

## CHAPTER VIII.

3 Women minister unto Christ of their substance. 4 Christ, after He had preached from place to place, attended with His apostles, propoundeth the parable of the sower, 16 and of the candle: 21 declareth who are His mother, and brethren: 22 rebuketh the winds: 26 casteth the legion of devils out of the man into the herd of swine: 37 is rejected of the Gadarenes: 43 healeth the woman of her bloody issue, 49 and raiseth from death Jairus' daughter.

**A**ND it came to pass afterward, that He went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve *were* with Him,

pardon, than its actual bestowal. But, on the other hand, it has been well remarked by Alford that the Christian's love may be built up on "the expectation, the desire, and hope of forgiveness," as well as on the certainty of it (See on St. Matt. ix. 2, & 8.).

49. "Who is This" &c. This seems spoken in wonder and surprise, but not with the same malice as was shown on the occasion of a like blessing given to the paralytic man, when the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemeth" (St. Matt. ix. 3.).

50. "Thy faith hath saved thee." Faith is the root, and love the fruit. Faith finds pardon, and pardon begets love. See how this poor sinner's faith worked by love. It saved her, because it brought her to the Saviour, and then she learnt to love.

"Go in peace." Surely that was a "peace that passeth understanding" (Phil. iv. 7.).

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### 1—3. General account of Christ's ministry, and attendants.

1. "Preaching and shewing" &c. This answers exactly to the words, "preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (St. Matt. iv. 23.),—that is, the glad tidings of the setting up of the kingdom of heaven (See on St. Matt. iii. 2.). We thus see that '*preaching the gospel*' is not in Scriptural language limited to the preaching of the great central doctrine of the Atonement,—a sense often given to the expression in these days. In this place, for instance, it is not so much the preaching of redemption through the One great Sacrifice as the preaching of a kingdom to gather together in one all men in Christ;—in other words, not so much the preaching of the Cross as of the Church (See on xx. 1.).

"The twelve were with Him." Blessed companionship, training and fitting them for their own great work! We may be reminded here of the beautiful figure in which Moses describes the Lord's leading His people of old; "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over

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2 and <sup>a</sup> certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, <sup>a</sup> A. D. 28. Matt. 27. 55, 56.  
out of whom went seven devils, <sup>b</sup> Mark 16. 9.  
3 and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward,

“her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him” (Deut. xxxii. 11, 12.). So too did the Lord Christ carry with Him His newly chosen Apostles till, strong in faith and grace, they were fitted to be sent forth alone to fly abroad bearing the blessed gospel to the world.

2. “Certain women.” Here we find the first mention of that pious sisterhood, of which we hear so much more during the last great scenes of our Lord's earthly sojourn. Surely we have here a pledge of two things:—1. That Christianity was by its blessed influence to raise woman from the low and despised state to which Eastern custom had debased her, even as Christ Himself was “made of a woman” (Gal. iv. 4.), that He might undo the curse brought into the world by her who was “in the transgression” (1 Tim. ii. 14.): and 2. That our dear Redeemer will not reject the loving ministrations of holy women who devote themselves to labours of love for His sake.

“Which had been healed” &c. Thus they were bound to Jesus by bonds of more than common gratitude. They had temporal mercies, as well as spiritual, to call forth their love; and they would show forth their thankfulness, not with their lips only, but in their lives, by giving themselves up to Christ's service.

“Mary called Magdalene.” From her birthplace (See on St. Mark xvi. 9.). She too had received the greatest temporal blessing, namely deliverance from the awful possession described in the next words. The nature of this terrible affliction (See on St. Matt. viii. 28.) makes it most unlikely that Mary Magdalene was the same person as the “woman in the city, which was a sinner” of the last chapter (See on vii. 37.). Besides she is introduced here as if for the first time, and it is difficult to suppose St. Luke could have known Mary Magdalene to be the woman he had spoken so much of just before, and to have given no hint of the fact.

“Seven devils.” So the Gadarene demoniac was possessed by “Legion” (30.); and notice also our Lord's description of the return of an evil spirit to a man, bringing with him “seven other spirits more wicked than himself” (xi. 26. and see on St. Matt. xii. 43—45.), though this latter is perhaps more of the nature of a parable, than a description of an actual state of possession. Some have taken the seven devils which went out of Mary Magdalene as representing various forms of sin, such as lust, unbelief, and the like, but this has only been an unnatural forcing of the plain words of this verse in order to fit the idea that Mary Magdalene and the woman who anointed our Lord are the same. It is however to be remembered that very possibly former sin may have brought Mary Magdalene under the power of these evil spirits, so that we need not put aside the common belief that she was a great penitent because we do not think she was the same penitent who anointed our Lord's Feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee.

3. “Joanna.” Being the wife of Herod's steward, Joanna would be in a position of some wealth and influence. She is mentioned again by St. Luke at the Resurrection (xxiv. 10.), but is not named in the

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A. D. 28. and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto Him of their substance.

4 ¶ And when much people were gathered together, and were come to Him out of every city, He spake by a parable :

5 A sower went out to sow his seed : and as he sowed, some fell by the way side ; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6 And some fell upon a rock ; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7 And some fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when He had said these things, He cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 ¶ And His disciples asked Him, saying, What might this parable be ?

10 And He said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God : but to others in parables ; <sup>c</sup> that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11 ¶ Now the parable is this : The seed is the word of God.

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other Gospels (But see on St. John iv. 46.). This Herod is the same who is mentioned as "Tetrarch of Galilee" (iii. 1.). Susanna is not mentioned any where else.

"Ministered" &c. These good women served, or attended upon, our Lord (See on St. Matt. xx. 26. and *Note.*), providing food, or other necessaries, "of their substance,"—that is, by their worldly wealth.

### 4—8. The Sower.

St. Matt. xiii. 1—9. St. Mark iv. 1—9.

6. "A rock." Observe the value of varied accounts of the same thing. Here the "rock" explains the "stony places" of St. Matthew's version (See *Notes* on St. Matt. viii. 25. and ch. vi. 17.).

### 9, 10. Why Jesus used Parables.

St. Matt. xiii. 10—17. St. Mark iv. 10—13.

### 11—15. Explanation of the Sower.

St. Matt. xiii. 18—23.

St. Mark iv. 14—20.

12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. A. D. 28.

13 They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.

16 ¶ <sup>d</sup> No man, when he hath lighted a candle, <sup>d</sup> Matt. 5. 15. ch. 11. 33. covereth it with a vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed; but setteth *it* on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17 <sup>e</sup> For nothing is secret, that shall not be made <sup>e</sup> Matt. 10. 26. ch. 12. 2.

13. "In time of temptation." Archbishop Trench suggests a beautiful thought here, namely that, as the hot sun, which scorches and destroys the shallow-rooted plant, only helps to ripen and perfect the strong and deep-rooted, so temptations—"tribulation or persecution" (St. Matt.)—which cause the shallow unstable man to fall, only strengthen the faith and perfect the character of the true Christian.

14. "Bring no fruit to perfection." How many a fair promise is brought to nought by the rampant weeds of the "cares and riches and pleasures of this life"!

15. "With patience." This is the "patient continuance in well-doing" (Rom. ii. 7.). The fruit of holy living must be a perpetual—a never-failing—fruit. It is not enough to produce one crop, and then to fall back, and become unfruitful. This appears to be the chief meaning of this expression, though we need not shut out the meaning which makes the "patience" to refer to the time *before* the fruit ripens, the gradual patient unfolding of Christian graces—"first the blade, then the ear; after that the full corn in the ear" (St. Mark iv. 28.).

### 16—18. How to hear Christ's words.

St. Mark iv. 21—25.

16. "They which enter in." If we carry out the figure, or parable (as it may be fitly called), those who enter in would be the heathen, who, brought within the pale of the Church, are enlightened with the light of the truth which she holds on high, and which already "giveth light unto all that are in the house" (St. Matt. v. 15.).

A. D. 28. manifest; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

f Matt. 13. 12. & 25. 29. ch. 19. 26. 18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: <sup>f</sup>for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he <sup>2</sup> seemeth to have.

19 ¶ Then came to Him *His* mother and His brethren, and could not come at Him for the press.

20 And it was told Him *by certain* which said, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to see Thee.

21 And He answered and said unto them, My mother and My brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

22 ¶ Now it came to pass on a certain day, that He went into a ship with His disciples: and He said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

23 But as they sailed He fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy.

24 And they came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Master, Master, we perish. Then He arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

25 And He said unto them, Where is your faith?

18. "That which he seemeth to have." The truth, or knowledge, or privilege, which he seemed to possess, but which was not his own, for, when he failed to use it, it was taken away. This is ever the law of God's gifts. If they are not used, they are taken away.

### 19—21. Christ's Mother and Brethren.

St. Matt. xii. 46—50. St. Mark iii. 31—35.

### 22—25. The Stilling of the Tempest.

St. Matt. viii. 23—27. St. Mark iv. 35—41.

23. "They were filled with water." Literally 'were being filled with water.' The water was washing into the boat, which was becoming fuller and fuller, till the "jeopardy"—that is, danger—seemed to the disciples, accustomed as they were to such scenes, very great.

19—21. It seems probable from a comparison with the other Gospels that this occurrence really took place in close connection with another bearing some resemblance to it, and related in xi. 27, 28, where see *Note*.

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And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for He commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey Him. A. D. 28.

26 ¶ And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27 And when He went forth to land, there met Him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* house, but in the tombs.

28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, *Thou* Son of God most high? I beseech Thee, torment me not.

29 (For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

31 And they besought Him that He would not command them to go out <sup>g</sup>into the deep. g Rev. 20. 3.

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### 26—39. The Healing of the Gadarene Demoniac.

St. Matt. viii. 28—34. St. Mark v. 1—20.

26. "Over against Galilee." That is, opposite Galilee, or on the Eastern side of the Lake, in the country known as Peræa. Galilee lay entirely to the West of the Jordan and Sea of Galilee (See *Map*).

27. "Out of the city." That is, belonging to the city of Gadara. It is plain from the rest of this verse that the demoniac was not *then* coming out of the city.

28. "He cried out." This is spoken of the man, yet the words were the words of the evil spirits; so completely did these terrible beings make the human frame in which they lodged their own.

"What have I to do with Thee," &c. The very presence of Jesus is pain and terror to the evil spirits. So will it be in the last great day to all those who have taken their part with the Prince of evil, and rejected Christ here. They will say "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. vi. 16.).

29. "Oftentimes it had caught him." He was thus subject to frequent fits of more than usual violence, during which he showed a marvellous strength. This is sometimes seen in cases of insanity.

31. "Into the deep." The word translated "the deep" means

A. D. 28.

32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought Him that He would suffer them to enter into them. And He suffered them.

33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

34 When they that fed *them* saw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city and in the country.

35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

36 They also which saw *it* told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about <sup>h</sup> besought Him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and He went up into the ship, and returned back again.

38 Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought Him that he might be with Him: but Jesus sent him away, saying,

39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his

literally the 'abyss.' It is the same word which in the Revelation is translated "bottomless pit" (Rev. ix. 11. xx. 3.). We must guard against supposing that it means the Sea (as in Ps. cvii. 24.).

37. "Besought Him to depart." The people of Sychar besought Him to tarry with them (St. John iv. 40.). And He granted both requests. Thus does He teach us a great law which governs His dealings with us, namely that His blessings are for those alone who desire them. It is those who hunger and thirst who shall be filled. Christ speaks now as Moses spoke of old: "I have set before you life and "death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life" (Deut. xxx. 19.). The Samaritans of Sychar chose life: the Gadarenes refused it. And both were dealt with according to their choice.

"They were taken with great fear." They saw Christ's power, but shut their eyes to His love. Thus they were afraid of His miracles; and dreaded lest He should inflict upon them other losses, like that of the swine. How good an example does their blind fear give of our Lord's saying, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it" (St. Matt. xvi. 25.).

way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him. A. D. 23.

40 ¶ And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people *gladly* received Him: for they were all waiting for Him.

41 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought Him that He would come into his house:

42 for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as He went the people thronged Him.

43 And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 came behind *Him*, and touched the border of His garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.

45 And Jesus said, Who touched Me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with Him said, Master, the multitude throng Thee and press *Thee*, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?

**40—56. The Miracles of the Raising of Jairus' daughter, and of the Healing of the woman with an issue of blood.**

St. Matt. ix. 18—26. St. Mark v. 21—43.

42. "One only daughter." So the widow of Nain had one only son (vii. 12.). Christ feels for human love, and human sorrow.

44. "The border of His garment." Or "hem" (as the same word is translated in St. Matthew.). This was the "fringe" with a blue riband or edging, which was commanded as a distinctive mark of the Jews (Numb. xv. 38.), and was therefore held sacred. It seems more natural to suppose that this woman spoke of, and touched, the "hem" as the extreme or farthest portion of our Lord's raiment than on account of its special sacredness. It is the *least* touch—the touch of the very *smallest* part—which is meant.

45. "When all denied." That is, all at that moment close to Him. "Master, the multitude throng Thee" &c. It has been a favourite lesson from this miracle to point out the vast difference between the mere outward touch, which no doubt many of those thronging Jesus must have unintentionally given Him, and the touch of faith, which was given by this poor woman alone. It is easy to be very near Christ outwardly, in His house, in His word, in His sacraments, and yet to win no blessing from this nearness; while some poor unknown unnoticed penitent, who has for many years been a captive to sin, may with one

A. D. 28.  
ch. 6. 19.

46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me: for I perceive that <sup>i</sup>virtue is gone out of Me.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately.

48 And He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

simple heart-felt cry of faith touch, as it were, the hem of His garment, and be free.

46. "Somebody hath touched Me:" &c. There is nothing in these words to prevent our believing that Christ knew who had touched Him. His object is plainly to draw forth the poor woman from her concealment, and to lead her to tell her own story. If He had Himself told it, some would have doubted. Still our Lord does not seem to have exercised omniscience (that is, knowledge of all things) while on earth, except when He specially willed to do so. It was one of those Divine attributes, which He of His own will laid aside, so far as His Human Nature was concerned, when He became Man (See on St. Matt. xxiv. 36.). In ordinary matters He submitted to be Man in knowledge, as in other things. We cannot imagine every question He asked to have been asked with a perfect knowledge of the answer; as, for instance, "How many loaves have ye?" (St. Matt. xv. 34.), "Where have ye laid him?" (St. John xi. 34.). Thus it is not thinking unworthily of Christ to imagine, as some do, that in the present case He really did not know who had touched Him, but only that He had been touched by faith, and had freely bestowed the blessing thus sought for. Yet in saying this, it is needful always to remember that such a human condition of knowledge was but a part of that perfect human nature which the ever-blessed Son of God of His own free will accepted, in order that "in all things" He might be "made like unto His brethren" (Heb. ii. 17.); and that at the same time that He was thus very Man, He was also very God (See on St. John v. 18.).

"I perceive." This simply means 'I know'; and is not spoken of a bodily feeling or sense, but of a knowledge of the mind.

47. "She was not hid." This (especially compared with St. Mark v. 32.) would lead us to think that our Lord exercised His Divine power in this case, and, knowing who it was that had touched Him, fixed His Eye on her, and showed her that she was not hid from Him.

"Before all the people." This must have been a great trial to her, for doubtless it was shame and modesty which made her approach at first so secretly. But others are to be blessed through her, and for herself there is yet another and a greater blessing, and so Jesus will have her tell all. And how many thousands have drawn comfort and instruction from this tale since! We would thank our merciful Lord that He did not suffer this poor woman to depart in the secrecy with which she came. Doubtless many others like her sought and found healing, though not like her brought forward to tell of the mercy they had received (See St. Mark vi. 56.).

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49 While He yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. A. D. 28.

50 But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51 And when He came into the house, He suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but He said, Weep not; she is not dead, <sup>k</sup> but sleepeth.

53 And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. <sup>k</sup> John 11. 11, 13.

54 And He put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, <sup>l</sup> arise.

55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and He commanded to give her meat. <sup>l</sup> ch. 7. 14.  
John 11. 43.

56 And her parents were astonished: but <sup>m</sup> He charged them that they should tell no man what was done. <sup>m</sup> Matt. 8. 4.  
& 9. 30.

### CHAPTER IX.

1 Christ sendeth His apostles to work miracles, and to preach. 7 Herod desired to see Christ. 17 Christ feedeth five thousand: 18 enquireth what opinion the world had of Him: foretelleth His passion: 23 proposeth to all the pattern of His patience. 28 The Transfiguration. 37 He healeth the humatick: 43 again forewarneth His disciples of His passion: 46 commendeth humility: 51 biddeth them to shew mildness towards all, without desire of revenge. 57 Divers would follow Him, but upon conditions.

**T**HEN <sup>a</sup> He called His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. A. D. 29.  
33rd Year  
of our  
Lord's life.  
<sup>a</sup> Mark 3. 13.

50. "He answered him." Certainly our Lord's words were spoken to Jairus, not to the messenger. So this answer must be to the unspoken fears of the former, or to the actual words of the latter, though spoken to the former.

53. "Knowing that she was dead." The reason for this scornful laughter,—but not given in the other Gospels.

54. "Put them all out." That is, all but the three Apostles and the father and the mother.

55. "Her spirit came again." This is the most express declaration of a return to life. Her spirit had left the body. It was no trance or fit. It was actual death. The spirit "came again"—that is, from the abode of spirits—from Hades (See on xvi. 23.).

### CHAPTER IX.

1—6. The sending forth of the Twelve Apostles.

St. Matt. x. 1—15. St. Mark vi. 7—13.

**A. D. 29.** 2 And <sup>b</sup> He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

**b ch. 10. 1, 9.** 3 <sup>c</sup> And He said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

**c ch. 10. 4. & 22. 35.** 4 And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

**d Acts 13. 51.** 5 And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, <sup>d</sup> shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

6 And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.

7 ¶ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

8 and of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

**e ch. 23. 8.** 9 And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? <sup>e</sup> And he desired to see Him.

2. "To preach the kingdom of God." As their Master had done before them (See on viii. 1.).

4. "There abide, and thence depart." That is, Remain there all the time you are in that city—"Go not from house to house" (x. 7.).

### 7—9. Herod's perplexity concerning Christ.

St. Matt. xiv. 1—12. St. Mark vi. 14—29.

7. "It was said of some," &c. And this, which some said, Herod himself half believed, his guilty conscience filling him with superstitious fears.

8. "That Elias had appeared." It is not said 'had risen', for Elijah, or, as he is here called, Elias, had never died. He was taken up in a chariot of fire.

9. "John have I beheaded: but who is this," &c. Herod, frightened by his own guilty fears, half believed that it was John the Baptist returned to life to take vengeance upon him, and yet tried to reason himself out of it. No doubt he asked, "Who is this?" with the secret dread lest those who said it was John the Baptist were right. In the other Gospels he himself expresses his fears more openly.

"He desired to see Him." In the hope that his fears might be relieved, and also that he might see Him work some miracle. His desire to see Jesus is never gratified till He is sent to him as a Prisoner by Pontius Pilate, when for the last time he makes his choice, setting Jesus at nought and mocking Him (xxiii. 7—10.). Herod Antipas

10 ¶ And the apostles, when they were returned, told Him all that they had done. And He took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

11 And the people, when they knew *it*, followed Him: and He received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto Him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

13 But He said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

14 For they were about five thousand men. And He said to His disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16 Then He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

18 ¶ And it came to pass, as He was alone pray-

(See on iii. 1.) is a picture of one who, with many warnings and opportunities, much knowledge, and some attempts to do right, is led captive by one wicked passion which brings him to destruction.

### 10—17. The Feeding of the Five Thousand.

St. Matt. xiv. 13—21. St. Mark vi. 30—44. St. John vi. 1—13.

10. "Went aside." By ship, as all the other Gospels say.

"Bethsaida." Not the place of that name which is best known to us as the birthplace of the chief Apostles, and which lay on the Western side of the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum; but another village of the same name which lay on the North East of the lake not far from the spot where the Jordan flows into it (See *Note* on St. Matt. xi. 21.).

11. "He received them." Ready to help them, and giving up at once His wish for rest and solitude. Blessed Example of self-sacrifice for others!

A. D. 29. ing, His disciples were with Him: and He asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

<sup>f</sup> ver. 7, 8. 19 They answering said, "John the Baptist; but  
Matt. 14. 2. some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

<sup>g</sup> John 6. 69. 21 <sup>g</sup> And He straitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing;

<sup>h</sup> Matt. 17. 22. 22 saying, <sup>h</sup> The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

<sup>i</sup> Matt. 10. 33. 23 <sup>i</sup> And He said to *them* all, If any *man* will  
ch. 14. 27. come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it.

25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

<sup>k</sup> Matt. 10. 33. 26 <sup>k</sup> For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and  
<sup>2</sup> Tim. 2. 12. of My words, of him shall the Son of man be

## 18—27. Confession of St. Peter. Jesus foretells His Passion, and speaks of bearing the Cross.

St. Matt. xvi. 13—28. St. Mark viii. 27—ix. 1.

18. "His disciples were with Him." That is, they came to Him. This was in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, as we learn from the other Gospels.

19. "One of the old prophets." As Jeremiah, who is specially mentioned in St. Matthew.

20. "But whom say ye" &c. The force in this question must be put upon the "ye", as opposed to "the people" (18.).

"The Christ of God." This, like St. Mark's, is a brief summary of what is much more fully related by St. Matthew. We find there that St. Peter's words were, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

23. "Daily." This word, full of instruction as it is, is only given by St. Luke. It teaches us that the bearing of the Cross is not alone the patient enduring of suffering, when sent to us, but also a continual *daily* self-sacrifice for our Lord's sake. It is well that we should ask ourselves, 'What do I give up for my Lord's sake? Is there any *daily* taking up of the Cross? Nay, is there any taking of it up at all?'

21. Whosoever will save" &c. See also on St. Matt. x. 39.

ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, A. D. 29.  
and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.

27 But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

28 ¶ And it came to pass about an eight days after these <sup>2</sup> sayings, He took Peter and John and <sup>2</sup> Or, things. James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

29 And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening.

30 And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias :

31 who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

32 But Peter and they that were with Him <sup>1</sup> were <sup>1</sup> Dan. 8. 18. & 10. 9.

26. "In His own glory," &c. The glory in which Christ shall come to judge the world will be 1. His own, which He had before the worlds as the eternal Son : 2. the special glory with which the Father clothes Him as Judge, committing all judgment to Him, and setting Him upon the great white throne (Rev. xx. 11.): 3. the glory of the heavenly host who accompany Him.

### 28—36. The Transfiguration.

St. Matt. xvii. 1—9. St. Mark ix. 2—10.

28. "To pray." This is mentioned only by St. Luke, but we should almost have concluded it for ourselves, had it not been named; for it seems most natural that it should be while He was engaged in blessed intercourse with His heavenly Father that His Transfiguration should take place. Prayer opened the gates of heaven, and through those gates there streamed down on Jesus the "excellent glory" (2 St. Peter i. 17.).

31. "Who appeared in glory." That is, very glorious, partaking of the glory with which the Lord was surrounded.

"And spake of His decease." The word translated "decease" here is 'exodus', that is, 'departure'. There is probably a reference to the Exodus of Moses from Egypt, that being a type of Christ's deliverance of His people, by a new Passover, from their bondage; their Captain and Mediator leading the way from this Egypt to the heavenly Canaan. To him who reads them aright the Law and the Prophets ever speak of Christ's decease. Yet surely in the unseen world these Saints had learnt more concerning this great mystery than they knew on earth. We know not even whether, when Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, he had any glimpse given him of its great typical meaning. Yet now he speaks of Christ's decease, and the words would imply that it is a theme of holy joy and thrilling interest. Doubtless the "spirits of just men made perfect" learn within the veil ever new lessons of the love and the glory of Jesus.

A. D. 29. heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him.

33 And it came to pass, as they departed from Him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying,

<sup>m</sup> Matt. 3. 17. <sup>m</sup> This is My beloved Son: <sup>n</sup> hear Him.

<sup>n</sup> Acts 3. 22.

36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept *it* close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

37 ¶ And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met Him.

32. "Heavy with sleep:" &c. The Transfiguration having probably taken place at night (See 37.) may account for this heaviness, which reminds us of that which overcame the same favoured three in Gethsemane. It appears that on this occasion, although they did not actually fall asleep, they became drowsy while Jesus prayed, but were aroused to perfect wakefulness by the brightness of the vision itself. The word translated "when they were awake" would be more exactly translated 'having kept themselves awake throughout,'—that is, throughout the vision, the Evangelist thus guarding against its being supposed to be a mere dream.

33. "It is good for us to be here." Yes; for a little space, but not always. We must not spend our lives "gazing up into heaven": we have work to do for Christ before He comes again. Yet the brightness of moments of heavenly contemplation should shine upon our daily toil, and gild our darkest hours. Another beautiful thought upon this passage is given us by an ancient writer. "If the contemplation of Christ's glorified Manhood so filled the Apostle with joy that he was unwilling to be parted from it, how shall it fare with them who attain to the contemplation of His glorious Godhead? And if it was so good a thing to dwell with two of His saints, how good then to come to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to these, not seen through a glass and darkly, but face to face?" (St. Anselm, quoted by Abp. Trench.).

34. "As they entered."—That is, Moses and Elijah, not the Apostles.

### 37—42. Healing of the lunatic child.

St. Matt. xvii. 14—21. St. Mark ix. 14—29.

37. "On the next day." This makes it very probable that the Transfiguration occurred at night.

38 And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech Thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child.

39 And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him.

40 And I besought Thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.

41 And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

42 And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare *him*. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

43 ¶ And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, He said unto His disciples,

44 Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

45 ° But they understood not this saying, and it <sup>° ch. 2. 50.</sup> & 18. 34.

38. "Mine only child." So was Jairus' daughter, and the widow of Nain's son (See on viii. 42.).

39. "Hardly." That is, 'with difficulty.'

### 43—45. Our Lord again foretells His Death and Resurrection.

St. Matt. xvii. 22, 23. St. Mark ix. 30—32.

44. "Let these sayings" &c. By "these sayings" our Lord probably meant His predictions of His own sufferings, referred to in the next words, and which He had already spoken of (22.). It was needful to impress these strongly upon His disciples, since His acts of power, and the amazement of the people, would naturally encourage ambitious thoughts of earthly greatness.

45. "They understood not." It was long before they really understood that Christ's kingdom was not of this world. It was only by slow degrees that they themselves attained to the truths they were to teach the world (See on St. Mark vi. 52.). In the dimness of their insight at this time into the nature of Christ and His work, it must have been very perplexing to hear One who could do such wonderful works speak of His approaching sufferings and death.

A. D. 29. was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask Him of that saying.

46 ¶ Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by Him,

<sup>p</sup> Matt. 10.  
40.  
John 12. 44.  
& 13. 20.  
<sup>q</sup> Matt. 23.  
11, 12.

48 and said unto them, <sup>p</sup> Whosoever shall receive this child in My name receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me: <sup>q</sup> for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

<sup>r</sup> See Num.  
11, 28.

49 <sup>r</sup> And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us.

<sup>s</sup> See Matt.  
12. 30.  
ch. 11. 23.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not: for <sup>s</sup> he that is not against us is for us.

51 ¶ And it came to pass, when the time was come

#### 46—50. Lesson in humility from a little child.

St. Matt. xviii. 1—14. St. Mark ix. 33—50.

47. "Perceiving the thought of their heart." That is, probably, the wish to know from Himself who should be greatest.

48. "Him that sent Me." That is, God Himself. The blessing cannot go higher. He who in love receives even a little child receives (in that blessed fellowship by which God's children are said to be in Him, and He in them,) that God, who "is Love."

#### 51—56. The Sons of Zebedee wishing to call down fire upon a Samaritan village.

51. "When the time was come" &c. This is a very important mark of time, signifying the near approach of the last great events of our Lord's sojourn on earth, which ended in His being "received up" to heaven in the Ascension. Up to this point the whole of our Lord's public ministry related by St. Luke is placed in Galilee. We now turn our eyes Southward towards Judæa and Jerusalem. It should be carefully remembered that the same great break in the history is to be observed in all the three earlier Gospels, the first portion of each being concerned with our Lord's Galilæan ministry, and the last with the events closely connected with the Crucifixion. (In St. Matthew this break occurs at xix. 1, and in St. Mark at x. 1.) Our Lord's progress to Jerusalem was not direct, but included a long missionary tour to many towns and villages, in Galilee itself, and then in Samaria and Judæa. This tour is briefly described in several places, as, for instance, "He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem" (xiii. 22. Compare xvii. 11. xviii. 31.). It is probable that this tour ended in our Lord's arriving at Jerusalem in time for the

that He should be received up, He stedfastly set A. D. 29.  
 His face to go to Jerusalem, † Mark 16.  
 52 and sent messengers before His face: and they 19.  
 went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, Acts 1. 2.  
 to make ready for Him.

53 And <sup>u</sup> they did not receive Him, because His <sup>u</sup> John 4.  
 face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. 4, 9.

54 And when His disciples James and John saw  
*this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command  
 fire to come down from heaven, and consume them,  
 even as <sup>x</sup> Elias did? x 2 Kings 1.

55 But He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye 10, 12.  
 know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For <sup>y</sup> the Son of man is not come to destroy <sup>y</sup> John 3. 17.  
& 12. 47.

Feast of Dedication in the December before His Crucifixion (See on St. John x. 22.).

“He stedfastly set His face.” That is, knowing perfectly, and foretelling frequently, what should there befall Him, He nevertheless approached with calm and stedfast purpose the scene of His coming Passion.

52. “Sent messengers.” At first perhaps He sent such as presented themselves among His disciples, but after a little while He formed the band of seventy for this purpose (x. 1.).

“To make ready.” Perhaps not alone to prepare food and lodging, but to announce publicly His coming as the Messiah.

53. “Because His face” &c. That is, He was evidently travelling Southwards, only passing through Samaria on His way to Jerusalem. He was now announcing Himself as the Messiah more publicly than ever before, and it would be a very great offence to the Samaritans that He should acknowledge Jerusalem as the holy city, and so condemn them in their separation from the Jews (See on St. Matt. x. 5.).

54. “James and John.” Surnamed the ‘Sons of thunder’, possibly from the vehemence of character, of which we have here an example (See on St. Mark iii. 17.).

“Even as Elias did.” Elijah called down fire from heaven upon two companies of soldiers sent to take him by Ahaziah king of Israel, whose death he had prophesied (2 Kings i. 10, 12.).

55. “Ye know not what manner” &c. That is, either, ‘Ye do not know yourselves, nor what sort of spirit your wish shows that you entertain;’ or else, ‘Ye do not know the true nature of the spirit of that new and heavenly kingdom to which ye belong,—ye do not understand that the spirit of the new covenant of grace is one of love and forbearance and the returning of good for evil.’ We may well notice that one of these two brothers, who would now have called down fire from heaven to destroy these Samaritans, afterwards went with his fellow-apostle St. Peter to call down upon the people of Samaria the fire of the Holy Ghost to save them (See Acts viii. 14—17.).

56. “Not come to destroy” &c. How gently and patiently then should His sinful servants deal with the erring and ignorant!

A. D. 29. men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

57 ¶ And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain *man* said unto Him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *His* head.

59 And He said unto another, Follow Me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

\* See 1 Kin.  
19, 20.

61 And another also said, Lord, <sup>z</sup> I will follow Thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

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“Another village.” Which, doubtless, was willing to receive Him, and thereby won a priceless blessing. Again we may notice the rule by which Christ bestows His mercies. They are never forced upon the unwilling (See on viii. 37.).

### 57—62. Warnings to certain who would follow Christ.

St. Matt. viii. 18—22.

62. “No man, having put his hand” &c. It was an innocent—nay, in itself, a right thing—which this man wished to do. Under ordinary circumstances our Lord would certainly have approved of such a token of affection for his own family as he desired to show. But doubtless our Lord saw in the man's heart, and probably in his manner too, a backwardness, and shrinking from the work, which drew out the warning here given. Those who would follow Christ must give themselves up wholly to Him. There must be no backward looks (like those of Lot's wife); only a steadfast unflinching eye to the work of the great Master. By “fit for the “kingdom of God” our Lord means ‘serviceable, or useful, in doing the ‘work of that kingdom.’

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57. “It came to pass,” &c. The following events are placed by St. Matthew at a much earlier part of our Lord's ministry. It is only necessary to repeat that the Evangelists do not make a point of arranging all the events of our Lord's life in the precise order of their occurrence, and that therefore differences in the order between the different Gospels need not perplex us. We are however often able in such cases of difference to see when one of the Evangelists has preserved the true place of the event related.

For instance, here the events are probably given in their true place by St. Matthew, because he connects them in verse 18 with the rest of the narrative, whereas St. Luke introduces them without anything to show when they took place. And we may notice that the nature of the events themselves would, if we had nothing else to guide us, lead to the idea that they took place in the early, rather than in the later, part of our Lord's public ministry.

*1 Christ sendeth out at once seventy disciples to work miracles, and to preach: 17 admonisheth them to be humble, and wherein to rejoice: 21 thanketh His Father for His grace: 23 magnifieth the happy estate of His church: 25 teacheth the lawyer how to attain eternal life, and to take every one for his neighbour that needeth his mercy: 41 reprehendeth Martha, and commendeth Mary her sister.*

**A**FTER these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and <sup>a</sup> sent them two and two <sup>a</sup> Mark 6. 7. before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore said He unto them, <sup>b</sup> The harvest <sup>b</sup> Matt. 9. 37, truly is great, but the labourers are few: <sup>c</sup> pray <sup>38.</sup> John 4. 35. ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He <sup>c</sup> 2Thess. 3. 1. would send forth labourers into His harvest.

## CHAPTER X.

## 1—16. Sending forth of the Seventy.

Compare the sending forth of the Twelve Apostles, St. Matt. x.

1. "Other seventy." That is, besides the Twelve Apostles, whom He had chosen some time before (vi. 13.). From the earliest times it was held that, as the Twelve Apostles were succeeded by the order of Bishops as the highest order in the Church, so the Seventy were succeeded by the order of Priests. The former answer to the twelve Patriarchs, the founders of the people of Israel, the latter to the seventy Elders, chosen by Moses, upon whom God poured out His Spirit (Num. xi. 25.). Ancient writers frequently refer to the twelve wells of water and seventy palm-trees at Elim (Ex. xv. 27.) as a type of the twelve Apostles and seventy Disciples, who bestow the waters of life, and provide a blessed shelter for the weary, in the barren wilderness of this world. St. Luke alone relates the appointment of the Seventy, as he alone relates also the appointment of the seven Deacons (Acts vi. 1—6.).

"Sent them two and two." Our Lord had already sent messengers in like manner before Him to prepare for His approach (ix. 52.). He now more formally appoints these to the work. We are not however to suppose that this appointment was only for the temporary purpose here named of going before our Lord on His tour from place to place as He gradually approached Jerusalem. The Seventy were doubtless set apart to be Christ's heralds for the rest of their lives, and when they had no longer to prepare men for His coming in the cities and villages of the Holy Land, they would still go forth to prepare men for His great coming at the last day.

2. "The harvest" &c. This saying our Lord also used just before the sending forth of the Twelve (St. Matt. ix. 37, 38.). It is well remarked that "the sending out of the Seventy was of itself an answer to the prayer, which, on the occasion of sending forth the Twelve, Jesus urged His disciples to offer" (*Olshausen.*). God was even then sending forth labourers into His harvest.

A. D. 29.

3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

<sup>d</sup> Mark 6. 8.  
ch. 9. 3.

4 <sup>d</sup> Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and

<sup>e</sup> 2 Kin. 4. 29.

<sup>e</sup> salute no man by the way.

5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace *be* to this house.

6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. 10. 27.

7 And in the same house remain, <sup>f</sup> eating and drinking such things as they give: for <sup>g</sup> the labourer

<sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. 9. 4.

is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

&c.  
<sup>h</sup> 1 Tim. 5. 18.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

<sup>h</sup> ch. 9. 2.

9 <sup>h</sup> and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, <sup>i</sup> The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

<sup>i</sup> ver. 11.  
Matt. 3. 2.  
& 4. 17.

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

<sup>k</sup> ch. 9. 5.  
Acts 13. 51.  
& 18. 6.

11 <sup>k</sup> Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

3. "Go your ways:" &c. It is observable that many of the directions given to the Seventy are similar to those given to the Twelve, as we should naturally expect. Still it seems not improbable that St. Matthew, in his account of the Mission of the Twelve Apostles (St. Matt. x.), is grouping together our Lord's various directions as to the Pastoral Office, and thus may include some things spoken to the Seventy (See *Note* on St. Matt. x. 1.).

4. "Salute no man." This is an expression implying great haste. The messengers had momentous work to do, and must not stop to greet friends or hold converse by the way. Salutations in the East were, and are to this day, so formal and ceremonious as to consume much time.

6. "If the son of peace be there." By "son of peace" is meant one fit to receive the peace you offer. The expression answers to "If the house be worthy" (St. Matt. x. 13.).

7. "Eating and drinking" &c. That is, content with, and thankful for, whatever they have to give you. This suggests a reason for the command, "Go not from house to house": as though it were, 'Go not about seeking where you may fare best and be most agreeably entertained.'

9. "The kingdom of God is come nigh." At first that kingdom was "at hand." Now it is "come nigh." Afterwards St. Paul says, God "*hath translated* us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. i. 13.).

- 12 But I say unto you, that <sup>1</sup>it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. A. D. 29.  
<sup>1</sup> Mark 6. 11.
- 13 <sup>m</sup>Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! <sup>n</sup>for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>m</sup> Matt. 11. 21.  
<sup>n</sup> Ezek. 3. 6.
- 14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.
- 15 <sup>o</sup>And thou, Capernaum, which art <sup>p</sup>exalted to heaven, <sup>q</sup>shalt be thrust down to hell. <sup>o</sup> Matt. 11. 23.  
<sup>p</sup> See Gen. 11. 4.  
Deut. 1. 28.  
Isai. 14. 13.  
Jer. 51. 53.
- 16 <sup>r</sup>He that heareth you heareth Me; and <sup>s</sup>he that despiseth you despiseth Me; <sup>t</sup>and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me. <sup>q</sup> See Ezek. 26. 20.  
& 32. 18.  
<sup>r</sup> Mark 9. 37.  
John 13. 20.  
<sup>s</sup> 1 Thess. 4. 8.  
<sup>t</sup> John 5. 23.
- 17 ¶ And <sup>u</sup>the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name. <sup>u</sup> ver. 1.  
<sup>x</sup> John 12. 31.  
& 16. 11.  
Rev. 9. 1.  
& 12. 8, 9.
- 18 And He said unto them, <sup>x</sup>I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

12. "That day." "The day of judgment" (St. Matt. x. 15.). It is a very solemn and impressive way of speaking of it to call it "*that day.*" It is that great day, which should be to us above all other days.

16. "He that despiseth" &c. How careful should this make us not to despise the message of those who bear Christ's commission and speak in His Name.

### 17—20. Return of the Seventy.

17. "The seventy returned." We cannot tell how long they had been absent, though probably not for long. Doubtless our Lord appointed them a certain number of days for their first absence, as it appears as though they all returned at the same time.

"Even the devils are subject" &c. This was plainly the uppermost thought in their minds. Their miraculous powers were to them a greater subject of rejoicing than either their personal hopes, or the blessedness of their office. So the Lord conveys to them a gentle rebuke, even while He confirms to them their powers.

18. "I beheld Satan" &c. The word "beheld" here is not to be understood of bodily sight but of spiritual contemplation. And the sudden fall of Satan spoken of is not his first fall with "the angels which kept not their first estate" (St. Jude 6.), but his fall from great power and dominion through the coming of Christ his Conqueror. But *when* did our Lord behold this vision of the fall of the prince of darkness? Not alone, as might seem at first sight, at the time of the

18. "From heaven." "Heaven" is used by our Lord in the same sense of high dignity and position, when He speaks of Capernaum as "exalted unto heaven" (15.).

## ST. LUKE, X.

**A. D. 29.** 19 Behold, <sup>v</sup>I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt

<sup>v</sup> Mark 16. 18. Acts 28. 5. you.  
 \* Exod. 32. 32. Ps. 69. 28. Isai. 4. 3. Dan. 12. 1. Phil. 4. 3. Heb. 12. 23. Rev. 13. 8. & 20. 12. & 21. 27. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because <sup>z</sup> your names are written in heaven.

21 ¶ In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and

absence of the Seventy, as though our Lord were describing the overthrow of Satan which they had been enabled to effect. The beholding "must be referred, not merely to the period during which the Seventy were absent, but to past time in general, so that the meaning would be,—Long ere this have I seen in spirit the power of evil as a thing "overthrown" (*Olshausen*). We must not fail to remark here our Lord's plain witness to the existence, and the power, of the prince of evil spirits. If the prince is cast down, He would say to the Seventy, no marvel that his wicked servants—"the devils"—have lost their power too. We must mark our Lord's words at a still later period, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (St. John xi. 31.), as showing that Satan's power was not wholly destroyed, and had yet to receive a farther blow on Calvary. Perhaps we may say that our Lord's vision of Satan's fall pictured an overthrow, which, though indeed partly fulfilled then, still embraces the whole of the Gospel reign, and will not be finally accomplished till the end.

19. "Behold, I give you power to tread" &c. Evil in all forms, bodily as well as spiritual, is the fruit of sin. Christ here bestows power over every sort of evil, or rather confirms the power already silently bestowed. The fact that He does not appear to have named this power to the Seventy on first sending them forth, shows how much greater in His eyes was their message than their powers. There is a "more excellent way" than even the "best gifts" (1 Cor. xii. 31.). These miraculous powers were confirmed once more to the faithful before our Lord returned to heaven (St. Mark xvi. 17, 18.).

20. "In this rejoice not," &c. Here is the gentle rebuke which our Lord utters to the Seventy. He would not have them despise the great gifts bestowed on them, which He had just solemnly confirmed, but He would not have them glory in them. They had a higher ground of rejoicing, even that their names were written in heaven,—that they were enrolled among the number of God's elect servants, to whom it is His good pleasure to give the kingdom. A blessed privilege indeed, and one which should make them rejoice, yet rejoice with trembling lest, called to such high privilege, any of them should through pride fall like "the angels which kept not their first estate" (St. Jude 6.).

**21—24. God's truth revealed to the humble.**  
 St. Matt. xi. 25—27. xiii. 16, 17.

21. "Jesus rejoiced in spirit." Mark the difference between the rejoicing of the servants and that of their Lord. They rejoiced in the wondrous powers they possessed: He in the blessed truths made known

said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.

22 <sup>a</sup> All things are delivered to Me of My Father: and <sup>b</sup> no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and *he* to whom the Son will reveal *Him*.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 28. 18.  
John 3. 35.  
& 5. 27.  
& 17. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Many ancient copies add these words, *And turning to His disciples, He said,*

23 And He turned Him unto *His* disciples, and said privately, Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things that ye see:

<sup>b</sup> John 1. 18.  
& 6. 44, 46.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Pet. 1. 10.

24 for I tell you, <sup>c</sup> that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

25 ¶ And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and

to the lowly. The ancient reading here seems to be, "rejoiced in the "Holy Ghost," which St. Cyril understands as meaning "rejoiced in "the works and miracles wrought by means of the Holy Ghost." But it seems more natural to understand such an expression as meaning 'rejoiced with that joy which the Holy Ghost bestows.' And if any think such an expression strange as spoken of the eternal Son of God, they must remember that it is no more strange than the truth that the Holy Ghost descended on our Lord at His Baptism (See on St. Matt. iii. 16. iv. 1.).

23. "He turned Him unto His disciples," &c. It appears from this that certain others had gathered round Him as He spoke to the Seventy. The saying here recorded as spoken "privately" was probably uttered in a low tone so as to be heard only by the disciples standing close to Him. It is recorded by St. Matthew as spoken on a different occasion, and, like many of our Lord's sayings, may well have frequently formed a part of His teaching at various times.

24. "Many prophets and kings." St. Peter speaks of the ancient prophets as "searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of "Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the "sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 St. Pet. i. 11.). Their language was at best, "I shall see Him, but not now" (Num. xxiv. 17.): *ours* is, "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation" (St. Luke i. 30.).

## 25—37. Parable of the Good Samaritan.

25. "A certain lawyer" &c. Like another lawyer on another occasion (See on St. Matt. xxii. 35.), this man does not appear to have had any evil design in his question. To 'tempt' only means to 'prove' or 'try', and the lawyer's object seems to have been simply to make trial of our Lord's learning, or to discover what His teaching was. The question this lawyer asked was indeed the most important any man can

# ST. LUKE, X.

A. D. 29. tempted Him, saying, 'Master, what shall I do to  
† Matt. 19. 16. & 22. 35. inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

Deut. 6. 5. Lev. 19. 18.

28 And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and <sup>g</sup>thou shalt live.

‡ Lev. 18. 5. Neh. 9. 29. Ezek. 20. 11, 13. 21. Rom. 10. 5. 29 But he, willing to <sup>h</sup>justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

h ch. 16. 15. 30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went

ask. It was the same which the gaoler at Philippi asked (Acts xvi. 30.), and which every man, who cares for his soul, must ask.

26. "What is written" &c. Christ refers him at once to that Law, which was his professed study, and in which he, as a lawyer, should have been well versed. It is as though He said, 'Thou art a lawyer, 'learned in the Scriptures: canst thou not find an answer to thy 'question there?' It is thought by some that our Lord may have pointed to the phylactery (See on St. Matt. xxiii. 5.) worn by this lawyer, upon which the first portion of his answer was probably written, this being a favourite text for the purpose.

27. "Thou shalt love" &c. This answer was the best the lawyer could have given, for it sums up our whole duty to God and man. "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10.).

28. "This do, and thou shalt live." The lawyer had answered well, and blessed would he have been had his life been in accordance with his principles. That man cannot go wrong who loves God with all his heart and his neighbour as himself. How far are we all from this! Jesus would lead the lawyer to prove and test in action that which he acknowledged in word, and this would at once bring to light the shallowness of his view of that love of which he spoke so well. It would also at once reveal to him his own weakness and sinfulness. In trying to fulfil the law he would learn how far he was from really doing so, for "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20.). And thus he would be brought to see and acknowledge his need of a Saviour, and of a better strength than his own (See on St. Matt. xix. 17.).

29. "Willing to justify himself." Wishing to make himself out just, and to show that he had really fulfilled the law of love so far as any had a claim upon him.

"And who is my neighbour?" This was a point upon which the Jewish doctors laid down many rules of their own invention, shutting out all foreigners from the narrow circle of their neighbourly love.

30. "A certain man" &c. In this parable our Lord does not reply to the question of the lawyer, but to the spirit which gave rise to it. He does not show who is to be looked upon as a neighbour claiming from us the rights of love, but who acts most in the spirit of true neighbourly love. When the lawyer would draw a line to mark off

down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. A. D. 29.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, <sup>1</sup>he passed <sup>1</sup> by on the other side. Ps. 38. 11.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on *him*, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain <sup>k</sup> Samaritan, as he journeyed, <sup>k</sup> John 4. 9.

his neighbour from others, he showed that he knew nothing of that love of which he was talking; for that love knows no line which it cannot pass, no point where the claims on it cease. With what Divine wisdom does Jesus here turn the lawyer's thoughts from the miserable disputes as to who is his neighbour upon his own heart and conscience.

“Went down.” It is common in other countries besides our own to speak of going up to, and down from, the capital city.

“From Jerusalem to Jericho.” Jericho was the second city in Judæa, nearly twenty miles from Jerusalem. It stood in a rich and beautiful plain, and was called “the city of palm-trees” (Judg. i. 16.). The road between Jerusalem and Jericho was wild and mountainous, and frequented by robbers, so that one part of it was called the ‘red’ or ‘bloody way’ from the murders committed there. It is worthy of notice that this parable appears to have been spoken at some period during our Lord’s last journey towards Jerusalem, and that He approached Jerusalem from the direction of Jericho (See on St. Matt. xx. 29.), so that it is very possible that the scene of the parable was laid by our Lord at or near the very place where He was when He spoke it. And this is rendered the more probable from the immediate mention of Bethany afterwards (See on 38.).

31. “A certain priest.” Many priests lived at Jericho, and would be frequently on the road between it and Jerusalem. Archbishop Trenchard well points out the wretched hypocrisy of this man in passing by a brother in such sore need of help, when the Law, in which the priests made their boast, and of which they were the teachers, was so careful in pressing the duties of compassion that it had twice said:—“Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again” (Exod. xxiii. 5. Deut. xxii. 4.). Here, not a brother’s ox or his ass, but a brother himself, was lying in his blood, and he hid himself from him. Doubtless the danger of the robbers themselves being close at hand would hasten the steps of this selfish hard-hearted priest.

32. “A Levite.” He too, though holding an inferior office in the Jewish Church, would, in his degree, be naturally expected to act according to the precepts of that law of which he must have been constantly the hearer.

33. “A certain Samaritan.” That is, a stranger and an enemy (See on St. Matt. x. 5, and St. John iv. 9.), who would have every motive for leaving the wounded man to his fate.

A. D. 29. came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*,

34 and went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

“He had compassion.” It was this which made the Samaritan a neighbour to his wounded fellow-creature. “It is not place, but love, which makes neighbourhood” (*Wordsworth*). The true neighbour is he who links himself to others by neighbourly love and sympathy.

34. “Pouring in oil and wine.” These were much esteemed remedies for wounds in the East. Observe the unselfish care of this man, who forgetting his own danger, patiently dresses the wounds of the sufferer before he raises him from the ground.

“Set him on his own beast.” Thus doubtless walking by his side.

“An inn.” The inns in the East were usually large courtyards with buildings in which travellers might find shelter, but without any “host” to take care of them, the travellers taking with them all that they required. Our Lord however in this place speaks of an inn in which there was a resident “host,” as in modern inns, so that some such doubtless existed in the Holy Land. We find the Samaritan not only bringing the wounded man to the inn, where he might have given him into the care of others, but continuing to watch over him as long as he stayed.

35. “Two pence.” That is, about fifteen pence of our money. This however does not fairly describe the amount, for money was of more value then than now, so that a penny was the usual amount of a day’s wages for a man (See on St. Matt. xx. 2.). It was also a day’s pay for a Roman soldier.

Compassion in this Samaritan was no idle sentiment. It had its proper fruit in the willing bestowal both of trouble and of money upon its object.

36. “Which now of these three,” &c. The lawyer had asked, “Who is my neighbour?” Jesus teaches him to beware of the state

35. *Two pence.* Although it has not been thought well in this Commentary to alter the usually accepted value of the penny as given in the margin in various places, yet probably the value would be better expressed by ninepence than by sevenpence halfpenny. The denarius, or penny, contained sixty grains

of silver, or one eighth of an ounce, which, if silver is reckoned at six shillings an ounce, would be exactly ninepence. The calculation however has little practical importance, since the real value of money depends upon the cost of the necessaries of life.

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. A. D. 29.  
Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

38 ¶ Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named <sup>1</sup>Martha received Him into her house. <sup>1</sup>John 11. 1. & 12. 2, 3.

of heart out of which such a question could spring. He draws a picture of one who was a true neighbour in his compassion to others, and He bids the lawyer copy him. By so doing he would soon learn in practice to answer his own question, "Who is my neighbour?" He would find out that as soon as true neighbourly love dwelt in his own heart he would have occasion to ask that question no more.

The Church has in all ages traced in this beautiful parable a yet deeper meaning, seeing in the Good Samaritan a picture of Christ Himself. The wounded man, in this view, is human nature, stripped of original righteousness and well-nigh of life itself by him who was "a murderer from the beginning" (St. John viii. 44.). The Priest and the Levite represent the Law, which, whether by commandment or by sacrifice, had no power to save; for "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. iii. 20.), and the sacrifices of the Law could not "make the comers thereunto perfect," or "take away sins" (Heb. x. 1—4.). But when Christ came, then came the healing of wounds and salvation. Though we were enemies, He did not pass us by. In the wine and the oil we may perhaps see "the Blood of His Passion and the anointing of the Holy Spirit" (Trench). In the Good Samaritan setting the wounded man on his own beast, while he walked himself on foot, we are reminded of Him who came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (St. Matt. xx. 28.). The inn may well be a type of the Church, whose work is the healing of souls, and the host a type of the stewards of Christ's mysteries, whom He bids to take care of His people till He comes again, bringing His reward with Him.

Archbishop Trench has well pointed out that our Church would lead us to take this deeper view of the Parable by selecting as the Epistle for the 13th Sunday after Trinity, when this Parable forms the Gospel, a passage (Gal. iii. 16—23.) which states the very truth conveyed by this view of the Parable, namely that righteousness and salvation are not by the Law but by Jesus Christ.

### 38—42. Martha and Mary.

38. "As they went." That is, upon their great journey which ended at Jerusalem (See on ix. 51.). Probably this visit to Bethany (which we must doubtless understand by "a certain village") took place at the time of the Feast of Dedication, some months before the last great scenes at Jerusalem, for that our Lord was present at that feast we are expressly told by St. John (x. 22.). Bethany was a small village on a rocky height nearly two miles from Jerusalem, Eastward, over the Mount of Olives (See *Map*). It was on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, which road beyond Bethany is most wild and desolate, and is the scene of the foregoing Parable (See on 30.).

"Her house." This seems to imply that Martha was the elder

A. D. 29. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, <sup>m</sup> which also  
<sup>n</sup> sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word.  
 &c.  
 n ch. 8. 35.  
 Acts 22. 3.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving,  
 and came to Him, and said, Lord, dost Thou not  
 care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?  
 bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha,  
 Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many  
 things :

o Ps. 27. 4. 42 but • one thing is needful : and Mary hath  
 chosen that good part, which shall not be taken  
 away from her.

sister, and that her parents were dead. She was acting as mistress  
 of the house.

39. "Sat at Jesus' feet." This seems to have been while the meal  
 was being prepared.

40. "Cumbered." Literally, 'distracted,' or 'drawn in different  
 directions.' In her great anxiety to do honour to her Guest, Martha  
 scarcely knew which way to turn, and it grieved her to see her sister  
 heedless of all her trouble, and wrapped up in her listening to Jesus.

41. "Martha, Martha," &c. Our Lord's rebuke is very loving and  
 gentle. He rebukes her not for her active service, but for being so full  
 of care and trouble about it that she forgot for the time that any thing  
 else could be of greater importance. Observe here how "careful" has its  
 proper meaning of 'full of care.' It is the same word which our Lord  
 uses, when He says "Take no thought" (See on St. Matt. vi. 25.).

42. "One thing is needful." Martha was troubled about *many*  
 things. Only *one* thing should be the object of real and deep anxiety.  
 And that "one thing" was the "good part" Mary had chosen. By  
 "good part" is meant 'good portion', with reference to the feast. Martha  
 would prepare a great feast with many rich portions : Mary had chosen  
 the one truly good portion, namely the "Bread of Life." Martha would  
 feed her holy Guest with the best she had : Mary would rather be fed  
 by Him. Jesus does not say that Martha had chosen a *bad* part : only  
 Mary had chosen a better. And that good part should "not be taken  
 away from her." The Lord was her portion, and that portion she had  
 for ever.

We may see in these two sisters examples of two very different classes  
 of persons. Martha represents those who serve Christ in busy active  
 labour ; Mary those who serve Him in secret adoration and devotion.  
 Each have their place in Christ's Church, and each win their blessing.  
 But Christ Himself declares the latter the more blessed service. The  
 former may be mere outward activity ; the latter is closer to Himself.  
 We can do better without labours than without devotion. It has been  
 said that 'To labour is to pray.' Surely it is equally true that to pray  
 is to labour in our Master's service. But we must not think our Lord  
 desires us to draw a contrast between labours and devotion. His rebuke  
 is for those who make light of devotion and would call others away from  
 it to more active service. The best and truest life is one (like that of

CHAPTER XI.

*1 Christ teacheth to pray, and that instantly: 11 assuring that God so will give us good things. 14 He, casting out a dumb devil, rebuketh the blasphemous Pharisees: 28 and sheweth who are blessed: 29 preacheth to the people, 37 and reprehendeth the outward shew of holiness in the Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers.*

AND it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And He said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

angels) made up of *both* these forms of service—active labours and inward devotion.

“There are, in this loud stunning tide  
Of human care and crime,  
With whom the melodies abide  
Of the everlasting chime;  
Who carry music in their heart  
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,  
Plying their daily task with busier feet,  
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.”

(*Christian Year.*)

CHAPTER XI.

1—13. Prayer, with the Lord's Prayer.

St. Matt. vi. 9—15. vii. 7—12.

1. “As He was praying” &c. This is evidently a different occasion from that on which the Lord's Prayer is given by St. Matthew. Then our Lord was speaking the Sermon on the Mount, which was near the beginning of His public ministry: now He is praying, and the event is related during the history of His last great journey. Then the Prayer was uttered in the midst of a longer discourse upon prayer; now it is given in answer to the request of one of the disciples.

“As John also taught” &c. We have no record of the prayer which St. John the Baptist taught his disciples, this being the only place in which the fact is alluded to at all.

2. “When ye pray, say.” A distinct command to use a set form of words.

2. “Our Father” &c. Whether our Lord gave on this occasion an exact repetition of the Prayer which He gave in the Sermon on the Mount, or no, is doubtful. If He uttered the Prayer, as is probable, in the popular language of the Jews (the Syro-Chaldaic), the differences may exist only in the Greek  
H h

- A. D. 29.** 14 ¶ <sup>c</sup> And He was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.
- e Matt. 9. 32.**
- d Matt. 9. 34.** 15 But some of them said, <sup>a</sup> He casteth out devils through <sup>2</sup> Beelzebub the chief of the devils.
- 2 Gr. Beelzebub, and so ver. 18, 19.** 16 And others, tempting *Him*, <sup>e</sup> sought of Him a sign from heaven.
- e Matt. 12. 38. & 16. 1.** 17 But <sup>f</sup> He, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house *divided* against a house falleth.
- f John 2. 25.** 18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.
- 19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? therefore shall they be your judges.
- g Ex. 8. 19.** 20 But if I <sup>g</sup> with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.
- 21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

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**14—23. The Accusation of casting out devils by Beelzebub.**

St. Matt. xii. 22—30. St. Mark iii. 22—30.

14. "It was dumb." Causing dumbness and, as we know from St. Matthew, blindness also in the person afflicted.

16. "Others, tempting *Him*," &c. These were some of the Scribes and Pharisees, and the answer to them is given a little farther on (29—32.).

17. "Knowing their thoughts." The thoughts of those who said, either to themselves, or at least out of His hearing, "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub."

20. "With the finger of God." That is, 'with the power of God,' the "finger" being here used as 'hand' and 'arm' are elsewhere for the putting forth of power. In St. Matthew it is "by the Spirit of God."

21. "When a strong man armed" &c. This is fuller than in the

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14. "And He was" &c. St. Luke seems here to break in upon his orderly narrative, collecting together a number of events and sayings without regard to the time when, or order in which, they occurred. There is nothing specially instructive in the exact order of the events, and therefore the inspired Evangelists do not make it of any importance. Indeed often it is more instructive to group

together like sayings or events, though occurring at different times (See Note on St. Matt. x. 5.), than to present them in the true order of their occurrence. St. Luke proceeds to set forth Christ and His works and words without regard to historical order from this point probably as far as xiii. 21, the next verse, xiii. 22, taking up again the history of the last great journey.

22 but <sup>h</sup> when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. A. D. 29.  
h Is. 53. 12.  
Col. 2. 15.

23 He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth.

24 ¶ When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25 And when he cometh, he findeth *it* swept and garnished.

26 Then goeth he, and taketh *to him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter

other Gospels. The "strong man armed" is Satan or Beelzebub. His "palace" is this world, of which *in its evil* he is prince. His "goods" are those who are "taken captive by him" (2 Tim. ii. 26.). And these are "in peace" so long as they rest content in their captivity, and love their prison. It is a fearful thing to be in the power of Satan at all: it is a still more fearful thing to be in his power, and yet to be "in peace."

22. "But when a stronger than he" &c. If Christ had not been stronger than Satan, He could not have delivered his captives out of their bondage. By the "armour" of Satan is probably meant simply his powerful hold on his victims, or his power through their depravity and viciousness to resist the approach of good. By dividing his spoils is meant claiming, and devoting to good and holy use, those whom Satan had hitherto kept safely in his palace as his own "goods." When a conqueror takes a city or palace, the "spoils"—that is, the treasures found there—are divided among his army. Perhaps then we may see in our Lord's words here a hint of the reward promised to those who fight, under Him, to the rescuing of souls from Satan. Thus St. Paul calls his Thessalonian disciples his "crown of rejoicing," his "glory and joy" (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.). They were some of the "spoils" divided to him by the great Captain in the spoiling of the "strong man armed." No doubt our Lord in all this passage is speaking of the rescuing from Satan's power of those who, like Mary Magdalene and so many others, had been *possessed* by devils (See on St. Matt. viii. 28.), but we may well apply His words more widely, and understand them of the rescue of those who have been under the more ordinary power of the evil one.

## 24—26. The Return of the unclean spirit.

St. Matt. xii. 43—45.

23. After this verse in St. Matthew, the Holy Ghost, which is briefly introduced by St. Luke in a later place (xii. 10.), and in place of it in St. Mark, follows the passage concerning blasphemy against

A. D. 29. in, and dwell there: and <sup>1</sup>the last state of that  
<sup>1</sup> John 5. 14. man is worse than the first.  
 Heb. 6. 4.  
 & 10. 26.  
<sup>2</sup> Pet. 2. 20.

27 ¶ And it came to pass, as He spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto Him, <sup>k</sup>Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 7. 21. 28 But He said, Yea <sup>1</sup>rather, blessed are they  
 ch. 8. 21. that hear the word of God, and keep it.  
 James 1. 25.

### 27, 28. A woman blesses Christ's Mother.

27. "Blessed is the womb" &c. The woman who spoke thus was doubtless deeply moved by the wisdom and dignity of our Lord's words as well as by the power of His works. We cannot but admire the courage with which she lifted up her voice in the midst of Scribes and Pharisees, whose anger she knew she must incur. With a woman's feelings she thought how blessed it must be to be the mother of One so great and good.

28. "Yea rather," &c. This means, 'Yes, it is true; and yet 'still more blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.' Christ by no means denies the blessedness of being His mother (See on St. Matt. xii. 50.). She herself had said, "All generations shall call me blessed" (i. 48.). But there was a higher blessedness still, namely to hear and keep the word of God. Even the blessed Virgin herself was more blessed in hearing and keeping the word of God than in being the mother of the Lord. Elizabeth declared her true blessedness, when she said, "Blessed is she that believed" (i. 45.). And this higher blessedness all may share. There is a spiritual conception of Christ higher and holier than the bodily conception in the womb of the Virgin Mother. If "*Christ be formed in*" us (Gal. iv. 19.), by the putting on of "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. iv. 24.), then are we truly blessed; for blessed is the pure and holy soul that bears Him, and the lowly and contrite heart where He refuses not to dwell.

27. It is thought by some probable that this incident and that related in viii. 19-21. occurred at the same time. In support of this we may observe that in St. Matthew and St. Mark the coming of our Lord's mother and brethren to seek for Him is placed at the conclusion of the foregoing conversation, in fact in the very place which this woman's blessing of Christ's mother holds here. In St. Matthew that event is introduced with the express words, "While He yet talked to the people," whereas in St. Luke (viii. 19.) we have only the word "Then," which gives no exact mark of time. Thus it is argued with

some reason that the first two Evangelists relate the coming of our Lord's mother and brethren in its exact place, namely in the same place in which St. Luke here relates the story of the woman blessing our Lord's mother. If this is the true account of the matter, it would seem that the mention of our Lord's mother being without may have suggested to the woman the thought of her blessedness. And then our Lord may have first answered the woman, and afterwards turned to the rest of the people with the words, "Who is My mother", &c. as related in the other Gospels and in viii. 21.

29 ¶ And when the people were gathered thick together, He began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. A. D. 29.

30 For as <sup>m</sup>Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. <sup>m</sup>Jonah 1. 17. & 2. 10.

31 <sup>n</sup>The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. <sup>n</sup>1 Kings 10. 1.

32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for <sup>o</sup>they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. <sup>o</sup>Jonah 3. 5.

33 ¶ <sup>p</sup>No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. <sup>p</sup>Mark 4. 21. ch. 8. 16.

### 29—32. Seeking after a sign.

St. Matt. xii. 38—42.

29. "He began to say." In answer to those who, "tempting Him, sought of Him a sign from heaven" (16.).

30. "As Jonas was a sign" &c. Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites by his miraculous deliverance from his three days living death, which he doubtless related in his preaching to them. So Christ would be a sign to that generation by His miraculous Resurrection from the dead. The Resurrection is continually appealed to by the Apostles as the great proof of Christ's divine mission.

### 33—36. The Light of Truth.

Compare St. Matt. v. 15. vi. 22, 23.

33. "No man, when he hath lighted" &c. This seems to have been a frequent saying of our Lord, used on various occasions, and applied in various ways. We have already met with it in this Gospel (viii. 16.). Here, as there, the "candle" seems to mean Christ's doctrine. The putting it on a candlestick here refers simply to the publicity with which Christ proclaimed Himself (and not, as may be the case in the other places, to the holding up of the light by the Church). Christ had told those who asked for a sign that they in their blindness were rejecting a greater than Solomon and a greater than Jonas. And in this verse He shows them that they might have

29. "When the people" &c. From St. Matthew we should gather that this was towards the close of the present conversation, and just before the coming of His mother and brethren, who could not get to Him on account of the press.

A. D. 29. 34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

36 If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when <sup>2</sup>the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

<sup>2</sup> Gr. a candle by it's bright shining.

37 ¶ And as He spake, a certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with Him: and He went in, and sat down to meat.

seen and believed, had they pleased. He was come "the Light of the world" (St. John viii. 12.), and held up that Light openly for all to see. So their blindness was wilful.

34. "The light of the body" &c. These verses are also found in the Sermon on the Mount. There they seem to teach that the whole inner man is lit with heavenly light when the *heart and affections* are set on things above. Here they teach that the same inward light is won by a clear *faith* in Christ and His Truth. We must not forget that the eye conveying light to the body is a parable. The parable may be stated thus: The eye is the light (literally, the candle) of the body. When the eye is pure and clear, it gives light to the whole body. When it is dull and defiled, it can give no light. Take heed then that that eye, which is meant to be your light, be not darkness through its wilful blindness. If it shine so as to fill the body with light, then is all around as bright and clear as a room lit up with a brightly shining lamp or candle. The spiritual meaning is not hard to see: The soul has an eye to give it light, even Faith. If Faith is clear and true, the soul is in light; if Faith is weak and dim, the soul is in darkness. Take care that that very Faith which should flood your soul with light, be not itself dark and blind. If it does shed the light of truth upon your soul, filling it with its brightness, then is your soul as full of light as a brightly lighted room.

### 37—54. Earlier woe to the Pharisees.

Compare St. Matt. xxiii.

37. "Besought Him to dine with him." This invitation was not one of pure friendliness, but, as in other cases (See vii. 36. and xiv. 1.), with a view to watching the words and conduct of our Lord.

"He went in." Our Lord refuses not the invitations even of those who are most unworthy to receive so holy a Guest. He is always

37—54. The present passage contains much that we also find in our Lord's last solemn denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees contained in St. Matt. xxiii. Plainly our Lord uttered His woes on both occasions, and we must not confound the two. This was at a meal in a Pharisee's house, and certainly not at Jerusalem: that was in the Temple at Jerusalem, and on the last occasion on which

- 38 And when the Pharisee saw *it*, he marvelled A. D. 29.  
 that He had not first washed before dinner. <sup>q</sup> Mark 7. 3.
- 39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye  
 Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and  
 the platter; but <sup>r</sup>your inward part is full of <sup>r</sup>Titus 1. 15.  
 ravening and wickedness.
- 40 Ye fools, did not He that made that which is <sup>s</sup> Isai. 58. 7.  
 without make that which is within also? Dan. 4. 27.  
ch. 12. 33.
- 41 <sup>a</sup>But rather give alms <sup>2</sup>of such things as <sup>2</sup>Or, as you  
 are able.

ready to go where He may bestow a blessing, even though it be conveyed in the form, as here, of stern warning and rebuke.

38. "He marvelled" &c. Probably expressing his surprise aloud, and thus at the very first showing the captious and suspicious spirit in which he regarded his Guest (See on St. Matt. xv. 1—9.).

39. "Your inward part" &c. In the parallel passage in St. Matthew it is the inward part of the cup *and* platter which is spoken of, the parable being more exactly carried out. Here the figure and the thing signified by it are mingled together, the kernel as it were appearing through the shell. It is sometimes thought strange that our Lord should speak so strongly at a meal, and in condemnation of His host himself. But He who knew what was in man knew what His hearers needed, and no fancied courtesy would hinder Him from speaking that which was for their real good.

"Ravening." The original word is translated "extortion" in St. Matt. xxiii. 25. It means greedy avarice, and plunder.

40. "Ye fools," &c. That is, How can ye imagine that so shallow and incomplete a cleansing as that of the bare outside of your conduct can satisfy God, who made soul as well as body, and looks for the cleansing of the whole man, within and without?

41. "But rather give alms" &c. The words "such things as ye have" are literally 'the things that are within.' This may perhaps mean no more than 'the things ye possess'; but it seems better to understand it as referring to the "inward part" spoken of in the last two verses. That "inward part" our Lord had pronounced to be full of greedy covetousness. He now says, 'Be not content with the cleansing of the outside, which can never satisfy God, but rather give as your alms that which is within, and the outside shall be clean also.' The meaning of this command would be, 'In your almsgiving give more than a mere outside gift which costs you little; give the very contents of the vessel, something real and substantial, which will compel the sacrifice of your covetous desires, and so cleanse the whole man.' It is true giving alms is in some sort an outside duty, and one in which the Pharisees took pride (See St. Matt. vi. 2.), and therefore it may seem strange that our Lord should set it in contrast with

our Lord visited the Temple. It is not strange that He, whose words were not like the words of others—simply the best which occurred to the speaker at the time, but absolutely and always the best which could express His meaning, should have used the same words at different times to express the same things. This discourse in the Pharisee's house seems to be a forestalling and anticipation of the more full and solemn and formal discourse in the Temple just before the Passion (See Note on St. Matt. xxiii. 1.).

A. D. 29. ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

43 'Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! " for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over *them* are not aware of *them*.

45 Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto Him, Master, thus saying Thou reproachest us also.

46 And He said, Woe unto you also, *ye* lawyers!

their shallow outward observances; but He has spoken of their "ravening" as belonging to the *inward* part, and this sin must be corrected by a true charity, showing itself in liberal almsgiving, also in the *inward* part. Doubtless the almsgiving here spoken of by Christ is that secret and humble almsgiving recommended in the Sermon on the Mount (St. Matt. vi. 3.), and something very different from the wretched display of the Pharisee "to be seen of men."

"Behold, all things are clean unto you." It would be a grievous perversion of this text to suppose our Lord to teach that almsgiving, however pure and noble, sanctifies all other things. He only uses it as an example of a grace which, among many others, His hearers lacked, and He means, Take care to secure the inward grace, and you need fear no defilements from the neglect of those little outward observances which you think so important. Not outward washings but inward charity will make you clean.

44. "As graves which appear not." This is a different use of the figure from that in St. Matthew. There the Pharisees are compared to "whited sepulchres"—fair outside but full of all uncleanness within. Here they are compared to tombs which, instead of being "whited," are grass-grown and unseen, so that men are defiled by passing over them without knowing. The meaning is that the iniquity of the Pharisees was so secret and unsuspected that their pupils and followers caught, without knowing it, their false hypocritical spirit.

45. "One of the lawyers." Why this lawyer imagined his own class to be included in our Lord's condemnation is not clear. Perhaps because our Lord had addressed the Scribes (44.), between whom and the Lawyers there was little difference (See on St. Matt. xxii. 35.): perhaps because he was conscious that he made much of those outward ceremonies which Christ condemned.

46. "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers!" Our Lord accepts this lawyer's classing of himself with the Pharisees, and pronounces woe against him and his class for the very things which He afterwards charges against the Scribes and Pharisees (St. Matt. xxiii. 4.).

<sup>t</sup> Mark 12.  
33, 39.

<sup>u</sup> Ps. 5. 9.

for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute:

50 that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

51 \*from the blood of Abel unto <sup>v</sup>the blood of <sup>x</sup>Gen. 4. 8. Zacharias, which perished between the altar and <sup>y</sup>2 Chron. 24. 20, 21. the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye <sup>h</sup>hindered.

<sup>2</sup> Or, *forbad*.

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48. "Truly ye bear witness" &c. By their very building of these sepulchres, as though they honoured and followed the Prophets, while in their secret hearts they were as unlike them as could be, the Pharisees and lawyers showed themselves true descendants of their self-righteous and obstinate fore-fathers, who would not receive God's calls to repentance, but persecuted and slew the Prophets (See on St. Matt. xxiii. 31.). In a very little time they would prove themselves yet more like their fathers by their rejection and murder of Christ Himself.

49. "The wisdom of God." It is very note-worthy that in the later discourse Christ speaks in language of higher authority, saying, "Behold, I send" (St. Matt. xxiii. 34.). He is in the deepest truth the "Wisdom of God." Yet we are not to understand that He simply speaks of Himself by this title. He is speaking of God's Wisdom as it revealed itself in His dealings with His people of old. He is not quoting any distinct passage, but is probably (as Alford points out) referring to the passage in which the martyrdom of Zechariah is recorded (2 Chron. xxiv. 19—22.), where we find mention of God's sending His Prophets, of their rejection, of the special rejection and martyrdom of Zechariah, and of his last words (very different from St. Stephen's) asking that his blood might be thus "required."

52. "The key of knowledge." That is, either the key which opens the door to true knowledge,—namely, the right interpretation of the Scriptures; or, perhaps better still, the key which *is* knowledge, and which opens the door to the kingdom of heaven. According to the

## ST. LUKE, XII.

A. D. 29. 53 And as He said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge *Him* vehemently, and to provoke Him to speak of many things:

<sup>a</sup> Mark 12. 13. 54 laying wait for Him, and <sup>z</sup> seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him.

### CHAPTER XII.

1 *Christ preacheth to His disciples to avoid hypocrisy, and fearfulness in publishing His doctrine: 13 warneth the people to beware of covetousness, by the parable of the rich man who set up greater barns. 22 We must not be over careful of earthly things, 31 but seek the kingdom of God, 33 give alms, 36 be ready at a knock to open to our Lord whensoever He cometh. 41 Christ's ministers are to see to their charge, 49 and look for persecution. 54 The people must take this time of grace, 58 because it is a fearful thing to die without reconciliation.*

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 16. 6. <sup>b</sup> Mark 8. 15. **I**N <sup>a</sup> the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, in-  
somuch that they trode one upon another, He began  
<sup>b</sup> Matt. 16. 12. to say unto His disciples first of all, <sup>b</sup> Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

view taken of the key of knowledge will be that of the entering in; which will signify either into that true knowledge, of which they had the key, or else into that kingdom, the key of which is the knowledge of God's word.

53. "To urge Him vehemently." That is, 'to press Him eagerly.' This shows the spirit of those who had gone through the formality of asking Him to visit them (See on 37.).

54. "To catch something" &c. This means, to induce Him to utter some words, which they might use for the purpose of accusing Him.

### CHAPTER XII.

#### 1—9. Exhortation to the Disciples.

St. Matt. x. 26—33.

1. "Beware ye of the leaven" &c. This figure of "leaven" our Lord used on quite a different occasion in warning His disciples against the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees (See on St. Matt. xvi. 6.).

1. "He began to say." Most of this chapter is to be found in various parts of St. Matthew's Gospel, chiefly in the Sermon on the Mount (vi.), the missionary charge (x.), and the concluding part of the great prophecy of the coming of Christ (xxiv.). These various portions are here gathered together into one seemingly continuous discourse, interrupted only by the important passage 12—21, which is found only in St. Luke. How are we to explain this? Plainly much weight must be given to the con-  
sideration that it may have been our Lord's habit frequently to repeat the same sayings (See Note on xi. 37—54.). This consideration however does not fully meet the question, especially in regard to the longer passages such as are met with in this chapter. We must then also give due weight to the fact, frequently named in other places, that the Evangelists do not seek to give all the events and sayings they record in their exact order, but often group them together so as to present them in the most striking and

2 <sup>c</sup> For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. A. D. 29.

3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. c Mark 4. 22.  
ch. 8. 17.

4 <sup>d</sup> And I say unto you <sup>e</sup> My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. d Isai. 51. 7,  
8, 12, 13,  
Jer. 1. 8.  
e John 15.  
14, 15.

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him.

6 Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

8 <sup>f</sup> Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: f Mark 8. 38.  
2 Tim. 2. 12.  
1 John 2. 23.

9 but he that denieth Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

2. "For there is nothing" &c. This seems to have been a frequent saying of our Lord (See viii. 17.). Here it is applied to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, as declaring how vain is the attempt to dissemble and cloak the real character before God, who will bring every thing to light at the last day.

4. "My friends." Observe, the following exhortation is spoken to the disciples, Christ's "*friends*," though in the presence and hearing of a large multitude. They are Christ's friends, who do His commandments (St. John xv. 14, 15.). The words, "My friends," are not the beginning of the exhortation which follows, but are to be taken with the preceding word "you."

instructive form (See Note on St. Matt. x. 1.). Of course it is very difficult—often quite impossible—to decide upon particular sayings occurring under seemingly different circumstances in different Gospels, whether they were really spoken on both occasions, or, if not, which Gospel (if either) has them in their true historical place. We may thank God that to decide such questions is of no practical importance. But one thing should be borne in mind, namely that whatever is introduced by certain plain marks of time, or historical connection, must belong to such time or connection.

The Evangelists did not *invent* occasions for introducing Christ's sayings. Thus in the beginning of this chapter it is plain that our Lord addressed His disciples concerning the hypocrisy of the Pharisees in the presence of a large multitude. But how much of the discourse which follows was spoken on the same occasion, or how much grouped together for our instruction, we cannot tell. No attempt therefore will be made to fix the time or occasion of the sayings in this chapter which are also found in St. Matthew. The reader is referred to that Gospel for their explanation.

A. D. 29. 10 ¶ And <sup>2</sup>whosoever shall speak a word against  
<sup>1</sup>John 5. 16. the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto  
 him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it  
 shall not be forgiven.

11 ¶ And when they bring you unto the syna-  
 gogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye  
 no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or  
 what ye shall say:

12 for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same  
 hour what ye ought to say.

13 ¶ And one of the company said unto Him,  
 Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the  
 inheritance with me.

<sup>2</sup>John 18. 36. 14 And He said unto him, <sup>1</sup>Man, who made Me  
 a judge or a divider over you?

<sup>1</sup>1 Tim. 6. 7, &c. 15 And he said unto them, <sup>1</sup>Take heed, and be-

### 10. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

St. Matt. xii. 31, 32. St. Mark iii. 28—30.

10. "Whosoever" &c. This saying is in the other Gospels closely connected with the accusation made against our Lord of casting out devils through Beelzebub, so that it is quite clear *that* is its true historical place. (See *Note* on xi. 23.) It follows however here so naturally after the mention of denying Christ that it may very well have been spoken by our Lord in this connection also.

### 11—12. On the power of speech given by the Holy Ghost.

St. Matt. x. 19, 20. St. Mark xiii. 11, 12. Compare on xxi. 14, 15.

### 13—21. Parable of the Rich Fool.

13. "One of the company said." It appears as though this man, in his anxiety about his own affairs, interrupted our Lord in the midst of His conversation, or at least seized on the first vacant moment.

"Speak to my brother," &c. We need not doubt the justness of this man's claim. Indeed the parable which follows is a rebuke, not to injustice and wrong, but to covetousness.

14. "Who made Me a judge" &c. Our Lord distinctly refuses on all occasions to meddle with the temporal affairs of men. Observe the case of the tribute-money (St. Matt. xxii. 21.), and of the woman taken in adultery (St. John viii. 7.). He came to establish a spiritual kingdom, which was indeed in its growth to leaven the whole world, but any interference in worldly concerns then would only have encouraged the false notions of the Messiah which prevailed among the Jews, who looked for a temporal King and Deliverer.

ware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, <sup>k</sup>Soul, thou hast

<sup>k</sup> Eccles. 11.  
9.  
<sup>l</sup> Cor. 15. 32.  
James 5. 5.

15. "Covetousness." Our Lord at once proceeds to attack the evil which was at the root of the man's request. He who "knew what was in man" saw perfectly the true motive of his request.

"A man's life." That is, his true life—that life which is alone worthy of the name—his spiritual and eternal life (See on St. Matt. x. 39.). This in no way consists in outward things. It is neither bestowed, nor kept alive, nor strengthened, by them. "Man doth not live by bread alone." Bread nourishes the life of the body, but the true life is of heaven, and has heavenly food.

16. "The ground of a certain rich man" &c. Archbishop Trenchard (from whose admirable book upon the Parables much is borrowed, here as elsewhere,) points out the truth that the danger of riches increases with their increase. Abundance serves, not as water to quench, but as fuel to augment, the fire of covetousness. Thus the Psalmist's advice is very needful, "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them" (Ps. lxxii. 10.). And very wise is the prayer of Agar, "Give me neither poverty nor riches" (Prov. xxx. 8, 9.).

17. "What shall I do," &c. St. Ambrose answers this man's question for him, 'Thou hast barns enough,' he says,—'the bosoms of the needy, the houses of widows, the mouths of orphans and infants.' In those barns he could store up his goods to find them again in heaven. St. Augustine has a noble passage addressed to one perplexed with the abundance of his goods, and so in danger of losing them: 'God does not wish you to lose your riches; only to change their place. If a friend, finding that you had stored your corn in a damp room, where it was rotting away, were to advise you to remove it to a higher chamber, where it would be safe, you would listen to his advice; yet you will not listen to Christ bidding you raise your treasure from earth to heaven, where you will receive—not indeed what you have thus laid up, but—instead of these perishable things things eternal, instead of earth heaven.'

18. "My fruits and my goods." How like the world he speaks, as though all were his own, and he might do what he liked with his own.

19. "Soul, thou hast much goods" &c. Verily a most true picture

15. "For a man's life" &c. The literal translation of this sentence is as follows: 'abundance, does his life consist in the things which he possesses.'  
'For not, in the case of any man having

## ST. LUKE, XII.

A. D. 29. much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.

20 But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: <sup>m</sup> then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

<sup>s</sup> Or, do they require thy soul.

<sup>1</sup> Job 20. 22. & 27. 8.

<sup>Ps.</sup> 52. 7.

<sup>James</sup> 4. 14.

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, <sup>n</sup> and is not rich toward God.

<sup>m</sup> Ps. 39. 6.

<sup>Jer.</sup> 17. 11.

<sup>n</sup> ver. 33.

<sup>Matt.</sup> 6. 20.

<sup>1 Tim.</sup> 6. 18,

19.

<sup>James</sup> 2. 5.

22 ¶ And He said unto His disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

23 The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and

of many a man whom the world honours and approves. Is it so rare a thing for a man who has either made, or inherited, a goodly portion of wealth, to lay his plans for the future, exactly as this man in the parable did, with the sole view of pleasing self, and enjoying his good fortune?

20. "But God said unto him." We need not in these words understand any forewarning to be given to the man. God spake to him in the decree which ended his silly dream, and cut short his selfish projects.

"Required of thee." The righteous joyfully commits his soul to God: from the wicked it is exacted with stern terror. "For he is not as a ship, which has been long waiting in harbour, and joyfully, when the signal is given, lifts its anchor, and makes sail for the harbour of eternity; but like the ship which by some fierce wind is dragged from its moorings, and driven furiously to perish on the rocks" (*Trench.*).

21. "So is he" &c. Thus does Christ point the Parable against the man whose petition gave rise to it, and against all who lay up treasure upon earth. For be it much, or be it little, upon which the heart is set, it matters not. There may be rich men who have their treasure above, and poor men who have it below; for where the heart is, there is the treasure. And the true riches may be lost for a little handful as surely as for thousands of gold and silver.

### 22—34. Discourse to the Disciples upon Trust in God.

St. Matt. vi. 19—33.

22. "Therefore I say" &c. The following passage would most naturally spring out of the foregoing parable, and the word "Therefore" appears at first sight to join it closely to it. But in the Sermon on the Mount the same passage begins with the word "Therefore," and follows (with a break of a few verses) the passage upon heavenly treasure which is here given after it. We cannot then say for

certain that we have that mark of historical connection (See *Note* on 1.) here, which would oblige us to consider this a continuation of the same discourse. It is quite possible this passage may be a part of the Sermon on the Mount, given here on account of its appropriateness to the foregoing parable, the word "Therefore" being only part of the quotation.

God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?  
 25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

A. D. 29.  
 Job 38. 41.  
 Ps. 147. 9.

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith?

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

<sup>2</sup> Or, live not in careful suspense.

30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

<sup>P</sup> Matt. 11. 25, 26.  
<sup>9</sup> Mat. 19. 21. Acts 2. 45. & 4. 34.  
<sup>r</sup> ch. 16. 9. 1 Tim. 6. 19.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in

32. "Fear not, little flock." Thus speaks the Good Shepherd, and very blessed are His words. What hope and joy are ours in seeking the kingdom of God, when we know that it is God's good pleasure to give it us! God has called us to be inheritors of that kingdom: He destines us for it, and it for us: He gives us all needful helps in winning it. We have then none but ourselves to blame, if we lose it at last. We may notice that this is the only verse in this passage, which does not belong to the Sermon on the Mount, and yet it follows so naturally and so beautifully upon the verse before (31.) that a very thoughtful and reverent commentator (*Stier*) thinks that it must have always formed part of the same discourse. (On the word "kingdom" see on St. Matt. xiii. 43.)

33. "Sell that ye have," &c. Almsgiving then is not to be the bestowal of our superfluity. It is something serious and real. Moreover it is not alone for the benefit of those to whom the alms are given. It is also, and even more, for the benefit of the giver, "in the release of the heart from the devotion to worldly goods" (*Stier.*). (Compare on St. Matt. xix. 21.)

"Bags which wax not old." Purses, which will keep your treasures safely. What are these but the empty bags of the needy? Put your money there, and you shall not lose it (See on 17.). So far this verse differs in form of expression, though not in general meaning, from that

A. D. 29. the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

35 ¶ "Let your loins be girded about, and <sup>†</sup>your lights burning;

36 and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

39 "And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

in the Sermon on the Mount (St. Matt. vi. 19.). The remainder is the same.

### 35—48. Discourse upon Watchfulness.

St. Matt. xxiv. 42—51.

35. "Let your loins be girded about." As for active running or labour, for which the long loose outer garment of the Jew was rolled up and twisted round the waist.

"Your lights burning." This is best illustrated by the parable of the Ten Virgins (St. Matt. xxv. 1—13.).

36. "Ye yourselves." That is, in your whole conduct and character. The mention of the "wedding" here again reminds us of the parable of the Ten Virgins, though the opening of the door at the Bridegroom's coming is no part of that parable, but brings us at once to the passage in the chapter before, with which the remainder of the present passage is parallel.

37. "He shall gird himself," &c. The master waiting on his servants! Even so; for then shall the great Master, in the fulness of His love, minister to all, feeding all with the best portions of the great marriage-feast, pouring out for all new draughts of heavenly joy (See on xvii. 8.). By "come forth" is meant 'pass along' from one to another. "The washing of the feet at the last supper was a type and pledge of this; even as every renewal of His holy Supper is a foretaste and prophecy of that heavenly feast, of which it is said, 'Eat, O friends, drink; yea, drink abundantly, O beloved' (Cant. v. 1.)" (Stier.). "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb" (Rev. xix. 9.).

40 \* Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. A. D. 29.

41 Then Peter said unto Him, Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even to all? x Matt. 25. 13.  
Mark 13. 33.  
ch. 21. 34, 36.  
1 Thess. 5. 6.  
2 Pet. 3. 12.

42 And the Lord said, y Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? y Matt. 25.  
21.  
1 Cor. 4. 2.

43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

46 the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will <sup>2</sup> cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. <sup>2</sup> Or, cut him off.

47 And <sup>2</sup> that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. x Num. 15. 30.  
Deut. 25. 2.  
John 9. 41.  
& 15. 22.  
Acts 17. 30.  
Jam. 4. 17.

41. "Then Peter said" &c. St. Peter desires to know whether the parable as to watching is meant for those who, like himself and his brother Apostles, were specially charged with the duty of watching over the Lord's household, or whether the warning is a general one applying equally to all. Our Lord does not answer this enquiry one way or the other, but continues His discourse, leaving the Apostle to draw his own answer from it. That answer would be, that the lesson is for all, but for each according to the work entrusted to him by the great Master.

42. "Whom his lord shall make" &c. This does not refer to the time of the Lord's coming again, but of His going away, as though it were, 'Who of you is so faithful and wise a servant, as to be entrusted with so high a trust?' Such a servant may, if faithful, look for a blessing great in proportion to his trust; and this final blessing is that spoken of in 44, "He will make him ruler over all that he hath." The first rule (42.) is over the household on earth: the second rule (44.) is over the saints in glory.

46. "Unbelievers." "St. Matthew has 'hypocrites' in the parallel passage. Probably the heavenly Teacher used both terms, and each Evangelist adopted that which best suited his purpose, St. Matthew as writing among hypocritical Jews, and St. Luke among Gentile unbelievers" (Archd. Churton.).

47. "That servant, which knew" &c. This would include all Christian people generally, for all such either know, or might have known, their Lord's will. And in proportion to their knowledge is their guilt, if they disobey that will.

A. D. 29. 48 <sup>a</sup> But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.  
<sup>a</sup> Lev. 5. 17. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall  
<sup>1</sup> Tim. 1. 13. be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

<sup>b</sup> ver. 51. 49 ¶ <sup>b</sup> I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?

<sup>c</sup> Matt. 20. 22. 50 But <sup>c</sup> I have a baptism to be baptized with;  
 Mark 10. 38. and how am I <sup>2</sup> straitened till it be accomplished!  
<sup>2</sup> Or, *pained*.

48. "He that knew not." This must certainly include the heathen world, who have had no opportunity of knowing, and whose guilt therefore in like transgressions is far less than ours, and punishment lighter. It may also include some in Christian lands, who through the vice or neglect of others have been left in ignorance by no fault of their own.

"For unto whomsoever" &c. This declares the perfect justice of God's final judgment. He alone can weigh all opportunities and circumstances in each one's life, and His judgment cannot err. This lesson is fully drawn out in the parable of the Talents (St. Matt. xxv. 14—30.).

#### 49—53. The effects of Christ's coming.

St. Matt. x. 34—36.

49. "To send fire on the earth." The word translated "to send" is literally 'to cast,' and "the fire" seems to be the discord and persecution which was to gather round the name of Christ, and which He speaks of here as "division", and in St. Matthew as a "sword." Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say "the fire" means that kindling and inflaming of men's minds of which the "division" and the "sword" were the result. It is almost as if our Lord had said, 'I am come to set the earth on fire' (See Is. iv. 4, and Mal. iii. 2.).

"What will I, if it be already kindled?" This is a very difficult expression, and different explanations of it are given. Perhaps the simplest is to understand it as meaning, 'What other wish have I', or 'What do I desire *different*, if it be already kindled?' Another way of explaining it is to put the question after "What will I", and to understand the "if" as an expression of strong desire (as in "If thou hadst known"—xix. 42.), thus: 'What do I desire? *If only* it were already kindled!' The first explanation expresses contentment in the fire being already kindled, the second a longing that it were so. But why should our Lord thus express His desire for, or at least contentment with, the kindling of the fire? The next verse may give the reason.

50. "I have a baptism" &c. This "baptism" is the baptism of Blood,—the Cross and Passion to which our Lord was now drawing nigh (See on St. Matt. xx. 22, 23.).

"How am I straitened" &c. That is, 'How am I troubled and

50. "But." This word may not be pressed here. The little Greek word translated "But" frequently serves "merely to pass from one thing to another," and sometimes has almost the force of 'For.' This will help to clear the connection between these two verses.

51 <sup>a</sup> Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; <sup>o</sup> but rather division: A. D. 29.  
d ver. 49.

52 for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. e Mic. 7. 6.  
John 7. 43.  
& 9. 16.  
& 10. 19.

53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

54 ¶ And He said also to the people, <sup>f</sup> When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. f Matt. 16. 2.

55 And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

56 Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

57 Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

'oppressed in spirit.' "As the time drew nigh, when He would pass beneath the deep waters of affliction, He was 'straitened' by those, to us unknown, mental agonies, which would seem to have reached their head in the garden of Gethsemane. The bands of our sins pinioned, as it were, His loving arms, and the burden of our iniquities weighed down His soaring spirit" (*Prescott.*). Thus He longed for the time to come. Perhaps His Human nature longed for the shortening of the time of awful waiting. And this will explain the manner in which He spoke in the last verse of the kindling of the "fire", which was to inflame men's minds so as to bring about that baptism of Blood, wherewith He was to be baptized.

51. "Nay; but rather division." The reason why our Lord dwells upon this (the explanation of which is given in St. Matthew's Gospel) is to save His disciples from disappointment, and to prepare them for what might have staggered their faith, had they not received this forewarning.

### 54—59. Ignorance of the Signs.

54. "He said also to the people." Turning apparently from the little band of disciples close to Him to address in louder tones those standing around. Very similar language was addressed to the Pharisees and Sadducees on another occasion, where, though the signs are somewhat different, the general lesson is the same (See on St. Matt. xvi. 2, 3.).

56. "Ye hypocrites." Because they could, if they chose, judge quite as easily of the signs of the times, as of those of the weather.

57. "Why even of yourselves" &c. Why even without signs, by

A. D. 29.

g Prov. 25. 8.  
 Matt. 5. 25.  
 h See Psal.  
 32. 6.  
 Isai. 55. 6.

58 ¶ When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, <sup>h</sup>as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

59 I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last <sup>2</sup>mite.

2 See Mark  
 12. 42.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*1 Christ preacheth repentance upon the punishment of the Galilæans, and others. 6 The fruitless fig tree may not stand. 11 He healeth the crooked woman: 18 sheweth the powerful working of the word in the hearts of His chosen, by the parable of the grain of mustard seed, and of leaven: 24 exhorteth to enter in at the strait gate, 31 and reproveth Herod and Jerusalem.*

**T**HERE were present at that season some that told Him of the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such things?

that light of conscience and reason which God has given you, do ye not judge rightly of Me and of My doctrine?

58. "When thou goest" &c. This seems to be a brief parable, setting forth the necessity of speedy repentance. It is not wise to press every part of the passage into a spiritual meaning. The general lesson would be that, as you would do your best to make up the difference with an adversary, who had you in his power, to escape being cast into prison, so would you, if you judged what is right (57.), do your best, while the time of grace lasts,—while yet "in the way" to judgment,—to flee from the wrath to come (See on St. Matt. v. 25, 26.).

## CHAPTER XIII.

### 1—5. How to regard God's judgments.

1. "The Galilæans, whose blood" &c. Nothing is known of the event here named. Probably these Galilæans had taken part in some movement against the Roman government, and Pilate had ordered his soldiers to fall upon them while offering sacrifice in the outer court of the Temple (See on xxiii. 12.). Those who spoke to our Lord thought that so fearful a death proved the great sinfulness of those on whom it fell, or at least they wished for our Lord's opinion on this which was probably a popular view. It has always been a temptation with ignorant people to suppose heavy afflictions to be proofs of great sin. This was the argument of Job's friends, who continually urged upon him that he could not be in such distress except through his own fault (Job iv. 7. viii. 2—14, 20. xxii. 5.).

2. "Suppose ye" &c. Our Lord's answer is very valuable as teaching us how to regard God's judgments. We are not to regard them as

- 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall A. D. 29.  
all likewise perish.
- 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in  
Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were  
2 sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? <sup>2 Or, debtors,</sup>  
5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall <sup>Matt. 18. 24.</sup>  
all likewise perish. <sup>ch. 11. 4.</sup>
- 6 ¶ He spake also this parable; <sup>a Isai. 5. 2.</sup> "A certain man <sup>Matt. 21. 19.</sup>

special punishments for the special sins of the sufferers; but we are to regard them as general warnings against sin, and as calls to repentance (See on St. John ix. 3.). It is very possible that those who came to our Lord may have hoped that in answering their doubts about the special sinfulness of these Galilæans He would take occasion to condemn the cruel and sacrilegious conduct of the Roman governor, and so have exposed Himself to his wrath. We see here however, as ever, how strictly our Lord forbore to mix Himself up with any political or state question (See on xii. 14.); and also with what wisdom He ever turned His questioners back upon their own consciences.

3. "I tell you, Nay:" &c. Whenever we hear or read of any terrible calamity, how are we to regard it? Not as telling us anything concerning the sufferers themselves;—we are not their judges, and we are expressly told that their sufferings are no proof that they were greater sinners than others, or than we ourselves:—but as an awakening call to repentance, inasmuch as such a calamity, however awful, is but a faint shadow of that everlasting destruction which shall overwhelm us, if we repent not. Perhaps in the word "likewise" (meaning 'in like manner') our Lord may have had in view the fearful destruction of Jerusalem, when a vast number of the Jews were actually slain in and about the Temple: though of course His words have a wider meaning also.

4. "Or those eighteen." Our Lord Himself brings forward this second instance of a terrible calamity, no doubt fresh in the minds of His hearers, to show that the lesson is the same, whether the calamity be wrought by man, or by one of those occurrences which we call accidents. In each case it is God's Hand which really strikes the blow, and by it He cries aloud to all men to repent. Siloam was a pool to the South-East of Jerusalem, close to the walls of the city, a tower of which may probably be that spoken of as having fallen and killed these eighteen persons (Siloam is mentioned in St. John ix. 7.).

5. "Likewise." If our Lord had in His mind the coming destruction of Jerusalem, the "likewise" here may refer to the downfall of the Temple and other buildings, in the ruin of which numbers perished. So shall the wicked perish in the ruin of the world itself.

### 6—9. The Barren Fig-tree.

6. "He spake also" &c. Plainly in close connection with the foregoing conversation, carrying on the warning, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

"A certain man" &c. The owner of the vineyard is God; the vineyard His chosen people (Isai. v. 1.); and the fig-tree the individual

## ST. LUKE, XIII.

A. D. 29. had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

sinner who is still in impenitence. It is not unusual in the East to find fig-trees planted among the vines in a vineyard. It seems as though a fig-tree, rather than one of the vines, is chosen, because it stands out distinct among the rest, and so the eye is, as it were, fixed upon it as a distinct object; and the mention of only *one* has the same purpose—namely to bring it home to each individual conscience as a clear distinct likeness of the sinner himself (So with “a man” in St. Matt. xxii. 11.).

“He came and sought” &c. God is continually seeking fruit on His trees. But He specially comes, when by His messengers, such as the prophets of old, but above all His own beloved Son, He visits His people and calls them to repentance.

7. “The dresser of his vineyard.” This is our blessed Saviour, to whom is given the government of the kingdom,—the care of God’s vineyard.

“These three years.” Several explanations of the “three years” have been given, the best perhaps being that which supposes them to refer to the three years of our Lord’s public ministry. But probably it is better not to press them into any special meaning, but to understand the words as implying simply, ‘Again and again I come seeking fruit.’

“Cut it down;” &c. This is the decree of strict justice,—the doom which every barren tree deserves. Our Lord Himself taught this most strikingly in that which we may call His great *parable of action*—namely, the cursing of the barren fig-tree (See on St. Matt. xxi. 19.).

“Cumbereth.” That is, ‘occupies uselessly’—‘makes unfruitful and ‘valueless.’

8. “Lord, let it alone” &c. The word “Lord” here would perhaps be better translated ‘Sir,’ or ‘Master,’ as being the speech of the “dresser of the vineyard” to the owner. It is easy to see in this “dresser of the vineyard” a picture of Him who “ever liveth to make intercession for us”, and in answer to whose pleadings many a sinner is spared for farther trial; for God is “long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 St. Pet. iii. 9.).

“Dig about it, and dung it.” That is, give it every chance of bearing fruit. Spiritually this implies those special dealings and supplies of grace by which the sinner may be led to repentance. Perhaps our Lord had in view the still impenitent Jews, and those more manifest calls, and fuller outpourings of the Holy Spirit, which were to follow His Crucifixion and Ascension. But doubtless such renewed calls, and strivings of the Spirit, occur often in the lives of those who

9 and if it bear fruit, *well*: and if not, *then* after A. D. 29.  
that thou shalt cut it down.

10 ¶ And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. A. D. 30.  
34th Year  
of our  
Lord's life.

11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up *herself*.

12 And when Jesus saw her, He called *her to Him*, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 <sup>b</sup> And He laid *His* hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. <sup>b</sup> Mark 16. 18.  
Acts 9. 1.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the

despise the riches of God's "forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing "that the goodness of God leadeth" them "to repentance" (Rom. ii. 4.).

9. "If it bear fruit, well." The word "well" is not in the original Greek. There is a pause after the word "fruit," but it could not be better filled up.

"If not," &c. The pleading is only for a longer trial. The "dresser of the vineyard" does not ask that the barren tree may stand there for ever. There is a limit to the prayers of the Intercessor, and to the long-suffering of God.

The pains of the vine-dresser, together with the evident uncertainty of the result, may well illustrate the mystery of God's grace and man's free-will, so strikingly joined together by St. Paul in the words, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 12, 13.).

### 10-17. The Healing of the woman with a spirit of infirmity on the Sabbath-day.

11. "A spirit of infirmity." It seems plain from our Lord's words to the ruler of the synagogue, in which He says the poor woman had been bound *by Satan* (16.), that the affliction here named was something more than mere natural infirmity, and was caused by the power of an evil spirit, though without that possession of the whole being which was so terrible in other cases.

12. "He called her to Him." Not waiting till she begged for help. It seems not unlikely that she, together with others, had come on purpose to meet our Lord, and hoping to obtain relief, for the ruler of the synagogue bids them "*come and be healed*" on some other day (14.).

13. "And He laid His hands on her." Probably at the same time that He spoke the words, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." The act would be a mark of special kindness and favour.

14. "With indignation." Pretended, not real. This man was a

14. "Ruler of the synagogue." See on St. Mark v. 22.

A. D. 30. sabbath day, and said unto the people, <sup>c</sup>There are  
<sup>e</sup>Exod. 20. 9. six days in which men ought to work: in them  
<sup>d</sup>Matt. 12. 10. therefore come and be healed, and <sup>d</sup>not on the  
 Mark 3. 2.  
 ch. 6. 7.  
 & 14. 3. sabbath day.

<sup>e</sup>ch. 14. 5. 15 The Lord then answered him, and said, *Thou*  
 hypocrite, <sup>e</sup>doth not each one of you on the sabbath  
 loose his ox or *his* ass from the stall, and lead *him*  
 away to watering?

<sup>f</sup>ch. 19. 9. 16 And ought not this woman, <sup>f</sup>being a daughter  
 of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these  
 eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the  
 sabbath day?

17 And when He had said these things, all His  
 adversaries were ashamed: and all the people re-  
 joiced for all the glorious things that were done  
 by Him.

18 ¶ Then said He, Unto what is the kingdom  
 of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

“hypocrite” (15.); and was really angry because Christ had done so wonderful a miracle, not because it was on the Sabbath-day.

15. “Doth not each one” &c. Our Lord uses a like argument on several occasions (See xiv. 5. St. Matt. xii. 11.), always to the effect that, if it were allowable to give help on the Sabbath to a beast, it must be far more so to a man. (For the use of the Sabbath see on St. Matt. xii. 8.)

16. “A daughter of Abraham.” Not only of the human race, but still more of the chosen race of Abraham, which to the ruler of the synagogue, himself of the same race, would be a weighty addition to the argument.

“Loosed from this bond.” Our Lord is still carrying on the comparison with the loosing of the ox or the ass. ‘You,’ He would say, ‘spend time and labour in loosing a dumb beast to give it water after being tied up a few hours; I with a word and a touch loose one of God’s chosen race from a bondage of eighteen years.’

This miracle may fitly suggest a spiritual application,—namely the lifting up by the power of Christ to new life and heavenly desires of those whose eyes and hearts have been long bowed down to earth by worldliness or covetousness or fleshly lusts.

### 18, 19. The Mustard Seed.

St. Matt. xiii. 31, 32. St. Mark iv. 30—34.

18. “Then said He.” If, as many think, these two short parables were either repeated on this occasion, or spoken only on this occasion, being grouped with the others by St. Matthew for the purpose of instruction, they would very naturally foretell the growth and triumph of that kingdom which was already manifesting itself in the relief of misery and banishment of evil,

19 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

20 ¶ And again He said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

22 ¶ And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. g Matt. 9. 35. Mark 6. 6.

23 Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them,

24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for

### 20, 21. The Leaven.

St. Matt. xiii. 33.

### 22—30. The Strait Gate.

Compare St. Matt. vii. 13, 14, 22, 23.

22. "Journeying toward Jerusalem." This takes up again the mention of the last great missionary tour of our Lord (See on ix. 51. and x. 38.). There is no necessity to believe that all which St. Luke has related since he first mentioned our Lord's stedfast purpose of going up to Jerusalem took place during this journey. It is probable that the Evangelist has turned aside to relate other matters without regard to the actual time of their occurrence.

23. "Then said one." It is probable that this question was asked in consequence of what our Lord had already said on the subject in the Sermon on the Mount (St. Matt. vii. 14.). It had seemed a hard saying, and had been pondered by this man, who now desired to know more exactly our Lord's meaning, asking, as it were, 'Lord, dost Thou really mean to say that only few will be saved?' From our Lord's answer, which is rather severe than encouraging, we may gather that this man asked with something of a wrong spirit, possibly doubtingly, or curiously.

24. "Strive to enter in" &c. Our Lord does not answer the question put to Him. Indeed He tells less about the number saved than before, for then He had said of eternal life, "Few there be that find it." To have answered this man's question would only have satisfied curiosity. Christ does better. He turns the questioner's thoughts back upon himself. It is as though He said, 'I say not whether these be few or many: but this I say, strive to be among them.' The word translated "Strive" in this place implies a severe conflict and struggle,—'Strain every nerve.' Moreover it is in the plural number, so as to include other by-standers besides the one who asked the question.

"To enter in." That is, to life eternal.  
 "At the strait gate." The narrow entrance of repentance, and self-denial, and the taking up the cross to follow Christ,

## ST. LUKE, XIII.

A. D. 30. <sup>h</sup> many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

<sup>b</sup> See John 7. 34. & 8. 21. & 13. 33. Rom. 9. 31. <sup>i</sup> Ps. 32. 6. Isai. 55. 6. <sup>k</sup> Matt. 25. 10. <sup>l</sup> ch. 6. 46.

25 <sup>i</sup> When once the master of the house is risen up, and <sup>k</sup> hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, <sup>l</sup> Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, <sup>m</sup> I know you not whence ye are :

26 then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

<sup>n</sup> ver. 25. Matt. 25. 41. <sup>o</sup> Ps. 6. 8. Matt. 25. 41. <sup>p</sup> Matt. 8. 12. & 13. 42. & 24. 51. <sup>q</sup> Matt. 8. 11.

27 <sup>n</sup> But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; <sup>o</sup> depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

28 <sup>p</sup> There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, <sup>q</sup> when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and

“Will seek to enter in,” &c. Does not this seem to contradict the promise, “Seek, and ye shall find”? It would do so, if the seeking were the same in both cases. But here “seek” is opposed to “strive,” and implies a weak or shallow desire: in the promise “seek” is used for the earnest hearty endeavour, which is always blest with success. Besides, we must not understand our Lord to mean, ‘Many will seek to enter in *at the strait gate*, and shall not be able.’ He means rather, ‘Many will seek to enter in *by other ways*, and shall not be able’; or perhaps still better, ‘Many will seek, *when too late*, to enter in’, a meaning unfolded in the following verses. We have an instance of seeking and not finding in the Jews, who sought righteousness, “not by faith, “but as it were by the works of the law” (Rom. ix. 32.).

25. “When once” &c. The gate has been “strait” before: it is now *shut*. This describes the end of time, and the final closing of the door of salvation. If it will then be shut, it is certainly open now, and all who “strive” may enter in. We are reminded here of the vain appeal of the foolish virgins (St. Matt. xxv. 10—12.).

26. “Then shall ye begin” &c. It becomes plain now that our Lord is speaking chiefly of the rejection of the Jews. They were such as sought to enter in, but could not. Christ describes them as seeking an entrance on the ground of their outward knowledge of Him. They were familiar with both His person and His teaching, and on this they relied for acceptance. How many are like them, and think they shall be saved because they have been very near to Christ, hearers of His word, perhaps eating and drinking of His Sacrament, while they have never really entered in at the strait gate, or walked in the narrow way? This passage is again a repetition from the Sermon on the Mount.

28. “When ye shall see” &c. This word “see” must be understood in the same sense as that in which the rich man “in hell... “seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom” (xvi. 23.), not of bodily, but of mental sight; so that it almost means the same as ‘know’.

Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, A. D. 30.  
and you yourselves thrust out.

29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last. r Matt. 19. 30.  
& 20. 16.  
Mark 10. 31.

31 ¶ The same day there came certain of the

“In the kingdom of God.” That is, the perfected and glorified kingdom (See on St. Matt. xiii. 43.). The Jews presumed upon their being children of Abraham to count themselves sure of God’s favour and salvation. It would then be peculiarly terrible to them to think of being shut out from the eternal kingdom to which Abraham and the other patriarchs and prophets were admitted. And still lower would be their fall, when, as our Lord goes on to say, the Gentiles, whom they despised so greatly, should be gathered in.

29. “They shall come” &c. A blessed promise of the salvation of the Gentiles. Our Lord had said on another occasion, “Many shall come” (St. Matt. viii. 11.). He does not here repeat the “many”, for He does not desire to answer the question put to Him, except by awakening the conscience of the questioner. Yet in themselves the redeemed and saved will be “many”, for they will be “a great multitude, which no man could number” (Rev. vii. 9.).

“Sit down.” The blessedness of heaven is here, as in so many other places, described under the figure of a feast. In itself it is such as neither human words nor human thoughts can picture. It can only be spoken of in a dim shadow.

30. “There are last” &c. These “last” are the Gentiles spoken of in the verse before. The “first,” who will be last, are the Jews, first in calling and privilege, who will be “thrust out” of the kingdom of God. The words however may also have a wider meaning, and teach us that many highly gifted and blest may in the great Day be far behind others held of little account (See on St. Matt. xx. 16.).

### 31–33. Warning concerning Herod, and our Lord’s answer.

31. “The same day.” That is, on which the conversation just related took place.

“There came” &c. It seems probable that Herod had actually sent the Pharisees with this order to our Lord to depart out of his province, (they themselves adding the words concerning Herod’s murderous designs,) else we can hardly account for our Lord’s returning the message which follows. The Herod here mentioned is Herod Antipas, “tetrarch of Galilee” (iii. 1. and see also on St. Matt. xiv. 1.); and the words of the Pharisees would imply that our Lord was still either in Galilee itself, or (which seems more likely) in Peræa, the part beyond the Jordan (See on St. Matt. xix. 1.), which also belonged to Herod Antipas. The craftiness imputed to Herod in our Lord’s answer leads us to imagine that he had some secret motive for bidding Him

A. D. 30. Pharisees, saying unto Him, Get Thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill Thee.

Heb. 2. 10. 32 And He said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third *day* \* I shall be perfected.

33 Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the *day* following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

34 ¶ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the

depart. Probably he had no real thought of killing Christ, as he had St. John the Baptist, for when He was sent to him by Pilate, he does not appear to have had any such wish (See xxiii. 7—11.). It seems as though he wanted simply to frighten Him, and so to induce Him to leave his province, in which He was becoming too popular, and attracting too many followers to please the unbelieving ruler.

32. "Go ye, and tell that fox." It is very difficult to judge of the exact force of expressions used in another age and country, and this expression may not have sounded so harsh when uttered as it does to us. Still it is doubtless meant as a rebuke—"Go and tell that crafty man—that hypocrite."

"Behold, I cast out devils," &c. "I am engaged in My works of mercy and blessing."

"To day and to morrow," &c. These words do not signify so many literal days, but are used as a kind of proverb, meaning for a little space longer. Our Lord's message signifies that He must follow His course of mercy for the appointed time, and then, "when His hour was come, He would lay down His life, and crown all His labours and sufferings by death. But it would be His own free act. Herod would not either delay or hasten it" (*P. Young.*).

33. "Nevertheless I must walk" &c. The word "walk" in the original is the same as "depart" (31.)—literally 'journey' or 'travel,'—so that our Lord takes up the Pharisees' word, and says, 'Yet still I am about to obey your king's command, for I must journey on, day after day, leaving his province, as he bids Me, and going towards Jerusalem.' Christ implies that though He is about thus to depart, it is not on account of Herod's order, but in obedience to a higher bidding. "I must," because I am doing My Father's will, and passing on to My appointed Sacrifice.

"It cannot be" &c. Christ does not mean that no prophet ever perished out of Jerusalem, for many did, and the last of all—St. John the Baptist himself—did so; but that, since no place was more noted for the martyrdom of the prophets of old, so it could not be but that He—the greatest of prophets—should perish there also.

### 34, 35. Lamentation over Jerusalem.

Compare St. Matt. xxiii. 1, *Note*, and 37—39.

This lamentation is given by St. Matthew at the close of our Lord's last address in the Temple, on the Tuesday before His Crucifixion,

prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee ; A. D. 30.  
 how often would I have gathered thy children  
 together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her  
 wings, and ye would not!  
 35 Behold, ' your house is left unto you deso-  
 late: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see  
 Me, until *the time* come when ye shall say, " Blessed  
 is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

† Lev. 26. 31,  
 32.  
 Ps. 69. 25.  
 Isai. 1. 7.  
 Dan. 9. 27.  
 Mic. 3. 12.  
 † Ps. 118. 26.  
 Matt. 21. 9.  
 Mark 11. 10.  
 ch. 19. 38.  
 John 12. 13.

## CHAPTER XIV.

2 Christ healeth the dropsy on the sabbath: 7 teacheth humility: 12 to  
 feast the poor: 15 under the parable of the great supper, sheweth how  
 worldly minded men, who contemn the word of God, shall be shut out  
 of heaven. 25 Those who will be His disciples, to bear their cross must  
 make their accounts aforehand, lest with shame they revolt from Him  
 afterward, 34 and become altogether unprofitable, like salt that hath lost  
 his savour.

AND it came to pass, as He went into the house  
 of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on  
 the sabbath day, that they watched Him.

and many have supposed that St. Luke has introduced the words here,  
 though they were really spoken on the later occasion only. It seems  
 however just one of those sayings that might most naturally have been  
 uttered on more than one occasion, and it falls in here perfectly with  
 our Lord's mention of His own Death at Jerusalem. So that it is  
 better to suppose it spoken on both occasions.

34. "As a hen" &c. No figure could more touchingly picture to us  
 our Lord's tender yearning for the people who despised and rejected  
 Him. It is the same for each one of us even now. And yet how many  
 are there, "whom He would fain cherish under His fostering wings,  
 "and preserve from the assaults of their great spiritual enemy," over  
 whom He has to repeat His bitter lamentation, because they will not!  
 "How often would I"—are His sorrowful words. Shall it be always  
 in vain?

35. "Your house." When our Lord spoke these words on leaving  
 the Temple there could be no doubt as to their referring to the Temple ;  
 and therefore they probably refer to it also here.

## CHAPTER XIV.

1-6. Healing of the Man with the dropsy on the  
Sabbath.

1. "To eat bread on the sabbath day." The Jews did not scruple  
 to give entertainments on the Sabbath, and these must have given  
 occasion for more than necessary labour. This makes the finding fault  
 with our Lord's Sabbath healings all the more wicked and hypocritical.  
 We may observe that our Lord is never recorded to have refused an  
 invitation made to Him, thus showing His readiness to carry His  
 blessings to all who might be ready to receive them. He was equally  
 willing to sit at the table of Publicans and of Pharisees.

A. D. 30. 2 And, behold, there was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 12. 10. 3 And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, <sup>a</sup> Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?

4 And they held their peace. And He took *him*, and healed him, and let him go;

<sup>b</sup> Ex. 23. 5. <sup>b</sup> Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?  
<sup>Dent. 22. 4.</sup>  
<sup>ch. 13. 15.</sup>

6 And they could not answer Him again to these things.

7 ¶ And He put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when He marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any *man* to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

9 and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

3. "Answering." Either to some objections made but not recorded, or perhaps only to the thoughts of those present.

5. "Which of you" &c. The same argument, though not quite in the same form, was made use of by our Lord in respect of the healing of the woman with the spirit of infirmity (See on xiii. 15.), and of the man with the withered hand (St. Matt. xii. 11.).

### 7—11. The choosing of the lowest place.

7. "A parable." What follows is called a parable, because, while it may be taken literally in its simple sense, it has also a wider and deeper meaning.

"When He marked" &c. It is probable that on this occasion there were many distinguished Pharisees present, and these gave plain proof of their besetting pride by the way in which they chose out for themselves the places of chief honour. "Room" in this whole passage simply means 'place.'

8. "When thou art bidden" &c. This "parable" appears to be founded on a like saying in the Book of Proverbs:—"Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: for better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen" (Prov. xxv. 6, 7.).

5. "An ass." Most of the oldest copies would then say, "Which of you would have 'son' here instead of 'ass,' and it 'have a child, or even an ox, fallen into is probably the true reading. Our Lord 'a pit' &c.

10. "But when thou art bidden, go and sit down A. D. 30.  
in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee c Prov. 25.  
cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up 6, 7.  
higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

11. "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be d Job 22. 29.  
abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be Ps. 18. 27.  
exalted. Prov. 23. 23.  
Matt. 23. 12.  
ch. 18. 14.  
James 4. 6.  
1 Pet. 5. 5.

12. ¶ Then said He also to him that bade Him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

10. "Friend, go up higher." So does Christ ever speak to the humble. He calls them 'Friends,' since they are like Himself, who is "meek and lowly in heart." And He bids them "go up higher"—higher here, in spiritual gifts and graces: higher hereafter, even so as to sit upon His throne of glory. And we may apply the parable to the feast to which we are bidden in the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord. It is always he who in spirit takes the lowest place, feeling most deeply his own unworthiness, whom his Lord raises to the chief place in joy and peace and strength.

"Worship." That is, honour.

11. "Whosoever exalteth himself" &c. This is a favourite saying of our Lord (See xviii. 14. and St. Matt. xxiii. 12.). It is plain that His language as to the taking of places at a wedding-feast was but to teach this great general truth. The taking of the places was but a little matter, and one in which, although pride might easily show itself, yet worldly prudence and good taste would guide a man aright. So it was something like a parable to teach a lesson of general humility. It is very necessary to observe that to humble oneself *for the purpose* of being exalted is no humility at all, and that our Lord does not set the hope of the "Go up higher" before us as a *motive* for taking the lower place. It must be from a genuine and simple-minded lowliness, or it is hypocrisy. "The road to the honours of heaven passes at all times through the gate of humility. But let us remember that the promise 'he shall be exalted' is made to one who 'humbleth himself' and is lowly in his own estimation, not to him who by his speech, his look, his clothing, or by any other mere outward manifestations, endeavours to appear lowly in the sight of his fellow-men, but only to him who is really so in his inmost heart" (*Denton*).

### 12—14. Who are our best guests.

12. "Him that bade Him." In whom, we can hardly doubt, our Lord saw much of that selfish and worldly motive in his entertainment which He here condemns.

"Call not." No one would imagine this to forbid the invitation of equals and "rich neighbours." Our Lord is simply showing a *better* way of entertaining, namely by feeding the poor. What He would

A. D. 30. 13 But when thou makest a feast, call <sup>o</sup> the poor,  
 the maimed, the lame, the blind:  
 14 and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot  
 recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed  
 at the resurrection of the just.

15 ¶ And when one of them that sat at meat with  
 Him heard these things, he said unto Him, 'Blessed  
 is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.'

16 ¶ Then said He unto him, A certain man  
 made a great supper, and bade many:

teach is, 'If thou wouldest be *blessed* in thy entertaining, do not seek  
 'to entertain those who will do the same by thee, making thee a  
 'recompence; but share thy good things with those who need, and  
 'then God will recompense thee.'

14. "The resurrection of the just." That is, that blessed resur-  
 rection to eternal life of which the just alone shall be partakers—"the  
 "resurrection of life" (St. John v. 29.). There is another resurrection  
 —that of the unjust—which is "to shame and everlasting contempt"  
 (Dan. xii. 2.)—"the resurrection of damnation" (St. John v. 29.).

### 15—24. Parable of the Great Supper.

15. "Blessed is he" &c. This exclamation was called forth by the  
 mention of the recompence at the Resurrection of the just, and meant,  
 'Blessed is he who shall win that recompence.' Probably the speaker  
 was not thinking much of the *way* to win it, but, as being one of God's  
 chosen people, was flattering himself that he should doubtless be a  
 sharer in the Resurrection spoken of. The blessedness of the future  
 kingdom was of old pictured under the image of a feast (See Is. xxv. 6.),  
 and the Jews seem to have had very earthly and carnal ideas on the  
 subject, and to have looked forward to an actual feast, such as this  
 man speaks of.

16. "A certain man made a great supper." We may observe that  
 our Lord does not begin this parable by saying, 'The kingdom of  
 'heaven is like,' as He does so many. He is speaking in the midst  
 of a company of men who rejected that kingdom of heaven, and dis-  
 believed in it. Therefore He tells them about it indeed, but without  
 arousing their suspicions by the name, taking His parable from the  
 scene before Him, and beginning it without preface, "A certain man  
 "made a great supper." God is the maker of this feast. It is "great"  
 —in its company, for no man can number them;—in its blessedness,  
 for no man can conceive this;—in its duration, for it will last for ever.  
 Perhaps in the feast being called "supper"—the great evening meal—  
 may be signified the fact that the bliss thus pictured is after the toils  
 and troubles of life's brief day are over.

"Bade many." Namely, first of all, the Jewish nation, who were

15—24. The Great Supper. Quite | points in the two resemble each other  
 a different parable from that of the Mar- | (See Note on St. Matt. xxii. 1.).  
 riage of the King's Son, though some |

## ST. LUKE, XIV.

17 and <sup>h</sup>sent his servant at supper time to say **A. D. 30.**  
to them that were bidden, Come; for all things <sup>h</sup>are now ready. **Prov. 9.**  
**2, 5.**

18 And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

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bidden by the Law and the Prophets to the feast of the Gospel. But from what follows (See on 21.) we gather that our Lord had in view chiefly those to whom the Law and the Prophets spoke most loudly, namely the learned classes and the teachers of the people,—“the priests and the elders, the scribes and the Pharisees, in opposition to the publicans and sinners, and all the despised portions of the people” (*Abp. Trench.*).

17. “Sent his servant at supper time” &c. This appears to have been a customary observance on the part of great men in the East. Spiritually, “his servant” represents our blessed Lord, who “took upon Him the form of a servant” (Phil. ii. 7.); and “supper time” signifies that “fulness of time” when the blessings of the Gospel were ready for all who would accept them.

18. “With one consent.” Not as having really agreed together, but as if they had agreed together. Observe, the excuses which follow are not those of hardened wickedness or obstinate unbelief; but rather spring from a careless unconcern. They exactly picture to us what our Lord meant in the parable of the Marriage of the King’s Son, when He said those invited “made light of” the invitation (St. Matt. xxii. 5.).

“I have bought a piece of ground,” &c. There is nothing in itself sinful ascribed to any of these men. Their sin is allowing *lawful* things to occupy the first place in their hearts,—in short their putting earth before heaven. This first man is ensnared by the pride of earthly possession. It is a joy to him to look upon his broad acres, and to think, ‘All this is mine’; and he cannot forego this joy for the joys of the “great supper.” Yet he speaks respectfully: he does not give up all thought of heaven. Doubtless he hopes for another invitation, when he may be more disposed to go.

19. “I have bought five yoke of oxen.” This man is “getting what the other has already got” (*Abp. Trench.*). He is occupied not with the contemplation of his possessions, but with the cares and anxieties of his calling. He has to make his living, and must give his time and his thoughts to it. He is described as a farmer, who is taken up with the business of his farm. He has no leisure for the “great supper.”

20. “I have married a wife.” This man is hindered by family ties. He must think of those of his own household. This he considers quite a sufficient excuse, so that he does not, like the other two, pray

A.D. 30.

21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 21. 43. & 22. 8. Acts 13. 46. 24 For I say unto you, <sup>1</sup>That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper.

to be excused, but says bluntly, "I cannot come." Even the most innocent relationships may keep us from God. Archbishop Trench points out how remarkably the very next words of our Lord recorded by St. Luke after this parable accord with it in condemning this third excuse:—"If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (26.).

21. "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes" &c. The scribes and Pharisees having all refused the invitation and made excuse, Christ calls the ignorant and outcasts, the "publicans and sinners." We can hardly doubt that our Lord is here reminding His host of the precept He had already given him, "Call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind" (13), as though showing him in passing that, in God's dealing with His people, such are the guests He freely invites,—the spiritually poor and blind and needy. And we know that they obeyed the call which the others "made light of."

23. "Go out into the highways and hedges." This is a prophecy of the call of the Gentiles; for, as the "city" represents the Jewish nation, so the "highways and hedges" represent the Gentiles scattered in distant and unknown lands. This command to go to the Gentiles is, according to the strict interpretation of the parable, given by God the Father to His Son our Lord (See on 17.), who, as we know, did not Himself bear His message of mercy to the Gentiles, being sent only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (St. Matt. xv. 24.). But this is no difficulty, for what Christ does by His ministers, He does Himself, and they were sent by Him to the Gentiles.

"Compel them to come in." Plainly not by outward force, but by all the powers of earnest persuasion.

24. "For I say unto you." This verse is generally taken as part of that which the Maker of the great supper spoke to his servant, and so as the conclusion of the parable. But it is found in the Greek that the word "you" is here in the plural, as spoken to many, whereas in the whole parable only one servant is addressed. Thus it seems probable that this verse is really no part of the parable, but a sort of application of it spoken to the assembled guests at table, though still carrying on the language of the parable. "My supper" would thus

- 25 ¶ And there went great multitudes with Him : A. D. 30.  
 and He turned, and said unto them,  
 26 \* If any *man* come to Me, <sup>1</sup> and hate not his <sup>k</sup> Deut. 13. 6. & 33. 9.  
 father, and mother, and wife, and children, and <sup>l</sup> Matt. 10. 37.  
 brethren, and sisters, <sup>m</sup> yea, and his own life also, <sup>1</sup> Rom. 9. 13.  
 he cannot be My disciple. <sup>m</sup> Rev. 12. 11.  
 27 And <sup>n</sup> whosoever doth not bear his cross, and <sup>n</sup> Matt. 16. 24.  
 come after Me, cannot be My disciple. Mark 8. 34.  
ch. 9. 23.  
 28 For <sup>o</sup> which of you, intending to build a tower, <sup>o</sup> 2 Tim. 3. 12.  
 sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish it? Prov. 24. 27.

be a startling word to them. Jesus is suddenly transformed into the Giver of the feast, and speaks with a strange authority, "I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden" (and His hearers must surely have known the picture of themselves) "shall taste of My supper"—"My supper, to which I not only invite you, but which I, as the Son, with the Father, have Myself prepared for you" (*Stier.*).

### 25—35. Counting the cost.

25. "Great multitudes." Whether this was immediately after the feast in the chief Pharisee's house, or at some other time, we have no means of knowing. It would seem however that our Lord, who in the scribes and Pharisees had seen a fatal backwardness in receiving the Gospel invitation, now saw in the thronging multitudes a dangerous forwardness to profess themselves His disciples before they knew how much they would have to give up to be really so.

26. "Hate." This is a strong word, and of course does not imply the *feeling* of hatred, but a readiness to *act* as if one hated. The nearest and dearest must be forsaken, and opposed, and offended, if need be, in order to follow Christ (See on St. Matt. x. 37.).

"Yea, and his own life also." This shows clearly the meaning of the "hate." If the love of life, which is natural to all, stands in the way of the love of Christ, we must be ready to cast life itself aside, and to count it and all belonging to it but loss that we may win Christ (See Phil. iii. 7, 8.).

27. "Whosoever doth not bear his cross." This must have been a hard saying to the eager multitude. It was hard when said to Apostles, who could better count the cost (See on St. Matt. x. 38.). To the ignorant people it must have been chilling and discouraging. But Christ would not allow them to cherish false hopes. He speaks hard words that all may know well that He had no earthly reward to bestow, but that they "must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts xiv. 22.).

28. "Which of you," &c. Our Lord sets forth the necessity of counting the cost before undertaking to be His disciple in two short parables, both of which represent the folly of beginning any great and costly work without having calculated whether we shall be able to complete it. The first is taken from the building of a tower. The Christian would build a tower, laying Christ as his foundation, and

A. D. 30.

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him,

30 saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.

P Matt. 5. 13.  
Mark 9. 50.

34 <sup>P</sup> Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

building thereon the "gold, silver, precious stones" of faith and holiness (See 1 Cor. iii. 11—13.), adding grace to grace, and knowledge to knowledge, till his tower reaches unto heaven. But if he only lay the foundation, and then for lack of courage and endurance forsake the work, he is justly mocked for his folly.

31. "Or what king," &c. Any man undertaking to follow Christ without having weighed the difficulties and dangers he will have to undergo, is like a king going out to battle against another far more powerful, without having bethought him how his weak forces can withstand the strength of the enemy. He is sure to be worsted and put to shame. Had he known his own weakness and the enemy's strength in time, he would have shrunk from the unequal encounter, and yielded, seeking terms of peace. So, Jesus would say, do ye, who are eager to cast in your lot with Me, reckon whether ye have strength to endure the battle that is before you, and, if not, do not rashly engage in it. The king "with ten thousand" is a man not without some strength and resources, but weak for the encounter before him. The king "with twenty thousand" is the great and difficult work which has to be met and conquered by the Christian. The sending an 'ambassage' (or 'embassy') to desire peace is the shrinking from undertaking what he feels he is not strong enough to carry out.

33. "So likewise," &c. The cost of being Christ's disciple is the forsaking of all that he hath. If any one, reckoning with himself, finds he cannot make this sacrifice, he had better not begin the work. He has not sufficient to finish his tower: his force is not strong enough for the battle.

34. "Salt is good:" &c. This figure is used of the Christian man in the Sermon on the Mount (See on St. Matt. v. 13.). Here it is used of something *in* the Christian man. As it appears to belong to the foregoing conversation, we must understand it of that spirit of self-sacrifice, which is declared to be so needful in Christ's disciples (See on St. Mark ix. 50.). Our Lord is therefore declaring how savourless

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35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the A. D. 30.  
dunghill; *but* men cast it out. He that hath ears  
to hear, let him hear.

## CHAPTER XV.

*1 The parable of the lost sheep: 8 of the piece of silver: 11 of the prodigal son.*

**WHEN** <sup>a</sup> drew near unto Him all the publicans <sup>a</sup> *Matt. 9. 10.*  
and sinners for to hear Him.

**2** And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, say-

and good-for-nothing a man becomes whose first zeal and self-sacrifice have died away. If he begins well, but soon falls away, his salt has lost its savour, and such salt is good neither for putting on the land, nor for mixing with manure. Moreover this good zeal once allowed to die away is not easily revived: "wherewith shall it" (that is, the tasteless salt itself) "be seasoned?" The saying is here a vivid warning of the peril of so hastily or lightly beginning as shortly to fall away. He that will cast in his lot with Christ must do so with a thorough knowledge of the work he undertakes, and such reliance on Divine strength as alone can enable him to endure unto the end.

**35.** "He that hath ears" &c. A solemn appeal for thoughtful attention to words of deep importance (See on St. *Matt. xi. 15.*).

## CHAPTER XV.

**The Three Parables showing God's mercy to sinners.**

### **1, 2. Introduction.**

The three parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Piece of money, and the Prodigal Son, must be considered together, as one great lesson, setting forth the same great truth from different sides. The great truth is God's mercy in saving the lost. This is set forth in the first two parables—those of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Piece of money—from the side of God's sovereign grace; in the last—that of the Prodigal Son—it is set forth from the side of man's free will. In the former God seeks the lost; in the latter the lost seeks God. In the former God's work alone is displayed; in the latter man's. And yet it is really all one: for we may say on the one hand that the wandering sheep is not brought home against its own will, and on the other hand that the Prodigal would never have arisen and returned, had not God's grace sought him out, and given him first the will, and then the power, to do so.

**1. "All the publicans and sinners."** These, the lowest and most despised among the people—the taxgatherers for the Romans (See on *St. Matt. v. 46.*), and the outcasts and openly wicked (See on *vii. 37.*),—were naturally drawn towards One, who did not scorn and repel them as the Pharisees would, but who received them and treated them with kindly tenderness, thereby leading them to better things.

**2. "Murmured."** As once before, (*v. 30.*). And blessed to sinners were those murmurs, drawing forth as they did on each occasion such priceless words of hope and comfort.

A. D. 30. ing, This Man receiveth sinners, <sup>b</sup> and catcheth with  
 Acts 11. 3. them.  
 Gal. 2. 12.

3 ¶ And He spake this parable unto them, saying,  
 Matt. 18. 12. 4 ° What man of you, having an hundred sheep,  
 if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety  
 and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which  
 is lost, until he find it?

5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on  
 his shoulders, rejoicing.

6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together  
 his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Re-  
 1 Pet. 2. joyce with me; for I have found my sheep <sup>d</sup> which  
 10, 25. was lost.

7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in

### 3—7. The Lost Sheep.

4. "What man" &c. Who is represented by the "man" here,—  
 the owner of the hundred sheep? Doubtless the Son of God Himself—  
 the "Good Shepherd" (St. John x. 11.). When those who should  
 have been the shepherds of God's people let them wander and perish  
 without searching or seeking after them, then He came seeking and  
 saving that which was lost. (The whole of Ezek. xxxiv. should be read  
 in connection with this parable.) The "hundred sheep" mean all  
 mankind, or rather perhaps any group out of mankind, containing both  
 "just persons" (7.) and lost sinners. The "one of them" is singled  
 out to show God's care for each individual sinner, of however little  
 value he may seem to be, as well as to bring the parable home to each  
 separate conscience (See on "a man" St. Matt. xxii. 11.). By the  
 "wilderness" we are not to understand a barren and desolate place,  
 but the ordinary pasturage of flocks—the green hollows and valleys  
 among the rocks and hills.

"Until he find it." The "Good Shepherd" spares Himself no  
 labour or suffering in recovering the lost sheep. Nay, He "giveth  
 His life for the sheep." Has He done so much to find us, and shall  
 we refuse to be found by Him?

5. "He layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing." There is no smiting  
 of the wanderer, no harshness, no anger;—only the tenderest love.  
 Who can fail to remember the prophet's wondrously beautiful picture  
 of the Good Shepherd, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He  
 shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom,  
 and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Is. xl. 11.).

6. "When he cometh home," &c. The bringing of the lost sheep  
 home is not to be understood only of the future bringing of the lost  
 sinner to heaven. It signifies the present bringing of him back to  
 safety by repentance. It is this which causes the joy. The "friends  
 and neighbours" signify the "angels of God" (10.).

3—7. The Lost Sheep. Our Lord uses the same figure to show the value of each little one of the flock in the Good Shepherd's eyes (St. Matt. xviii. 12—14.).

heaven over one sinner that repenteth, <sup>°</sup> more than A. D. 30.  
 over ninety and nine just persons, which need no <sup>°</sup> ch. 5. 32.  
 repentance. <sup>2 Drachma,</sup>  
<sup>here trans-</sup>  
<sup>lated a piece</sup>  
<sup>of silver, is</sup>  
<sup>the eighth</sup>

8 ¶ Either what woman having ten <sup>2</sup> pieces of <sup>of silver, is</sup>  
 part of an ounce, which cometh to seven pence halfpenny, and is equal to the  
 Roman penny, Matt. 18. 28.

7. "Ninety and nine just persons," &c. That is, if they all were such. Our Lord is not drawing any sort of comparison here between the numbers on each side. Moreover in speaking of "just persons, which need no repentance," He seems to be referring to the "Pharisees and scribes" (2.), and therefore to use the expression, as He does "they that are whole" (St. Matt. ix. 12.), in a sort of gentle irony (See on St. Mark vii. 9.). It is as though He said, there is more joy over one repenting sinner than over "ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance," such as you Pharisees and scribes believe yourselves to be.

### 8-10. The Lost Piece of silver.

8. "What woman." Again, under this second figure, does our Lord set forth His anxious search for the lost, and the joy of the finding. The truths taught in this parable are the same as those taught in the last. A wise teacher often enforces the same lesson by several different examples or illustrations. So our Lord enforces the lesson of perseverance in prayer by the two short parables of the Friend at midnight (xi. 5-8.) and of the Unjust Judge (xviii. 1-8.). It has been often said that the "woman" here signifies the Church of Christ acting as her Lord's handmaid in the search for lost souls. But, in the first place, the points of the parable are the diligence in seeking and the joy in finding, and not the person of the seeker (—the parable would have had the same force if it had been 'What merchant', or 'What money-changer', instead of "What woman"—); and, in the second place, the form of the parable makes such an interpretation very unnatural. The fact is, this and the foregoing are scarcely true parables, in which a story, plainly invented for the purpose, like that of the Prodigal Son, has the spiritual history running (more or less closely) side by side all through with the framework of the story. They are rather illustrations, in the form of questions appealing to the daily life of the hearers, and resemble the question, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?" (xiv. 5.). Had our Lord cast His parable into the more studied form, and said, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a woman' &c., then plainly we should more naturally have looked for a spiritual truth hidden under the sex of the person named. Any point in a true parable (unless simply necessary to make the story natural) may be supposed to be put in for a special purpose, since the whole is invented. But this is not the case in a question appealing to real life, which is asked with a view to some special point or points, and not with a view to a complete picture of the subject.

"Ten pieces of silver." The lost sinner is compared to a lost coin, and we may well reflect on the fitness of this comparison. For

A. D. 30. silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

9 And when she hath found *it*, she calleth *her* friends and *her* neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

11 ¶ And He said, A certain man had two sons:  
12 and the younger of them said to *his* father,

each human soul bears on it (however marred and defaced) the image and superscription of the Creator (See on St. Matt. xxii. 21.). Though lost, it still belongs to Him.

“Light a candle.” This has been pressed into referring to the holy Scriptures, as an instrument for the finding of the lost sinner; but it is much better to understand it simply as describing the care and pains of the seeker.

### 11—32. The Prodigal Son.

If it were allowable to make distinctions as to divine sayings, “we might term this parable the crown and pearl of all our Lord’s parables” (*Stier.*). It is indeed “a Gospel within a Gospel” (*Lange.*).

11. “A certain man had two sons.” The father in the parable is God. The two sons are the two classes before our Lord,—the self-righteous Pharisees, and the publicans and sinners, whose reception by Him aroused their murmurings. Some (probably because several of our Lord’s parables do concern this point) have understood by the two sons the Jews and Gentiles; but if, as we cannot doubt, this parable was spoken on the same occasion with the last two, and in answer to the murmurings of the Scribes and Pharisees, it is plain that the former must be the true interpretation.

As with the sheep, and the coins, so now with the sons, we must not fail to notice the first leading thought of ownership and possession. The lost sheep belongs to the man who seeks for it; the lost coin belongs to the woman; the prodigal son belongs to the father. He is a *son*; a member of the family; not a stranger. Christ does not picture the one son as born in a happy home, and the other as belonging to a different family, and having at length to be taught the happiness of the good Father’s house, and to seek admission to it. He is *already in it*. He goes away *from it*. Thus the picture Christ draws is of the fall of a baptized Christian,—of one who from the first is called—and treated as—a *son*. Our Lord thus confirms the truth that the Christian’s attitude in this life is not so much that of one fighting to gain a promised prize, as that of one fighting to defend a treasure already bestowed upon him. It is not *that he may win*, but *lest he lose*, his adoption as a child of God, that He must watch and pray. The Prodigal very nearly lost this privilege for ever.

Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them *his* living.

13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

12. "Father, give me the portion of goods" &c. This request shows that his heart was already weary of his home, and that he was longing to be free from his father's control. He was not content with the daily blessings and happiness of his father's house. He desired a separate portion, the means of enjoying himself apart from his father. And his request was granted. God has made man's will free, and when we choose to depart, He forces us not to stay. Probably we should not press the "goods" and the "living" into meaning any special gifts, bodily or spiritual; though it is true that, when we wilfully leave our heavenly Father, He does not send us away quite empty, but lets us go with those bodily blessings, and mental endowments, and worldly goods, in which we choose to seek our happiness.

13. "Gathered all together," &c. Thus carrying out in open act the secret purpose of his heart.

"A far country." The far country is forgetfulness of God—that state in which it is said of a man, "neither is God in all his thoughts" (Ps. x. 4.). Or we may say it is this world, which in its evil is far from God.

"Wasted his substance." The "substance" here, as the "goods" and "living" above (12.), means all the blessings God suffers us to retain when we go from Him. For by sinful conduct all mental gifts and powers, all noble impulses, all kindly affections, are no less surely wasted than is money itself. It is so difficult in this parable to separate the story from its spiritual meaning that we are apt to forget that "riotous living" of the Prodigal is not to be limited in the interpretation to any one form of vice, but signifies far more widely any life in which pleasure is sought apart from God.

14. "When he had spent all." At first no doubt he found a certain pleasure in his new life. It is simple folly to deny the pleasures of sin. But the bottom of these pleasures is soon reached. This Prodigal learnt ere long their emptiness and worthlessness. They could never satisfy.

"A mighty famine in that land." A mighty spiritual famine,—a lack of all that can feed and satisfy the soul. It is well pointed out by Stier that in reality that mighty famine is always in that land, though it is only felt by those dwelling there as they one by one begin to realize their true state, and come to themselves. Still, when Christ says this famine "arose", He may be thinking of those visitations (such as sicknesses, poverty, bereavements,) whereby the merciful Father often opens the eyes of His prodigal sons to their true condition. It may be that this famine is one way in which the Shepherd is seeking to bring back the lost sheep.

A. D. 30.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

15. "He went and joined himself" &c. Thus he falls deeper and deeper. Disappointment turns to recklessness. What so common as to see one who has been for a time a mere pleasure-seeker end in being a degraded slave to the lowest vices? The "citizen of that country"—by which we understand one who belonged to it, who was at home there, (not a stranger, who should never have been there, like the Prodigal)—is surely the prince of this world—the devil. The reckless sinner hires himself to serve the devil. He has tried to enjoy himself without giving up all self-respect and self-government, but it has failed, and he now plunges into any filth of sin, without caring what it is, in the faint hope of getting some pleasure in return. He serves Satan for any wages he will give him. And this master, with whom he has been friends for some time, but to whom he now is forced to join himself as a slave to do his bidding, sets him to the feeding of swine—to the lowest and foulest of work, the serving of "divers lusts and pleasures" (Tit. iii. 3.).

16. "He would fain have filled" &c. That is, he has become so low and degraded that he would gladly take his pleasure, and satisfy his desires, if he could, in any foul way.

"No man gave unto him." His old boon-companions, his hard-hearted master, his fellow-slaves,—all were alike, none cared for him, none pitied his sufferings. Besides, they could not help him, if they would. They had no real food to offer wherewith to nourish his starving soul. The wicked know not how to comfort the wicked. Behold how Satan treats his servants! He promises high wages. See what he gives! Yet even in this last extremity (thanks be to God!) there is hope. When God suffered the new kingdom of Judah to fall under the power of the king of Egypt, He said of His people, "They shall be *his* servants, that they may know *My* service" (2 Chron. xii. 8.). So through being Satan's servant this Prodigal came to know God's service.

17. "When he came to himself." All this time he had been as one beside himself. This is the first step in the recovery. He goes into his own heart. He sees what, and where, and in what condition, he really is. This is the sense of sin, the first honest gaze into the foulness of the polluted heart.

"How many hired servants" &c. He does not think of his elder brother, and all the privileges he is enjoying in his father's house, but rather of those who have but a small share of those privileges—the "hired servants." He would be glad to be but as one of them. These "hired servants" would mean such as serve God even imperfectly—such as "do His work rather in the spirit of servants than of

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say A. D. 30.  
 unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven,  
 and before thee,  
 19 and am no more worthy to be called thy son :  
 make me as one of thy hired servants.  
 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But

“sons, rather looking to their hire than out of the free impulse of love, who yet are not without their reward” (*Trench.*). Even these have abundance of those very privileges and blessings, which the Prodigal has thrown away. Alas! how many, when brought to feel and acknowledge this, lack the strength and courage to arise, and only plunge deeper into sin to drown the disturbing voice of conscience!

18. “I will arise.” Let us not suppose that the Prodigal can do this in his own strength. No; just as the shepherd sought the sheep, and the woman the piece of money, so doubtless we may say that the Father seeks the Prodigal in his misery, and by His good Spirit inspires the resolve.

“Father.” Blessed word for fallen sinners! They may arise and go—not to an angry God—not to a stern Master—but to a Father, and a Father who loves them still. It was not their dutiful obedience which first made them children, and so their disobedience however great robs them not of this blessed relationship. “What is it that gives the sinner now a sure ground of confidence that returning to God he shall not be repelled or cast out? The adoption of sonship, which he received in Christ Jesus at his baptism, and his faith that the gifts and calling of God are, on His part, without repentance or recall. Wretched and degraded though he be, he may yet take that dearest name of ‘Father’ on his lips, and claim anew his admission into the household of faith, on the ground that he was once made a member thereof, and that his privileges abide for him still in their full force, however he may have chosen to remain in guilty ignorance of them for so long” (*Trench.*).

“Against heaven.” Whatever the sin may have been, the thought that it has been committed against God outweighs all other thoughts in the true penitent. Thus David, who had sinned grievously against man, can in his misery see nothing but his deep guilt towards God, and cries, “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned” (Ps. li. 4.). In the parable the father is of course supposed to be an earthly father, and so the son says, “Against heaven and before thee.” But in the spiritual application, as Archbishop Trench rightly observes, the two melt into one—“I have sinned against Thee, my Father in heaven.”

19. “No more worthy” &c. Yet this hinders him not, for he knows that it is not his own worthiness, but his father’s love, which will procure his acceptance. Still he will ask only for the lowest place in the household. Though he will say “Father,” yet he will not presume upon being a son. He knows he has justly forfeited all right to a son’s privileges, and if he may enter the house of his childhood once more, even though to do the lowest work, and to take the lowest place, he will be thankful.

20. “And he arose.” Blessed they whose resolutions are not suffered to fade away, but are carried out as soon as made!

A. D. 30. <sup>ε</sup> when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, <sup>h</sup> and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet:

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“When he was yet a great way off,” &c. What wondrous depth of mercy is here! This is indeed the crowning verse of the whole glorious parable. Had our Lord pictured the father as listening patiently to his son’s confession, and then graciously granting him a fresh trial, and promising, if his conduct proved the reality of his professions, to pardon the past and restore him to favour, we should all have thought that the Prodigal was very mercifully dealt with. But this seeing him afar off, and running, and falling on his neck, and kissing him,—all this is such an excess of love and goodness that in the mere story it seems quite unnatural. What earthly father would do so much as this? But this is a picture not of man’s mercy, but of God’s. He sees the returning sinner while yet “a great way off,”—while his heart is as yet only beginning to turn to Him,—and He waits not till the wanderer has come back all the way: He is waiting to be gracious; more ready to forgive than the sinner to seek forgiveness; at once welcoming, receiving, restoring, the penitent. God does not wait till trial can be made of the reality of the penitence: He needs no trial to prove its reality. He does not wait till sin is conquered, and sanctification far advanced, before He forgives. In Christ Jesus the penitent sinner is at once pardoned and accepted. Let his penitence be sincere, and he is faithless to doubt God’s pardon (See on St. Matt. xviii. 27.).

21. “Father, I have sinned” &c. The unexpected and overwhelming love of his father does not hinder his intended confession, though it does prevent his adding the petition to be made as one of the hired servants, which, after the proofs of love given him by his father would now have been a mere mock humility, for he knew his father had already raised him to a better place than that. But we must well mark that the fullest proof of forgiveness does not make the Prodigal forget his sin and unworthiness. Indeed we cannot doubt that such proof only deepened his sense of sin and consciousness of unworthiness. Pardon does not lessen repentance. David cried, “My sin is ever before me” after Nathan had pronounced his absolution—“The Lord hath put away thy sin.”

22. “Bring forth the best robe,” &c. The robe, the ring, the shoes, were all signs that the Prodigal was restored to the place of a son in his father’s house, these not being worn by slaves. The word “best” here is literally ‘first,’ and some have understood by the ‘first robe,’ the robe which he had before he went away, which would mean the baptismal grace which he had forfeited. But probably our translation is right, ‘first’ meaning first in honour and dignity—not first in time. Many have understood by the robe either the robe of holiness,

23 and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; A. D. 30.  
 and let us eat, and be merry:  
 24 for this my son was dead, and is alive again; <sup>1 ver. 32.</sup>  
 he was lost, and is found. And they began to be <sup>Eph. 2. 1.</sup>  
 merry. <sup>& 5. 14.</sup>  
<sup>Rev. 3. 1.</sup>

25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as  
 he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard  
 musick and dancing.

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked  
 what these things meant.

or the robe of imputed righteousness (See on the Wedding-garment  
 St. Matt. xxii. 11.); by the ring either the seal of the Spirit, or a  
 sign of betrothal to God; and by the shoes power to walk in the path  
 of righteousness: but perhaps this is pressing the parable beyond what  
 our Lord meant it to teach.

23. "The fatted calf." As for an occasion of great rejoicing, to show  
 the joy in heaven over the sinner that repenteth.

24. "This my son was dead" &c. A state of sin is ever described  
 as a state of spiritual death. The conversion of the sinner is a moral  
 resurrection; and might well be called a regeneration or second-birth,  
 but that that term has from the very first been always applied to the  
 spiritual birth into God's family in Baptism.

25. "His elder son." The character and conduct of the elder son  
 in this second part of the parable presents some difficulty. If he  
 represents (as has been said on 11.) the self-righteous Pharisees, how  
 can he be described as having remained faithful in his father's house  
 and service? If, on the other hand, he represents the really righteous  
 and faithful, how can he give way to jealousy and ingratitude? this  
 difficulty is nearly the same as that suggested by the murmurings of  
 the first-called labourers in the parable of the Labourers in the vine-  
 yard (See on St. Matt. xx. 11.). The true explanation seems to be  
 that this elder son *does* represent the self-righteous Pharisees, but *only*  
*in the one point of their murmuring at the reception of the publicans and*  
*sinner* (See 2.), which it was our Lord's purpose to illustrate. As  
 to the character of this son, it is a great mistake to regard him as  
 "a model of self-righteousness, and Pharisaic pride." This is not con-  
 sistent with his having lived so long happily and faithfully in his  
 father's home. "He is rather one whose life has been well regulated—  
 "one who has feared to offend; but, as is too often found in men of  
 "regular lives, he is not yet perfect in love, and wants a lesson of  
 "greater tenderness to sinners returning from the error of their ways"  
 (Archd. Churton.).

"In the field." Doubtless (as would be customary in the East)  
 engaged in some work for his father.

"Musick and dancing." Not only is there joy *in heaven* over the  
 returning sinner, but also *to the sinner himself* there is often granted  
 a joy and gladness in his first conversion to God beyond such as may  
 be ordinarily looked for in the calm even course of a holy life.

26. "He called one of the servants," &c. A good and loving son  
 would have hastened in at once, ready to rejoice in all that caused

A. D. 30.

27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30 but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

his father joy. This son here begins to show his grudging and envious spirit.

28. "He was angry." Angry that so much should be made of one so undeserving as his prodigal brother.

"And would not go in." That is, would not join in the rejoicing over his brother's return, in this resembling the Pharisees and scribes who murmured at our Lord's reception of the publicans and sinners. Even when his father, in his loving forbearance, came out, and intreated him, he still hardened his heart. Thus for the time he changes places with his penitent brother. The younger is in his father's house; the elder is shut out. So the first is last and the last first (See on St. Matt. xix. 30. and xx. 16.).

29. "Lo, these many years" &c. The very language of self-righteousness—just what the Pharisees and scribes would say of themselves. We need not suppose this son to be one who had indulged at other times this spirit of pride and envy. It seems to be a sudden outbreak caused by his brother's reception, which had revealed the hidden evil of his heart (See on 25.).

"Thou never gavest me a kid," &c. Here is the root of his sin. He is reckoning his merits and claims, and thinking of receiving things from his father for his own enjoyment apart from him. It is, though in a less degree, the same spirit which made the younger son ask for his portion of goods that he might go away and enjoy it. This elder son had still to learn the blessedness of his own portion (See on 31.). The "kid" is named as something much less than the "fatted calf." It is not at all necessary to understand by the "friends" whom the elder son mentions any bad or unfit companions. He probably would only mean those like himself remaining faithful in his father's service.

30. "This thy son." Spoken in scorn: he will not say 'my brother.'

31. "Son, thou art ever with me," &c. The force here must be put upon the words "with me." The blessedness of the elder brother's portion was to have ever been with his father, and to have shared in all the happiness of that father's home. It is as though the father said, "What need to talk of other friends? Thou art ever with a better

32 It was meet that we should make merry, and A. D. 30.  
 be glad: <sup>k</sup> for this thy brother was dead, and is <sup>k</sup> ver. 24.  
 alive again; and was lost, and is found.

## CHAPTER XVI.

<sup>1</sup> The parable of the unjust steward. 14 Christ reproveth the hypocrisy of the covetous Pharisees. 19 The rich glutton, and Lazarus the beggar.

AND He said also unto His disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

"than them all, even myself. Why shouldst thou have expected a 'kid, when all that I have is thine?' (*Trench.*). What if there be much rejoicing when a prodigal returns home? Has the faithful one, who has never gone far from home, cause for envy? Nay; his lot has been in reality far the more blessed of the two. He may never have experienced a joy as overflowing as that of the newly-returned penitent. He may never have been to others the cause of such an outburst of thankfulness. But his joy has in reality been "infinitely greater in amount than this one burst of gladness, only it has been spread over "a far larger space of time." And if it be asked, 'Why has there been 'no such rejoicing for him?' the answer is, "Because he has ever been "with his father,—because his father's possessions are, and have been "always, his. His joy therefore is soberer and more solid,—not the "suddenly swelling mountain cataract, but the deep, though smooth "and silent, river" (*Cajetan quoted by Trench.*).

32. "This thy brother." Whom he would not speak of as such, but scornfully called "this thy son" (30.), so that the father here conveys a tender rebuke for his unbrotherly spirit.

"Was dead, and is alive again." Thus the conversion of a sinner might fitly be called his new birth or regeneration, had not this expression been from the first used of Baptism (See on 24, and on St. John iii. 5.), so that its use for conversion would cause, and indeed has often in modern times caused, much confusion. Yet indeed the change is no less than a change from death to life, a very resurrection. The first new-birth—the first resurrection with Christ—is in the waters of Baptism: the second is amid the tears of penitence. Both are the work of the Holy Spirit.

We are not told the end of this elder brother; and whether he afterwards repented and went in, or not, is left unspoken. Most wisely: for in this way would his example far more keenly touch the consciences of the murmuring Pharisees and scribes, for whose repentance a door was thus graciously left open.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## 1—13. The Parable of the Unjust Steward.

1. "A certain rich man, which had a steward." By a "steward" is meant an agent, or manager of his property. No doubt in the spiritual meaning the "rich man" signifies God, but our attention

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2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

6 And he said, An hundred <sup>2</sup>measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

<sup>2</sup> The word *measures* in the original counteth nine gallons three quarts: See Ezek. 43. 10, 11. 14.

is wholly turned upon the steward, and we are not meant to look for any instruction concerning God from the conduct or words of the master, except in so far as he calls on the steward to render up an account of his stewardship. The steward represents each one of us to whom God has entrusted worldly means, or the power of doing good.

"The same was accused" &c. The steward was justly accused; for though he had not yet committed the gross wrong of altering his master's books, and thus robbing him deliberately, he had no doubt been a bad steward, living in plenty, and neglecting his master's interests.

2. "Give an account" &c. So God calls upon us to give an account of our stewardship. This is not on the great day of account alone. Indeed this would not fit with the story of the parable, for it is rather a notice or warning which is here spoken of than a final reckoning. Thus this giving of account exactly answers to the taking of account by the king in the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, and signifies any time when God, by His warnings, reminds us that our stewardship must shortly be ended, and an account of it given (See on St. Matt. xviii. 23.).

3. "What shall I do?" &c. This represents the utter helplessness of the steward of God's gifts to provide for himself. If he lose his stewardship, and cannot render a good account of it, he has no resource: he is destitute and helpless.

4. "They may receive me." That is, his master's debtors. This is one of the chief points of the parable. Its main lesson turns upon the anxious efforts of a bad man to secure a home for the future (See on 9.).

5. "His lord's debtors." Probably these were merchants or dealers, who owed the rich man for corn and oil, the produce of his estate.

6. "An hundred measures of oil." This was strictly what the debtor owed for, rather than what he owed. He owed the payment for this quantity of oil, for which he had, as it seems, given his note of hand, as a receipt for the goods and acknowledgement of the debt.

"Take thy bill," &c. That is, 'Take back thy bill.' The unjust

7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred <sup>2</sup> measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than <sup>a</sup> the children of light.

9 And I say unto you, <sup>b</sup> Make to yourselves & 19. 21. ch. 11. 41. 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18, 19.

A. D. 30.

<sup>2</sup> The word here interpreted a measure in the original containeth about fourteen bushels and a pottle.

<sup>a</sup> John 12. 36. Eph. 5. 8.

<sup>1</sup> Thess. 5. 5.

<sup>b</sup> Dan. 4. 27.

Matt. 6. 19.

steward returns to these debtors their notes of hand for the goods they had received from the estate, bidding them alter the amount to a less figure, thus plotting with them to cheat his own employer. He bids them do it "quickly," probably fearing his wicked plan would not otherwise be carried out before he would have to render his account.

8. "The lord commended." Of course no attentive reader could make the mistake of supposing "the lord" here to mean our Lord. The words are part of the parable, and spoken by our Lord Himself. Still it would perhaps be clearer, if it were translated, 'the master,' or 'his master,' "commended"—that is, praised or applauded—"the unjust steward." Plainly this means, after he had discovered the steward's dishonesty. But how then could his master praise him? The next words show.

"Because he had done wisely." "Wisely" in this place means 'prudently.' The steward had done cleverly and well for his own interests, and his master, though he found out his wicked tricks, praised him for this—his forethought in securing some to befriend him when he is turned out of his place.

"For the children of this world" &c. Here begins our Lord's own comment upon the parable. The parable ends with the master's praise of his steward's clever prudence. Jesus upon this—to explain it, and prevent any mistake,—adds these words, which show plainly enough what sort of wisdom it was which the master in the parable praised. It was pure worldly wisdom,—the wisdom of a bad crafty man. The point of this our Lord's explanation lies in the words "in their generation", on which in reading great force should be laid. This expression is more exactly translated—'unto' or 'towards their generation'—that is, those like themselves. 'The wicked,' our Lord says, 'are wiser in their dealings with those of their own kind than the good are in theirs.' Plainly the master's debtors were those of his own generation, in dealing with whom the steward had shown so much worldly wisdom. They were bad men like himself. And so comes out the great lesson of the parable. It is simply this: The good may learn wisdom and forethought from the bad. Nay, the bad shame the good by their greater wisdom and zeal in their own affairs. The bad are wiser in worldly things than the good in heavenly. "The children of light are not at half the pains to win heaven which the men of this world are to win earth: the world is better served by its servants than God is by His" (*Abp. Trench.*).

9. "Make to yourselves friends" &c. The word "of" here is literally 'out of'—'Make friends out of the mammon of unrighteousness';

A. D. 30. friends of the <sup>2</sup> mammon of unrighteousness; that,  
 3 Or, riches. when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting  
 habitations.

10 <sup>c</sup> He that is faithful in that which is least is  
 faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in  
 the least is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in  
 the unrighteous <sup>3</sup> mammon, who will commit to your  
 trust the true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which  
 is another man's, who shall give you that which is  
 your own?

or, in other words, 'Use the mammon of unrighteousness as a means of  
 'making friends.' "Mammon" means money (See St. Matt. vi. 24.).  
 But why is it called "unrighteous"? Certainly our Lord does not  
 mean money unjustly got. In verse 12 the "unrighteous mammon"  
 is opposed to the "true riches", and so means simply worldly wealth.  
 We must therefore understand our Lord to speak of wealth as  
 "unrighteous" on account of its great temptations. "Riches", says  
 Bishop Wilson, "are almost always either the fruit or the seed of  
 "unrighteousness." This wealth—so often abused—Christ bids us use  
 in making to ourselves friends. That is, we are to do good with it,  
 and so to attach the poor and needy to us, and make them our friends.

"When ye fail." That is, 'when ye die.'

"They may receive you" &c. The unjust steward so dealt with  
 the money entrusted to him as to secure friends ready to receive him  
 when he was turned out of his stewardship. Do, ye Christians, the  
 same. Use your money to make friends of the poor, who, when ye  
 die and render up your stewardship, shall welcome you—not to a poor  
 temporary earthly home, like those of the unjust steward's friends,  
 but—to the "everlasting habitations" of heaven. It is well to mark  
 the hint we have here that we shall meet and know in heaven the  
 friends whom we have known on earth. If those whom we have  
 benefited on earth shall meet and welcome us in heaven, surely also  
 will beloved friends and relatives do the same (See on 23.).

10. "He that is faithful" &c. Our Lord speaks no more of pru-  
 dence. He now points to a higher grace—faithfulness. His hearers  
 might possibly fancy He approved of that crafty wisdom in the unjust  
 steward which He only spoke of to shame them by contrasting it with  
 their own careless indifference as to their future prospects. So now  
 He commends a faithful use of money, declaring it to be a good test  
 of faithfulness in greater and higher things.

11. "If therefore" &c. If you have proved yourselves unfaithful  
 in your stewardship of that worldly wealth with which God has tried  
 you, can you think He will bestow upon you the true riches of his  
 kingdom?

12. "Another man's, . . . your own." By "another man's" is

9. "When ye fail." It should perhaps be noted that there is another reading,  
 resting on very high authority, which would be translated 'when it fails'—that  
 is, 'when the worldly wealth fails'. The sense is not very different.

13 <sup>a</sup> No servant can serve two masters: for <sup>A. D. 30.</sup> either he will hate the one, and love the other; <sup>a</sup> Matt. 6. 24. or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

14 ¶ And the Pharisees also, <sup>e</sup> who were covetous, <sup>e</sup> Matt. 23. 14. heard all these things: and they derided Him.

15 And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but <sup>g</sup> God knoweth your hearts: for <sup>h</sup> that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. f ch. 10. 29. g Ps. 7. 9. h 1 Sam. 16. 7.

16 <sup>i</sup> The law and the prophets were until John: <sup>i</sup> Matt. 4. 17. & 11. 12, 13. ch. 7. 29. since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

plainly meant that worldly wealth which you cannot call your own, because you are only a steward of it. The heavenly inheritance is called "your own", because, when once possessed, it is yours to enjoy for ever, and you have no more any account to render.

13. "No servant" &c. This is repeated here from the Sermon on the Mount (See St. Matt. vi. 24.), and teaches us that by *unfaithfulness* in the management of our earthly wealth is meant a *love* of it. Covetousness is dishonesty towards God. We cannot love riches, and be faithful stewards.

#### 14—18. Rebuke of the Pharisees.

14. "All these things." Probably this includes the three parables in the last chapter, which were spoken expressly against the Pharisees and Scribes, though they seem to have been more annoyed by the rebuke of covetousness following upon the parable of the Unjust Steward.

"They derided Him." They mocked and laughed at Him.

15. "Which justify yourselves." That is, 'which put on the appearance of righteousness.' This is simply an accusation of hypocrisy (See on St. Matt. vi. 2.). God, who knew the hearts of these Pharisees, saw their covetousness, as well as other sins; and, much as men might esteem them, seeing only the outside, in God's sight they were hateful.

16. "The law and the prophets" &c. This verse appears to be a rebuke to the Pharisees for not accepting and entering into that kingdom of God, for which the law and the prophets had been so long preparing them (See on St. Matt. xi. 12.). By "every man presseth into it" our Lord describes the zeal with which numbers sought to enter in. Of course He does not mean literally "every man", but it is as if He said, 'Men are every where pressing in.' These men might have taught the Pharisees, only they were too proud to follow. The verse is spoken in much the same sense as when our Lord, speaking to the "chief priests and elders," who were mainly Pharisees, said, "John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him" (St. Matt. xxi. 32.).

A. D. 30.

1. Ps. 102.

20, 27.

Isai. 40. 8.

&amp; 51. 6.

Matt. 5. 18.

1 Pet. 1. 25.

1 Matt. 5. 32.

&amp; 19. 9.

Mark 10. 11.

1 Cor. 7. 10,

11.

17 <sup>k</sup> And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

18 <sup>l</sup> Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband committeth adultery.

19 ¶ There was a certain rich man, which was

17. "And it is easier" &c. Our Lord's hearers might think that, having spoken of the law as having been "until John", He meant that from that time the law was destroyed. He therefore guards His words by briefly repeating what He had fully taught in the Sermon on the Mount, namely, that the Gospel is no destruction of the law, but its fulfilment (See on St. Matt. v. 17, 18.).

18. "Whosoever putteth away" &c. Why our Lord selects this one portion of God's Law to enforce at this particular time we cannot tell. Probably something in the conversation of the by-standers may have suggested it. We must observe how completely unqualified the rule is, as here given. No exception is hinted at (See on St. Matt. v. 31, 32. and xix. 1—12.).

### 19—31. The Rich Man and Lazarus.

19. "There was a certain rich man," &c. In the Greek there is a little word joining this verse on to what has gone before, which may be given in English by the word 'now'—'Now there was' &c. Perhaps it is not wise to press these little marks of connection too strongly, but it certainly seems as though this parable was spoken in connection with the foregoing discourse, and therefore addressed mainly to the Pharisees. It is true the Pharisees were never accused of riotous or luxurious living. Indeed they were the strictest party among the Jews in all their conduct. But they were "covetous" (14.), and "derided" our Lord's teaching concerning the true use of money in the parable of the Unjust Steward. This parable thus meets those scoffs by showing a picture of one who did not, in the true sense, make to himself "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness" (9.), but used that "unrighteous mammon" unrighteously—because selfishly. It is a most serious warning to the rich against any selfish use of their riches, whether it be by a refined self-indulgence or a covetous hoarding.

It has been often pointed out that this is not a parable in the strict meaning of the word—'a story with an inner and spiritual meaning' (See on St. Matt. xiii. 3.); inasmuch as the rich man stands for a rich man, and the poor man for a poor man, and the whole is of the nature of a history rather than a parable. On the other hand there is no sufficient reason to suppose that it is (as some have thought) a history of two real persons (See on 20.). Rather it is a history of two imaginary persons who represent the two classes to which they belong—the rich who are poor in grace, and the poor who are rich in faith. We need not then refuse to call this story a parable, though it is not one in quite the usual sense.

clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

20 and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21 and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

**"Purple and fine linen."** The purple dye in ancient times was very costly, being obtained from a certain sea-shell. The city of Tyre was famous for its goods dyed with this colour. The "fine linen", used for the under clothing, was also very costly, and only used by the rich.

**"Sumptuously."** That is, richly, expensively.

20. **"Lazarus."** The rich man's name is not told us. In the book of God's remembrance his name is not found. "Lazarus" was a name "written in heaven" (x. 20.). The mention of the name of the poor beggar is the chief reason assigned for believing this to be a history of two real persons. But the meaning of the name—"God is my help"—is a sufficient reason for our Lord's adopting it, since it so well describes the character of the poor man.

**"Laid at his gate."** Probably by some who did for him this kindness, thinking he would surely be cared for by the rich man, when he saw his piteous condition.

21. **"Desiring."** Longing for the crumbs, and, as we can hardly doubt is meant, denied even this small boon. Probably the rich man scarcely noticed him; though his knowing him after death seems to show that he knew him by sight before. What an opportunity he lost of making to himself a friend by his wealth, who might have received him into the "everlasting habitations"! (See on 9.).

**"The dogs came" &c.** The only things that pitied him, and tended him. Some however think that this is meant to describe the lowest depth of misery, and that these dogs, which wander unowned in all Eastern cities, living on the offal thrown out into the streets, and looked upon with horror by the people, were ready to devour the poor man's dying frame, while he had no power to drive them away. It is however best to take the other meaning, and to suppose the tenderness of the very dogs is set against the hardness of the rich man and his servants.

22. **"Was carried."** That is, his spirit was carried.

**"Abraham's bosom."** This was the Jewish expression for the happy rest of the faithful dead. It is the same as Paradise (See on xxiii. 43.), the place where "the souls of the righteous are in the Hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them" (Wisd. iii. 1.); for "there the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest" (Job iii. 17.). It is necessary carefully to distinguish between this happy abode of departed spirits, and the final glory of heaven, into which the saints shall enter after the Resurrection and Judgment of the last day.

**"Was buried."** No doubt with all pomp and magnificence, as

A. D. 30. 23 and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

became a rich man. The poor man's burial is not mentioned. That was an event of no note. What if the mourners at that great funeral could have had their eyes opened to see what was taking place in the world of spirits!

23. "In hell." There are two very different Greek words, both of which are unhappily expressed in English by the same word—"hell". There is, first, 'Hades',—the place of departed spirits; and, secondly, 'Gehenna', the place of torment. The former is a temporary abode of the spirits of the dead both good and bad between death and resurrection. The latter is the final and eternal abode of the lost after the Resurrection and Judgment. Here our Lord uses the former word—'Hades', what He relates being wholly about the state of the dead while separate from the body, between death and resurrection: and it is the more important to remember this because the mention of the "torments" and the "flame" would naturally lead us to suppose Him to be speaking of 'Gehenna', or hell-fire. We learn however here that in the place of departed spirits—'Hades'—there are two separate parts, one of peace and joy called "Abraham's bosom", and elsewhere "Paradise"; the other of torment and misery, which latter has no distinctive name, being here simply spoken of as 'Hades' (See Note.).

"He lift up his eyes, being in torments." We know so little of the separate spiritual existence that we can only speak of it in words borrowed from the body. The "eyes" here are the spiritual sight: the "torments" mental sufferings.

"Seeth Abraham" &c. Again not literally, with any bodily sight. It is interpreting our Lord's words in the letter, and not in the spirit, to represent them as showing that the good and bad will be within sight and hearing of each other, or able to hold converse, in the unseen world. Our Lord so speaks in His parable for the purpose of making His picture more vivid and His lesson more pointed. The rich man was in some way, we know not how, made conscious of the happy state of the once despised beggar. It is plain that we have here an argument for the knowing of each other by the dead. We cannot tell in what sense the rich man saw Abraham and Lazarus, but certainly he knew who they were (See on 9.).

23. "Hell." It will help us to clearer ideas as to the difference between the place of departed spirits ('Hades') and the place of eternal torment ('Gehenna') if we notice the use of the two words in the New Testament, remembering that the former being used for the place of the departed is sometimes used almost in the sense of death. 1. 'Hades' is used in the following places:—Where our Lord speaks of Capernaum being "cast down to hell"—that is, simply to destruction, or nothingness—(St. Matt. xi. 23. St. Luke x. 15.): where our Lord says of His Church, "The gates of hell" (in the same sense as the last) "shall

"not prevail against it" (St. Matt. xvi. 18.): in the discourse of St. Peter concerning our Lord's soul being "not left in hell" (Acts ii. 27, 31.): where St. Paul cries, "O grave" ('Hades'), "where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. xv. 55.): and lastly in three passages in the Revelation, where it is very plain that the place of final punishment cannot be meant (Rev. i. 18, vi. 8, and xx. 13, 14.). 2. 'Gehenna' is used in the following places: Where our Lord speaks of the "danger of hell fire" (St. Matt. v. 22.): where He speaks of losing one member rather than that the whole body should be cast into hell (St. Matt. v. 29, 30. xviii. 9. St. Mark

ST. LUKE, XVI.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and <sup>m</sup> cool my tongue; for I <sup>n</sup> am tormented in this flame. A. D. 30.

25 But Abraham said, Son, <sup>o</sup> remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. <sup>m</sup> Zech. 14. 12.  
<sup>n</sup> Isai. 66. 24.  
Mark 9. 44,  
&c.  
<sup>o</sup> Job 21. 13.  
ch. 6. 24.

26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would* come from thence.

24. "Father Abraham," &c. Doubtless, like other Jews, this rich man had trusted to his descent from Abraham for acceptance with God (See on St. Matt. iii. 9.). He now finds how vain was this trust. Abraham might be his father according to the flesh, but the true children of Abraham are they who walk in the faith of Abraham (Rom. iv. 12.). The "finger", the "tongue", the "flame", all these are spoken in a figure. The words are taken from bodily things to represent to us spiritual things. The rich man was in great torment and cried out for help to his "father Abraham." "The 'Have mercy upon me' "was well in itself, but not addressed to the right Father" (Stier.). It has been well pointed out that the tongue is pictured as the seat of special suffering, because the tongue had before been the instrument of special self-indulgence.

25. "Son, remember" &c. Abraham speaks with gentle compassion. The "Son" is perhaps not so much an acknowledgement of the rich man as a descendant (for what would fleshly descent be in the world of spirits?), as an address of love and pity. The "Remember" is to awaken the rich man to a sense of the justice of his present torments. He had his good things where he sought them—in this life; just as the Pharisees, who sought only the praise of men, had "their reward" (St. Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16.). It is important to mark the little word "thy",—"thy good things", that is, 'the good things thou desiredst'; else we might fall into the great error of supposing our Lord to teach that prosperity in this world will be punished in the next, and suffering in this world rewarded in the next. Prosperity brings punishment, when it draws the heart from God: suffering brings reward, when it is borne with humble patience. But it is the selfishness, not the prosperity, which is punished; the patience, not the suffering, which is rewarded.

26. "A great gulf fixed." Both of distance and of condition. Good and bad are separated at once after death. And this separation is "fixed", so that there is, and can be, no passing to and fro.

ix. 43, 45, 47.): Where He speaks of God being able to destroy both soul and body in hell (St. Matt. x. 28. St. Luke xii. 5.): in the expression "Child of hell" (St. Matt. xxiii. 15.): in the question, "How can ye escape the damnation of 'hell?" (St. Matt. xxiii. 33.): and lastly in St. James' saying that the tongue is "set on fire of hell" (St. James iii. 6.). It should be added that in the Creeds of the Church "hell" is 'Hades', not 'Gehenna.'

A. D. 30.

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house :

28 for I have five brethren ; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

P *Teal.* 8. 20.  
& 31. 16.  
John 5. 39,  
45.  
Acts 15. 21.  
& 17. 11.

29 Abraham saith unto him, <sup>P</sup>They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham : but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

q *John* 12.  
10, 11.

31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, <sup>q</sup>neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1 *Christ teacheth to avoid occasions of offence.* 3 *One to forgive another.* 6 *The power of faith.* 7 *How we are bound to God, and not He to us.* 11 *He healeth ten lepers.* 22 *Of the kingdom of God, and the coming of the Son of man.*

27. "My father's house." That is, his earthly father's house, his former home, when on earth. Abraham had spoken of no "great gulf" between Paradise and earth, and so the rich man thought Lazarus might perhaps be allowed to go thither. We find in this request a hint as to the remembrance of those still alive by the dead. If this miserable man could "in hell" think of his five brethren still on earth, much more may we suppose the spirits of the blest able to take an interest in those they have known and loved in this life. As to their being able to visit them we have no hint given.

29. "They have Moses and the prophets." That is, They have sufficient witness—sufficient light—if they really desire to know God's will.

"Let them hear them." Not 'Let them listen to' only—but 'Let them obey them.' The word "hear" has in the Greek this fuller meaning.

30. "Nay, father Abraham," &c. The rich man thought, from his own experience, and from his knowledge of his brethren, that they were little likely to repent through the teaching of Moses and the prophets, and he pleaded with Abraham that a visitor from the dead, to assure them of the truth of the world to come, and of the misery of the godless there, would awaken them to a real sense of their danger.

31. "If they hear not" &c. This seems a strange and startling answer. Yet was it not proved to be true? A Lazarus was indeed to go to the unbelieving people from the dead:—not the Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, but the Lazarus of Bethany; yet his resurrection only roused the Pharisees to more active measures against Christ. And One far greater than Lazarus was to come from the dead, yet neither then were they persuaded. The truth is, the faith and repentance which the "five brethren" needed, did not require any stronger testimony on which to rest. They had all the proof they could want. The heart and the will were wrong, and these are not changed by startling wonders, but by the grace of God.