some high day.

11. "On the right side of the altar." The altar of incense stood inside the Holy Place, which none but the priests were permitted to enter. Beyond this again was the Holy of Holies, into which no one went except the High-priest once a year on the great Day of Atonement (See Heb. iii. 2—4.). The Table of Show-bread and the Golden Candlestick stood one on each side of the altar of incense.

13. "Thy prayer is heard." Zacharias had therefore prayed for a child. Possibly, being now old, he may have ceased to offer this prayer, thinking it was God's will not to grant it. But God may give us our heart's desire, when we least expect it; and prayers, which seemed in vain, may find their answer at last. Thus "men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (xviii. 1.).

"John." This name means 'The Lord is gracious,' and we can hardly believe that God would have specially revealed the name unless its meaning were intended to convey some truth or lesson.

14. "Many shall rejoice at his birth." This need not be confined to the "neighbours" and "cousins" who rejoiced at his birth (58.), but may also be spoken of the many who should have cause for joy in his birth, being brought to repentance and salvation through him. The Church keeps the Feast of the *Birth* of St. John the Baptist, most other Saints-days being kept on the supposed days of the *death* of those they commemorate.

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Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years."

15. "Shall drink" &c. This was a vow taken by the Nazarites,—a society of men who dedicated themselves to God's service, and led a very strict life (See Num. vi. 2—5.).

"Filled with the Holy Ghost." We may compare this verse with St. Paul's words, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18.).

"Even from his mother's womb." So do we believe that God bestows the Holy Spirit upon little children brought to Him in Baptism, to be their Guide and Sanctifier from the very first.

17. "Before Him." Literally this must mean "the Lord their God" spoken of in the verse before. But, as it is certainly said of Christ, before whom St. John the Baptist went as Forerunner, we see that St. Luke speaks of Christ as the Lord God.

"In the spirit and power of Elias." St. John the Baptist resembled the prophet Elijah both in his spirit of self-denying severity and in the power with which he roused the people to repentance (See on St. Matt. xi. 14.).

"To turn the hearts" &c. In the prophet Malachi the words are, "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers": that is, 'he shall draw together in bonds of loving unity those whom sin and selfishness had severed.' The Angel however alters the second part of the sentence, thus showing what is required to understand the prophet aright, namely, that this drawing of father to child and child to father is in reality a drawing of the wicked to the good. Some have seen in the fact that the Angel only speaks of the turning of the "*fathers to the children*" a declaration that those under the old covenant—"the fathers"—should be turned to those under the new—"the children"; or, in other words, that St. John the Baptist should be the link between the Law and the Gospel.

"The Lord." That is, our blessed Saviour, whom the Angel Gabriel acknowledges as 'Lord.'

18. "Whereby shall I know this?" It is said of Abraham, when he was promised a son in his old age, that, "being not weak in faith,"... "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief" (Rom. iv. 19, 20.). Zacharias was weak in faith, and so staggered at the promise, and questioned. The Virgin Mary also questioned as to the manner (34.), but doubted not as to the fact.

^r Num. 6. 3.
^r Judg. 13. 4.
^r ch. 7. 33.
^s Jer. 1. 5.
^s Gal. 1. 15.

^t Matt. 18. 14.
^t Mark 9. 12.

² Or, by.

Mal. 4. 6.

^u Gen. 17. 17.

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19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am
^y Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and
^y am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these
glad tidings.

^y Dan. 8. 16.
& 9. 21, 22,
23.
Matt. 18. 10.
Heb. 1. 14.
^z Ezek. 3. 26.
& 24. 27.

20 And, behold, ^z thou shalt be dumb, and not
able to speak, until the day that these things shall
be performed, because thou believest not my words,
which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and
marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22 And when he came out, he could not speak
unto them: and they perceived that he had seen
a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them,
and remained speechless.

^a See 2 Kin.
11. 5.
1 Chron.
9. 25.

23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as ^a the
days of his ministration were accomplished, he de-
parted to his own house.

24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth con-
ceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

19. "I am Gabriel," &c. This is said to show Zacharias the sin and folly of his doubts. Gabriel was the Angel sent to show Daniel the time of the coming of the Messiah (Dan. viii. 16. ix. 21.).

"That stand" ... "and am sent." Thus does the heavenly Messenger declare the twofold occupation of angelic beings. At one time they are rapt in blissful adoration; at another speeding on messages of mercy. The Seraphim, which Isaiah saw, had each one "six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet"—this was blessed adoration—, "and with twain he did fly"—this was active service.

20. "Thou shalt be dumb," &c. We find (See 62.) that Zacharias was struck deaf as well as dumb. The voice of the Law is silenced as the first notes of the voice of the Gospel are sounded.

"Because thou believest not" &c. Zacharias was struck dumb partly as a punishment for his doubts, but partly also to prove to him the truth of the Angel's words. Thus does God frequently unite chastisement and instruction.

21. "The people waited." It is doubtful whether it was the duty of the same priest who burnt incense to come forth and pronounce the blessing, for which it has been supposed the people were waiting. It is quite sufficient to know that the priest came forth from the holy place after fulfilling his office, and that Zacharias remained much longer within the veil than was usual (See on 11.).

22. "They perceived that he had seen a vision." By the signs he made, and his unusual manner and look.

23. "As soon as the days" &c. Thus Zacharias, though deaf and dumb, still continued to fulfil his priestly duties for the remainder of his week (See on 5.).

24. "Hid herself." Possibly giving herself to much prayer and

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25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein He looked on me, to ^btake away my reproach among men. ^b Gen. 30. 23. Isai. 4. 1. & 54. 1, 4.

26 ¶ And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, The sixth year before the common date called Anno Domini 1.

27 to a virgin ^cespoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ^c Matt. 1. 18. ch. 2. 4, 5.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, ^aHail, *thou that art* ²highly favoured, ^ethe Lord is with thee: blessed *art* thou among women. ^d Dan. 9. 23. & 10. 19.

29 And when she saw *him*, ^fshe was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. ² Or, graciously accepted, or, much graced: See ver. 30.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. ^e Judg. 6. 12. ^f ver. 12.

31 ^gAnd, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and ^hshalt call His name JESUS. ^g Isai. 7. 14. Matt. 1. 21. ^h ch. 2. 21.

32 He shall be great, ⁱand shall be called the Son ⁱ Mark 5. 7.

meditation, as one singled out by God for a special blessing. This seems almost implied in the next verse, as though the marvellous dealing of God with her were the reason for her retirement.

25. "My reproach." That is, the reproach of barrenness, always regarded as an affliction by Jewish wives.

26—38. The Annunciation.

26. "In the sixth month." That is, after the event last recorded, namely the conception of Elisabeth. The twenty-fifth of March is observed by the Church as the day of the Annunciation.

"Nazareth." A poor and despised town in Galilee, itself a despised district (See on St. Matt. ii. 23.).

28. "The angel came in." The Virgin Mary was then in some private chamber, and possibly, as she is commonly represented in pictures of the Annunciation, engaged in devotion.

"Highly favoured." The only other place where the same Greek word which is thus translated is used is in Eph. i. 6, where it is translated "accepted." The reading in the margin here—"graciously accepted"—expresses the meaning well.

29. "Troubled." Not with doubts or unbelief, but with confusion at the honour bestowed on her, and with wonder as to its nature, and as to the meaning of the heavenly salutation.

30. "Fear not, Mary." See how another Mary was comforted by the speaking of her name (St. John xx. 16.).

32. "Shall be called." This expression seems in Scriptural usage

- of the Highest: and ^k the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David:
- 33 ^l and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.
- 34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?
- 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, ^m The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called ⁿ the Son of God.
- 36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.
- 37 For ^o with God nothing shall be impossible.

to imply more than the mere words express (See on St. Matt. v. 9. and compare 35 and 36.). The Angel declares that the Child shall be, and shall be acknowledged to be, the Son of the Most High God (See viii. 28. where the devils thus acknowledge Him.).

32. "The throne of His father David:" &c. The Angel is here referring to the great prophecy of the Birth of Christ by Isaiah (ix. 6, 7.), where we read, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." The kingdom of Christ was to be set up first among the Jews, and though as a nation they have rebelled against their true King, yet His kingdom is for ever, for it is "not of this world," and into it the nations are gathered, "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." And then "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. xi. 25, 26.). From the words "His father David," we may be sure that the Virgin Mary was "of the house of David," as well as Joseph.

34. "How shall this be." Not spoken in doubt, but in wonder (See on 18.).

35. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," &c. This is the answer to the question of the verse before, and declares the miracle by which a virgin should conceive and bear a Child (See on St. Matt. i. 23.). The Church has always embodied in her creeds the truth that the ever-blessed Son of God was "conceived by the Holy Ghost." And thus we plead with Him in our beautiful Litany, saying, "By the mystery of Thy holy Incarnation." When Christ was pleased to take to Himself our nature that He might become Man and suffer and die for us, He entered not that nature as others do. He entered it by a miracle and a mystery.

36. "Behold, thy cousin Elisabeth," &c. Thus a sign, though unasked, is given to the blessed Virgin. She was probably not aware of all that had happened to her kinswoman Elizabeth, and the Angel informs her of this to confirm her own faith in the more marvellous blessing bestowed upon herself.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

39 ¶ And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, ^p into a city of Juda; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

^p Josh. 21. 9,
10, 11.

41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

42 and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, ^q Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb.

^q ver. 28.
Judg. 5. 24.

43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

38. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." These are words of lowly and entire submission to the will of God. The holy Virgin receives the most exalted of blessings in no other way than she would have received the bitterest of afflictions; because her one thought is to cast herself into God's Hands as the passive instrument of His will. A very great blessing is received by a humble Christian almost with as great fear and awe as a very great woe. The first thought, when it comes, should be, 'May it be to His glory whose will has thus ordained.'

39—56. The visit of the Virgin Mary to Elizabeth.

39. "A city of Juda." Hebron, which was one of the cities "in the mountains" allotted to the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 48 and 54.), is by an old tradition said to be the city here spoken of as the home of Zacharias and Elizabeth. This region was about a hundred miles distant from Nazareth. The visit of Mary to Elizabeth was probably for the sake of taking "sweet counsel together" concerning the wonderful revelations made to them.

41. "The babe leaped" &c. Thus the Forerunner, yet unborn, acknowledged the presence of his yet unborn Lord. And God at the same time filled Elizabeth with the Holy Ghost, inspiring her both to understand aright the movement of the child in her womb and to salute her highly-favoured kinswoman in the words which follow.

42. "Blessed art thou" &c. Mary had not told Elizabeth of the wonderful event which had happened to her. Elizabeth knew it by the power of the Holy Ghost, which became the Spirit of prophecy within her.

"The Fruit of thy womb." That is, "that holy Thing which shall be born of thee" (35), the everblessed Son of God, who, though "very and eternal God," yet "took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance," and thus was very God, and very Man (See Art. ii.).

43. "Whence is this to me," &c. Elizabeth, though the older of the

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

² Or, which believed that there.

45 And blessed is she ² that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

^r 1 Sam. 2. 1.
Ps. 34. 2, 3.
& 35. 9.
Hab. 3. 18.

46 And Mary said, ^r My soul doth magnify the Lord,

two, and as a married woman the superior, yet, knowing the wonderful honour bestowed on Mary, feels herself unworthy to receive one so highly favoured. That she had a clear insight given her into the blessedness of Mary's state is shown by her calling her "the mother of my Lord." Faith discerns the presence of Christ, where sight is helpless.

45. "Blessed is she that believed." We can hardly doubt that Elizabeth in uttering these inspired words must have felt their contrast with the different sentence pronounced upon Zacharias for his doubting. Mark how completely she speaks in the spirit of inspired prophecy, when she declares the fulfilment of the things told to Mary from the Lord. Mary did not need this assurance, yet it would help to strengthen her under the burden of a bliss almost beyond belief.

46. "And Mary said." Zacharias doubted, and was dumb. Mary believed, and broke forth into that glorious hymn of praise so familiar to us all in the constant use of it by the Church, which we know as the "Magnificat," that being the first word of it in the Latin translation.

THE "MAGNIFICAT," or Song of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord," &c. This "Song of the blessed Virgin Mary" bears a great resemblance to the Song of Hannah upon the birth of Samuel (1 Sam. ii. 1—10.). It is also framed upon the model of the Psalms, the great book of Jewish devotion.

"Throughout this hymn we are to hear the voice, not merely of the Virgin Mary celebrating the praises of Him who had so magnified her, but of the whole Church, of whom she was a type, giving thanks for the mystery of the Incarnation and the blessings of the Gospel. And it is on this account,—namely because the blessed Mary here speaks in the person of the Church,—that this hymn has been, from very early times, used in the public services of Christians.

"Go forth therefore, Christian soul, and magnify the Lord, and rejoice in God thy Saviour! But remember that, if thou wouldest thank God worthily for His mercy to the humble, thou must be very careful to be thyself humble.

"Joy and thankfulness do not necessarily lead to pride and self-exaltation; for, as we see in this hymn of the Virgin, there may be simple joy in God, unsullied by any thought of self. She forgets every thing else in the contemplation of God's exceeding goodness. Do thou, whenever thou takest on thy lips the words of her hymn of praise, whisper a secret prayer that God would give thee something of her spirit—the spirit of lowliness and thankful joy" (P. Young.).

47 and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 For ^a He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth ^t all generations shall call me blessed.

49 For He that is mighty ^u hath done to me great things; and ^x holy ^{is} His name.

50 And ^y His mercy ^{is} on them that fear Him from generation to generation.

51 ^z He hath shewed strength with His arm; ^a He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 ^b He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

53 ^c He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen His servant Israel, ^d in remembrance of His mercy;

¹ Sam. 1. 11.
Ps. 138. 6.
^t all Mal. 3. 12.
ch. 11. 27.
^u Ps. 71. 19.
& 126. 2, 3.
^x Ps. 111. 9.
^y Gen. 17. 7.
Ex. 20. 6.
Ps. 103. 17, 18.
^z Ps. 98. 1.
& 118. 15.
Isai. 40. 10.
& 51. 9.
& 52. 10.
^a Ps. 33. 10.
1 Pet. 5. 5.
^b 1 Sam. 2.
6, &c.
Job 5. 11.
Ps. 113. 6.
^c 1 Sam. 2. 5.
Ps. 34. 10.
^d Ps. 98. 3.
Jer. 31. 3, 20.

47. "God my Saviour." Not, as some have supposed, referring to the Child who was to be born to save His people from their sins, but spoken, in the more simple sense, of God the Father, who was indeed raising up a mighty salvation for her. We may note that St. Paul speaks of God the Father as "our Saviour" in one verse, and God the Son as "our Saviour" in the next (See Titus i. 3, 4.).

48. "The low estate." The blessed Virgin was poor and lowly in her worldly condition (See on ii. 7. and 24.). It may be well to mention here that the reason why the Prayer-book version of this hymn, and of those of Zacharias and of Simeon, differs in some few words (as here "lowliness" for "low estate") from the Bible is that all passages of Scripture quoted in the Prayer-book were, like the Psalms, taken from an older translation than that of our present Bible. When this latter was made, it was not thought well to alter the Prayer-book version, except in the case of the Epistles and Gospels, because the people were so familiar with the words that the change would have been unwelcome to them.

"Shall call me blessed." She is, in fulfilment of her own words, continually called the "*blessed*" Virgin Mary (See on xi. 27, 28.).

51. "He hath shewed strength" &c. This God did by His Son. Mary speaks, as is common in prophecy, of God's purposes as though already fulfilled. God's "Arm" is used for His power, as in Isai. liii. 1, where the prophet, foretelling the general unbelief in Christ, asks, "To whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?" The "proud," the "mighty" (52), and the "rich" (53), are the Scribes and Pharisees, the Chief-priests and Rulers of the people; together with all in all ages who have been, like them, proud and self-reliant. Some have in these words seen a prophecy of the victory of Christ over the powers of darkness.

54. "Holpen." This is only an old English form of the word 'helped.'

^e Gen. 17. 19. 55 "as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and
^f Ps. 132. 11. to his seed for ever.
^g Rom. 11. 28.
^h Gal. 3. 16.

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

ⁱ The fifth year before the common date called Anno Domini I. 57 ¶ Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and ^f they rejoiced with her.

^f ver. 14. 59 And it came to pass, that ^g on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

^h ver. 13. 60 And his mother answered and said, ^h Not so; but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

55. "To Abraham, and to his seed for ever." These words follow the word "mercy," and not "spake." The sense is—'In remembrance of His mercy to Abraham and to his seed for ever, as He spake to our fathers.' By "our fathers" are meant the "holy prophets, which have been since the world began" (70.). When the blessed Virgin spoke of the "seed" of Abraham, she probably had chiefly in view the mercies of God to His chosen people Israel (See on 32.): but her words bear their fullest and truest meaning when applied to the *spiritual* seed, or family, of Abraham, for "they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham" (Gal. iii. 7.).

56. "Returned to her own house." The holy Virgin had not yet told Joseph, to whom she was espoused, the great secret of the Angel's visit. She left that to be revealed as God willed. So Joseph's trouble and the Angel's visit to him (as related in St. Matt. i. 18—21.) must be placed at some period *after* her return to Nazareth.

57—80. The Birth of St. John the Baptist.

59. "The eighth day." The day appointed according to God's command to Abraham (Gen. x. 12.), and the Law of Moses (Lev. xii. 3.). Our blessed Lord was also circumcised on the eighth day (ii. 21.). A strong argument for Infant Baptism may be drawn from the fact that under the older Law infants of eight days old were brought into covenant with God. Surely the Gospel would not shut out where the Law opened. (See more fully on this point on St. Mark x. 14.)

"They called him." Literally, 'They were calling him.' They had not actually given the name, but were intending to do so. This does not include Elizabeth, who knew that the Angel had determined the name of the child (13.), as we learn from the next verse.

62. "They made signs." Plainly because Zacharias was deaf as well as dumb,

ST. LUKE, I.

63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, ¹His name is John. And they marvelled ¹ver. 13. all.

64 ^kAnd his mouth was opened immediately, and ^kver. 20. his tongue *loosed*, and he spake, and praised God.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these ²sayings were noised abroad throughout all ¹the hill country of Judæa. ² Or, *things*.
¹ ver. 39.
^m ch. 2. 19, 51.
ⁿ Gen. 39. 2.
Ps. 80. 17.
& 89. 21.
Acts 11. 21.
^o Joel 2. 28.
^p 1 Kings 1. 48.
Ps. 41. 13.
& 72. 18.
& 106. 48.

66 And all they that heard *them* ^mlaid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And ⁿthe hand of the Lord was with him. ^o Joel 2. 28.
^p 1 Kings 1. 48.

67 And his father Zacharias ^owas filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, ^o Joel 2. 28.
^p 1 Kings 1. 48.
Ps. 41. 13.
& 72. 18.
& 106. 48.

68 ^pBlessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for ^qHe hath visited and redeemed His people, ^q Ex. 3. 16.
& 4. 31.
Ps. 111. 9.
ch. 7. 16.

63. "A writing table." Or rather 'a writing-tablet,' "table" being used here, as when we speak of the two "tables of stone" on which the Commandments were written, of a flat surface. The writing-tablets used by the ancients were flat pieces of wood or metal thinly coated with wax, on which they wrote with a sharp-pointed iron pen.

"They marvelled all." Of course the friends and relatives did not know that the name John had been divinely revealed to Zacharias, and they were astonished that both he and his wife should fix on a name borne by no member of the family.

64. "His mouth was opened." We thus learn the exact meaning of the Angel's words, "until the day that these things shall be performed" (20.). The things the Angel had spoken were not performed until the name was given, for that formed part of the Angel's message (13.).

65. "And fear" &c. In this and the next verse St. Luke is describing the effect of the wonderful events he has recorded. Fear is natural to man when brought close to the unseen world. There is something awful in an event in which the Hand of God is plainly manifested.

67. "His father Zacharias" &c. Probably, as is generally understood, on the day of the Circumcision of his son, St. Luke returning to that day after describing briefly the effect of the events upon the hearers, and still more briefly the Divine guardianship exercised over the child in the words, "the Hand of the Lord was with him." Zacharias was "filled with the Holy Ghost," a special outpouring of the Divine Spirit being bestowed upon him, as a pledge that his doubting, of which we may be sure he had deeply repented, was forgiven, and also to inspire him with the noble song of thanksgiving which follows.

"Prophesied." Probably here used in its broader and commoner sense in the New Testament, of inspired utterance, rather than in its narrower sense of the foretelling of future events.

The "BENEDICTUS," or Song of Zacharias.

68. "Blessed be the Lord God" &c. The Song of Zacharias naturally divides itself into two parts, the first (68—75), praising God for the

ST. LUKE, II.

CHAPTER II.

The fourth year before the common date called Anno Domini 1.

1 *Augustus taxeth all the Roman empire.* 6 *The nativity of Christ.* 8 *One angel relateth it to the shepherds:* 13 *many sing praises to God for it.* 21 *Christ is circumcised.* 22 *Mary purified.* 28 *Simeon and Anna prophesy of Christ:* 40 *who increaseth in wisdom,* 46 *questioneth in the temple with the doctors,* 51 *and is obedient to His parents.*

AND it came to pass in those days, that there² went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be² taxed.
² Or, *enrolled.* 2 (^a *And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.*)
^a Acts 5. 37.

care and training and self-discipline with which those who seek the sacred office of the ministry should prepare themselves for their holy work?

CHAPTER II.

1—7. The Birth of our Lord.

St. Matt. i. 18—25.

1. "Cæsar Augustus." The Roman emperor at that time. 'Cæsar' was the general title of all the Roman emperors, and 'Augustus' was the title given by the Roman senate (or parliament) to this Cæsar. Other emperors however adopted this honourable name, as Nero (See on Acts xxv. 21.).

"That all the world should be taxed." "All the world" was the expression in use to signify the whole Roman empire, the Romans being at that time masters of all the known world. The word translated "taxed" would be more correctly translated 'enrolled,' as in the margin. The emperor had ordered a census to be taken of all countries under the Roman power.

2. "This taxing was first made" &c. Cyrenius (or Quirinus, as his name is in the Latin form,) seems to have been governor of Syria for a few years just before the birth of Christ, and again ten or eleven years afterwards. It is known that a census of the province of Syria (of which Judæa then formed a part) was made at this latter time, and this is the "taxing" referred to by Gamaliel (Acts v. 37.) as the occasion of certain disturbances. What then is the meaning of this much-disputed verse? Two explanations may be given as satisfactory. 1. St. Luke may refer to the census itself taken at the time of our Lord's Birth, and this (the first census of the Jews taken under Roman authority) may have been made under the direction of Cyrenius as governor of Syria. Judæa was not at that time a Roman province, but was governed by Herod, who however was under the power, and supported by the authority, of the Roman emperor. It is however very possible that Cyrenius may have had the general management of the

census in that part of the Roman dominion, Herod being required to make the return so far as regarded his own kingdom. There is no reason to suppose any money payment was exacted at the time of the enrolment of the names. 2. Another view, which has been widely received, would refer this verse to the completion of the census when Cyrenius was governor ten or eleven years later, or to its enforcement for the purpose of taxation. It is quite possible a beginning may have been made, in obedience to the emperor's decree, at the time of our Lord's Birth, but that the work may have been interrupted—perhaps by the death of Herod the Great, which took place very shortly afterwards—for some years, and resumed and completed by Cyrenius when again governor of Syria. This will be the more probable if we suppose that the census was undertaken by Cyrenius himself during his first government of Syria, and dropped when he left. Meanwhile Herod had died, his son and successor Archelaus had been banished by the Romans, and

ST. LUKE, II.

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto ^b the city of ^b 1 Sam. 16. 1, 4.
John 7. 42. David, which is called Bethlehem; (^c because he c Matt. 1. 16.
ch. 1. 27. was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 to be taxed with Mary ^d his espoused wife, being ^d ch. 1. 27. great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him

3. "And all went to be taxed," &c. This would not be the Roman way of taking the census, but would be very natural to the Jews, who were very careful as to their family lines, or genealogies. The Jews were at this time governed by a king of their own (See on St. Matt. ii. 1.), who, though under the power of Rome, would doubtless carry out the emperor's order for the census in the manner most acceptable to the Jews, that is, by having everyone enrolled in the place to which his family belonged. How little did the emperor who ordered the census, or the king who enforced it, suspect that he was helping to accomplish the fore-ordained and foretold purposes of God as to the place of the Saviour's Birth.

4. "From Galilee," &c. The distance from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judæa was about seventy miles, and the journey was probably made on foot.

"House and lineage." That is, 'family and line of descent.'

5. "With Mary." It was not compulsory upon women to appear personally in order to be enrolled in the census, either by Roman or by Jewish law. But we can well understand that Mary, to whose promised Child was to be given "the throne of His father David", would desire to record herself with all due care of the line of David and in the city of David (See on i. 32.). She may also have desired to be under the pious care of Joseph, to whom the mystery of the Incarnation had been divinely revealed (See St. Matt. i. 20, 21.).

"Espoused." Literally this word means betrothed, but not yet married. Among the Jews however the espousals formed a rite little less binding than that of actual marriage, and the word "wife" being here used, it is probable that Joseph had already obeyed the Angel's command and taken Mary to be his wife, so far as to receive her into his house, and to be her guardian and protector (See St. Matt. i. 24.).

Judæa had been made a Roman province, and joined to that of Syria. Or we may suppose that, the census being made at the time of our Lord's Birth, it was first put in force as a means of taxing the people when Cyrenius became governor, on which occasion disturbances took place, as named by St. Luke himself (Acts v. 37.). The fact that St. Luke was well acquainted with this "taxing" under Cyrenius ten or eleven years after

our Lord's Birth, and in narrating the speech of Gamaliel uses precisely the same word for it—'enrolment'—as here, is an argument of some weight in favour of the second of the above explanations. The same may be said of the word "first," which would surely be omitted if the Evangelist simply meant to say that the "taxing" was made while Cyrenius was governor.

7. "Firstborn." See on St. Matt. i. 25.

in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 ¶ And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping ² watch over their flock by night.

² Or, *the night watches.*

^e ch. 1. 12.
^f ver. 31, 32.
Gen. 12. 3.
Matt. 28. 19.
Mark 1. 15.
ch. 24. 47.
Col. 1. 23.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: ^e and they were sore afraid.

^g Isai. 9. 6.
^h Matt. 1. 21.
ⁱ Matt. 1. 16.
& 16. 16.
ch. 1. 43.
Acts 2. 36.
& 10. 36.
Phil. 2. 11.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy; which shall be to all people.

11 ^g For unto you is born this day in the city of David ^h a Saviour, ⁱ which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall

7. "In a manger." It was an old belief that the birthplace of Christ was a mere cave in the rock, such places being frequently used for stables in the East.

"There was no room for them in the inn." Had they been rich and great they would doubtless have been received into the inn. Room would have been found for them then. Mark how these people by shutting out the poor shut out Christ. May it not be that, if we opened the door of our hearts to the poor, Christ might be born in us? Is it never the case that we can find room enough for this world and the things of this world, but no room for Christ and for those that belong to Him? Let us also think how fitting a beginning this was of the life of Him who was "despised and rejected of men," and who had "not where to lay His head." Who then will dare to despise the poor (See St. James ii. 6.)? And who will not rather echo the Lord's own words, and say, "Blessed be ye poor" (vi. 20.)?

8—20. The vision to the Shepherds.

8. "Shepherds." David was once a shepherd at Bethlehem, and doubtless often watched his father Jesse's sheep on these same pastures. The country not being enclosed by fences, as with us, it was needful that the shepherds should be constantly keeping watch over their flocks.

9. "Came upon them." Suddenly and unexpectedly descending from heaven and appearing to them.

10. "I bring you good tidings." The word thus translated is the same which is used for preaching the Gospel, and from which the word 'Evangelist' is formed. This Divine messenger was the first preacher of the Gospel, and the first congregation was formed of a few poor shepherds.

"To all people." Literally, 'to all *the* people,' meaning probably the Jewish people, to whom the first offer of salvation was to be made.

11. "Christ the Lord." Thus does the Angel bear witness to the truth that Jesus was both the promised Messiah—the 'Anointed' (See on St. Matt. i. 1),—and also "the Lord," to be adored in His Divine nature as Lord of heaven and earth.

11. "A Saviour." See on St. Matt. i. 21.

find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13^k And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14¹ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth ^mpeace, ⁿgood will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, ²the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19^o But Mary kept all these things, and pondered ^othem in her heart.

^k Gen. 28. 12.
& 32. 1, 2.
Ps. 103. 20, 21.
& 148. 2.
Dan. 7. 10.
Heb. 1. 14.
Rev. 5. 11.
¹ ch. 19. 38.
Eph. 1. 6.
& 3. 10, 21.
Rev. 5. 13.
^m Isai. 57. 19.
ch. 1. 79.
Rom. 5. 1.
Eph. 2. 17.
Col. 1. 20.
ⁿ John 3. 16.
Eph. 2. 4, 7.
² Thess. 2. 16.
¹ John 4. 9,
10.
² Gr. *the men the shepherds.*
^o ver. 51.
Gen. 37. 11.
ch. 1. 66.

13. "The heavenly host." The host—or army—of Angels who surround the throne of God, and of whom the Saviour spoke when He said He could, if He willed, call to His aid "more than twelve legions of Angels" (St. Matt. xxvi. 53.). We read that when the foundations of the world were laid "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job xxxviii. 7.). Now the new creation begins; and again all heaven rings with shouts of joy.

14. "Glory to God in the highest," &c. The Angels' joy is no selfish joy. They praise God for His "good will toward men." So in the wonderful visions of the Revelation we find the Angels singing the praises of the "Lamb that was slain," though He was slain not for them but for us (See Rev. v. 12.). "In the highest" means 'in heaven.'

17. "They made known abroad" &c. Thus will all who have themselves received and believed the "good tidings of great joy" seek to make them known to others. Probably the influence of these poor shepherds was not great enough to produce much effect, and the time was not come yet for the fuller manifestation of the Messiah. Yet some doubtless believed the shepherds' tale, and waited, like Simeon, for "the consolation of Israel" (25.).

19. "Pondered." That is, 'meditated upon.' It was quite in

14. "On earth peace." See on St. Matt. x. 34.

"Good will toward men." A different reading is found in many very old copies of this Gospel, which by the addition of a single letter alters the meaning of these words into 'toward (or among) men of good-will'—that is, men of God's good-will, blessed and favoured by Him. If that reading be the true one, the Angels'

song would then be best translated and stopped thus: 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth; peace among the men of God's favour.' We must remember that the stops are no part of the original Gospel, being added at a much later date (See Note on St. Mark iii. 19.). The reading however adopted by our own translators is on the whole to be preferred.

ST. LUKE, II.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

The third year before the common date called Anno Domini 1.
 p Gen. 17. 12.
 Lev. 12. 3.
 ch. 1. 59.
 q Matt. 1. 21.
 25.
 ch. 1. 31.
 r Lev. 12. 2, 3, 4, 6.

21 ¶ And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, His name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

22 ¶ And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present *Him* to the Lord;

accordance with the blessed Virgin's character to store up in her memory, and secretly muse upon, the wonderful words she heard (See 51.). In the few places in which she is mentioned she appears thoughtful and meditative as well as meek and retiring.

20. "Returned." That is, to their former employment. What a thankful holy joy must have brightened all their after toils, and how often must they have conversed together of that wonderful night, in which they had heard and seen so great and glorious things.

21. The Circumcision.

21. "When eight days" &c. Jesus submits to the requirements of the Law, though needing them not (See on St. Matt. iii. 15.). By His Circumcision He also acknowledges Himself of the seed of Abraham (See also on i. 59.). The Circumcision of Christ is kept upon the first day of the year, being eight days after Christmas Day. So early does our Saviour begin to taste the cup of pain.

"The year begins with Thee,
 "And Thou beginn'st with woe."

(*Christian Year.*)

The ceremony of circumcision was held to signify the renouncing of all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and this lesson is well drawn out in the Collect for the day:—"Almighty God, who madest Thy blessed Son to be circumcised, and obedient to the law for man; Grant us the true Circumcision of the Spirit; that, our hearts, and all our members, being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey Thy blessed will; through the same Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

22—38. The Purification. Simeon and Anna.

22. "The days of her purification." Forty days. The law concerning purification will be found in Lev. xii.

"To present Him to the Lord." Observe how our Church, following the example of holy Scripture, centres our attention on the

22. "*Her purification.*" It is right to point out that the word "her" is a correction of the original word, which means 'their,' being in the plural. This latter should certainly have been retained, as there is little doubt it was so written by St. Luke. Nor need any one scruple to include the Infant Jesus in the purification, who remembers that He was circumcised and baptized for us, in all things being "made like unto His brethren" (Heb. ii. 17.), sin only excepted.

St. LUKE, II.

23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, ^s Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) Ex. 22. 29. & 34. 19. Num. 3. 13. & 8. 17. & 18. 15.

24 and to offer a sacrifice according to ^t that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons. Ex. 13. 2. Lev. 12. 2, 6, 8.

25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, ^u waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. u ver. 38. Isai. 40. 1. Mark 15. 43.

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not ^x see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. x Ps. 89. 48. Heb. 11. 5.

27 And he came ^y by the Spirit into the temple: y Matt. 4. 1.

Divine Child instead of on the human mother, entitling the Feast of the Purification (Feb. 2.), "The Presentation of Christ in the Temple," commonly called, "The Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin," and in the beautiful Collect for the Day drawing her lesson entirely from the Presentation of Christ, while no mention is made of the Virgin Mary.

23. "Every male that openeth the womb." That is, every first-born son. When God slew all the first-born in Egypt, He commanded that all the first-born of the children of Israel should be counted holy and dedicated to Him, and be redeemed, or bought back, by a payment of five shekels for each. Afterwards the tribe of Levi was taken by God in the place of the first-born of the whole nation, but these were still presented as an offering to God, and redeemed.

24. "A pair of turtledoves," &c. Rich women offered a lamb with a turtle-dove or young pigeon at their purification. The Virgin's offering was the offering of the poor (Lev. xii. 8.). Yet in very truth did this blessed Mother offer that Lamb, of which all the others were but types, for she brought with her the very "Lamb of God." The whole world would have been an offering nothing-worth compared to this.

25. "Waiting for the consolation of Israel." That is, for the coming of Him who was to save and deliver Israel (See 38.). It would seem from Simeon's words (32.) that he had been blessed with a clearer insight into the true nature of the "consolation of Israel" than many others. He did not look for a mere temporal or national deliverance, but for one in which Gentile would share as well as Jew. St. Paul when in Rome declared that he was a prisoner "for the hope of Israel" (Acts xxviii. 20.).

26. "It was revealed unto him" &c. We are not told how this revelation was made, except that, being "by the Holy Ghost," it was some inward intimation, not one made by an Angel or in a dream. It was probably of the nature of a prophecy.

"The Lord's Christ." "The Lord" is plainly here used for God the Father.

27. "By the Spirit." Feeling an impulse within him, which was in truth the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

and when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the law,

28 then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, ^z now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word:

30 for mine eyes ^a have seen Thy salvation,

31 which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

32 ^b a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

33 And Joseph and His mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of Him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary His mother, Behold, this *Child* is set for the ^c fall

“The parents.” Joseph stood in the place of a parent, though not really one (See on 48.).

28. “Then took he Him” &c. It had been revealed to Simeon that he should see Christ, and lo! he holds Him in his very arms. How blessed must that moment have been to the aged saint. Let us too wait for Christ in the daily use of the means of grace, and to us too will He come.

The “NUNC DIMITTIS,” or Song of Simeon.

29. “Lord, now lettest Thou” &c. The Song of Simeon is a short hymn of thankful readiness to die now that he had seen Him who was come to bring salvation to all mankind. Simeon doubtless felt that the time of his departure was at hand. But God was making that departure very peaceful and blessed, and so he says, ‘Lord, now art Thou dismissing Thy servant in peace.’

“According to Thy word.” That is, the promise that had been made to him by a special revelation (26.).

31. “All people.” This in the original is plural—‘all peoples, or ‘nations’; not, as in the Angel’s message to the shepherds, ‘all the ‘people’ (See on 10.).

32. “A light to lighten” &c. It needed a miraculous vision to teach St. Peter what Simeon here plainly declares (See Acts x. 11—16.). Observe, he not only declares that Christ should bring the Gentiles out of darkness to the true light, but also puts the Gentiles before the people of Israel. Fitly do we Gentiles use this holy song in our public worship, as a hymn of thanksgiving for that Salvation of which we have read in the second Evening Lesson and the knowledge of which should make us ready to depart in peace, whenever God shall call.

34. “Behold, this Child is set” &c. ‘Appointed for the fall and ‘rising of many’. It would be clearer if the word “again” were omitted in the English, as it makes it appear as though the *same* persons were to fall and rise again, which is not the sense. Some should fall, and some rise. Many would be offended at Christ, and refuse to believe, and to such He would be “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence”

and rising again of many in Israel; and for ^d a sign ^d Acts 28. 22. which shall be spoken against;

35 (yea, ^e a sword shall pierce through thy own ^e Ps. 42. 10. soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be ^e John 19. 25. revealed.

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

(1 St. Pet. ii. 8.), so that they should fall and perish. Others would believe and be saved, being raised up by Christ to new life here and eternal life hereafter.

“A sign which shall be spoken against.” A “sign” because “set” by God in the world as a witness of the truth (See St. John xviii. 37.), and yet one which would meet with constant opposition and rejection.

35. “Yea, a sword” &c. Simeon having named the opposition of men to Christ, foretells the anguish in store for the Virgin mother. Doubtless the bitter malice of men against her Divine Son would be to her “like the piercings of a sword” (Prov. xii. 18.). But above all would the sword enter her very soul in the hour of the Saviour’s Crucifixion, of which, as we know, she was a witness (St. John xix. 26.).

“That the thoughts” &c. These words are to be joined in sense with the last verse, the saying concerning the “sword” being a parenthesis—that is, a short sentence introduced into the middle of another. The presence of Christ in the world as a sign rejected by many would be a touchstone to reveal the nature of men’s hearts, showing whose thoughts were humble and lowly and teachable, and whose were proud and obstinate, who were really ready to receive the Messiah, and who were not.

36. “Anna, a prophetess.” She, as was the case with other holy women (See Acts xxi. 9.), had been gifted with certain revelations by the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, probably in the sense of foretelling future events, rather than in that of mere inspired teaching (See on i. 67.).

“Of the tribe of Aser.” That is, Asher, as the name is spelt in the Old Testament. This was one of the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel carried away captive by the King of Assyria (2 Kings xvii. 6.) more than 700 years before the Birth of Christ. These ten tribes never returned to their own land, but it is very probable that some families from among them may have escaped and remained in the kingdom of Judah, especially as we find that when Hezekiah king of Judah, six years before the carrying away of Israel, invited the people of both kingdoms to join in keeping a solemn Passover at Jerusalem, some of the tribe of Asher came (2 Chron. xxx. 1—11.). It is easy to suppose that some of those who thus obeyed the king of Judah’s invitation may have found refuge in his kingdom, when their own people were carried away into captivity. They would then share in the fortunes of the kingdom of Judah, which was afterwards carried into captivity to Babylon (2 Kings xxv. 1—11.), but after seventy years returned to their own land, as told us in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

37 and she *was* a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers ^fnight and day.

^f Acts 26. 7.
¹ Tim. 5. 5.

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that ^slooked for redemption in ²Jerusalem.

^s ver. 25.
Mark 15. 43.
ch. 24. 21.

² Or, *Israel*.

39 ¶ And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

^h ver. 52.
ch. 1. 80.

40 ^h And the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him.

ⁱ Ex. 23. 15,
17. & 34. 23.
Deut. 16. 1,
16.

41 ¶ Now His parents went to Jerusalem ⁱevery year at the feast of the passover.

42 And when He was twelve years old, they went A. D. 8. up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

37. "A widow of about fourscore and four years." Whether this describes Anna's entire age, or only the length of time she had been a widow is uncertain.

"Departed not from the temple." That is, she was constant in her attendance at all the Temple services and hours of prayer.

38. "To all them that looked" &c. Thus there were some in Jerusalem at that time waiting in hope for the promised redemption, and who, like Simeon and Anna, were ready to receive their Redeemer, not as an earthly Prince and Deliverer, but as God should reveal Him.

39, 40. The Return to Nazareth, and Childhood of Jesus.

40. "Grew, and waxed strong in spirit." Thus did the eternal Son of God humble Himself, "being found in fashion as a Man" (See on Phil. ii. 8.). He *emptied* Himself, as the word "humbled" in the Philippians literally means, of His Divine glories, that, as Man, He might grow and increase (See on 52.).

41—52. Jesus visiting the Temple when twelve years old.

41. "His parents" &c. So called, (See on 27.). It was commanded in the Law that every male among the Israelites should attend the three great feasts—the Passover, the feast of Pentecost or of Weeks, and the feast of Tabernacles,—at Jerusalem every year (See Ex. xxiii. 14—17.). Of these the Passover was the most solemn and important. The Virgin Mary's attendance at the Feast was an act of devotion not commanded by the Law.

42. "When He was twelve years old." At that age Jewish children were called 'Sons of the Law,' and began to attend the Passover and other public rites of the Jewish Church. This is the one only

39. "They returned into Galilee." Upon the order of events at this time see *Note* on "There came wise men", St. Matt. ii. i.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the Child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it. A. D. 8.

44 But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought Him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And ^kall that heard Him were astonished at his understanding and answers. ^k Matt. 7. 28.
Mark 1. 22.
ch. 4. 22, 32.
John 7. 15,
46.

48 And when they saw Him, they were amazed: and His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast Thou

glimpse permitted us of our Lord's early years. Holy Scripture draws a veil over thirty years of our Lord's life, which is only here lifted for a few moments. Surely this is in order to centre our attention upon the great three years of His public ministry among men. The Bible teaches by its *silences*, as well as by its words (See on St. Mark i. 9.).

43. "The days." That is, the week of the Paschal feast (Ex. xii. 15, 16.).

44. "Supposing Him" &c. This was very natural, for the Jews travelled up to the feasts in great numbers, friends and neighbours forming large companies for the journey. Families might therefore easily become separated on the road, and this would cause no uneasiness, as they would find each other readily when they halted for the night. It has been well remarked on this passage that Christ is very often lost in the company of our friends and acquaintances, but very seldom found there. If we would find Him, we must seek Him in His Father's house.

46. "After three days." That is, from the time when they left Jerusalem. The first day's journey would be one day, the return to Jerusalem the second, and the next day, the third, they found Him.

"The doctors." Scribes and learned men, whose business it was to instruct the young in the Law, and who held classes for such instruction in rooms attached to the Temple.

"Both hearing them," &c. It is a mistake to suppose that our Lord was at this time taking the place of Teacher and instructing the learned men. He was rather being taught and questioned by them, though He in His wisdom asked questions also of His teachers, as was customary with the pupils in the Jewish schools. It was however His *answers* rather than His questions which caused the astonishment of all that heard Him.

48. "Amazed." Doubtless because this seeming neglect of them was so different from His usual thoughtful attention to their every wish.

ST. LUKE, II.

- A. D. S. thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have
12th Year of our Lord's life. sought Thee sorrowing.
- 1 John 2. 16. 49 And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about ¹ My Father's business?
- m ch. 9. 45. & 18. 34. 50 And ^m they understood not the saying which He spake unto them.
- n ver. 19. Dan. 7. 28. 51 And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but His mother ⁿ kept all these sayings in her heart.
- o ver. 40. 1 Sam. 2. 26. 52 And Jesus ^o increased in wisdom and ² stature, and in favour with God and man.
- 2 Or, age.

“Thy father.” So the Divine Child had *hitherto* called Joseph, who stood to Him in the place of earthly father (See on 27.). Now He corrects the expression (See on next verse.). We may observe that the mother speaks (not Joseph), as having the greater right to do so.

49. “How is it that ye sought Me?” Jesus expresses surprise, as though Mary and Joseph might have known that, if not with them, it could only be because a Greater than they had called Him from them.

“About My Father's business.” Literally, ‘among the things of ‘My Father,’ and therefore perhaps, as many ancient interpreters understand the words, ‘in My Father's house.’ No doubt great force is to be laid upon the words “My Father.” The Virgin Mary had just said “Thy father,” speaking of Joseph. Her holy Child now, as it seems, for the first time openly claims His heavenly parentage, and corrects her, as though saying, ‘Nay, it is *My Father* who has kept Me from thee. ‘I am doing My Father's work,—engaged in those holy things which ‘belong to Him.’ Henceforth Joseph is heard of no more; and there can be no doubt that he died before the time of our Lord's public ministry (See on St. John ii. 12.). It was an ancient tradition that he was much older than the Virgin Mary, as he is always represented in pictures.

50. “They understood not” &c. We cannot suppose that they ever forgot the Angel's wondrous words, which declared that the Child of Mary should be “called the Son of God” (i. 35.). But doubtless they understood not the full depth and meaning of the saying they had just heard, and in which the Child they were nurturing for God perhaps first spoke of the work He had come to do.

51. “Subject unto them.” That is, obedient. After this one glimpse of a duty and a work which would one day call Him from all human ties, He returns to His former course of holy subjection. For eighteen more years, lowly, sinless, unknown, He veils His Divine powers, and grows to the perfection of His adopted human nature.

“His mother kept” &c. Doubtless storing them up with the certainty that in patient waiting she should learn their full meaning (See on 19.).

52. “Jesus increased” &c. This verse alone is a proof that Christ was perfect Man as well as perfect God. He submitted to the laws and conditions of that nature which He had taken to Himself. Thus, as

¹ *The preaching and baptism of John: 15 his testimony of Christ. 20 Herod imprisoneth John. 21 Christ baptized, receiveth testimony from heaven. 23 The age, and genealogy of Christ from Joseph upwards.*

NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa,

His "human flesh" grew in stature, so His "reasonable soul" increased in wisdom. As Man, He laid aside while on earth the exercise of that Divine Omniscience (that is, knowledge of all things) which belonged to Him of right as God (See on 40. and St. Matt. xxiv. 36.). Many very blessed thoughts flow from the truth here revealed to us. Among others it is a very blessed thing to know that Jesus has sanctified for us every age—Childhood, Boyhood, Youth, Manhood,—by passing through all, and showing forth in turn the graces and perfection of each. It was the opinion of St. Cyril (a writer who lived about 400 years after Christ) that the Divine nature of our Lord revealed itself in proportion with the growth of His human nature.

"In favour with God and man." The word translated "favour" is the same which is often translated 'grace,' and "with" means either 'towards' or 'in the sight of.' Thus we must not suppose the Evangelist to assert (as some might fancy from the English version) that Jesus gradually gained the favourable regard of God, as though He had ever been without it. The words rather mean that He grew in *grace* (See 40.) in the sight of both God and man. Or, if we prefer to retain "favour," that He received more and more outward marks and evidences of God's favour, as well as man's goodwill. It is probable that He was known to but a small circle, it being His holy will to live in retirement in His humble home until the time for His greater work was come, but as yet man's enmity was not roused against Him, because He did not yet expose man's sin (See on iv. 16.).

CHAPTER III.

1—18. The preaching of John the Baptist.

St. Matt. iii. 1—12. St. Mark i. 1—8.

1. "Tiberius Cæsar." He was the emperor of Rome next after Augustus (See on ii. 1.) from A.D. 15 to A.D. 37.

"Pontius Pilate." Roman governor (strictly 'procurator') of Judæa. After the banishment of Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, Judæa became a Roman province, or rather a division of the larger province of Syria (See on ii. 2.). Like other such divisions of provinces, it had its own governor, called a 'procurator', for the collection of taxes and administering of justice, and, although he was strictly speaking only a subordinate ruler under the governor general of the province, yet he was very often left much to his own discretion, and exercised considerable power. Cæsarea was made the capital under the Roman governors, who held their court there; but they often went to Jerusalem, especially at the time of the great festivals, when their presence, with that of their troops, was sometimes needed for the sake of order

ST. LUKE, III.

A. D. 26. and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

^a John 11.
49, 51.
& 18. 13.
Acts 4. 6.

2 ^a Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

^b ch. 1. 77. 3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance ^b for the remission of sins;

4 as it is written in the book of the words of ^c John 1. 23. Esaias the prophet, saying, ^c **The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.**

(See on St. Matt. xxvii. 2. St. John xviii. 3.). Pontius Pilate was the sixth governor since the banishment of Archelaus, and he had now been three years in office. He was cruel and overbearing, and especially disliked the Jews, over whom he was placed, and whom he had deeply offended by his open contempt for their religion (See farther on St. John xix. 14, 16.).

“Herod being tetrarch of Galilee.” This was Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great (See on St. Matt. xiv. 1.), and the same who beheaded John the Baptist.

“Philip.” This was another son of Herod the Great, but not the Philip whose wife Herodias Herod Antipas had taken (19.), and who was his half-brother. Herod the Great named two sons Philip. Philip the “tetrarch” was the best of Herod’s family. Ituræa and Trachonitis were regions lying beyond the Jordan Eastward from Galilee (See Map.).

“Lysanias.” Nothing is known of Lysanias. He ruled, under the title of ‘tetrarch,’ a small district to the north of the Holy Land, lying along the Eastern side of the range of Mount Lebanon (See Map.).

2. “Annas and Caiaphas.” According to the Jewish law, there could be but one High-priest, and he held his office for life. However Herod first, and afterwards the Romans, abused their power by making any changes they pleased, for the sake of putting their own friends into the office. Thus Annas was deposed by the Romans, and after several others had held the office for a short time, his son-in-law Caiaphas was appointed. It appears that Annas, though deprived of his office, had not seriously offended the Romans, since he seems to have been allowed to exercise a sort of joint authority with Caiaphas, and it is probable that the Jews would privately recognize him as the lawful High-priest, just as we should recognize the Archbishop of Canterbury as the lawful Archbishop, if expelled from his office by some foreign power (See farther on St. John xviii. 13.).

“The word of God came” &c. That is, John the Baptist received a special command from God to begin his preaching. The same expression is used of the inspiration of the prophets in the Old Testament (See Jer. i. 2, 4, 11, 13.). John was at this time in retirement “in the wilderness” (See on i. 80.), and, like Jesus Himself, about thirty years of age.

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; A. D. 26.

6 and ^d all flesh shall see the salvation of God. ^d Ps. 98. 2.
Is. 40. 3, 4, 5. Isai. 52. 10.
ch. 2. 10.

7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits ² worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. ² Or, meet for.

5. "Every valley" &c. St. Luke quotes the prophecy at greater length than St. Matthew and St. Mark, who only give the first verse of the passage (i. e. Isai. xl. 3.). Here we have all three verses, and the comment upon it has therefore been left for this Gospel. The figure seems taken from the ancient custom of sending forward a body of men (pioneers) to make or repair the road by which some great person—such as a king with his attendants, or a general with his army—was about to travel. The first and nearer subject of this beautiful prophecy is the return of the Jews from their captivity, the prophet beholding them in his vision as a mighty army marching through the wilderness back to their own land, the Lord going before them as their Deliverer and Leader. But *to us* the farther and more glorious fulfilment so stands out in the front that this its earlier fulfilment is almost hidden from sight. *To us* the great Person in the prophecy is the everblessed Son of God. The road is to be made in the hearts of men that He may enter in and dwell there. Thus the valleys would represent sloth and unbelief and all sins of omission, which must be filled up by the diligent adding of grace to grace (2 St. Peter i. 5—7.). The mountains would mean pride and haughtiness and self-will and obstinacy, which must be humbled and cast down. The crooked places would signify all sorts of deceit and guile and hypocrisy and untruthfulness. The rough ways would picture anger, strife, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. It is by the removal of all these obstacles—these stumbling-blocks of iniquity (See Ezek. xiv. 3.)—that a road can be made in our hearts such as the Lord will pass over. Yet He who desires the road to be made will in mercy Himself send those who shall make it:—He who would find a way into our hearts will send His Holy Spirit to prepare the way before Him.

6. "All flesh." That is, all mankind; yet not at once, but as it shall please God in the unfolding of His gracious purposes, and according to the faithfulness of those who bear the commission to "preach the Gospel to every creature" (St. Mark xvi. 15.).

7. "To the multitude." But addressing his words, as we find from St. Matthew, especially to the Scribes and Pharisees and such as came to him in hypocrisy and without true repentance.

A. D. 26. 9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of
 • Matt. 7. 19. the trees: ° every tree therefore which bringeth not
 forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

r Acts 2. 37. 10 And the people asked him, saying, f What shall
 we do then?

g ch. 11. 41. 11 He answereth and saith unto them, g He that
 2 Cor. 8. 14. hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath
 James 2. none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.
 15, 16.
 1 John 3.

17. & 4. 20. 12 Then h came also publicans to be baptized, and
 h Matt. 21. said unto him, Master, what shall we do?
 32.

ch. 7. 29. 13 And he said unto them, i Exact no more than
 i ch. 19. 8. that which is appointed you.

2 Or, Put 14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him,
 no man in saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto
 fear. them, 2 Do violence to no man, k neither accuse any
 k Ex. 23. 1. Lev. 19. 11. falsely; and be content with your 3 wages.
 3 Or, allowance.

10. "What shall we do then?" That is, as a proof of true repentance. Some of those so sternly addressed as a "generation of vipers" no doubt felt anxious to make their repentance real. They had come as hypocrites; but they had borne, and been moved by, the stern rebuke they had received, and would stay as penitents.

This and the next four verses contain a most valuable portion of the Baptist's teaching only found in this Gospel. They show us how he applied his doctrine to various classes of persons.

11. "He that hath two coats," &c. The principle running through the Baptist's three answers in this passage is that of putting his finger upon the besetting sin, and saying, 'If you would bring forth fruits of penitence, cure this first.' We may therefore be sure that want of charity to the poor was a very general besetting sin among those whom he addressed, who were probably of the class most able to give, since the publicans and soldiers came separately (See xi. 41.).

12. "Also publicans." The collectors of the public taxes for the Romans (See on St. Matt. v. 46.). These were of various ranks, but generally a very low class of men. They had great opportunity of cheating the people by making them pay more than the proper sum due, and this temptation very few of them withstood.

13. "Exact no more" &c. Observe the wisdom of this advice. St. John does not say, 'Leave a calling of such great temptation, and take to some more honest livelihood'; but simply, 'Conquer the great temptation of your calling, and do your duty in that state of life in which God has placed you' (Compare St. Paul's advice, 1 Cor. vii. 20.).

14. "The soldiers." Literally 'men marching under arms.' These were in all probability Jewish soldiers, belonging to Herod's army. Herod was at this time at war with his father-in-law Aretas, king of Arabia (See on St. Matt. xiv. 3.), and his troops would have to march through the region in which St. John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing. Force must be laid on the word "we" in their question, which, as it stands in the Greek, is as follows:—'And we—what must we do?'

"Do violence to no man," &c. Soldiers quartered in any place were

15 And as the people were ²in expectation, and all men ³mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; A. D. 26.

16 John answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: ² Or, *in suspense.*
³ Or, *reasoned,*
or, *debated.*

17 whose fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and ¹will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable. ¹ Micah 4. 12.
Matt. 13. 30.

18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

19 ¶ ^mBut Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by A. D. 26.
^m Mark 6. 17.

very apt to be rough and violent in order to extort money or other things from the people. They also frequently brought false charges against any who had offended them, or had refused their violent demands: Thus the Baptist's answer to them touches their besetting sins, and is likè that to the publicans in not telling them to give up a dangerous calling but exhorting them to do their duty in it faithfully.

15. "In expectation." That is, of the coming of the Messiah, of which there was a very general expectation at the time.

"Mused." That is, 'thought' or 'reasoned' (See Margin.).

16. "The latchet of whose shoes." The shoes worn by the Jews were only sandals, or leathern soles bound on to the foot by thongs. The "latchet" here means the thong of the sandal.

18. "Preached he." Literally, 'preached he glad tidings unto.' The whole verse would be best translated, 'And with many other exhortations he preached the glad tidings unto the people'—that is, doubtless, the glad tidings of the approach of Christ. The word for "preached" is the same as that used by the Angel to the shepherds (See on ii. 10.).

19, 20. St. John the Baptist imprisoned.

St. Matt. xiv. 1—12.

19. "But Herod" &c. This and the next verse refer to an event which happened some little time after the first appearance and preaching of the Baptist, and of course after the Baptism of Jesus which follows. There is nothing unusual in an historian, when speaking of some person or event, bringing in something which happened at a later time in order to complete his subject. And here the Baptist's reproof of Herod and its consequences fall in most naturally with the account of his general preaching and exhortation. In fact the 18th verse prepares the way for such an after event being named, since it describes what no doubt continued for some months (See ix. 7—9.).

A. D. 26. him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,
20 added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

A. D. 27. 21 ¶ Now when all the people were baptized, ⁿit came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22 and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased.

23 ¶ And Jesus Himself began to be ^oabout thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) ^pthe Son of Joseph, which was *the son* of Heli,

24 which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi, which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Janna, which was *the son* of Joseph,

21, 22. The Baptism of Jesus.

St. Matt. iii. 13—17. St. Mark i. 9—11.

21. "Praying." This is told us by St. Luke alone, and yet we could hardly have doubted it, even had holy Scripture been silent. All the great instances of God's testimony to His Son by a voice from heaven took place when He was praying. It was so at the Transfiguration (ix. 29.). It was so when the answer came to His petition, "Father, glorify Thy Name" (St. John xii. 28.).

23—38. Genealogy.

St. Matt. i. 1—17.

23. "And Jesus Himself began" &c. This sentence would be more literally translated—'And Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age when He began'—that is, probably, when He began His public ministry. Thirty was the legally appointed age for those who served in the Tabernacle (See Numbers iv. 3, 23, 30, &c.).

23. "Being (as was supposed) the Son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli." It is forcing these words very much to suppose them to be the beginning of Mary's genealogy, and not Joseph's. Yet many commentators have taken this view, and it need not be pronounced inadmissible. It is certainly strange that Joseph's father should by St. Matthew be named Jacob, and by St. Luke Heli (But see Note on St. Matt. i. 16.). Those who think St. Luke gives (as we must confess it would be natural he should give) the genealogy of the Virgin Mary, as being our Lord's

real—instead of his legal—descent, either suppose Joseph to be called [Son] of Heli, though only son-in-law, or else, placing all the words ("being, as was supposed, the Son of Joseph") within brackets, understand "[Son] of Heli" to be spoken of Jesus, Heli being His grandfather, and the Virgin Mary's name being omitted, because the Jews did not name women in their genealogies. It should be remembered that the word "son" never occurs in the Greek throughout this genealogy except only in the first instance "Son of Joseph" (See Note on St. Matt. xx. 6.).

25 which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Amos, which was *the son* of Naum, which was *the son* of Esli, which was *the son* of Nagge,

26 which was *the son* of Maath, which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Semei, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Juda,

27 which was *the son* of Joanna, which was *the son* of Rhesa, which was *the son* of Zorobabel, which was *the son* of Salathiel, which was *the son* of Neri,

28 which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Addi, which was *the son* of Cosam, which was *the son* of Elmodam, which was *the son* of Er,

29 which was *the son* of Jose, which was *the son* of Eliezer, which was *the son* of Jorim, which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi,

30 which was *the son* of Simeon, which was *the son* of Juda, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Jonan, which was *the son* of Eliakim,

31 which was *the son* of Melea, which was *the son* of Menan, which was *the son* of Mattatha, which was *the son* of ^qNathan, ^rwhich was *the son* of David,

32 ^swhich was *the son* of Jesse, which was *the son* of Obed, which was *the son* of Booz, which was *the son* of Salmon, which was *the son* of Naasson,

33 which was *the son* of Aminadab, which was *the son* of Aram, which was *the son* of Esrom, which was *the son* of Phares, which was *the son* of Juda,

34 which was *the son* of Jacob, which was *the son* of Isaac, which was *the son* of Abraham, ^twhich was *the son* of Thara, which was *the son* of Nachor,

35 which was *the son* of Saruch, which was *the son* of Ragau, which was *the son* of Phalec, which was *the son* of Heber, which was *the son* of Sala,

36 ^uwhich was *the son* of Cainan, which was *the son* of Arphaxad, ^xwhich was *the son* of Sem, which was *the son* of Noe, which was *the son* of Lamech,

37 which was *the son* of Mathusala, which was *the son* of Enoch, which was *the son* of Jared, which was *the son* of Maleleel, which was *the son* of Cainan,

38 which was *the son* of Enos, which was *the son*

^q Zech. 12. 12.

^r 2 Sam. 5.

14.

¹ Chron. 3.

5.

^s Ruth 4. 13, &c.

¹ Chron. 2. 10, &c.

^t Gen. 11. 24, 26.

^u See Gen. 11. 12.

^x Gen. 5. 6, &c.

& 11. 10, &c.

ST. LUKE, IV.

A. D. 27. of Seth, which was *the son of Adam*,^y which was *the*
^y Gen. 5. 1, 2. *SON of God.*

CHAPTER IV.

1 *The temptation and fasting of Christ. 13 He overcometh the devil: 14 beginneth to preach. 16 The people of Nazareth admire His gracious words. 33 He cureth one possessed of a devil, 38 Peter's mother in law, 40 and divers other sick persons. 41 The devils acknowledge Christ, and are reproved for it. 43 He preacheth through the cities.*

^a ver. 14.
^{ch.} 2. 27.
^b Ex. 34. 28.
¹ Kings
19. 8.

AND Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and ^a was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 being forty days tempted of the devil. And ^b in

38. "Which was *the son of Adam, which was the son of God.*" Thus St. Luke traces our Lord's genealogy up to the beginning. St. Matthew goes no farther back than Abraham, his Gospel being intended chiefly for Jewish readers. St. Luke, who writes for all, goes back to the beginning of the human race, setting forth Christ as the Saviour of all, "and as being not only the Seed promised to Abraham, "but also that Seed of the woman promised from the very beginning, "who was to bruise the serpent's head (See Gen. iii. 15.)" (*Lonsdale and Hale.*)

CHAPTER IV.

1-13. The Temptation.

St. Matt. iv. 1-11. St. Mark i. 12, 13.

1. "Being full of the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost had just descended upon Jesus in His Baptism, and His human nature was now perfectly endowed with that holy Gift. Thus was He fitted to meet the great enemy. The descent of the Spirit was as the anointing of the Warrior for the combat. It is in the same Divine strength that *we* must do battle with the devil, if we would prevail. Again, mark how this conflict took place immediately after the manifested outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our Lord. Thus when we have gained some new increase of grace, we may expect the assaults of the evil one to become fiercer.

"By the Spirit." This, and like expressions,—such as that Jesus "returned in the power of the Spirit" (14.), that "the Spirit of the Lord" was "upon" Him (18.), that He "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. ix. 14.),—set forth our Lord, in the most striking way, as "very Man." In His Godhead He is One with the Holy Spirit, even as He and the Father are One. In His Manhood He was "filled," "anointed," "led," by the Spirit, even as one of us. "In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren" (Heb. ii. 17.).

2. "Being forty days tempted." We gather from these words, and from St. Mark, that the temptation lasted during the whole forty days. Thus the three temptations recorded are apparently only specimens of the evil one's attacks, though doubtless his last and fiercest.

"Tempted." It is well to mark clearly the distinction between

those days He did eat nothing: and when they were ended, He afterward hungered. A. D. 27.

3 And the devil said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Deut. 8. 3.

temptation and sin. Temptation is not sin. The yielding to temptation is sin. Temptation is the knocking at the door. It is the opening of the door which is sin. So long as the will gives no consent, and the heart allows no resting-place, to the temptation, there is no sin. St. James well describes the exact point when temptation passes into sin: "When *lust hath conceived*, it bringeth forth sin" (St. James i. 15.). When the desire of evil is once admitted into the soul, the sin has begun. The evil may fall like a shadow across the soul, and cause pain and grief, yet without sin. The evil thoughts presented to our Lord by Satan fell like shadows across the pure brightness of His Soul, but they could not rest there. They were thrown off, as if from some polished surface, which they could not fasten upon, or tarnish in passing. They were met by an all-holy will, and from that they fell back harmless. Temptations are like evil seed which Satan sows broadcast; for there are *two* sowers in the world. But the evil seed no more finds entrance into the pure and holy heart, than the good seed into the hardened heart. When the evil seed finds ever so brief a resting-place, and shoots its first small root into the heart, then there is sin. It is a most blessed thing to know that temptation is not sin, and that Jesus was tempted. For temptations are often very grievous to God's servants.

3. "If Thou be the Son of God." Observe how in this temptation, as well as in that on the pinnacle of the Temple, Satan tempts our Lord (not only first to *distrust* in God, and then to *false* trust in God, but also) to make *display of His miraculous powers*. Up to this time our Lord had done no miracle. He is now about to show forth to the world His miraculous power. Who else but He would have forborne to exercise it, if only to make proof of the wondrous gift? Few things in our Lord's life on earth are more wonderful than this, namely that, conscious within Himself of almighty power, He calmly refuses to exercise it. He carries into the wilderness a heaven-wrought weapon which no power can resist, yet He lays it aside. He could wield the might of God; but He of His own will chooses the weakness of Man. "O Saviour," (writes the good Bishop Hall) "none of Thy miracles is more worthy of astonishment than Thy not doing of miracles!" It was an ancient opinion that Satan was doubtful of our Lord's real Divine nature at first, and desired to make trial of it. Thus St. Leo, about four hundred years after Christ, writes as follows of our Lord's temptation: "That He might loose mankind from the bonds of deadly transgression, He concealed from the devil's fury the power of His own Majesty, and opposed him in the infirmity of our lowliness." Whether this be so, or not, is of little importance. But one thing is very plain,—that Jesus, not only now, but all through His life on earth, stedfastly refused to Himself

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A. D. 27. 5 And the devil, taking Him up into an high mountain, shewed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto Him, All this power ^{e John 12. 31. & 14. 30.} will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for ^{e that} that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

^{2 Or, fall down before me.} 7 If Thou therefore wilt ² worship me, all shall be Thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind Me, Satan: for it is written, **Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.**

Deut. 6. 13. & 10. 20.

9 And he brought Him to Jerusalem, and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence:

10 for it is written, **He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee:**

all mere display of His miraculous power. He did no miracle for His own fame or glory (See on St. Matt. xii. 15.). In His encounter with Satan our Lord will contend *as Man*, and with none but *human weapons*. He could have summoned twelve legions of Angels, had He pleased, and swept the hateful tempter from His presence in a moment. But how then could He be our Pattern in fighting, or give us a pledge of conquering, as He conquered? He uses no weapons but those which He puts also into our hands. In the strength of the Holy Ghost, in prayer and fasting, in perfect trust in God, and with the "sword of the Spirit," He meets the enemy and conquers him.

5. "In a moment of time." This must then have been a splendid vision created by the tempter, in which the world seemed spread out below with its greatest and wealthiest cities and its varied lands and people, a picture of all that was great and rich and beautiful. It lasted but a moment: and may we not turn Satan's vision against himself, and say, Thus too "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof" (1 St. John ii. 17.)?

6. "To whomsoever I will I give it." So says he who was "a liar from the beginning." The Spirit of truth says, "There is no power but of God" (Rom. xiii. 1.).

8. "Get thee behind Me, Satan." That this was the end of the temptations is plain (See Note on St. Matt. iv. 5.); but probably these words—"Get thee behind Me, Satan, for"—were not written here by St. Luke, since they are not found in some of the best ancient copies, and may very easily have been put in by mistake by some copyist familiar with St. Mat-
 thew's account. It seems not unlikely that St. Luke, instead of following the historical order of the three Temptations, gives them in what may be called their natural order, as advancing from lower to higher, this order being the same as that in St. John's words, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" (1 St. John ii. 16.).

11 and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. A. D. 27.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Ps. 91. 11, 12.
Deut. 6. 16.

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from Him ^d for a season.

14 ¶ ^e And Jesus returned ^f in the power of the Spirit into ^g Galilee: and there went out a fame of Him through all the region round about. d John 14. 30.
Heb. 4. 15.
A. D. 23.
32nd Year
of our
Lord's life.

15 And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. e Matt. 4. 12.
John 4. 43.

16 And He came to ^h Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, ⁱ He went f ver. 1.
g Acts 10. 37.
h Matt. 2. 23.
i Acts 13. 14.
& 17. 2.

13. "For a season." Possibly we may suppose that in the Agony in Gethsemane Satan again visited our Lord, tempting Him to put away the cup of suffering from Him as too bitter to drink (See on St. Matt. xxvi. 37.). At all events, even if he could not himself again approach our Lord so closely, Satan wrought his malice through the Chief Priests and Judas Iscariot.

14—32. Our Lord's preaching, and rejection, at Nazareth.

Compare St. Matt. xiii. 54—58. and St. Mark vi. 1—6.

14. "Jesus returned." That is, from Judæa, His Baptism having taken place in that province, where St. John the Baptist was baptizing in the Jordan.

"In the power of the Spirit." That is, the Holy Spirit, which had descended upon Him in His Baptism (See on St. Matt. iii. 16.), and which dwelt in Him so mightily, for God gave not "the Spirit by measure unto Him" (St. John iii. 34.).

15. "Being glorified of all." This must be understood as a general account of the reception which our Lord met with on His first tour in Galilee. A striking exception to this general favour is now about to be recorded.

16. "Where He had been brought up." How much is gathered up in these few simple words. And how naturally we long to know more about our Lord during the thirty years of His hidden life at Nazareth (See on ii. 42.). All that we do know is that He lived a humble lowly life, with His gentle thoughtful mother, and His reputed father,

14. "Into Galilee." See Note on St. Matt. iv. 12.

16. "He came to Nazareth." It is a much disputed question whether this visit to Nazareth is the same with that described in St. Matt. xiii. 54—58, and St. Mark vi. 1—6. There are no doubt striking points of likeness, but certainly nothing that could not have occurred on two separate

occasions. There is no doubt that the Evangelists do not profess, or purpose, to relate all things in the order in which they happened; but in this case there are marks of time, which must not be neglected. Thus in this place it is hard to suppose that St. Luke does not mean that verse 16 should be closely connected with what goes before, and describe what

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A. D. 28. into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written,

18 **The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because**

Joseph the carpenter. It is even probable that Jesus in His youth helped Joseph in His trade, for His fellow-townsmen asked, "Is not *this the Carpenter?*" (St. Mark vi. 3.). Even of His character, as displayed in His humble home, we have nothing distinctly told us but that He was "subject" to those who were called His "parents" (See on ii. 27.). Yet we can scarcely doubt that He who, when twelve years old, had spoken those solemn words about His Father's business (ii. 49.), must have continually shown forth more and more that that Father's business was the one great thing He had come to do.

"As His custom was." We cannot be quite sure in what light the Jews regarded our Lord and His teaching. Possibly He was recognized as an inspired Prophet. At all events He was allowed to teach in the synagogues (See on St. Matt. iv. 23.). His standing up to read showed His own desire to address the congregation, and the readiness with which His desire was complied with showed that His claim to teach was publicly allowed (But see St. Mark v. 22. and Acts xiii. 15.).

17. "The book of the prophet Esaias." The Books of the Old Testament were written out on rolls of parchment, each probably on a separate roll. The book of the prophet Isaiah was probably that from which the lessons of the season were being read, but whether our Lord read the appointed lesson, or chose the passage for Himself, we cannot tell. The words, "He found the place," would lead us rather to suppose the latter.

18. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," &c. In these words (which belong to that latter portion of Isaiah's prophecy which is so full of Christ) the prophet seems to be speaking as the mouthpiece of the Lord, and not concerning himself. The prophet speaks; but the voice is the voice of One greater than the prophet—even of the Lord the Anointed. In the words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," "the Lord" is plainly used of God the Father, who is often called the "Lord"; for "the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost 'Lord.'" So "the LORD said unto my Lord" (Ps. cx. 1. St. Matt. xxii. 44.), where the first is spoken of the Father, the second of the Son. Observe St. Peter's words concerning this anointing of the Son by the Father, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost" (Acts x. 38. Compare also on St. Matt. iii. 16.).

took place very shortly after our Lord's return into Galilee. While in St. Matt. xiii. 54. it is equally difficult to suppose that St. Matthew does not mean to fix the visit to Nazareth there related *after* the speaking of the seven Parables, which was at a later time than this. But, if we turn to St. Matt. iv. 13, we find an account of our Lord's leaving Nazareth

to dwell at Capernaum, and this most naturally answers to verse 31 of this chapter, and is indeed partly accounted for by the events here related, so that from St. Matthew alone we may gather a hint of this earlier visit to Nazareth, and thus conclude that the two narratives probably refer to different occasions.

He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, A. D. 28.

19 to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. Isai. 61. 1, 2.

21 And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare Him witness, and ^k wondered at ^k Ps. 45. 2.
ch. 2. 47.

“Anointed Me.” Made Me *the Christ*—the Anointed. Anointing is the emblem of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.

“The poor.” In Isaiah it is the “meek,” by which we learn that the *poor in spirit* are meant in this place.

19. “The acceptable year of the Lord.” That is, the welcome time of the Lord’s coming to save the world. Observe how Jesus stops short in His quotation, not going on to “the day of vengeance” which follows in Isaiah. His message as yet is all of mercy and love.

20. “He closed the book,” &c. Jesus would close the book by rolling it up on the piece of wood to which one end of the roll would be fastened. He then handed it to the “minister”—the attendant whose duty it was to take care of the books, and “sat down,” according to the custom of Jewish teachers, to begin His sermon.

“The eyes of all” &c. No doubt these Nazarenes had heard the strange reports which must already have begun to spread concerning the miraculous power and heavenly wisdom of Him who had so long lived among them, probably known chiefly by His singular holiness and retiring modesty. And now, when He appears among them in His new character and authority, they listen eagerly.

21. “This day” &c. Only the opening words are here given us, for we cannot suppose the interruption mentioned in the next verse took place immediately our Lord had begun to speak. No doubt He explained the passage He had read as His text, and showed how wonderfully it was fulfilled in Himself.

22. “All bare Him witness,” &c. That is, bare witness to the wisdom and power and eloquence with which He spoke. They would hardly be prepared to receive His application of the prophetic words to Himself as *true*. Yet His “gracious words” impressed them greatly, and filled them with wonder when they remembered His lowly origin,

18. “Recovering of sight” &c. The differences between this passage and Isaiah are easily accounted for, partly by the fact that, although our Lord doubtless read the text from the Hebrew, yet St. Luke, writing in Greek, quotes it from the Greek Translation then in use, known as the ‘Septuagint’; and partly by the fact that the Scripture writers seek to convey the sense, rather than the exact words, of the passages they quote (For a remarkable instance of the latter practice compare Ephesians v. 14. with Isaiah lx. 1.).

- A. D. 28.** the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, ¹Is not this Joseph's Son?
- ¹ John 6. 42. 23 And He said unto them, Ye will surely say unto Me this proverb, Physician, heal Thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in ^m Capernaum, do also here in Thy country.
- ^m Matt. 4. 13. & 11. 23.
- ⁿ John 4. 44. 24 And He said, Verily I say unto you, No ⁿ prophet is accepted in His own country.
- ^o 1 Kin. 17. 9. & 18. 1. James 5. 17. 25 But I tell you of a truth, ^o many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;
- 26 but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman *that was* a widow.
- ^p 2 Kin. 5. 14. 27 ^p And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

so that a murmur ran through the people, "Is not this Joseph's Son?" Observe the witness borne to His manner by the officers sent to take Him (St. John vii. 46.).

23. "Ye will surely say" &c. Jesus knew their thoughts, and put them into words for them. By "Physician, heal Thyself," is meant, 'Thou doest miracles elsewhere; do miracles now here, so as to 'prove Thy words and gain Thyself honour.'

"In Capernaum." The only miracle we know of as performed in Capernaum before this time was the healing of the nobleman's son (St. John iv. 46—54. See *Note* on St. Matt. iv. 12.). Our Lord's miracles of healing however were so numberless that we may well suppose there were others.

24. "No prophet is accepted" &c. Because the man is considered rather than the office (See on St. Matt. xiii. 57.).

25. "Many widows" &c. Our Lord proceeds to show the Nazarenes two instances in which prophets, not being honoured in their own country, conferred their blessings on strangers. It was not to an Israelitish widow that Elijah was sent; it was not an Israelitish leper whom Elisha cleansed.

27. "Eliseus." The Greek form of the name Elisha, as Elias of Elijah, Sarepta of Zarephath. It is observable that our Lord in two notable instances praised the faith of those who were strangers to Israel in a manner which might well put to shame those of His own country; saying to the woman of Canaan, "O woman, great is thy faith" (St. Matt. xv. 28.), and to the Centurion, "I have not found so great "faith, no, not in Israel" (vii. 9.).

25. "Three years and six months." (Compare St. James v. 17.) In 1 Kings xviii. 1. it is said that the drought ceased "in the "third year"; but it must have continued some time *before* Elijah was directed to go to the widow of Sarepta, so that there is no difficulty in regard to the length of time.

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they A. D. 28.
 heard these things, were filled with wrath,
 29 and rose up, and thrust Him out of the city,
 and led Him unto the ² brow of the hill whereon ² Or, *edge.*
 their city was built, that they might cast Him
 down headlong.

30 But He ¹ passing through the midst of them ¹ John 8. 59.
 went His way, & 10. 39.

31 and ^r came down to Capernaum, a city of Ga- ^r Matt. 4. 13.
 lilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. Mark 1. 21.

32 And they were astonished at His doctrine: ^s for ^s Matt. 7. 28,
 His word was with power. 29.
 Titus 2. 15.

33 ¶ And in the synagogue there was a man, A. D. 28.
 which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried
 out with a loud voice,

34 saying, ³ Let us alone; what have we to do with ³ Or, *Away.*
 Thee, *Thou* Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to
 destroy us? ^t I know Thee who Thou art; ^u the ^t ver. 41.
 Holy One of God. ^u Ps. 16. 10.
 Dan. 9. 24.
 ch. 1. 35.

28. "Filled with wrath." Because they understood our Lord's meaning, and knew that He was rebuking them for their unbelief and hardness of heart.

29. "Rose up, and thrust Him out." Thus was He "despised and rejected of men (Isaiah liii. 3.). "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (St. John i. 11.). We may notice that the Jews rose up full of wrath against St. Paul, when he spoke of being sent to the Gentiles, saying, "Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live" (Acts xxii. 21, 22.).

"The brow of the hill." Nazareth was built on a range of hills, and near to it is a cliff or precipice, thirty or forty feet high,—doubtless that over which they purposed to cast Jesus down. This murderous rage of the Nazarenes is very fearful. May it not teach us to what actual hatred of Christ we may come if we have been very familiar with Him—in His word, and Church, and Sacraments,—and yet have never learnt truly to love Him and believe in Him?

30. "Passing through the midst." By a miracle, probably making Himself invisible, and so escaping their wrath (See on xxiv. 31. and St. John v. 13. and viii. 59.).

31. "Down to Capernaum." Nazareth being on a hill, and Capernaum on the border of the Lake, it was natural to speak of going down. (For Capernaum see on St. Matt. iv. 13.)

33—37. The casting out of a devil in the synagogue
 at Capernaum.

St. Mark i. 21—28.

32. "His word was with power." See on St. Matt. vii. 28, 29.

A. D. 28. 35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

37 And the fame of Him went out into every place of the country round about.

38 ¶ And He arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought Him for her.

39 And He stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

40 Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them.

^x Mark 3. 11. 41 ^x And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And ^y He rebuking *them* suffered them not ² to speak: for they knew that He was Christ.

^y ver. 34, 35.
² Or, to say that they knew Him to be Christ.

42 ¶ And when it was day, He departed and

35. "Hurt him not." So when Satan departs from the sinner whom he has held in his power, the struggle may be fierce, and the pain great, yet he will have no power really to hurt him.

38—41. The healing of St. Peter's mother-in-law, and others.

St. Matt. viii. 14—17. St. Mark i. 29—34.

38. "A great fever." That is, a very severe heavy fever.

41. "Thou art Christ the Son of God." The devils not only knew Christ, but were also constrained to give utterance to their knowledge (See on St. Mark i. 24, 25.).

42—44. Christ retires to pray, and preaches throughout Galilee.

St. Mark i. 35—39.

42. "When it was day." As soon as day dawned:—according to

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went into a desert place: and the people sought Him, and came unto Him, and stayed Him, that He should not depart from them. A. D. 28.

43 And He said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

44 And He preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

CHAPTER V.

1 Christ teacheth the people out of Peter's ship: 4 in a miraculous taking of fishes, sheweth how He will make him and his partners fishers of men: 12 cleanseth the leper: 16 prayeth in the wilderness: 18 healeth one sick of the palsy: 27 calleth Matthew the publican: 29 eateth with sinners, as being the Physician of souls: 34 foretelleth the fastings and afflictions of the apostles after his ascension: 36 and likeneth fainthearted and weak disciples to old bottles and worn garments.

AND it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

St. Mark "a great while before day,"—which may mean a long while before the beginning of the ordinary working day, which began, as with us, at six o'clock in the morning.

"The people." Led, as St. Mark shows, by Simon Peter and other disciples.

"Stayed Him." That is, they tried to stay Him, praying Him to remain with them.

CHAPTER V.

1—11. The first miraculous draught of fishes, and the calling of St. Peter and the Sons of Zebedee from their trade.

St. Matt. iv. 18—22. St. Mark i. 16—20. Compare the Miracle related in St. John xxi. 1—14, and the Parable in St. Matt. xiii. 47—50.

1. "He stood by the lake" &c. This was a favourite place of our Lord. It was on the shore of this lake that the seven parables of St. Matt. xiii. were spoken.

1. "It came to pass," &c. Some have held that this event is a different one from that related by St. Matthew and St. Mark in the passages above referred to. Certainly this account is not only much fuller than the others, but seemingly different in some particulars. However it is very improbable that what is recorded in 10, 11, which answers closely to St. Matt. iv. 19, 20, and St. Mark i. 17, 18, could have occurred on two separate occasions. The main difficulties in supposing the three accounts to be accounts of the same thing are—1. that St. Matthew and St. Mark do not allude to the miracle here related, but simply represent the Apostles as fishing; and 2. that St. Mark relates the healing of the man with the unclean spirit in the synagogue at Capernaum as taking place immediately after this call of the fishermen, while St. Luke relates it before (namely in iv. 31—36.). It is however so continually the case that different events are related by the different Evangelists, and different particulars of the same event, that, though the omission of the miracle in St. Matthew and St. Mark may seem strange, it cannot really perplex us; and as to the second objection the Evangelists most clearly do not aim at giving the events they relate in their

A. D. 28.

2 and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets.

3 And He entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

2. "The fishermen." Not yet called Apostles, for though two of them at any rate had already been called to be disciples (See St. John i. 40—43.), they had not yet been called to leave their trade and to follow Christ more closely.

"Washing their nets." This implies that their work for the time was over.

3. "He entered into one" &c. So when He spoke the seven parables (St. Matt. xiii. 2.) He sat in a ship while the people stood on the shore. The ship would be thrust only a few yards from the land, just sufficiently to keep the people from pressing too near.

4. "Launch out" &c. Our Lord's first important act with those who were to be the nearest to Himself was the same as that which was almost His last (See St. John xxi.), and in each He makes His miracle a parable, teaching His Apostles wonderful lessons concerning His Church.

5. "Master," &c. The word "Master," together with the seeming expectation of a miracle in the words, "Nevertheless at Thy word" &c., show that St. Peter was already a disciple of our Lord (See on 2.). Night was usually the best time for fishing, yet the fishermen caught nothing till Christ came. So Christ's ministers will labour in vain, however hopeful their labour may seem, except Christ be with them. "Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it" (Ps. cxxvii. 1.).

6. "They inclosed" &c. It has been often asked whether this was a miracle of Omnipotence or of Omniscience, of power or of wisdom; that is, whether the Lord compelled the fish to come to the net, or, knowing where the fish were, guided the fishermen to the spot. It is in vain to ask, or to try to answer, such a question. Either opinion is

exact order, and here St. Luke has given the healing of the man with an unclean spirit in the synagogue *before* its proper place in the history (for St. Mark says clearly that it was *after* the call of the fishermen), probably because in the passage following the Temptation (that is, the remainder of ch. iv.) he is principally speaking of our Lord's visits to the "synagogues of Galilee" (iv. 44.).

7 And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which A. D. 28.
were in the other ship, that they should come and
help them. And they came, and filled both the
ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus'
knees, saying, ^aDepart from me; for I am a sinful
man, O Lord. <sup>a 2 Sam. 6. 9.
1 Kings
17. 18.</sup>

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with
him, at the draught of the fishes which they had
taken:

10 and so *was* also James, and John, the sons
of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And
Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth
thou shalt catch men.

11 And when they had brought their ships to
land, ^bthey forsook all, and followed Him. <sup>b Mat. 19. 27.
ch. 18. 28.</sup>

perfectly lawful, but it is better not to seek to be wise above that which
is written. Yet it is written of the Lord by the prophet, "Thou madest
Him to have dominion over the works of Thy Hands; Thou hast put
all things under His Feet; . . . the fowl of the air, and the fish of
the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas" (Ps.
viii. 6, 8.).

"Their net brake." Literally 'was breaking', that is, just on the
point of breaking, or beginning to break. (For a spiritual application
of this and other parts of the miracle see on St. John xxi. 11.)

8. "Depart from me;" &c. It is most natural for the sinful soul to
shrink from the presence of the All-holy. A consciousness of God's
nearness and power and purity will at first make the sinner fear. Yet
fear will often lead to love, and Simon Peter soon found by a blessed
experience that "perfect love casteth out fear" (1 St. John iv. 18.).

9. "All that were with him." Among whom was his own brother
Andrew (See St. Matth. iv. 18.).

10. "Fear not." This was Christ's comforting answer to St. Peter's
"Depart from me." When the shrinking from Christ springs from a
self-accusing self-condemning spirit, then He cheers and comforts, and
bids us "Fear not."

"From henceforth" &c. This is spoken here in the singular to
St. Peter. In St. Matthew and St. Mark it is spoken in the plural to all
the four disciples. It is easy to understand that our Lord may have
thus addressed St. Peter first, and then have made known to the rest
that His words equally applied to them. We may be sure much more
passed than is related. The Evangelists continually give only an out-
line of that which they record. How would St. Peter be reminded of
this miracle and its promise in the miraculous ingathering of three
thousand souls on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 41.)!

11. "They forsook all," &c. This alone proves that our Lord's
words to Simon Peter were not His only words on the subject. Doubt-
less He similarly invited all the four, describing the work in store for
them in like manner to all. They were all to be "fishers of men."

A. D. 28. 12 ¶ And it came to pass, when He was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on *his* face, and besought Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.

13 And He put forth *His* hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

14 And He charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, ^c according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of Him: ^d and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities.

16 ^e And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

A. D. 29. 17 ¶ And it came to pass on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jeru-

12—16. Healing of a Leper.

St. Matt. viii. 2—4. St. Mark i. 40—45.

15. "So much the more" &c. "Fame" means a 'report.' The miracle was noised about, and much talked of. St. Mark tells us this was owing to the conduct of the man who had been healed.

"To hear, and to be healed." Probably this refers to those who came to Him in the "desert places," for in the town the multitudes were so great as to be a serious hindrance (See St. Mark i. 45.), and the latter flocked together from idle curiosity, and not "to hear and "to be healed." The following our Lord into the wilderness was a pledge of sincerity.

17—26. Healing of the Paralytic man at Capernaum.

St. Matt. ix. 1—8. St. Mark ii. 1—12.

17. "Come out of every town" &c. The fame of Jesus had already spread far and wide. The Pharisees and doctors (See on ii. 46.) flocked to hear and see Him, their enmity not as yet aroused by His exposure of their pride and hypocrisy, and by the disappointment of their expectation of a temporal deliverer. Yet is their doubt and jealousy of our Lord shown in their very posture; for "while the multitude are thronging Him with every sign of amazement and fear, they are sitting "by and watching Him" (*Is. Williams.*).

salem: and the power of the Lord was *present* to A. D. 28.
 heal them.

18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought *means* to bring him in, and to lay *him* before Him.

19 And when they could not find by what *way* they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with *his* couch into the midst before Jesus.

20 And when He saw their faith, He said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? [†] Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

[†] Ps. 32. 5.
Isai. 43. 25.

23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (He said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

“The power of the Lord” &c. That is, the power of God, displayed in His Son. This power was “present to heal them”—that is, not the Pharisees and doctors, but the poor sufferers who crowded there to be healed. The Scribes and Pharisees indeed had sore need of healing, but they knew it not. They thought themselves whole, and in no need of the Physician (See 31, and on St. Matt. ix. 12.).

19. “Through the tiling.” Perhaps the most natural explanation of this is that which supposes our Lord to have been in a room, possibly an upper room, or the room of a one-storied house, and not in a court such as would be found in houses of a better sort, and that the men who carried the poor paralytic actually broke away some of the tiles or slabs, which covered the roof, and also a part of the ceiling over our Lord’s head, which may have been merely boarded with planks.

25. “Departed.” We can easily suppose that the crowd which was a bar to the poor man’s being carried into Christ’s presence, would now make way for him, as for one supremely honoured and blest. All eyes would be upon him; all would be silent with awe as he passed along carrying his mattress, and glorifying God, who had shown such mercy upon both soul and body.

A. D. 28. 26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

27 ¶ And after these things He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, Follow Me.

28 And he left all, rose up, and followed Him.

29 And Levi made Him a great feast in his own house: and ^g there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against His disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

^h 1 Tim. 1. 15. 32 ^h I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

33 ¶ And they said unto Him, Why do the dis-

27—32. The Calling and Feast of St. Matthew.

St. Matt. ix. 9—13. St. Mark ii. 13—17.

27. "Saw." The original word means much more than simply "saw." It is rather, He 'looked earnestly upon' (See on St. Matt. xix. 26.).

28. "Left all." This is named only in this Gospel, though of course understood in the others. St. Matthew gave up all earthly riches to receive "an hundredfold now," "and in the world to come eternal "life" (See on St. Mark x. 28—30.).

30. "Why do ye" &c. But especially, as we see from the other Gospels, *your Master*. The Pharisees thought men professing so great holiness were inconsistent in suffering the presence of acknowledged sinners. They needed indeed to learn the meaning of the words, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice."

33—39. Discourse upon Fasting.

St. Matt. ix. 14—17. St. Mark ii. 18—22.

33. "They said." That is, the Scribes and Pharisees (30.). St. Matthew says the disciples of John asked this question. St. Mark explains this seeming difference by saying that *both* asked the question. That the disciples of St. John the Baptist should appear here on the side of the Pharisees against Christ seems strange; but we must observe that there is no *unfriendly* opposition spoken of. In this one matter of practice the strictness of St. John's life and teaching made his disciples join with the Pharisees in asking for an explanation of our Lord's less

principles of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise *the disciples* of the Pharisees; but Thine eat and drink?

34 And He said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

36 And He spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new agreeth not with the old.

37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

severe rule of life. It has been suggested as possible that the feast in St. Matthew's house took place upon a day observed as a fast by the disciples of St. John the Baptist and the Pharisees.

"**Make prayers.**" That is, prayers of unusual length, and at stated hours. The aim of the Pharisee was to spend so much time in prayer: the Christian would "pray without ceasing," living in the spirit of prayer. The Pharisee strictly observed his appointed fasts. The Christian seeks to be "temperate in all things." In saying this it is not meant that Christ would discourage in His followers either stated hours of prayer, or stated fasts such as the Church enjoins. Only He would discourage the *formal* observance of such, and show, as in the case of the observance of the sabbath, that ordinances, good in themselves, must be governed by the higher laws of a more spiritual religion.

36. "**A piece of a new garment.**" St. Matthew and St. Mark have "a piece of new *cloth*." In the "garment" we get a new idea, for it teaches us whence the "new cloth" is taken. The "new garment" is the Gospel, and the piece taken from it represents any portion of the spirit of the Gospel, which it is attempted to blend with the old Law.

"**Both the new maketh a rent.**" That is, as in the two former Gospels, by its strength and firmness pulling away and tearing the weak material into which it is sewn. But these words might be still better translated, 'He both rendeth the new,' that is, he tears and spoils the new garment, out of which the piece was taken, and that without improving the old, since the two agree not together.

37. "**New wine into old bottles.**" This pictures the attempt to pour the free spirit of the Gospel into the forms and ceremonies of the Law. These were only for a time, and to educate God's people for the nobler manhood of Christianity. This, being a life of faith and love and grace, neither needs, nor can make use of, the system of minute observances, upon which the Jew relied for acceptance.

If we interpret the bottles (as many do, and as it is very allowable to do,) of *persons* rather than of *ordinances*, then the meaning would be

A. D. 28.

38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

39 No man also having drunk old *wine* straight-way desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

CHAPTER VI.

1 *Christ reproveth the Pharisees' blindness about the observation of the sabbath, by scripture, reason, and miracle: 13 chooseth twelve apostles: 17 healeth the diseased: 20 preacheth to His disciples before the people of blessings and curses: 27 how we must love our enemies: 46 and join the obedience of good works to the hearing of the word: lest in the evil day of temptation we fall like an house built upon the face of the earth, without any foundation.*

AND it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that He went through the corn fields; and His disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands.

that it is vain to expect those clinging to a religion of ceremonies (like the Galatians) to possess the spiritual life and freedom of the new covenant. If they once really embrace the new, the old must pass away. May we not apply this figure to those in these days who, having been brought up in ignorance, or having lived in sin, have at length embraced some portion of Christian truth, but, being unable to give to that truth its proper place and proportion, have carried it, or have been carried by it, into foolish extremes, hurtful to their own souls? The new wine is too strong for the old bottles.

38. "New bottles." If the "new wine" is the new living vigorous spirit of the Gospel (See on St. Matt.), then we may gather from this verse that *some* ordinances are needful for the preservation and safety of this spirit. But these ordinances must be such as agree with that new spirit. Christ does not say, the new wine will need no bottles at all, but, "New wine must be put into *new* bottles."

Taking the bottles of *persons*, it has been well remarked that what the Jews said mockingly, we may say in a true sense of Christians renewed by God's grace,—“These men are full of new wine” (Acts ii. 13.), even the “new wine” of the blessed Spirit of God.

39. “No man also” &c. This (which is only found in St. Luke) gives the reason why the Pharisees and the Baptist's disciples could not understand the freedom from ceremonial restraints with which Jesus and His disciples acted. These complainers had drunk the old wine of the Law, and they could scarcely be expected all at once to see the greater merit of the new wine of the Gospel. They said, “The old is better.” But those who have really tasted the new, which Jesus provides, say, “Thou hast kept the good wine until now” (St. John ii. 10.).

1—5. The plucking of corn on the Sabbath.

St. Matt. xii. 1—8. St. Mark ii. 23—28.

1. “On the second sabbath after the first.” In the Greek this is simply, ‘On the second-first sabbath.’ It is unknown what this means. Various suggestions have been made. Among these one of the simplest

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2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, A. D. 28.
Why do ye that ^a which is not lawful to do on the ^a sabbath days? Ex. 20. 10.

3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not
read so much as this, ^b what David did, when him- 1 Sam. 21. 6.
self was an hungred, and they which were with him;

4 how he went into the house of God, and did
take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them
that were with him; ^c which it is not lawful to eat Lev. 24. 9.
but for the priests alone?

5 And He said unto them, That the Son of man
is Lord also of the sabbath.

6 ¶ ^d And it came to pass also on another See ch. 13.
14. & 14. 3.
John 9. 16.
sabbath, that He entered into the synagogue and
taught: and there was a man whose right hand
was withered.

7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched Him,
whether He would heal on the sabbath day; that
they might find an accusation against Him.

8 But He knew their thoughts, and said to the
man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and
stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood
forth.

9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one
thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good,
or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy *it*?

10 And looking round about upon them all, He
said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And
he did so: and his hand was restored whole as
the other.

11 And they were filled with madness; and com-
muned one with another what they might do to
Jesus.

is that certain sabbaths were called 'first' or 'chief' sabbaths, and that
this was the second of such chief sabbaths. As the year began with
the Passover, the sabbath of the Paschal-week would be the first chief
sabbath (See on St. John xix. 31.), and probably the sabbath at the
Pentecost, or feast of First-fruits, would be the second. This would
accord with the fact that the corn was ripe in the fields.

6—11. Healing of the man with the withered hand.

St. Matt. xii. 9—14. St. Mark iii. 1—6. Compare also xiv. 1—6.

11. "Madness." That is, a senseless rage against Christ.

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A. D. 28.
e Matt. 14. 23. 12 ¶ ° And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

13 And when it was day, He called *unto Him* His disciples : and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles ;

f John 1. 42. 14 Simon, (^fwhom He also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

15 Matthew and Thomas, James the *son* of Alphæus, and Simon called Zelotes,

g Jude 1. 16 and Judas ^g*the brother* of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

A. D. 28.
h Matt. 4. 25.
Mark 3. 7. 17 ¶ And He came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of His disciples, ^hand

12—16. Calling of the Twelve Apostles.

St. Matt. x. 1—4. St. Mark iii. 13—19.

12. "All night in prayer." Can we contemplate our great Example thus spending the whole night in prayer, and feel no shame when we think of the short space we allot to the same holy intercourse with our heavenly Father? And let us remember, we *need* prayer in a manner in which He could never need it; for we are sinners, and He was without sin (See on St. Matt. iv. 2.).

13. "He chose twelve." The chief of them common fishermen, one a publican, all from the lower ranks of life. These princes of the kingdom of heaven were not "wise men after the flesh," nor "mighty," nor "noble," for "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are" (1 Cor. i. 26—28.).

"He named apostles." The word 'Apostle' means 'sent forth,' and answers to our word 'missionary,' except that, of course, the title 'Apostle' implies the high dignity of one sent forth by Christ Himself, and appointed by Him to be a missionary founder of His kingdom.

17—49. The Sermon on the Mount.

St. Matt. v—vii.

17—20. Introduction.

St. Matt. v. 1, 2.

17. "In the plain." Literally 'on a level place' (See Note.).

17—49. The question whether St. Luke is here giving a brief summary of the Sermon on the Mount (St. Matt. v—vii), or relating a different discourse, has been much discussed, and probably must always remain an open question, upon

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a great multitude of people out of all Judæa and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases; A. D. 28.

18 and they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude ⁱsought to touch Him: for ^kthere went virtue out of Him, and healed ⁱ Matt. 14. 36. ^k Mark 5. 30. ch. 8. 46. them all.

20 ¶ And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said, ⁱBlessed be ye poor: for your's is the kingdom of God. Matt. 11. 5. James 2. 5.

19. "Virtue." That is, healing power (See on St. Mark v. 30.).

20—23. The Beatitudes.

St. Matt. v. 3—12.

20. "He lifted up His eyes." Fixing on His disciples an intent and earnest gaze, to rivet their attention, before He "opened His mouth and taught them" (See on St. Matt. xix. 26.).

"Blessed be ye poor." As "the poor" in iv. 18. is explained by referring to Isaiah, where we read "the meek," so here "ye poor" is explained by referring to St. Matthew, where we read "the poor in spirit." Still the thought of earthly poverty is not to be shut out, since the "poor" in this verse is opposed to the "rich" in verse 24, and the latter can hardly refer only to a spiritual state. We must however remember that earthly poverty has no blessing apart from poverty of spirit.

which different opinions may be formed. We need not however feel much difficulty in accepting the two accounts as different versions of the same discourse, if we remember two things:—1. That throughout the Gospels the object of the inspired Evangelists is plainly "not so much to confine our minds to one set of words, as if they were or could be a full exponent of Christ's meaning, as to declare what was in the mind of Christ. The Holy Spirit who inspired the Evangelists knew what was in Christ's mind, and by presenting the same substantial truth with circumstantial varieties, and in different points of view, He has given a clearer view of that mind than if He had given one view only" (*Wordsworth*. See also *Note* on St. Matt. viii. 25.). 2. That the Evangelists, writing for different classes of readers, would be led to select those parts of our Lord's teaching most needful for those whom they had in view. Thus in the present case it is easily seen that St. Matthew gives, and St. Luke omits,

various matters which were specially suitable to Jewish readers.

A difficulty has been raised upon the words "stood in the plain" (17.), which certainly seem at first sight opposed to St. Matthew's statement that our Lord was sitting upon a mountain. But this difficulty vanishes when we look to the Greek, and find that what is translated "the plain" is literally 'a level place,' and would quite naturally mean a flat space upon the hill side, such as would be most suitable for His purpose, and to which He would descend from the higher part of the mountain, where He had spent the night in prayer, and whither He had called up His Apostles. While, as to the standing and sitting, St. Luke does not say that Jesus stood while He taught, but only while the multitudes came to Him to be healed, after which He would probably find a spot slightly raised above the 'level place,' where He could, according to the Jewish custom, sit down to address His hearers.

- A. D. 28. 21 ^m Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. ⁿ Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.
- ^m Isai. 55. 1. & 65. 13.
ⁿ Isai. 61. 3.
^o 1 Pet. 2. 19. & 3. 14. & 4. 14.
^p John 16. 2.
- 22 ^o Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they ^p shall separate you *from their company*, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.
- ^q Acts 5. 41. Col. 1. 24. James 1. 2.
^r Acts 7. 51.
- 23 ^q Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for ^r in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.
- ^s Amos 6. 1. James 5. 1.
^t ch. 12. 21.
^u ch. 16. 25.
- 24 ¶ ^s But woe unto you ^t that are rich! for ^u ye have received your consolation.

21. "Ye that hunger." Here again St. Matthew speaks of spiritual hunger, and of that is the Beatitude most fully and eternally true. Yet again the thought of a lowly worldly estate with the patient endurance of privations need not be shut out. The shadow has its blessedness as well as the substance. Is it not true that they who have experience of bodily hunger are the most likely to crave for the heavenly food?

"Ye that weep." Again, all sorrow may be blest. "They that sow in tears" may, if they will, "reap in joy." But of all sorrow spiritual sorrow—that is, sorrow for sin—is the most surely and the most richly blest.

22. "When men shall hate you," &c. Observe well, all this must be "for the Son of man's sake," or it misses the blessing. There is a self-chosen persecution which is wilfulness, and a self-inflicted martyrdom which is pride. It has been well pointed out what dignity and greatness our Lord claims in these words "for the Son of man's sake." It is blessed even to *suffer* for Him.

24—26. Woes corresponding to the Beatitudes.

24. "Woe unto you that are rich!" The beatitudes and woes stand over against one another like Mount Ebal and Gerizim, from which the blessings and the cursings were read aloud to the Israelites (See Deut. xi. 29. Josh. viii. 33, 34.). By the "rich" here must be understood those "that trust in riches" (St. Mark x. 24. See on St. Matt. xix. 23.). It is plain that the "rich" does not naturally suggest to us those who are proud and self-satisfied *in spirit*—the opposite to the "poor *in spirit*"—but must signify those possessing and trusting in actual worldly riches; which is the reason why it is said above (on 20.) that the thought of worldly poverty must not be shut out in speaking of the blessedness of the "poor."

"Ye have received your consolation." No better comment on

24. "But woe" &c. St. Luke gives only four 'beatitudes' instead of the eight of St. Matthew, but adds four 'woes' which St. Matthew does not give. This is the most important variation in the whole discourse. It is quite possible to suppose that our Lord enlarged upon each beatitude, as He spoke it, showing the opposite truth to it in the shape of these 'woes', for we need not suppose that St. Matthew's longer account records all our Lord spoke on the occasion.

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25 * Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. † Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. A. D. 28.
x Isai. 65. 13.
y Prov. 14. 13.

26 † Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets. z John 15. 19.
1 John 4. 5.

27 ¶ † But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, a ver. 35.
Exod. 23. 4.
Prov. 25. 21.
Rom. 12. 20.

these words can be found than that which our Lord gives in the Parable of the Rich man and Lazarus (See on xvi. 25.). They are like the words "They have their reward," spoken of the hypocrites who did their religious acts to be seen of men (St. Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16.). These sought the praise of men, and they got it. So the rich sought the consolation of earthly riches, and they got it. Yet we cannot but reflect how poor was that reward, when won, and how hollow this consolation when received (See St. James v. 1—3.).

25. "You that are full!" &c. Again, what comment on these words like the Parable of the Rich man and Lazarus? He that "fared sumptuously every day" craved a drop of cold water to cool his parched tongue. God hath indeed "filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away" (i. 53.).

"You that laugh." This is no condemnation of innocent mirth and light-heartedness, but only of the godless merriment of the wicked. "A man's attire, and excessive laughter, and gait, show what he is" (Ecclus. xix. 30.).

26. "When all men shall speak well of you." We must not forget that these 'woes', as well as the rest of the discourse, are addressed, at any rate in the first instance, to the disciples, warning them, and through them warning the Church, against states of peculiar danger. Thus this fourth woe should be a special warning to all Christian ministers against the peril of popularity. There is a middle course, which the Christian will seek to keep, between courting persecution (See on 22.) and courting popularity. If pride and obstinacy are dangers on one side, on the other side there may be a carelessness as to the truth, an easy compliance with the low standard of the world, a shrinking from duties which would be unpopular in their performance. The right course is humbly to seek to know and to do God's will, not on the one side needlessly offending a weak brother, nor on the other side shrinking from what is right through fear of man.

"The false prophets." Who cried, "Peace, peace, when there was no peace" (Jer. vi. 14. viii. 11. Ezek. xiii. 10.). Mark the terrible description given by Jeremiah of a time of great wickedness and degradation:—"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so" (Jer. v. 31.).

27—36. The Law of Love and the Law of Retaliation.
St. Matt. v. 38—48.

27. It is plain, if we compare this with St. Matthew, that there is a great break between the last verse and this, St. Luke selecting parts here and there of our Lord's teaching.

A. D. 28.

^b ch. 23. 34.
Acts 7. 60.

28 bless them that curse you, and ^b pray for them which despitefully use you.

^c 1 Cor. 6. 7. 29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; ^c and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not *to take thy* coat also.

^d Deut. 15. 7, 8, 10. 30 ^d Give to every man that asketh of thee; and ^e of him that taketh away thy goods ask *them* not again.

31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34 And if ye lend *to them* of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

^e ver. 27.

^f ver. 30.
Ps. 37. 26.

35 But ^e love ye your enemies, and do good, and ^f lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and *to the evil*.

36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

37 ¶ Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

30. "Of him that taketh away thy goods" &c. This does not seem to refer so much to actual stealing as to any wrongful dealing by which we may suffer loss. A man is very apt to think and talk much of his *rights*, and to profess that he is bound to stand up for his *rights*, and not to suffer his *rights* to be trampled upon. But let the Christian ask, What is his *right*? Is it not to show mercy, and love, and forbearance, and forgiveness? Let him stand up for *this right*, and he will do well.

32. "What thank have ye?" This is the same as "What reward have ye?" (St. Matt. v. 46.), and "What glory is it?" (1 St. Pet. ii. 20.), and means 'Ye are doing nothing meritorious—nothing to boast of.'

37—42. Charity and Wisdom in dealing with others.

St. Matt. vii. 1—6.

38 ^g give, and it shall be given unto you; good A. D. 28.
 measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and g Prov. 19. 17.
 running over, shall men give into your ^h bosom. h Ps. 79. 12.
 For ⁱ with the same measure that ye mete withal it ⁱ shall be measured to you again. i Mark 4. 24. James 2. 13.

39 And He spake a parable unto them, ^k Can the ^k blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? k Matt. 15. 14. i Matt. 10. 24. John 13. 16. & 15. 20.

40 ¹ The disciple is not above his master: but ² every one ² that is perfect shall be as his master. 2 Or, shall be perfected as his master.

38. "Good measure, pressed down," &c. This is a beautiful addition recorded in this Gospel only. The figure is taken from the filling of a measure with corn, and the meaning is, that our gifts will be repaid, not by strict measure, but by the overflowing bounty of God's mercy in the Day of reward.

"Shall men give." The word "men" does not exist in the original. It would therefore have been better, either to print it in Italics (See on St. Matt. xxvi. 5.), or to omit it altogether in the English, translating simply 'shall *they* give,' the sense plainly being merely 'shall be given,' without stating by whom. We may however understand it of God Himself, or of the holy Angels who shall receive the redeemed into the joy of their Lord.

"With the same measure" &c. Observe how our Lord applies this same figure to the measure of profit with which we hear God's word (St. Mark iv. 24.). If it be asked, How can the immensity of the eternal reward, as compared with the poverty of our acts of charity, be spoken of as measured "with the same measure"? We answer, Because "he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (2 Cor. ix. 6.). The "same" measure does not mean one equal in size, but *proportionately* great or small.

39. "Can the blind" &c. Neither this short parable, nor the saying in the next verse, is found in the Sermon on the Mount in St. Matthew's Gospel. It is not improbable that both may have been frequently used by our Lord. This "parable" of the blind leading the blind is spoken on another occasion concerning the false teaching of the Pharisees (See St. Matt. xv. 14.). Here it seems used as a warning to the disciples that, if they would guide others safely, they must take care that they are themselves well instructed in the truth.

40. "The disciple is not above." This is a saying repeated by our Lord on several occasions, and with different applications (See on St. Matt. x. 24.). Here it seems closely connected with the saying as to the blind leading the blind, and would thus mean, You cannot expect the disciple to escape where the master falls, for the disciple is not likely to be better instructed than his master. The best and most perfect disciple is only equal to his master: he can learn no more than his master can teach. Therefore be careful to gain wisdom to enable you to lead your disciples aright. In the latter part of the verse we may

40. "Perfect." See on St. Matt. v. 48.

ST. LUKE, VI.

A. D. 28. 41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, ^m cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

^m See Prov. 18. 17.

43 ¶ For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

ⁿ Matt. 12. 33. 44 For ⁿ every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a ² Gr. a grape. bramble bush gather they ² grapes.

^o Matt. 12. 35. 45 ^o A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for ^p of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

^q Mal. 1. 6. Matt. 25. 11. ch. 13. 25.

46 ¶ ^q And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

47 Whosoever cometh to Me, and heareth My sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

48 he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehe-

perhaps suppose our Lord to convey a double meaning, namely, that the disciples must not only take care to excel their own pupils, if they would be safe teachers and guides, but also remember that they are themselves but pupils of the One great Master, whom they must ever strive to imitate. The best guide of others is he who most closely follows Christ: the best master is the best disciple.

43—45. False Prophets and their fruits.

St. Matt. vii. 15—20.

46—49. No safety but in obedience.

St. Matt. vii. 21—27.

48. "Digged deep." This implies labour and pains; but what labour and pains are ill spent if they bring us to the Rock of our salvation?

mently upon that house, and could not shake it: A. D. 28.
 for it was founded upon a rock.

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

CHAPTER VII.

1 Christ findeth a greater faith in the centurion a Gentile, than in any of the Jews: 10 healeth his servant being absent: 11 raiseth from death the widow's son at Nain: 19 answereth John's messengers with the declaration of His miracles: 24 testifieth to the people what opinion He held of John: 30 inveigheth against the Jews, who with neither the manners of John nor of Jesus could be won: 36 and sheweth by occasion of Mary Magdalene, how He is a friend to sinners, not to maintain them in sins, but to forgive them their sins, upon their faith and repentance.

NOW when He had ended all His sayings in the audience of the people, He entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto Him the elders of the Jews, beseeching Him that He would come and heal his servant.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought Him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom He should do this:

49. "He that heareth, and doeth not." Surely this is the great peril of days when there is so much *hearing* as in these. If some rest in pious words, saying, "Lord, Lord" (46.), how many are there who rest in the mere *hearing* of the Gospel, listening to Sermons, and yet never doing what they hear!

CHAPTER VII.

1—10. The Centurion's servant healed.

St. Matt. viii. 5—13.

2. "Who was dear unto him." This is worthy of notice as a mark of unusual kindness and tenderness in an age when servants were really slaves, and treated with much hardness.

"Sick, and ready to die." He was "sick of the palsy, grievously tormented," as St. Matthew tells us.

3. "The elders of the Jews." The Centurion, who was plainly a proselyte or convert to the Jewish religion (See on St. Matt. xxiii. 15.), sent these elders to plead for him as a more respectful way of approaching Christ than if he had come himself in person. He felt himself unworthy to ask so great a favour, and thought perhaps it would be more readily granted to these Jewish elders than to himself a Gentile (See 7.).

ST. LUKE, VII.

A. D. 28. 5 for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying unto Him, Lord, trouble not Thyself: for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof:

7 wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

² Gr. *this man.* 8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto ²one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

9 When Jesus heard these things, He marvelled at him, and turned Him about, and said unto the people that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

11 ¶ And it came to pass the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and much people.

4. "Instantly." That is, very earnestly or pressingly.

5. "He hath built us a synagogue." Literally our synagogue. He had given the same proof of his love to the Jewish faith, as some convert from heathenism to Christianity would, if he built a church at his own expence.

6. "Sent friends." Again St. Luke is more minute than St. Matthew, who only says, "The centurion answered and said." We here learn that this answer was sent by others, doubtless for the same reason which induced him to send the "elders" at first, namely that given by himself in his message by these friends.

7. "Wherefore neither thought I" &c. This gives the clue to the centurion's conduct in sending, instead of coming, to our Lord. His humility is as remarkable as his faith.

10. "They that were sent," &c. These took back with them the comforting message, "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee"; and doubtless as these words were spoken, it was done. He who commanded the winds and the sea, saying, "Peace, be still," commanded the palsy to depart, and the sickness to be no more. "He spake; and "it was done" (Ps. xxxiii. 9.).

11—17. The raising of the widow of Nain's son.

11. "Nain." A small town of Galilee on a hill-side not far from Capernaum.

12 Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. A. D. 28.

13 And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And He came and touched the ² bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, ^a Arise. ² Or, *coffin*.

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother. ^a ch. 8. 54.
John 11. 43.
Acts 9. 40.
Rom. 4. 17.

12. "Carried out." The Jewish burial-places were generally outside the gates of their cities and villages. Christ had power over death in all its stages (See on St. Matt. ix. 25.).

"The only son of his mother, and she was a widow." A touching picture presented in a few simple words. Archbishop Trench well points out the bitterness of the mourning for an only son had passed into a proverb; thus, "Make thee mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentation" (Jer. vi. 26.): "They shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son" (Zech. xii. 10): "I will make it as the mourning of an only son" (Amos viii. 10.). Doubtless this widow was well known, and her affliction excited great sympathy, for a large number of persons accompanied the funeral. Thus there were many witnesses to our Lord's great miracle.

13. "Weep not." Possibly when Christ spoke these words, they may have seemed to the poor mourner simply kindly words of compassion, yet it is probable that she was already a believer in Him, even if she had not such strength of faith as to believe in Him as "the Resurrection and the Life" (St. John xi. 25.). But *He* spake the "Weep not," who had power to wipe away all tears, and surely that voice must have carried to the stricken mother's heart deep comfort, even before she knew how much was meant by the words.

14. "He came and touched the bier." As a sign to the bearers to stand still. The dead were not enclosed in coffins, as with us, but carried on a bier covered with a sheet or pall. Doubtless there was something in our Lord's manner which impressed the bearers so that they stood still when He laid His Hand on the bier.

"Young man," &c. Mark the authority with which our Lord commands the dead to arise. So to Jairus' daughter, "Maid, arise" (viii. 54.), and to Lazarus, "Lazarus, come forth" (St. John xi. 43.). It is very different with those who in the Old Testament were permitted to raise the dead, and who did so not without strong wrestlings for heavenly aid (See 1 Kings xvii. 20, 21. 2 Kings iv. 33, 34.).

15. "He delivered him to his mother." May we not in this see a dim foreshadowing of the great Resurrection in which the same Divine Lord will deliver to each other those of His redeemed whom death has parted here below, uniting them for ever in His heavenly kingdom? Of this young man we know nothing, except the simple fact recorded in this miracle; but can we doubt that one so wondrously restored to life would dedicate the life thus given back to him to Him who gave it?

A. D. 28.
 b ch. 1. 65.
 c ch. 24. 19.
 John 4. 19.
 & 6. 14.
 & 9. 17.
 d ch. 1. 68.

16 ^b And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, ^c That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, ^d That God hath visited His people.

17 And this rumour of Him went forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about.

18 ¶ And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

19 And John calling *unto him* two of his disciples sent *them* to Jesus, saying, Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?

20 When the men were come unto Him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto Thee, saying, Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?

21 And in that same hour He cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many *that were* blind He gave sight.

e Isai. 35. 5.

22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; ^e how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, ^f to the poor the gospel is preached.

f ch. 4. 18.

23 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.

24 ¶ And when the messengers of John were departed, He began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

16. "That God hath visited His people." We are not to suppose that the people in saying this meant to speak of Christ as "God." Though their words would bear a most true and literal sense, yet they had no such insight into His real nature, and simply intended to express their belief that they had seen a wonderful display of God's power, which made them suppose that He, in whom it was displayed, was a "great prophet," like Elijah or Elisha.

18—23. St. John the Baptist's Question.

St. Matt. xi. 2—6.

24—35. Discourse concerning St. John the Baptist.

St. Matt. xi. 7—19.

25. "They which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately." That is, 'They which are splendidly dressed, and fare daintily,' such

26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? A. D. 28.
 Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27 This is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee.

Mal. 3. 1.

28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

29 And all the people that heard *Him*, and the publicans, justified God, ^g being baptized with the baptism of John. ^g Matt. 3. 5. ch. 3. 12.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers ² rejected ^h the counsel of God ³ against themselves, being not baptized of him. ² Or, *frustrated.*
^h Acts 20. 27.
³ Or, *within themselves.*

31 And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I

as the rich man who was "clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day" (xvi. 19.).

29. "And all the people" &c. This and the next verse are not in St. Matthew, who gives some verses not recorded here. They appear to be a parenthesis (that is, something *put into* the main sentence, but not a part of it,) by St. Luke, the Evangelist breaking the thread of our Lord's discourse in order to state for his Gentile readers the effect of Christ's words, and the manner in which St. John the Baptist had been received by the Jews.

"All the people" &c. That is, All the common people who heard Him (Christ), and especially the publicans,—as opposed to the Pharisees and lawyers of the next verse.

"Justified God." That is, acknowledged God's justice and goodness, praising Him for the sending of the Fore-runner, with whose baptism they had been baptized.

30. "Rejected the counsel of God" &c. The word "against" in this verse should probably be 'towards.' These self-righteous men, as a body, refused God's gracious "counsel"—or purpose—towards them, which was, that they should be brought to repentance, for they had refused the baptism of the Fore-runner. That *some* of this class were baptized we may gather from St. Matt. iii. 7. The words "rejected the counsel of God" are opposed to "justified God."

29, 30. "And all the people" &c. Many able commentators, and especially the ancient ones, take these verses to be part of our Lord's discourse, in which case of course the words, "That heard him," refer to St. John the Baptist, not to Christ. This view agrees best with the way in which our Lord continues His discourse in verse 31, for the opening words of that verse, "And the Lord said,"

are not found in the oldest copies, and ought probably to be omitted. Still on the whole it seems more natural to take the view given above that these verses are a parenthesis by the Evangelist.

30. "Against themselves." These words may be taken either in the sense given above, 'towards themselves,' or, as some eminent commentators understand them, 'to their own condemnation.'

A. D. 28. liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

32 They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

¹ Matt. 3. 4.
² Mark 1. 6.
ch. 1. 15.

33 For ¹John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

35 But wisdom is justified of all her children.

^k Mark 14. 3.
John 11. 2.

36 ¶ ^kAnd one of the Pharisees desired Him that He would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a

31. "The men of this generation." Not all the Jews, but those who, like the Pharisees and lawyers, "rejected the counsel of God" towards them by rejecting both the stern Baptist and the gentle Christ.

36—50. The Anointing by the penitent woman.

Compare the anointing by Mary of Bethany, St. Matt. xxvi. 6—13.
St. John xii. 1—7.

36. "One of the Pharisees." Simon by name (40.). It is remarkable that this Pharisee's name was the same as that of the host in the case of the other anointing above referred to. But Simon was a very common Jewish name, and in almost all other particulars the two events are quite unlike one another. The whole of this part of St. Luke's Gospel being concerned with Galilee, it is probable that this event took place in some town or village in Galilee.

"And He went" &c. Thus fulfilling what He Himself said, "The Son of Man is come eating and drinking" (34.), but at the same time showing by the use He made of the occasion how He carried with Him a blessing wherever He went, sanctifying daily life by His holy presence and His life-giving words.

37. "A woman in the city, which was a sinner." Plainly she was publicly known as a sinner. We have here an instance of the truth of our Lord's words when He says that the "publicans and harlots" went into the kingdom of God before the self-righteous Pharisees. We have seen how He received one of the former of these two classes in the case of St. Matthew (v. 27—32.): we here see how He receives one of the latter. It has been a common idea that this woman was Mary Magdalene, but (although adopted in the modern heading to the chapter,) there is nothing at all to support such an idea. Still on the other hand we cannot pronounce it absolutely impossible that it is true (See on viii. 2.).

sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, A. D. 28.

38 and stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden Him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, ¹This ^{ch. 15. 2.} Man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

“An alabaster box.” So it was in the other anointing by Mary of Bethany (St. Matt. xxvi. 7.).

38. “Stood at His feet” &c. This is explained by the Jewish mode of reclining on couches at meals (See on St. John xiii. 23.). This poor woman's penitence must have been very deep and real, for it could be no passing emotion which would dare so much to win the Saviour's pardon. She must have forced her way into the Pharisee's house, perhaps in spite of the servants' opposition; she must have braved the scorn with which she knew the master of the house would regard her; she must have nerved herself to face the publicity of such an act as hers, and the wonder of the guests:—but she doubtless forgot all when she beheld Him for whom she yearned, and had no thought except to win from Him some token of acceptance.

“With tears.” The tears of a broken-hearted penitent, of which there is no mention—as there was no need—in the case of the loving faithful Mary of Bethany. The wiping with her hair does not appear to have been intended as an act of homage or devotion. Her hair was probably hanging loose, which was a Jewish token of mourning, and as she embraced our Lord's Feet, and her tears fell on them, she in tender care wiped them with her hair, which hung around them, as would naturally suggest itself at the moment.

39. This Man, if He were a prophet,” &c. Simon thought now he had full proof of the falsity of our Lord's claim to be a prophet. It never entered his head that Christ could know better than he did what that woman's life had been, and yet not scorn and repel her. Nor had he any idea of the nature of the conversion which had now so utterly changed that woman's heart and character.

40. “Jesus answering said.” Answering, that is, the Pharisee's unspoken thoughts. The tenderness and the wisdom of this answer to the Pharisee are very striking.

“Master, say on.” Simon speaks with due respect, not at all revealing the thought, which he fancied was known only to himself.

A. D. 28.
 † See Matt.
 18. 28.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred ²pence, and the other fifty.

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he*, to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine

The Parable of the Two Debtors.

41. "A certain creditor." This, of course, is God; answering to the King in the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, which may be compared with this (See on St. Matt. xviii. 23—35.).

"Five hundred pence"—"fifty." We must observe here that these two sums are given to represent—not the actual amount of our debt to God, which is better represented by the ten thousand talents (St. Matt. xviii. 24.), but—the amount we are ourselves *conscious of*—that which we *feel* we owe. The right understanding of the whole parable depends upon our keeping this in view. Of course the poor penitent sinner is represented by the debtor who owed five hundred pence, and the Pharisee by the one who owed fifty. The one knew she had much to be forgiven: the other thought he had little.

42. "When they had nothing to pay." That is, when they found and felt they had nothing to offer in payment.

"He frankly forgave." That is, freely and fully forgave, as Jesus did, when he said, "Thy sins are forgiven" (48).

43. "He to whom he forgave most." Simon is answering in respect to human things,—to earthly debtors and money debts. *There* the amount of the favour shown in forgiving the debt is plain and clear, and according to the amount forgiven is the claim on our gratitude. But in spiritual matters it is different. In these we measure the favour shown us, and so the claim upon our love and gratitude,—not by the amount forgiven, for that we cannot see, but—by the amount we *fancy* has been forgiven. Thus, in other words, it is not he who is actually forgiven most who loves most, but he who has the deepest sense of sin, and so of the mercy shown him. Often one who has sinned less has the deeper sense of sin, and therefore the more lively gratitude for pardon.

44. "He turned to the woman." This seems to be the first notice our Lord had taken of her; and how must her broken and contrite heart have thrilled with hope as she heard Him recount one by one, and evidently with approval, her various acts of reverent affection. Having drawn from Simon the answer He desired, our Lord now goes on to apply it to the case before Him. He reasons thus with him:—"You say that he who is forgiven most loves most. Well, then he who loves most gives most proof that he has been forgiven. Now compare your love with this woman's, and judge for yourself which of you two gives most proof that you have found pardon and acceptance with God."

house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest Me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet.

46 ^m My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but ^m Ps. 23. 5. this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment.

47 ⁿ Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which ⁿ 1 Tim. 1. 14. are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

48 And He said unto her, ^o Thy sins are forgiven. ^o Matt. 9. 2. Mark 2. 5.

“Thou gavest Me no water” &c. There is no reason to suppose that Simon had been disrespectful or uncourteous, but he had shown no marks of a desire to do special honour to his Guest.

45. “Thou gavest Me no kiss.” Such a kiss of welcome was usual in the East. But we have no mention in the Gospels of any kiss given to Jesus, except those of this penitent on His Feet, and the kiss of Judas.

“Since the time I came in.” It seems from this that the woman followed our Lord into the house when He first entered.

46. “Oil”—“ointment.” The latter was very much more precious than the former.

47. “Her sins, which are many,” &c. The only difficulty in this verse lies in the word “for.” We must be careful not to suppose it to mean the same as ‘because.’ The woman was not forgiven because of her love. She loved because she was forgiven. The “for” gives the proof, not the cause, of the forgiveness. Our Lord’s meaning is, ‘Her sins which are many are forgiven, for you see how much she loved:—‘you may gather her forgiveness from the greatness of her love.’

“But to whom little” &c. This is plainly a warning to the Pharisee. Simon had shown little love. This proved that he had received little forgiveness. But why? Because he, in his blindness, thought he had little to be forgiven. Jesus speaks gently of *little* love and *little* pardon. Perhaps (as *Stier* says) “Simon’s conscience might have answered, ‘O Lord, Thou sayest not enough; Nothing is forgiven me, therefore I love Thee not at all.’”

“If a man *has* really sinned but little, compared with others who have been grievous sinners, let him confess that it is a still greater debt that he owes for sins *prevented* by God’s love and mercy, than if he had committed them and been forgiven” (*St. Augustine.*).

Mark how all through Jesus speaks with calm dignity of Himself as the One who could grant the forgiveness, and to whom the love was due.

48. “Thy sins are forgiven.” With what deep joy must the penitent have heard these blissful words of absolution! There is no need to suppose that her sins were not pardoned till that moment. Indeed the whole of the discourse seems to take for granted that pardon goes before love, and so that this woman’s sins were already pardoned when she showed such love. Thus this was rather a solemn declaration of the

A. D. 28.

^p Matt. 9. 3.
Mark 2. 7.

49 And they that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves, ^p Who is This that forgiveth sins also?

^q Matt. 9. 22.
Mark 5. 34.
& 10. 52.
ch. 8. 48.
& 18. 42.

50 And He said to the woman, ^q Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.