unbelievers. The martyrology of scepticism has not yet been written.

That part of Christ's promise which respects hereafter must be taken on trust; but the other part, which concerns the present life, admits of being tested by observation. The question, therefore, may competently be put: Is it true, as matter of fact, that sacrifices are recompensed by an hundred-fold—that is, a manifold[1]—return in kind in this world? To this question we may reply, *first*, that the promise will be found to hold good with the regularity of a law, if we do not confine our view to the *individual* life, but include successive generations. When providence has had time to work out its results, the meek do, at least by their heirs and representatives, inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The persecuted cause at length conquers the world's homage, and receives from it such rewards as it can bestow. The words of the prophet are then fulfilled: "The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other (by persecutors' hands), shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell."[2] And again: "Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall throb and swell; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the wealth of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron."[3] These prophetic promises, extravagant though they seem, have been fulfilled again and again in the history of the church: in the early ages, under Constantine, after the fires of persecution kindled by pagan zeal for hoary superstitions and idolatries had finally died out;[4] in Protestant Britain,

[1] πολλαπλασίονα, Luke xviii. 30. [2] Isa. xlix. 20.

[3] Isa. lx. 4, 5, 16, 17.

[4] See sermon of Paulinus of Tyre at the consecration of his church, rebuilt, like many others, after the last persecution—the churches having been destroyed by the edict of Diocletian. Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* x. 4.

once famous for men who were ready to lose all, and who did actually lose much, for Christ's sake, now mistress of the seas, and heiress of the wealth of all the world; in the new world across the Atlantic, with its great, powerful, populous nation rivalling England in wealth and strength, grown from a small band of Puritan exiles who loved religious liberty better than country, and sought refuge from despotism in the savage wildernesses of an unexplored continent.

The beginnings of this temporal rewarding of suffering for righteousness' sake may sometimes be observed even in the lifetime of the sufferers. We have a modern instance of this in the history of the Free Church of Scotland. What a wonderful progress towards the realization of Christ's promise has been made in a short quarter of a century! Those who left their worldly all at the call of duty, have got at least as much, if not a hundred times as much, as they abandoned—churches, manses, stipends, congregations of brothers and sisters in the Lord, to their hearts' desire.[1]

Still it must be confessed that, taken strictly and literally, the promise of Christ does not hold good in every instance. Multitudes of God's servants have had what the world would account a miserable lot. Does the promise then simply and absolutely fail in their case? No; for, *secondly*, there are more ways than one in which it can be fulfilled. Blessings, for example, may be multiplied an hundred-fold, without their external bulk being altered, simply by the act of renouncing them. Whatever is sacrificed for truth, whatever we are willing to part with for Christ's sake, becomes from that moment immeasurably increased in value. Fathers and mothers, and all earthly friends, become unspeakably dear to the heart when we have learned to say: "Christ is first, and these must be second." Isaac was worth an hundred sons to Abraham when he received him back from the dead. Or, to draw an illustration from another quarter, think of John Bunyan in gaol brooding over his poor blind daughter, whom he left behind

[1] The success of the Free Church has been such as to be used as a leading argument in support of the policy pursued by Mr. Gladstone in disestablishing the Irish Church, and it will probably be used as an argument for disestablishing all state churches.

at home. "Poor child, thought I," thus he describes his feelings in that inimitable book, *Grace Abounding*, "what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world! Thou must be beaten, must beg, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow upon thee. But yet, thought I, I must venture you all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you. Oh! I saw I was as a man who was pulling down his house upon the heads of his wife and children; yet I thought on those two milch kine that were to carry the ark of God into another country, and to leave their calves behind them." If the faculty of enjoyment be, as it is, the measure of real possession, here was a case in which to forsake wife and child was to multiply them an hundred-fold, and in the multiplied value of the things renounced to find a rich solatium for sacrifice and persecutions. The soliloquy of the Bradford prisoner is the very poetry of natural affection. What pathos is in that allusion to the milch kine! what a depth of tender feeling it reveals! The power to feel so is the reward of self-sacrifice; the power to *love* so is the reward of "hating" our kindred for Christ's sake. You shall find no such love among those who make natural affection an excuse for moral unfaithfulness; thinking it a sufficient apology for disloyalty to the interests of the divine kingdom to say, "I have a wife and family to care for."

Without undue spiritualizing, then, we see that a valid meaning can be assigned to the strong expression "an hundred-fold." And from the remarks just made, we see further why "persecutions" are thrown into the account, as if they were not drawbacks, but a part of the gain. The truth is, the hundred-fold is realized, not in spite of persecutions, but to a great extent because of them. Persecutions are the salt with which things sacrificed are salted, the condiment which enhances their relish. Or, to put the matter arithmetically, persecutions are the factor by which earthly blessings given up to God are multiplied an hundred-fold, if not in quantity, at least in virtue.

Such are the rewards provided for those who make sacrifices for Christ's sake. Their sacrifices are but a seed sown

in tears, from which they afterwards reap a plentiful harvest in joy. But what now of those who have made no sacrifices, who have received no wounds in battle? If this has proceeded not from lack of will, but from lack of opportunity, they shall get a share of the rewards. David's law has its place in the divine kingdom: "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike." Only all must see to it, that they remain not by the stuff from cowardice, or indolence and self-indulgence. They who act thus, declining to put themselves to any trouble, to run any risk, or even so much as to part with a sinful lust for the kingdom of God, cannot expect to find a place therein at the last.

Section III.—*The First Last, and the Last First.*

Matt. xix. 30, xx. 1–20; Mark x. 31.

Having declared the rewards of self-sacrifice, Jesus proceeded to show the risk of forfeiture or partial loss arising out of the indulgence of unworthy feelings, whether as motives to self-denying acts, or as self-complacent reflections on such acts already performed. "But," He said in a warning manner, as if with upraised finger, "many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." Then, to explain the profound remark, He uttered the parable preserved in Matthew's Gospel only, which follows immediately after.

The explanation is in some respects more difficult than the thing to be explained, and has given rise to much diverse interpretation. And yet the main drift of this parable seems clear enough. It is not, as some have supposed, designed to teach that all will share alike in the eternal kingdom, which is not only irrelevant to the connection of thought, but *untrue*. Neither is the parable intended to proclaim the great evangelic truth, that salvation is of grace and not of merit, though it may be very proper in preaching to take occasion to discourse on that fundamental doctrine. The great outstanding thought set forth therein, as it seems to us, is this, that in

estimating the value of work, the divine Lord whom all serve takes into account not merely quantity, but quality; that is, the spirit in which the work is done.

The correctness of this view is apparent, when we take a comprehensive survey of the whole teaching of Jesus on the important subject of *work and wages* in the divine kingdom, from which it appears that the relation between the two things is fixed by righteous law, caprice being entirely excluded; so that if the first in work be last in wages in any instances, it is for very good reasons.

There are, in all, three parables in the Gospels on the subject referred to, each setting forth a distinct idea, and, in case our interpretation of the one at present to be specially considered is correct, all combined presenting an exhaustive view of the topic to which they relate. They are the parables of the Talents[1] and of the Pounds,[2] and the one before us, called by way of distinction "the Labourers in the Vineyard."

In order to see how these parables are at once distinct and mutually complementary, it is necessary to keep in view the principles on which the value of work is to be determined. Three things must be taken into account, in order to form a just estimate of men's works; viz. the quantity of work done, the ability of the worker, and the motive. Leaving out of view meantime the motive: when the ability is equal, quantity determines relative merit; and when ability varies, then it is not the absolute amount, but the relation of the amount to the ability, that ought to determine value.

The parables of the Pounds and of the Talents are designed to illustrate respectively these two propositions. In the former parable, the ability is the same in all—each servant receiving one pound; but the quantity of work done varies, one servant with his pound gaining ten pounds, while another with the same amount gains only five. Now, by the above rule, the second should not be rewarded as the first, for he has not done what he might. Accordingly, in the parable a distinction is made, both in the rewards given to the two servants, and in the manner in which they are respectively addressed by their employer. The first gets ten cities to govern, and

[1] Matt. xxv. 14–30. [2] Luke xix. 12–28.

these words of commendation in addition: "Well, thou good servant; because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." The second, on the other hand, gets only five cities, and, what is even more noticeable, no praise. His master says to him drily, "Be thou also over five cities." He had done somewhat, in comparison with idlers even something considerable, and therefore his service is acknowledged and proportionally rewarded. But he is not pronounced a good and faithful servant; and the eulogy is withheld, simply because it was not deserved: for he had not done what he could, but only half of what was possible, taking the first servant's work as the measure of possibility.

In the parable of the Talents the conditions are different. There the amount of work done varies, as in the parable of the Pounds; but the ability varies in the same proportion, so that the ratio between the two is the same in the case of both servants who put their talents to use. One receives five, and gains five; the other receives two, and gains two. According to our rule, these two should be equal in merit; and so they are represented in the parable. The same reward is assigned to each, and both are commended in the very same terms; the master's words in either case being: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Thus the case stands when we take into account only the two elements of ability to work, and the amount of work done; or, to combine both into one, the element of zeal. But there is more than zeal to be considered, at least in the kingdom of God. In this world men are often commended for their diligence, irrespective of their motives; and it is not always necessary even to be zealous in order to gain vulgar applause. If one do something that looks large and liberal, men will praise him without inquiring whether for him it was a great thing, a heroic act involving self-sacrifice, or only a respectable act, not necessarily indicative of earnestness or devotion. But in God's sight many bulky things are very little, and many small things are very great. The reason is, that He seeth the heart, and the hidden springs of

action there, and judges the stream by the fountain. Quantity is nothing to Him, unless there be zeal; and even zeal is nothing to Him, unless it be purged from all vainglory and self-seeking,—a pure spring of good impulses; cleared of all smoke of carnal passion—a pure flame of heaven-born devotion. A base motive vitiates all.

To emphasize *this* truth, and to insist on the necessity of right motives and emotions in connection with work and sacrifices, is the design of the parable spoken by Jesus in Peræa. It teaches that a small quantity of work done in a right spirit is of greater value than a large quantity done in a wrong spirit, however zealously it may have been performed. One hour's work done by men who make no bargain is of greater value than twelve hours' work done by men who have borne the heat and burden of the day, but who regard their doings with self-complacency. Put in preceptive form, the lesson of the parable is: Work not as hirelings basely calculating, or as Pharisees arrogantly exacting, the wages to which you deem yourselves entitled; work humbly, as deeming yourselves unprofitable servants at best; generously, as men superior to selfish calculations of advantage; trustfully, as men who confide in the generosity of the great Employer, regarding Him as one from whom you need not to protect yourselves by making beforehand a firm and fast bargain.

In this interpretation, it is assumed that the spirit of the first and of the last to enter the vineyard was respectively such as has been indicated; and the assumption is justified by the manner in which the parties are described. In what spirit the last worked, may be inferred from their making no bargain; and the temper of the first is manifest from their own words at the end of the day: "These last," said they, "have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day." This is the language of envy, jealousy, and self-esteem, and it is in keeping with the conduct of these labourers at the commencement of the day's work; for they entered the vineyard as hirelings, having made a bargain, agreeing to work for a stipulated amount of wages.

The first and last, then, represent two classes among the

professed servants of God. The first are the calculating and self-complacent; the last are the humble, the self-forgetful, the generous, the trustful. The first are the Jacobs, plodding, conscientious, able to say for themselves, "Thus I was: in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and the sleep departed from mine eyes;" yet ever studious of their own interest, taking care even in their religion to make a sure bargain for themselves, and trusting little to the free grace and unfettered generosity of the great Lord. The last are Abraham-like men, not in the lateness of their service, but in the magnanimity of their faith, entering the vineyard without bargaining, as Abraham left his father's house, knowing not whither he was to go, but knowing only that God had said, "Go to a land that I shall show thee." The first are the Simons, righteous, respectable, exemplary, but hard, prosaic, ungenial; the last are the women with alabaster boxes, who for long have been idle, aimless, vicious, wasteful of life, but at last, with bitter tears of sorrow over an unprofitable past, begin life in earnest, and endeavour to redeem lost time by the passionate devotion with which they serve their Lord and Saviour. The first, once more, are the elder brothers who stay at home in their father's house, and never transgress any of his commandments, and have no mercy on those who do; the last are the prodigals, who leave their father's house and waste their substance on riotous living, but at length come to their senses, and say, "I will arise, and go to my father;" and having met him, exclaim, "Father, I have sinned, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

The two classes differing thus in character are treated in the parable precisely as they ought to be. The last are made first, and the first are made last. The last are paid first, to signify the pleasure which the master has in rewarding them. They are also paid at a much higher rate; for, receiving the same sum for one hour's work that the others receive for twelve, they are paid at the rate of twelve pence per diem. They are treated, in fact, as the prodigal was, for whom the father made a feast; while the "first" are treated as the elder brother, whose service was acknowledged, but who had

to complain that his father never had given him a kid to make merry with his friends. Those who deem themselves unworthy to be anything else than hired servants, and most unprofitable in that capacity, are dealt with as sons; and those who deem themselves most meritorious are treated coldly and distantly, as hired servants.

Reverting now from the parable to the apothegm it was designed to illustrate, we observe that the degradation of such as are first in ability, zeal, and length of service, to the last place as regards the reward, is represented as a thing likely to happen often. "*Many* that are first shall be last." This statement implies that self-esteem is a sin which easily besets men situated as the twelve, *i.e.* men who have made sacrifices for the kingdom of God. Now, that this is a fact observation proves; and it further teaches us that there are certain circumstances in which the laborious and self-denying are specially liable to fall into the vice of self-righteousness. It will serve to illustrate the deep and, to most minds on first view, obscure saying of Jesus, if we indicate here what these circumstances are.

1. Those who make sacrifices for Christ's sake are in danger of falling into a self-righteous mood of mind, when the spirit of self-denial manifests itself in rare occasional acts, rather than in the form of a habit. In this case Christians rise at certain emergencies to an elevation of spirit far above the usual level of their moral feelings; and therefore, though, at the time when the sacrifice was made, they may have behaved heroically, they are apt afterwards to revert self-complacently to their noble deeds, as an old soldier goes back on his battles, and with Peter to ask, with a proud consciousness of merit for having forsaken all, What shall we have therefore?

2. There is great danger of degeneracy in the spirit of those who make sacrifices for the kingdom of God, when any particular species of service has come to be much in demand, and therefore to be held in very high esteem. Take, as an example, the endurance of physical tortures and of death in times of persecution. It is well known with what a *furor* of admiration martyrs and confessors were regarded in the

suffering church of the early centuries. Those who suffered martyrdom were almost deified by popular enthusiasm: the anniversaries of their death—of their birth-days,[1] as they were called, into the eternal world—were observed with religious solemnity, when their doings and sufferings in this world were rehearsed with ardent admiration in strains of extravagant eulogy. Even the confessors, who had suffered but not died for Christ, were looked up to as a superior order of beings, separated by a wide gulf from the common herd of untried Christians. They were saints, they had a halo of glory round their heads; they had power with God, and could, it was believed, bind or loose with even more authority than the regular ecclesiastical authorities. Absolution was eagerly sought for from them by the lapsed; admission to their communion was regarded as an open door by which sinners might return into the fellowship of the church. They had only to say to the erring, "Go in peace," and even bishops must receive them. Bishops joined with the populace in this idolatrous homage to the men who suffered for Christ's sake. They petted and flattered the confessors, partly from honest admiration, but partly also from policy, to induce others to imitate their example, and to foster the virtue of hardihood, so much needed in suffering times.

This state of feeling in the church was obviously fraught with great danger to the souls of those who endured hardship for the truth, as tempting them to fanaticism, vanity, spiritual pride, and presumption. Nor were they all by any means temptation-proof. Many took all the praise they received as their due, and deemed themselves persons of great consequence. The soldiers, who had been flattered by their generals to make them brave, began to act as if they were the masters, and could write, for example, to one who had been a special offender in the extravagance of his eulogies, such a letter as this: "All the confessors to Cyprian the bishop: Know that we have granted peace to all those of whom you have had an account what they have done; how they have behaved since the commission of their crimes; and we would that these presents should be by you imparted to the rest of the bishops.

[1] The festival of a martyr was called his *natalitia*.

We wish you to maintain peace with the holy martyrs."[1] Thus was fulfilled in these confessors the saying, "Many that are first shall be last." First in suffering for the truth, and in reputation for sanctity, they became last in the judgment of the great Searcher of hearts. They gave their bodies to be scourged, maimed, burned, and it profited them little or nothing.[2]

3. The first are in danger of becoming the last when self-denial is reduced to a system, and practised ascetically, not for Christ's sake, but for one's own sake. That in respect of the amount of self-denial the austere ascetic is entitled to rank first, nobody will deny. But his right to rank first in intrinsic spiritual worth, and therefore in the divine kingdom, is more open to dispute. Even in respect to the fundamental matter of getting rid of self, he may be, not first, but last. The self-denial of the ascetic is in a subtle way intense self-assertion. True Christian self-sacrifice signifies hardship, loss undergone, not for its own sake, but for Christ's sake, and for truth's sake, at a time when truth cannot be maintained without sacrifice. But the self-sacrifice of the ascetic is not of this kind. It is all endured for his own sake, for his own spiritual benefit and credit. He practises self-denial after the fashion of a miser, who is a total abstainer from all luxuries, and even grudges himself the necessaries of life, because he has a passion for hoarding. Like the miser, he deems himself rich; yet both he and the miser are alike poor: the miser, because with all his wealth he cannot part with his coin in exchange for enjoyable commodities; the ascetic, because his coins, "good works" so called, painful acts of abstinence, are counterfeit, and will not pass current in the kingdom of heaven. All his labours to save his soul will turn out to be just so much rubbish to be burned up; and if he be saved at all, it will be as by fire.

Recalling now for a moment the three classes of cases in

[1] Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, part iii. cap. v. For the original, *vid.* Cypriani *Opera* [Clark's Ante-Nicene Library, *Cyprian*, vol. i. p. 54].

[2] The virtue *now* in request is that of giving liberally to missions, and to philanthropic enterprises of all sorts. The same degeneracy of motive may take place in connection with giving as in connection with suffering in early times; and the first in our subscription lists may be last in the book of life.

which the first are in danger of becoming last, we perceive that the word "many" is not an exaggeration. For consider how much of the work done by professing Christians belongs to one or other of these categories: occasional spasmodic efforts; good works of liberality and philanthropy, which are in fashion and in high esteem in the religious world; and good works done, not so much from interest in the work, as from their reflex bearing on the doer's own religious interests. Many are called to work in God's vineyard, and many are actually at work. But few are chosen; few are *choice* workers; few work for God in the spirit of the precepts taught by Jesus.

But though there be few such workers, there are some. Jesus does not, observe, say *all* who are first shall be last, and all who are last shall be first: His word is *many*. There are numerous exceptions to the rule in both its parts. Not all who bear the heat and burden of the day are mercenary and self-righteous. No; the Lord has always had in His spiritual vineyard a noble band of workers, who, if there were room for boasting in any case, might have boasted on account of the length, the arduousness, and the efficiency of their service, yet cherished no self-complacent thoughts, nor indulged in any calculations how much more they should receive than others. Think of devoted missionaries to heathen lands; of heroic reformers like Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Latimer; of the eminent men of our own day, but recently taken from amongst us. Can you fancy such men talking like the early labourers in the vineyard? Nay, verily! all through life their thoughts of themselves and their service were very humble indeed; and at the close of life's day, their day's work seemed to them a very sorry matter, utterly undeserving of the great reward of eternal life. Such first ones shall not be last.

If there be some first who shall not be last, there are doubtless also some last who shall not be first. If it were otherwise; if to be last in length of service, in zeal and devotion, gave a man an advantage, it would be ruinous to the interests of the kingdom of God. It would, in fact, be in effect putting a premium on indolence, and encouraging men to stand all the day idle, or to serve the devil till the eleventh hour; and

then in old age to enter the vineyard, and give the Lord the poor hour's work, when their limbs were stiff and their frames feeble and tottering. No such demoralizing law obtains in the divine kingdom. Other things being equal, the longer and the more earnestly a man serves God, the sooner he begins, and the harder he works, the better for himself hereafter. If those who begin late in the day are graciously treated, it is in spite, not in consequence, of their tardiness. That they have been so long idle, is not a commendation, but a sin; not a subject of self-congratulation, but of deep humiliation. If it be wrong for those who have served the Lord much to glory in the greatness of their service, it is surely still more unbecoming, even ridiculous, for any one to pride himself in the littleness of his. If the first has no cause for boasting and self-righteousness, still less has the last.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE AGAIN.

MATT. XX. 17–28; MARK X. 32–45; LUKE XVIII. 31–34.

THE incident recorded in these sections of Matthew's and Mark's Gospels happened while Jesus and His disciples were going up to Jerusalem for the last time, journeying *via* Jericho, from Ephraim in the wilderness, whither they had retired after the raising of Lazarus.[1] The ambitious request of the two sons of Zebedee for the chief places of honour in the kingdom, was therefore made little more than a week before their Lord was crucified. How little must they have dreamed what was coming! Yet it was not for want of warning; for, just before they presented their petition, Jesus had for the third time explicitly announced His approaching passion, indicating that His death would take place in connection with this present visit to Jerusalem, and adding other particulars respecting His last sufferings not specified before, fitted to arrest attention; as that His death should be the issue of a judicial process, and that He should be delivered by the Jewish authorities to the Gentiles, to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified.[2]

After recording the terms of Christ's third announcement, Luke adds, with reference to the disciples: "They understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."[3] The truth of this statement is sufficiently apparent from the scene which ensued, not recorded by Luke, as is also the cause of the fact stated. The disciples, we perceive, were thinking of other

[1] John xi. 54.

[2] Matt. xx. 17–19. Mark (x. 34) adds spitting to the catalogue of indignities.

[3] Luke xviii. 34.

matters, while Jesus spake to them of His approaching sufferings. They were dreaming of the thrones they had been promised in Peræa; and therefore were not able to enter into the thoughts of their Master, so utterly diverse from their own. Their minds were completely possessed by romantic expectations, their heads giddy with the sparkling wine of vain hope; and as they drew nigh the holy city, their firm conviction was, "that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."[1]

While all the disciples were looking forward to their thrones, James and John were coveting the most distinguished ones, and contriving a scheme for securing these to themselves, and so getting the dispute who should be the greatest settled in their own favour. These were the two disciples who made themselves so prominent in resenting the rudeness of the Samaritan villagers. The greatest zealots among the twelve were thus also the most ambitious; a circumstance which will not surprise the student of human nature. On the former occasion they asked fire from heaven to consume their adversaries; on the present occasion they ask a favour from Heaven to the disadvantage of their friends. The two requests are not so very dissimilar.

In hatching and executing their little plot, the two brothers enjoyed the assistance of their mother, whose presence is not explained, but may have been due to her having become an attendant on Jesus in her widowhood,[2] or to an accidental meeting with Him and His disciples at the junction of the roads converging on Jerusalem, whither all were now going to keep the feast. Salome was the principal actor in the scene, and it must be admitted she acted her part well. Kneeling before Jesus, as if doing homage to a king, she intimated her humble wish to proffer a petition; and being gently asked, "What wilt thou?" said, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom."

This prayer had certainly another origin than the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and the scheme of which it was the

[1] Luke xix. 11.

[2] Salome was one of the women who followed Christ in Galilee, and served Him. Mark xv. 41.

outcome was not one which we should have expected companions of Jesus to entertain. And yet the whole proceeding is so true to human nature as it reveals itself in every age, that we cannot but feel that we have here no myth, but a genuine piece of history. We know how much of the world's spirit is to be found at all times in religious circles of high reputation for zeal, devotion, and sanctity; and we have no right to hold up our hands in amazement when we see it appearing even in the immediate neighbourhood of Jesus. The twelve were yet but crude Christians, and we must allow them time to become sanctified as well as others. Therefore we neither affect to be scandalized at their conduct, nor, to save their reputation, do we conceal its true character. We are not surprised at the behaviour of the two sons of Zebedee, and yet we say plainly that their request was foolish and offensive: indicative at once of bold presumption, gross stupidity, and unmitigated selfishness.

It was an irreverent, presumptuous request, because it virtually asked Jesus their Lord to become the tool of their ambition and vanity. Fancying that He would yield to mere solicitation, perhaps calculating that He would not have the heart to refuse a request coming from a female suppliant, who as a widow was an object of compassion, and as a contributor to His support had claims to His gratitude, they begged a favour which Jesus could not grant without being untrue to His own character and His habitual teaching, as exemplified in the discourse on humility in the house at Capernaum. In so doing, they were guilty of a disrespectful, impudent forwardness most characteristic of the ambitious spirit, which is utterly devoid of delicacy, and pushes on towards its end, reckless what offence it may give, heedless how it wounds the sensibilities of others.

The request of the two brothers was as ignorant as it was presumptuous. The idea implied therein of the kingdom was utterly wide of truth and reality. James and John not only thought of the kingdom that was coming as a kingdom of this world, but they thought meanly of it even under that view. For it is an unusually corrupt and unwholesome condition of matters even in a secular state, when places of highest dis-

tinction can be obtained by solicitation and favour, and not on the sole ground of fitness for the duties of the position. When family influence or courtly arts are the pathway to power, every patriot has cause to mourn. How preposterous, then, the idea that promotion can take place in the divine, ideally-perfect kingdom, by means that are inadmissible in any well-regulated secular kingdom! To cherish such an idea is in effect to degrade and dishonour the Divine King, by likening Him to an unprincipled despot, who has more favour for flatterers than for honest men; and to caricature the divine kingdom, by assimilating it to the most misgoverned states on earth, such as those ruled over by a Bomba or a Nero.

The request of the brethren was likewise intensely selfish. It was ungenerous as towards their fellow-disciples; for it was an attempt to overreach them, and, like all such attempts, produced mischief, disturbing the peace of the family circle, and giving rise to a most unseemly embitterment of feeling among its members. "When the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation." No wonder; and if James and John did not anticipate such a result, it showed that they were very much taken up with their own selfish thoughts; and if they did anticipate it, and nevertheless shrank not from a course of action which was sure to give offence, that only made their selfishness the more heartless and inexcusable.

But the petition of the two disciples was selfish in a far wider view, viz. with reference to the public interests of the divine kingdom. It virtually meant this: "Grant us the places of honour and power, come what may; even though universal discontent and disaffection, disorder, disaster, and chaotic confusion ensue." These are the sure effects of promotion by favour instead of by merit, both in church and in state, as many a nation has found to its cost in the day of trial; and as all the world may now see in France, when in three short months, a great army proudly deeming itself invincible, commanded by generals who were courtiers rather than soldiers, and who received promotion as the reward of their subserviency to a corrupt imperialism, has been utterly annihilated, and the poor French nation left distracted, without a head, and prostrate under the heel of a victorious foe,

whose strength lies in this, that he has not granted places of power and trust to favourites and self-seekers, but to modest, capable, earnest men.

To be sure, James and John never dreamt of disaster resulting from their petition being granted. No self-seekers and place-hunters ever do anticipate evil results from their promotion. But that does not make them less selfish. It only shows that, besides being selfish, they are vain.

The reply of Jesus to this ambitious request, considering its character, was singularly mild. Offensive though the presumption, forwardness, selfishness, and vanity of the two disciples must have been to His meek, holy, self-forgetful spirit, He uttered not a word of direct rebuke, but dealt with them as a father might deal with a child that had made a senseless request. Abstaining from animadversion on the grave faults brought to light by their petition, He noticed only the least culpable—their ignorance. "Ye know not," He said to them quietly, "what ye ask;" and even this remark He made in compassion rather than in the way of blame. He pitied men who offered prayers whose fulfilment, as He knew, implied painful experiences of which they had no thought. It was in this spirit that He asked the explanatory question: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

But there was more than compassion or correction in this question: even instruction concerning the true way of obtaining promotion in the kingdom of God. In interrogatory form Jesus taught His disciples that advancement in His kingdom went not by favour, nor was obtainable by clamorous solicitation; that the way to thrones was the *via dolorosa* of the cross; that the palm-bearers in the realms of glory should be they who had passed through great tribulation, and the princes of the kingdom they who had drunk most deeply of His cup of sorrow; and that for those who refused to drink thereof, the selfish, the self-indulgent, the ambitious, the vain, there would be no place at all in the kingdom, not to speak of places of honour on His right or left hand.

The startling question put to them by Jesus did not take James and John by surprise. Promptly and firmly they

replied, "We are able." Had they then really taken into account the cup and the baptism of suffering, and deliberately made up their minds to pay the costly price for the coveted prize? Had the sacred fire of the martyr spirit already been kindled in their hearts? One would be happy to think so, but we fear there is nothing to justify so favourable an opinion. It is much more probable that, in their eagerness to obtain the object of their ambition, the two brothers were ready to promise anything, and that, in fact, they neither knew nor cared what they were promising. Their confident declaration bears a suspiciously close resemblance to the bravado uttered by Peter a few days later: "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended."

Jesus, however, did not choose, in the case of the sons of Zebedee, as in the case of their friend, to call in question the heroism so ostentatiously professed, but adopted the course of assuming that they were not only able, but willing, yea eager, to participate in His sufferings. With the air of a king granting to favourites the privilege of drinking out of the royal wine-cup, and of washing in the royal ewer, He replied: "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with." It was a strange favour which the King thus granted! Had they only known the meaning of the words, the two brethren might well have fancied that their Master was indulging in a stroke of irony at their expense. Yet it was not so. Jesus was not mocking His disciples when He spake thus, offering them a stone instead of bread: He was speaking seriously, and promising what He meant to bestow, and what, when the time of bestowal came—for it did come—they themselves regarded as a real privilege; for all the apostles agreed with Peter that they who were reproached for the name of Christ were to be accounted happy, and had the spirit of glory and of God resting on them. Such, we believe, was the mind of James when Herod killed him with the persecutor's sword: such, we know, was the mind of John when he was in the isle of Patmos "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Having promised a favour not coveted by the two disciples, Jesus next explained that the favour they did covet was not

unconditionally at His disposal: "But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, save to those for whom it is prepared of my Father." The English version suggests the idea that the bestowal of rewards in the kingdom is not in Christ's hands at all. That, however, is not what Jesus meant to say; but rather this, that though it is Christ's prerogative to assign to citizens their places in His kingdom, it is not in His power to dispose of places by partiality and patronage, or otherwise than in accordance with fixed principles of justice and the sovereign ordination of His Father. The words paraphrased signify: "I can say to any one, Come, drink of my cup, for there is no risk of mischief arising out of favouritism in that direction. But there my favours must end. I cannot say to any one, as I please, Come, sit beside me on a throne; for each man must get the place prepared for him, and for which he is prepared."

Thus explained, this solemn saying of our Lord furnishes no ground for an inference which, on first view, it seems not only to suggest, but to necessitate; viz. that one may taste of the cup, yet lose the crown; or, at least, that there is no connection between the measure in which a disciple may have had fellowship with Christ in His cross, and the place which shall be assigned to him in the eternal kingdom. That Jesus had no intention to teach such a doctrine, is evident from the question He had asked just before He made the statement now under consideration, which implies a natural sequence between the cup and the throne, the suffering and the glory. The sacrifice and the great reward so closely conjoined in the promise made to the twelve in Peræa, are disjoined here, merely for the purpose of signalizing the rigour with which all corrupt influences are excluded from the kingdom of heaven. It is beyond doubt, that those on whom is bestowed in high measure the favour of being companions with Jesus in tribulation, shall be rewarded with high promotion in the eternal kingdom. Nor does this statement compromise the sovereignty of the Father and Lord of all; on the contrary, it contributes towards its establishment. There is no better argument in support of the doctrine of election, than the simple truth that affliction is the education for heaven. For in what does the

sovereign hand of God appear more signally, than in the appointment of crosses? If crosses would let us alone, we would let them alone. We choose not the bitter cup and the bloody baptism: we are chosen for them, and in them. God impresses men into the warfare of the cross; and if any come to glory in this way, as many an impressed soldier has done, it will be to glory to which, in the first place at least, they did not aspire.

The asserted connection between suffering and glory serves to defend as well as to establish the doctrine of election. Looked at in relation to the world to come, that doctrine seems to lay God open to the charge of partiality, and is certainly very mysterious. But look at election in its bearing on the *present* life. In that view, it is a privilege for which the elect are not apt to be envied. For the elect are not the happy and the prosperous, but the toilers and sufferers.[1] In fact, they are elected not for their own sake, but for the world's sake, to be God's pioneers in the rough unwelcome work of turning the wilderness into a fruitful field; to be the world's salt, leaven, and light, receiving for the most part little thanks for the service they render, and getting often for reward the lot of the destitute, the afflicted, and the tormented. So that, after all, election is a favour to the non-elect: it is God's method of benefiting men at large; and whatever peculiar benefit may be in store for the elect is well earned, and should not be grudged. Does any one envy them their prospect? He may be a partaker of their future joy, if he be willing to be companion to such forlorn beings, and to share their tribulations now; and if he be unwilling, he has no right to complain.

It is hardly needful to explain that, in uttering these words, Jesus did not mean to deny the utility of prayer, and to say, "You may ask for a place in the divine kingdom, and not get it; for all depends on what God has ordained." He only wished the two disciples and all to understand, that to obtain

[1] The lines of Euripides may be appropriated here to the true sons of God:

Οὔτ' ἐπὶ κερκίσιν οὔτε λόγοις
φάτιν ἄϊον' εὐτυχίας μετέχειν
θεόθεν τέκνα θνατοῖς.—*Ion*, 510.

their requests they must know what they ask, and accept all that is implied, in the present as well as in the future, in the answering of their prayers. This condition is too often overlooked. Many a bold ambitious prayer, even for spiritual blessing, is offered up by petitioners who have no idea what the answer would involve, and if they had, would wish their prayer unanswered. Crude Christians ask, *e.g.*, to be made holy. But do they know what doubts, temptations, and sore trials of all kinds go to the making of great saints? Others long for a full assurance of God's love; desire to be perfectly persuaded of their election. Are they willing to be deprived of the sunshine of prosperity, that in the dark night of sorrow they may see heaven's stars? Ah me! how few among us do know what we ask! how much all need to be taught to pray for right things with an intelligent mind and in a right spirit!

Having said what was needful to James and John, Jesus next addressed a word in season to their brethren, inculcating humility; most appropriately, for though the ten were the offended party, not offenders, yet the same ambitious spirit was in them, else they would not have felt and resented the wrong done so keenly. Pride and selfishness may vex and grieve the humble and the self-forgetful, but they provoke resentment only in the proud and the selfish; and the best way to be proof against the assaults of other men's evil passions, is to get similar affections exorcised out of our own breasts. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus;" then shall nothing be done by you at least in strife or vainglory.

"When the ten heard it," we read, "they were moved with indignation against the two brethren." Doubtless it was a very unedifying scene which ensued; and it is very disappointing to witness such scenes where one might have looked to see in perfection the godly spectacle of brethren dwelling together in unity. But the society of Jesus was a real thing, not the imaginary creation of a romance-writer; and in all real human societies, in happy homes, in the most select brotherhoods, scientific, literary, or artistic, in Christian churches, there will arise tempests now and then. And let us be thankful that the twelve, even by their folly, gave their Master

an occasion for uttering the sublime words here recorded, which shine down upon us out of the serene sky of the gospel story like stars appearing through the tempestuous clouds of human passion—manifestly the words of a Divine Being, though spoken out of the depths of an amazing self-humiliation.

The manner of Jesus, in addressing His heated disciples, was very tender and subdued. He collected them all around Him, the two and the ten, the offenders and the offended, as a father might gather together his children to receive admonition, and He spoke to them with the calmness and solemnity of one about to meet death. Yes! throughout this whole scene death's solemnizing influence is manifestly on the Saviour's spirit. For does He not speak of His approaching sufferings in language reminding us of the night of His betrayal, describing His passion by the poetic sacramental name "my cup," and for the first time revealing the secret of His life on earth—the grand object for which He is about to die?

In moral significance, the doctrine of Jesus at this time was a repetition of His teaching in Capernaum, when He chose the little child for His text. As He said then, Who would be great must be child-like, He says here, Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. In the former discourse His model and His text was an infant; now it is a slave, another representative of the mean and despicable. Now, as before, He quotes His own example to enforce His precept; stimulating His disciples to seek distinction in a path of lowly love, by representing the Son of man as come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, even to the length of giving His life a ransom for the many, as He then reminded them, that the Son of man came like a shepherd, to seek and to save the lost sheep.

The single new feature in the lesson which Jesus gave His disciples at this season is, the contrast between His kingdom and the kingdoms of earth, in respect to the mode of acquiring dominion, to which He directed attention, by way of preface, to the doctrine about to be communicated. "Ye know," He said, "that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great (provincial governors, often

more tyrannical than their superiors) exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you." There is a hint here at another contrast besides the one mainly intended, viz. that between the harsh despotic sway of worldly potentates, and the gentle dominion of love alone admissible in the divine kingdom. But the main object of the words quoted is to point out the difference in the way of acquiring rather than in the manner of using power. The idea is this: earthly kingdoms are ruled by a class of persons who possess hereditary rank—the aristocracy, nobles, or princes. The governing class are those whose birthright it is to rule, and whose boast it is never to have been in a servile position, but always to have been served. In my kingdom, on the other hand, a man becomes a great one, and a ruler, by being first the servant of those over whom he is to bear rule. In other states, they rule whose privilege it is to be ministered unto; in the divine commonwealth, they rule who account it a privilege to minister.

In drawing this contrast, Jesus had, of course, no intention to teach politics; no intention either to recognise or to call in question the divine right of the princely caste to rule over their fellow-creatures. He spoke of things as they were, and as His hearers knew them to be in secular states, and especially in the Roman Empire. If any political inference might be drawn from His words, it would not be in favour of absolutism and hereditary privilege, but rather in favour of power being in the hands of those who have earned it by faithful service, whether they belong to the governing class by birth or not. For what is beneficial in the divine kingdom cannot be prejudicial to secular commonwealths. The true interests, one would say, of an earthly kingdom should be promoted by its being governed as nearly as possible in accordance with the laws of the kingdom which cannot be moved. Thrones and crowns may, to prevent disputes, go by hereditary succession, irrespective of personal merit; but the reality of power should ever be in the hands of the ablest, the wisest, and the most devoted to the public good.

Having explained by contrast the great principle of the spiritual commonwealth, that he who would rule therein must

first serve, Jesus proceeded next to enforce the doctrine by a reference to His own example. "Whosoever will be chief among you," said He to the twelve, "let him be your servant;" and then He added the memorable words: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

These words were spoken by Jesus as one who claimed to be a King, and aspired to be the first in a great and mighty kingdom. At the end of the sentence we must mentally supply the clause—which was not expressed, simply because it was so obviously implied in the connection of thought—"so seeking to win a kingdom." Our Lord sets Himself forth here not merely as an example of humility, but as one whose case illustrates the truth, that the way to power in the spiritual world is service; and in stating that He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, He expresses not the whole truth, but only the present fact. The whole truth was, that He came to minister in the first place, that He might be ministered to in turn by a willing, devoted people, acknowledging Him as their sovereign. The point on which He wishes to fix the attention of His disciples, is the peculiar way He takes to get His crown; and what He says in effect is this: "I am a King, and I expect to have a kingdom: James and John were not mistaken in that respect. But I shall obtain my kingdom in another way than secular princes get theirs. They get their thrones by succession, I get mine by personal merit; they secure their kingdom by right of birth, I hope to secure mine by the right of service; they inherit their subjects, I buy mine, the purchase-money being mine own life."

What the twelve thought of this novel plan of getting dominion and a kingdom, or what ideas the concluding words of their Master suggested to their minds when uttered, we know not. It is certain, however, that they did not comprehend what they had heard. No wonder: for the thoughts of Jesus were very deep. Who can understand them fully even now? Here we emphatically see through a glass, in enigmas. Yet these things we may without presumption say:

The plan propounded was certainly a very *original* way

of getting a kingdom. Men have got kingdoms for themselves in various ways: some by inheritance, the most respectable way known to the world; others by their sword; others, again, by paying down a sum of money, as when in its last degenerate days the Roman Empire was disposed of by auction and sold to the highest bidder. But who, till the Son of man came, ever thought of earning a crown by the service of lowly love rendered to the very meanest of mankind? Alexander of Macedon won for himself the epithet of "the Great," and made himself master of almost the whole earth, by sacrificing millions of lives to his ambition. Jesus of Nazareth alone entertained the singular and apparently utopian idea of founding a kingdom not less extensive than that of Alexander or Cæsar, by giving His own life as a sacrifice for the million.

Strange and unheard of as this idea was, it was, after all, a most *rational* one. Supposing that the dominion aimed at is not mere despotic control over men's destinies, but sovereign sway over their hearts, what better and more direct way of attaining that end can be taken than to devote yourself to their interest? The sword will make a tyrant master of his subjects' lives and properties, but it takes quite another key than that of brute force to unlock the human heart: lowly love alone can make the doors fly open, and win for itself the place of sovereignty there. Now it was the sovereignty of love, and not of mere power, that Jesus coveted for Himself. As God, He already possessed dominion over men's destiny; but He was not content with that: therefore He came to earth to be a servant to His own subjects, that He might become their King by acclamation, and wear round His brow a crown fashioned and placed on His head by their own devoted hands, in grateful acknowledgment of the services He had rendered them. This kind of sovereignty even a Divine Being could attain to only by humbling Himself to take upon Him the form of a servant.

The method adopted by Jesus to make Himself a King of men has been *successful*. The proposal to gain sovereign power by becoming a servant might seem utopian to the twelve when first announced, but now the idea has become a wonderful accomplished fact. Jesus Christ is now the

spiritual sovereign of a vast holy state, the direct historical result of His earthly ministry of love. Because He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, therefore He is now highly exalted, and hath a name which is above every name. At the name of Him who gave His life a ransom for many, millions of redeemed men in earth and heaven bow the knee in lowly reverence, as to their King. Innumerable tongues in many languages confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, and cordially join in the new song, whereof this is the burthen: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

Once more, Jesus gained His kingdom in a way that was most *righteous*. He fairly and fully earned the right to rule over His subjects. He gave His life a ransom for them; so that to whomsoever they might belong before, they were certainly His most rightfully afterwards. No party having any claim over them, real or imaginary, could come forward and say, These human beings for whom you have given your life still belong to me. Not even Satan, who seduced man into sin, and made him his captive, could plausibly deny the right of Jesus to those for whom He died. As against him, Jesus might have asserted His kingly rights without dying at all; for Satan's dominion over man was a mere usurpation, and no length of time could, as by way of prescription, make his title good. It was therefore a great mistake on the part of early writers on the subject of redemption, to admit the devil's title by representing the "ransom" as paid to him.[1] If there had been no other ground for Christ's dying than to liquidate the imaginary claims of Satan to rule over sinners, we do not think He would have died at all. But among the many collateral ends served by the death of the Redeemer, we may enumerate this as one, that Satan's mouth was shut. He could not even pretend to have a claim any longer over men. In his eagerness to assert his cursed dominion over the whole human race, he tried by temptations and terrors to bring even Jesus under his power. And he succeeded in getting Him

[1] So, *e.g.*, Irenæus. On the views of the early Fathers on the atonement, *vid.* Baur, *Versöhnungslehre*, cap. i.

crucified; but thereby he lost his hold not merely of *Him*, but of a multitude of sinners whom he had formerly held captive.[1]

Better founded than those of Satan are the claims of the moral law and government of God. It is a righteous law, which decrees that the soul that sinneth shall die; and it is not good that a law solemnly enacted should be allowed to become a dead letter. It has been disputed among theologians whether it was absolutely necessary that sin should be atoned for before being forgiven. We venture not to pronounce on this question, because it is too high for us. In place of discussing *à priori* questions as to what could or could not have been, we prefer to look at what has been, and reverently inquire what good ends it serves, and how it tends to glorify the wisdom and justice and goodness of Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things. And this seems clear, that whether or not men could have been saved without the Captain of salvation enduring suffering, it is better in every respect that they are saved in a way that does homage to the righteous law by which the universe of intelligent beings is governed.

In such a way has Jesus Christ saved men. He has paid a price to redeem them from the curse of the law. He has given His life a ransom for the lives of the many forfeited to justice by sin. And the law is satisfied. It admits the life of the One to be worth the lives of the whole race of criminals, and acknowledges that a greater homage has been rendered to its majesty by a Divine Being condescending to become obedient to death, than would accrue from the death of all mankind. The ransom efficient for the many is accepted as being abundantly, superabundantly sufficient for the whole world.

God the Father also cordially acknowledges his Son's claims to His kingdom. For the Eternal One delights in the spirit of self-sacrifice; and the spectacle of love making itself a slave and a sufferer for the good of others, is evermore an object of complacent contemplation to His mind. And the most splendid

[1] The ancient writers represented the cross as a mouse-trap (Christ's flesh being the bait) in which Satan was caught. To refute and supersede by better ones these crude notions, was the object of Anselm in his tract, *Cur Deus Homo*.

spectacle of that kind ever exhibited—that, viz., presented in the life and death of Jesus—thrilled His heart so much, that He could not refrain from expressing His pleasure by audible voices from heaven. And when the work of love was achieved, He welcomed His Son back to glory with a "Well done, good and faithful servant," and conferred on Him as His reward all power in heaven and earth, to be wielded by Him for the behoof of the people whom He purchased with His own blood.

Finally, the ransomed ones admit the claims of Jesus to reign over them. They acknowledge that He who was slain on the cross is worthy to receive from them "power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." They are constrained to make this admission. The love of Christ constraineth them to hail Him their King. There is a moral power in the life of Jesus, and especially in His cross, which captivates their hearts, and turns them from sin. Some maintain that to gain this power was the sole object of Christ's incarnation. We cannot agree with this view; but we have no doubt that, to gain such power over human hearts as springs out of a life of devoted service, and out of a sacrifice like that offered on Calvary, was one reason why the Son of man came to earth; and came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He wished to charm us away from self-indulgence and self-worship, and to make Himself the centre of our thoughts and of our whole being; to emancipate us from the bondage of sin by the power of His love, in order that we might acknowledge ourselves to be His, and not our own, and gratefully devote ourselves to His service. In the case of many, if not in the case of all, who have heard the story of His love unto death, the Redeemer hath gained His end. Those who belong to the number of true believers, say unto Him, in the words of the Psalmist: "O Lord, truly I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid: Thou hast loosed my bonds." In their new song of praise to Jesus, the ransomed host ascribe to Him glory and dominion, not merely because He hath washed them from their sins, but also because He hath made them kings and priests unto God; that is, men at once spiritually free, and consciously under obligation to glorify their

God and Saviour with their bodies and spirits, because they have been "bought with a price."

These reflections may suffice to give a slight hint of the pregnant meaning of the words by which in so casual a way Jesus indicated to the twelve the design of His approaching death. They certainly do nothing more. This memorable word of our Lord is a deep, deep well, which has never yet been fully fathomed, and never will. Brought in so quietly as an illustration to enforce a moral precept, it opens up a region of thought which takes us far beyond the immediate occasion of its being uttered. It contains in germ the great doctrine of redemption as afterwards expounded by the apostles. It raises questions in our minds which it does not solve, and yet there is nothing in the New Testament on the subject of Christ's death which might not be comprehended within the limits of its possible significance. Even all the utterances of the Apostle Paul amount to nothing more than an unfolding of the meaning of the one word "ransom."

With two remarks more on the autobiographical observation of Jesus, we close this chapter:—

When He says of Himself, that He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, He alludes not merely to His death, but to His whole life. The statement is an epitome in a single sentence of His entire earthly history. While He was in the world, He was among men as one who serveth. His death was but the closing, crowning, most signal and decisive act of service. His whole career was but one long drama of self-sacrificing love, which found its culminating point in the cross. The reference to His death in this sentence has the force of a superlative. He came to minister, *even to the extent of giving His life a ransom.*

The other remark is, that this memorable saying of Jesus, while breathing the spirit of utter lowliness, at the same time betrays the consciousness of superhuman dignity. Jesus speaks here as one who knows that He might have come to be ministered unto, that to be served and worshipped was His natural right. The divinity of the speaker is as clearly revealed in these words as it is proclaimed in the celebrated passage in the Epistle to the Philippians, where Paul adverts

in glowing language to the self-humiliation of Him who was in the form of God, for the self-same purpose which led the Incarnate One to speak of it at this time to His disciples, viz. to check ambitious, vainglorious passions, and promote unity and peace in the church. Had Jesus not been more than man, His language would not have been humble, but presumptuous. Why should the son of a carpenter say of himself, "I came not to be ministered unto?" A servile position and occupation was a matter of course for such an one. The statement before us is rational and humble, only as coming from one who, being in the form of God, freely assumed the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, for our salvation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ANOINTING IN BETHANY.

MATT. XXVI. 6–13; MARK XIV. 3–9; JOHN XII. 1–8.

THE touching story of the anointing of Jesus by Mary at Bethany forms part of the preface to the history of the passion, as recorded in the synoptical Gospels. That preface, as given most fully by Matthew, includes four particulars: *first,* a statement made by Jesus to His disciples two days before the passover concerning His betrayal; *second,* a meeting of the priests in Jerusalem to consult when and how Jesus should be put to death; *third,* the anointing by Mary; *fourth,* the secret correspondence between Judas and the priests. In Mark's preface, the first of these four particulars is omitted; in Luke's, both the first and the third.

The four facts related by the first evangelist had this in common, that they were all signs that the end so often foretold was at length at hand. Jesus now says, not "the Son of man shall be betrayed," but "the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified." The ecclesiastical authorities of Israel are assembled in solemn conclave, not to discuss the question what should be done with the object of their dislike—that is already determined—but how the deed of darkness may be done most stealthily and most securely. The victim has been anointed by a friendly hand for the approaching sacrifice. And, finally, an instrument has been found to relieve the priests from their perplexity, and to pave the way in a most unexpected manner for the consummation of their wicked purpose.

The grouping of the incidents in the introduction to the tragic history of the crucifixion is strikingly dramatic in its effect. First comes the Sanhedrim in Jerusalem plotting against the life of the Just One. Then comes Mary at

Bethany, in her unutterable love breaking her alabaster box, and pouring its contents on the head and feet of her beloved Lord. Last comes Judas, offering to sell his Master for less than Mary wasted on a useless act of affection! Hatred and baseness on either hand, and true love in the midst.[1]

This memorable transaction of Mary with her alabaster box belongs to the history of the passion, in virtue of the interpretation put upon it by Jesus, which gives to it the character of a lyric prelude to the great tragedy enacted on Calvary. It belongs to the history of the twelve disciples, because of the unfavourable construction which they put on it. All the disciples, it seems, disapproved of the action, the only difference between Judas and the rest being that he disapproved on hypocritical grounds, while his fellow-disciples were honest both in their judgment and in their motives. By their fault-finding the twelve rendered to Mary a good service. They secured for her a present defender in Jesus, and future eulogists in themselves. Their censure drew from the Lord the extraordinary statement, that wheresoever the gospel might be preached in the whole world, what Mary had done would be spoken of for a memorial of her. This prophecy the fault-finding disciples, when they became apostles, helped to fulfil. They felt bound by the virtual commandment of their Master, as well as by the generous reaction of their own hearts, to make amends to Mary for former wrong done, by telling the tale of her true love to Jesus wherever they told the story of His true love to men. From their lips the touching narrative passed in due course into the Gospel records, to be read with a thrill of delight by true Christians to the end of time. Verily one might be content to be spoken against for a season, for the sake of such chivalrous championship as that of Jesus, and such magnanimous recantations as those of His apostles!

When we consider from whom Mary's defence proceeds, we must be satisfied that it was not merely generous, but just. And yet surely it is a defence of a most surprising character! Verily it seems as if, while the disciples went to one extreme

[1] On the apparent discrepancy between the Synoptists and John as to time, and on all other points belonging to harmony, see the commentaries, especially Alford and Stier.

in blaming, their Lord went to the other extreme in praising; as if, in so lauding the woman of Bethany, He were but repeating her extravagance in another form. You feel tempted to ask: Was her action, then, so pre-eminently meritorious as to deserve to be associated with the gospel throughout all time? Then, as to the explanation of the action given by Jesus, the further questions suggest themselves: Was there really any reference in Mary's mind to His death and burial while she was performing it? Does not Jesus rather impute to her His own feeling, and invest her act with an ideal poetic significance, which lay not in it, but in His own thoughts? And if so, can we endorse the judgment He pronounced; or must we, on the question as to the intrinsic merit of Mary's act, give our vote on the side of the twelve against their Master?

We, for our part, cordially take Christ's side of the question; and in doing so, we can afford to make two admissions. In the first place, we admit that Mary had no thought of embalming, in the literal sense, the dead body of Jesus, and possibly was not thinking of His death at all when she anointed Him with the precious ointment. Her action was simply a festive honour done to one whom she loved unspeakably, and which she might have rendered at another time.[1] We admit further, that it would certainly have been an extravagance to speak of Mary's deed, however noble, as entitled to be associated with the gospel everywhere and throughout all time, unless it were fit to be spoken of not merely for her sake, but more especially for the gospel's sake; that is to say, unless it were capable of being made use of to expound the nature of the gospel. In other words, the breaking of the alabaster box must be worthy to be employed as an emblem of the deed of love performed by Jesus in dying on the cross.

Such, indeed, we believe it to be. Wherever the gospel is truly preached, the story of the anointing is sure to be prized as the best possible illustration of the spirit which moved Jesus to lay down His life; as also of the spirit of

[1] It is natural to connect the anointing with the raising of Lazarus, and to find in gratitude for the restoration of a brother to life, the motive to that deed of love. It has been suggested that the ointment may originally have been provided for the burial rites of Lazarus.

Christianity as it manifests itself in the lives of sincere believers. The breaking of the alabaster box is a beautiful symbol at once of Christ's love to us, and of the love we owe to Him. As Mary broke her box of ointment and poured forth its precious contents, so Christ broke His body and shed His precious blood; so Christians pour forth their hearts before their Lord, counting not their very lives dear for His sake. Christ's death was a breaking of an alabaster box for us; our life should be a breaking of an alabaster box for Him.

This relation of spiritual affinity between the deed of Mary and His own deed in dying is the true key to all that is enigmatical in the language of Jesus in speaking of the former. It explains, for example, the remarkable manner in which He referred to the gospel in connection therewith. "This gospel," He said, as if it had been already spoken of; nay, as if the act of anointing were the gospel. And so it was, *in a figure.* The one act already done by Mary naturally suggested to the mind of Jesus the other act about to be done by Himself. "There," He thought within Himself, "in that broken vessel and outpoured oil is my death foreshadowed; in the hidden motive from which that deed proceeded, is the eternal spirit in which I offer myself a sacrifice revealed."

In the light of this same relation of spiritual affinity, we clearly perceive the true meaning of the statement made by Jesus concerning Mary's act: "In that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial." It was a mystic, poetic explanation of a most poetic deed, and as such was not only beautiful, but *true.* For the anointing in Bethany has helped to preserve, to embalm, so to speak, the true meaning of the Saviour's death. It has supplied us with a symbolic act, through which to understand that death; it has shed around the cross an imperishable aroma of self-forgetting love; it has decked the Saviour's grave with flowers that never shall wither, and reared for Jesus, as well as for Mary, a memorial-stone that shall endure throughout all generations. Might it not be fitly said of such a deed, She did it for my burial? Was it not most unfitly said of a deed capable of rendering so important a service to the gospel, that it was wasteful and useless?

These questions will be answered in the affirmative by all who are convinced that the spiritual affinity asserted by us really did exist. What we have now to do, therefore, is to show, by going a little into detail, that our assertion is well-founded.

There are three outstanding points of resemblance between Mary's "good work" in anointing Jesus, and the good work wrought by Jesus Himself in dying on the cross.

There was first a resemblance in motive. Mary wrought her good work out of pure love. She loved Jesus with her whole heart, for what He was, for what He had done for the family to which she belonged, and for the words of instruction she had heard from His lips when He came on a visit to their house. There was such a love in her heart for her friend and benefactor as imperatively demanded expression, and yet could not find expression in words. She must do something to relieve her pent-up emotions: she must get an alabaster box and break it, and pour it on the person of Jesus, else her heart will break.

Herein Mary's act resembles closely that of Jesus in dying on the cross, and in coming to this world that He might die. For just such a love as that of Mary, only far deeper and stronger, moved Him to sacrifice Himself for us. The simple account of Christ's whole conduct in becoming man, and undergoing what is recorded of Him, is this: He *loved sinners.* After wearying themselves in studying the philosophy of redemption, learned theologians come back to this as the most satisfactory explanation that can be given. Jesus so loved sinners as to lay down His life for them; nay, we might almost say, He so loved them that He must needs come and die for them. Like Nehemiah, the Jewish patriot in the court of the Persian king, He could not stay in heaven's court while His brethren far away on earth were in an evil case; He must ask and obtain leave to go down to their assistance.[1] Or like Mary, He must procure an alabaster-box—a human body—fill it with the fine essence of a human soul, and

[1] See Neh. i. and ii. Nehemiah, like Mary, may be spoken of wherever the gospel is preached, to illustrate the heart of the Redeemer and interpret His thoughts.

pour out His soul unto death on the cross for our salvation. The spirit of Jesus, yea the spirit of the Eternal God, is the spirit of Mary and of Nehemiah, and of all who are like-minded with them. In reverence we ought rather to say, the spirit of such is the spirit of Jesus and of God; and yet it is needful at times to put the matter in the inverse way. For somehow we are slow to believe that love is a reality for God. We almost shrink, as if it were an impiety, from ascribing to the Divine Being attributes which we confess to be the noblest and most heroic in human character. Hence the practical value of the sanction here given by Jesus to the association of the anointing in Bethany with the crucifixion on Calvary. He, in effect, says to us thereby: Be not afraid to regard my death as an act of the same kind as that of Mary: an act of pure, devoted love. Let the aroma of her ointment circulate about the neighbourhood of my cross, and help you to discern the sweet savour of my sacrifice. Amid all your speculations and theories on the grand theme of redemption, take heed that ye fail not to see in my death, my loving heart, and the loving heart of my Father, revealed.[1]

[1] There is a tendency among a certain school of theologians to treat all that is said of love in connection with the atonement as sentimental, or at most as available only for popular purposes, and to represent the judicial aspect of the atonement as alone of scientific validity. Thus a recent writer on the History of Doctrines (Shedd) says: "All true scientific development of the doctrine of the atonement, it is very evident, must take its departure from the idea of divine justice. This conception is the primary one in the biblical representation of this doctrine." This author is greatly in love with "soteriologies" of scientific pretensions. He idolizes Anselm as the author of the "first metaphysique of the Christian doctrine of atonement," and as the first to challenge for the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction "both a rational necessity and a scientific rationality." Anselm did certainly carry the passion for *à priori* reasoning on the subject of redemption to its extreme limit. He aimed to demonstrate not only a hypothetical necessity for an atonement in order to salvation, but an absolute necessity. A certain number of sinners, he maintained, must be saved, to fill up the numbers of the fallen angels, as "it is indubitable that rational nature which is or is to be happy in the contemplation of God is foreknown by God in a certain rational and perfect number which can neither be more nor less" (*Cur Deus Homo*, i. c. 16). How happy is one to get away from such science so called to the supper room in Bethany! Let the august attribute of justice get its due place in the theology of the atonement, but let not "love" be relegated from theology to popular sermons. Christ's death satisfied both divine justice and divine love, and the glory of the gospel is that the *same* event satisfied both.

Mary's "good work" further resembled Christ's in its self-sacrificing character. It was not without an effort and a sacrifice that that devoted woman performed her famous act of homage. All the evangelists make particular mention of the costliness of the ointment. Mark and John represent the murmuring disciples as estimating its value at the round sum of three hundred pence; equal say to the wages of a labouring man for a whole year at the then current rate of a penny per day. This was a large sum in itself; but what is more particularly to be noted, it was a very large sum for Mary. This we learn from Christ's own words, as recorded by the second evangelist. "She hath done what she could," He kindly remarked of her, in defending her conduct against the harsh censures of His disciples. It was a remark of the same kind as that which He made a day or two after in Jerusalem concerning the poor widow whom He saw casting two mites into the temple treasury; and it implied that Mary had expended all her resources on that single tribute of respect to Him whom her soul loved. All her earnings, all her little hoard, had been given in exchange for that box, whose precious contents she poured on the Saviour's person. Hers was no ordinary love; it was a noble, heroic, self-sacrificing devotion, which made her do her utmost for its object.

Herein the woman of Bethany resembled the Son of man. He, too, did what He could. Whatever it was possible for a holy being to endure in the way of humiliation, temptation, sorrow, suffering, yea, even in the way of becoming "sin" and "a curse," He willingly underwent. All through His life on earth He scrupulously abstained from doing aught that might tend to make His cup of affliction come short of absolute fulness. He denied Himself all the advantages of divine power and privilege; he emptied Himself; He made Himself poor; He became in all possible respects like His sinful brethren, that He might qualify Himself for being a merciful and trustworthy High Priest to them in things pertaining to God. Such sacrifices in life and death did His life impose on Him.

While imposing sacrifices, love, by way of compensation, makes them easy. It is not only love's destiny, but it is

love's delight, to endure hardships, to bear burdens for the object loved. It is not satisfied till it has found an opportunity of embodying itself in a service involving cost, labour, pain. The things from which selfishness shrinks, love ardently longs for. These reflections, we believe, are applicable to Mary. With her love to Jesus, it was more easy for her to do what she did than to refrain from doing it. But love's readiness and eagerness to sacrifice herself are most signally exemplified in the case of Jesus Himself. It was indeed His pleasure to suffer for our redemption. Far from shrinking from the cross, He looked forward to it with earnest desire; and when the hour of His passion approached, He spoke of it as the hour of His glorification. He had no thought of achieving our salvation at the smallest possible cost to Himself. His feeling was rather akin to this: "The more I suffer the better: the more thoroughly shall I realize my identity with my brethren; the more completely will the sympathetic, burden-bearing, help-bringing instincts and yearnings of my love be satisfied." Yes; Jesus had more to do than to purchase sinners for as small a price as would be accepted for their ransom. He had to do justice to His own heart; He had adequately to express its deep *compassion;* and no act of limited or calculated dimensions would avail to exhaust the contents of that whose dimensions were immeasurable. Measured suffering, especially when endured by so august a personage, might satisfy divine justice, but it could not satisfy divine love.

A third feature which fitted Mary's "good work" to be an emblem of the Saviour's, was its *magnificence.* This also appeared in the expenditure connected with the act of anointing, which was not only such as involved a sacrifice for a person of her means, but very liberal with reference to the purpose in hand. The quantity of oil employed in the service was, according to John, not less than a pound weight. This was much more than could be said to be necessary. There was an appearance of waste and extravagance in the manner of the anointing, even admitting the thing in itself to be right and proper. Whether the disciples would have objected to the ceremony, however performed, does not appear; but it was

evidently the extravagant amount of ointment expended which was the prominent object of their displeasure. We conceive them as saying, in effect: "Surely less might have done: the greater part at least, if not the whole of this ointment, might have been saved for other uses. This is simply senseless, prodigal expenditure."

What to the narrow-hearted disciples seemed prodigality was but the princely magnificence of love, which, as even a heathen philosopher could tell, considers not for how much or how little this or that can be done, but how it can be done most gracefully and handsomely.[1] And what seemed to them purposeless waste, served at least one good purpose. It symbolized a similar characteristic of Christ's good work as the Saviour of sinners. *He* did *His* work magnificently, and in no mean, economical way. He accomplished the redemption of "many" by means adequate to redeem all. "With Him is plenteous redemption." He did not measure out His blood in proportion to the number to be saved, nor limit His sympathies as the sinner's friend to the elect. He shed bitter tears for doomed souls; He shed His blood without measure, and without respect to numbers, and offered an atonement which was sufficient for the sins of the world. Nor was this attribute of universal sufficiency attaching to His atoning work one to which He was indifferent. On the contrary, it appears to have been in His thoughts at the very moment He uttered the words authorizing the association of Mary's deed of love with the gospel. For He speaks of that gospel which was to consist in the proclamation of His deed of love in dying for sinners, as a gospel for the whole world; evidently desiring that, as the odour of Mary's ointment filled the room in which the guests were assembled, so the aroma of His sacrifice might be diffused as an atmosphere of saving health among all the nations.

We may say, therefore, that in defending Mary against the charge of waste, Jesus was at the same time defending Himself; replying by anticipation to such questions as these: To what purpose weep over doomed Jerusalem? why sorrow for souls that are after all to perish? why trouble Himself

[1] Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* lib. iv. cap. 2. 9.

about men not elected to salvation? why command His gospel to be preached to every creature, with an emphasis which seems to say He wishes every one saved, when He knows only a definite number will believe the report? why not confine His sympathies and His solicitudes to those who shall be effectually benefited by them? why not restrict His love to the channel of the covenant? why allow it to overflow the embankments, like a river in full flood?[1]

Such questions betray ignorance of the conditions under which even the elect are saved. Christ could not save any unless He were heartily willing to save all, for that willingness is a part of the perfect righteousness which it behoved Him to fulfil. The sum of duty is, Love God supremely, and thy neighbour as thyself; and "neighbour" means, for Christ as for us, every one who needs help, and whom He can help. But not to dwell on this, we remark that such questions show ignorance of the nature of love. Magnificence, misnamed by churls extravagance and waste, is an invariable attribute of all true love. David recognised this truth, when he selected the profuse anointing of Aaron with the oil of consecration at his installation into the office of high priest as a fit emblem of brotherly love.[2] There was "waste" in that anointing too, as well as in the one which took place at Bethany. For the oil was not *sprinkled* on the head of Aaron, though that might have been sufficient for the purpose of a mere ceremony. The vessel was emptied on the high priest's person, so that its contents flowed down from the head upon the beard, and even to the skirts of the sacerdotal robes. In that very waste lay the point of the resemblance for David. It was a feature that was likely to strike his mind, for he too was a wasteful man in his way. He had loved God in a manner which exposed him to the charge of extravagance. He had danced before the Lord, for example, when the ark was brought up from the

[1] On the apparent waste in the economy of redemption, there are some good remarks in the writings of Andrew Fuller, and especially in *Three Conversations on Particular Redemption.* He says: "It accords with the general conduct of God to impart His favours with a kind of profusion which, to the mind of man that sees only one or two ends to be answered by them, may have the appearance of waste."

[2] Ps. cxxxiii.

house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem, forgetful of his dignity, exceeding the bounds of decorum, and, as it might seem, without excuse, as a much less hearty demonstration of his feelings would have served the purpose of a religious solemnity.[1]

David, Mary, Jesus, all loving, devoted beings, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, belong to one company, and come all under one condemnation. They must all plead guilty to a waste of affection, sorrow, labour, tears; all live so as to earn for themselves the blame of extravagance, which is their highest praise. David dances, and Michal sneers; prophets break their hearts for their people's sins and miseries, and the people make sport of their grief; Marys break their alabaster boxes, and frigid disciples object to the waste; men of God sacrifice their all for their religious convictions, and the world calls them fools for their pains, and philosophers bid them beware of being martyrs by mistake; Jesus weeps over sinners that will not come to Him to be saved, and thankless men ask, Why shed tears over vessels of wrath fitted for destruction?

We have thus seen that Mary's good deed was a fit and worthy emblem of the good deed of Jesus Christ in dying on the cross. We are now to show that Mary herself is in some important respects worthy to be spoken of as a model Christian. Three features in her character entitle her to this honourable name.

First among these is her enthusiastic attachment to the person of Christ. The most prominent feature in Mary's character was her power of loving, her capacity of self-devotion. It was this virtue, as manifested in her action, that elicited the admiration of Jesus. He was so delighted with the chivalrous deed of love, that He, so to speak, canonized Mary on the spot, as a king might confer knighthood on the battle-field on a soldier who had performed some noble feat of arms. "Behold," He said in effect, "here is what I understand by Christianity: an unselfish and uncalculating devotion to me as the Saviour of sinners, and as the Sovereign of the kingdom of truth and righteousness. Therefore, wherever the gospel is preached, let this that this woman hath done be spoken of,

[1] 2 Sam. vi.

not merely as a memorial of her, but to intimate what I expect of all who believe in me."

In so commending Mary, Jesus gives us to understand in effect that love is the chief of Christian virtues. He proclaims the same doctrine afterwards taught by one who, though last, was the first of all the apostles in his comprehension of the mind of Christ—the Apostle Paul. That glowing panegyric on charity, so well known to all readers of his epistles, in which he makes eloquence, knowledge, faith, the gift of tongues, and the gift of prophecy do obeisance to her, as the sovereign virtue, is but the faithful interpretation in general terms of the encomium pronounced on the woman of Bethany. The story of the anointing and the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians should be read together.

In making love the test and measure of excellence, Jesus and Paul, and the rest of the apostles (for they all shared the Master's mind at last), differ widely from the world religious and irreligious. Pharisees and Sadducees, scrupulous religionists, and unscrupulous men of no religion, agree in disliking ardent, enthusiastic, chivalrous devotion, even in the most noble cause. They are wise and prudent, and their philosophy might be embodied in such maxims as these: "Be not too catholic in your sentiments, too warm in your sympathies, too keen in your sense of duty; never allow your heart to get the better of your head, or your principles to interfere with your interest." So widely diffused is the dislike to earnestness, especially in good, that all nations have their proverbs against enthusiasm. The Greeks had their *μηδὲν ἄγαν*, the Latins their *Ne quid nimis;* expressing scepticism in proverb-maker and proverb-quoter as to the possibility of wisdom being enthusiastic about anything. The world is prosaic, not poetic, in temperament—prudential, not impulsive: it abhors eccentricity, in good or in evil; it prefers a dead level of mediocrity, moderation, and self-possession; its model man is one who never forgets himself, either by sinking below himself in folly or wickedness, or by rising above himself, and getting rid of meanness, pride, selfishness, cowardice, and vanity in devotion to a noble cause.

The twelve were like the world in their temperament at

the time of the anointing: they seem to have regarded Mary as a romantic, quixotic, crazy creature, and her action as absurd and indefensible. They objected not, of course, to her love of Jesus; but they deemed the manner of its manifestation foolish, as the money spent on the ointment might have been applied to a better purpose—say to the relief of the destitute—and Jesus loved nothing the less, seeing that, according to His own teaching, all philanthropic actions were deeds of kindness to Himself. And, on first thoughts, one is half inclined to say that they had reason on their side, and were far wiser, while not less devoted to Jesus than Mary. But look at their behaviour on the day of their Lord's crucifixion, and learn the difference between them and her. Mary loved so ardently as to be beyond calculations of consequences or expenses; they loved so coldly, that there was room for fear in their hearts: therefore, while Mary spent her all on the ointment, they all forsook their Master, and fled to save their own lives. Whence we can see that, despite occasional extravagances, apparent or real, that spirit is wisest as well as noblest which makes us incapable of calculation, and proof against temptations arising therefrom. One rash, blundering, but heroic Luther, is worth a thousand men of the Erasmus type, unspeakably wise, but cold, passionless, timid, and time-serving. Scholarship is great, but action is greater; and the power to do noble actions comes from love.

How great is the devoted Mary, compared with the cold-hearted disciples! She does noble deeds, and they criticise them! Poor work for a human being, criticism, especially the sort that abounds in fault-finding! Love does not care for such occupation; it is too petty for her generous mind. If there be room for praise, she will give that in unstinted measure; but rather than carp and blame, she prefers to be silent. Then observe again how love in Mary becomes a substitute for prescience. She does not know that Jesus is about to die, but she acts as if she did. Such as Mary can divine: the *instincts* of love, the inspiration of the God of love, teach them to do the right thing at the right time, which is the very highest attainment of true wisdom. On the other hand, we see in the case of the disciples how coldness of heart con-

sumes knowledge and makes men stupid. They had received far more information than Mary concerning the future. If they did not know that Jesus was about to be put to death, they ought to have known from the many hints and even plain intimations which had been given them. But, alas, they had forgot all these. And why? For the same reason which makes all men so forgetful of things pertaining to their neighbours. The twelve were too much taken up with their own affairs. Their heads were filled with vain dreams of worldly ambition, and so their Master's words were forgotten almost as soon as they were uttered, and it became needful that He should tell them pathetically and reproachfully: "The poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always." Men so minded never understand the times, so as to know what Israel ought to do, or to approve the conduct of those who do know.

A second admirable feature in Mary's character was the *freedom of her spirit.* She was not tied down to methods and rules of well-doing. The disciples, judging from their language, seem to have been great methodists, servile in their adherence to certain stereotyped modes of action. "This ointment," said they, "might have been sold for much, and given to the *poor*." They understand that charity to the poor is a very important duty: they know that their Master often referred to it; and they make it everything. Charity is their hobby. When Judas went out to betray his Lord, they fancied that he was gone to distribute what remained of the supper among some poor persons of his acquaintance. Their very ideas of well-doing appear to be method-ridden. Good works with them do not seem to be co-extensive with noble deeds of all sorts. The phrase is technical, and limited in its application to a confined circle of actions of an expressly and obviously religious and benevolent nature.

Not so with Mary. She knows of more ways of doing good than one. She can invent ways of her own. She is original, creative, not slavishly imitative. And she is as fearless as she is original. She can not only imagine forms of well-doing out of the beaten track, but she has the courage to realize her conceptions. She is not afraid of the public. She does not ask beforehand, What will the twelve think of this? With a free

mind she forms her plan, and with prompt, free hand she forthwith executes it.

For this freedom Mary was indebted to her large heart. Love made her original in thought and conduct. People without heart cannot be original as she was. They may addict themselves to good works from one motive or another; but they go about them in a very slavish, mechanical way. They have to be told by some individual in whom they confide, or more commonly by custom or fashion, what to do; and hence they never do any good which is not in vogue. But Mary needed no counsellor; she took counsel of her own heart. Love told her infallibly what was the duty of the hour; that her business for the present was not to give alms, but to anoint the person of the great High Priest.

Love, we learn from Mary's case, as well as necessity, is the mother of invention. A great heart has fully as much to do with spiritual originality as a clever head. What is needed to fill the church with original preachers, original givers, original actors in all departments of Christian work, is not more brains, or more training, or more opportunities, but above all, more *heart.* When there is little love in the Christian community, it resembles a river in dry weather, which not only keeps within its banks, but does not even occupy the whole of its channel, leaving large beds of gravel or sand lying high and dry on both sides of the current. But when the love of God is shed abroad in the hearts of her members, the church becomes like the same river in time of rain. The stream begins to rise, all the gravel beds gradually disappear, and at length the swollen flood not only fills its channel, but overflows its banks, and spreads over the meadows. New methods of well-doing are then attempted, and new measures of well-doing reached; new songs are indited and sung; new forms of expression for old truths are invented, not for the sake of novelty, but in the creative might of a new spiritual life.

It was love that made Mary free from fear, as well as from the bondage of mechanical custom. "Love," saith one who knew love's power well, "casteth out fear." Love can make even shrinking, sensitive women bold—bolder even than men. It can teach us to disregard that thing called public opinion,

before which all mankind cowers. It was love that made Peter and John so bold when they stood before the Sanhedrim. They had been with Jesus long enough to love Him more than their own life, and therefore they quailed not before the face of the mighty. It was love that made Jesus Himself so indifferent to censure, and so disregardful of conventional restraints in the prosecution of His work. His heart was so devoted to His philanthropic mission, that He set at defiance the world's disapprobation; nay, probably did not so much as think of it, except when it obtruded itself upon His notice. And what love did for Mary, and for Jesus, and for the apostles in afterdays, it does for all. Wherever it exists in liberal measure, it banishes timidity and shyness, and the imbecility which accompanies them, and brings along with it power of character and soundness of mind. And to crown the encomium, we may add, that while it makes us bold, love does not make us impudent. Some men are bold, because they are too selfish to care for other people's feelings. Those who are bold through love may dare to do things which will be found fault with; but they are always anxious, as far as possible, to please their neighbours, and to avoid giving offence.

One remark more let us make under this head. The liberty which springs from love can never be dangerous. In these days, good men are greatly alarmed at the progress of broad school theology. Well, of the breadth that consists in *sceptical indifference* to important Christian truth we cannot be too jealous. But, on the other hand, of the breadth and freedom due to consuming love for Christ, and all the grand interests of His kingdom, we cannot have too much. The spirit of charity may indeed treat as comparatively light matters, things which men of austere mind deem of almost vital importance, and may be disposed to do things which men more enamoured of order and use and wont than of freedom may consider licentious innovations. But the harm done will be imaginary rather than real; and even if it were otherwise, the impulsive Marys are never so numerous in the church that they may not safely be tolerated. There are always a sufficient number of prosaic, order-loving disciples, to keep their quixotic brethren in due check.

Finally, the *nobility* of Mary's spirit was not less remarkable than its freedom. There was no taint of vulgar utilitarianism about her character. She thought habitually, not of the immediately, obviously, and materially useful, but of the honourable, the lovely, the morally beautiful. Hard practical men might have pronounced her a romantic, sentimental, dreamy mystic; but a more just, appreciative estimate would represent her as a woman whose virtues were heroic and chivalrous rather than commercial. Jesus signalized the salient point in Mary's character by the epithet which He employed to describe her action. He did not call it a useful work, but a good, or better still, a *noble* work.

And yet, while Mary's deed was characteristically noble, it was not the less useful. All good deeds are useful in some way, and at some time or other. All noble and beautiful things—thoughts, words, deeds—contribute ultimately to the benefit of the world. Only the uses of such deeds as Mary's —of the best and noblest deeds—are not always apparent or appreciable. If we were to make immediate, obvious, and vulgar uses the test of what is right, we should exclude not only the anointing in Bethany, but all fine poems and works of art, all sacrifices of material advantage to truth and duty; everything, in fact, that has not tended directly to increase outward wealth and comfort, but has merely helped to redeem the world from vulgarity, given us glimpses of the far-off land of beauty and goodness, concerning which we now and then but faintly dream, brought us into contact with the divine and the eternal, made the earth classic ground, a field where heroes have fought, and where their bones are buried, and where the moss-grown stone stands to commemorate their valour.

In this nobility of spirit Mary was pre-eminently *the Christian.* For the genius of Christianity is certainly not utilitarian. Its counsel is: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, think of these things." All these things are emphatically useful; but it is not of their utility, but of themselves, we are asked to think, and that for a very good reason. Precisely in order to be useful, we must

aim at something higher than usefulness; just as, in order to be happy, we must aim at something higher than happiness. We must make right revealed to us by an enlightened conscience and a loving pure heart our rule of duty, and then we may be sure that uses of all kinds will be served by our conduct, whether we foresee them or not; whereas, if we make calculations of utility our guide in action, we shall leave undone the things which are noblest and best, because as a rule the uses of such things are least obvious, and longest in making their appearance. Supremely useful to the world is the heroic devotion of the martyr; but it takes centuries to develope the benefits of martyrdom; and if all men had followed the maxims of utilitarian philosophy, and made utility their motive to action, there would never have been any martyrs at all. Utilitarianism tends to trimming and time-serving; it is the death of heroism and self-sacrifice; it walks by sight, and not by faith; it looks only to the present, and forgets the future; it seats prudence on the throne of conscience; it produces not great characters, but at best petty busybodies. These things being considered, it need not surprise us to find that the term "usefulness," of such frequent recurrence in the religious vocabulary of the present day, has no place in the New Testament.[1]

Two further observations may now fitly close these meditations on the memorable transactions in Bethany.

1. From Christ's defence of Mary we may learn, that being found fault with is not infallible evidence of being wrong. A much blamed man is commonly considered to have done something amiss, as the only possible reason for his being censured. But, in truth, he may only have done something unusual; for all unusual things are found fault with—the unusually good as well as, nay more than, the unusually bad. Hence it comes that Paul makes the apparently superfluous remark, that there is no law against love and its kindred graces. In point of fact, these virtues are treated as if illegal and criminal, whenever they exceed the usual stinted niggard measure in which such precious metals are found in the world. Was

[1] The defects of utilitarian morality are well exposed in Sir James Macintosh's *Dissertation*, under Jeremy Bentham.

not He who perfectly embodied all the heavenly graces, flung out of existence by the world as a person not to be tolerated ?

Happily the world ultimately comes round to a juster opinion, though often too late to be of service to those who have suffered wrong. The barbarians of the Island of Malta, who, when they saw the viper fastened on Paul's hand, thought he must needs be a murderer, changed their minds when he shook off the reptile unharmed, and exclaimed, "He is a god." Hence we should learn this maxim of prudence, not to be too hasty in criticising, if we want to have credit for insight and consistency. But we should discipline ourselves to slowness in judging from far higher considerations. We ought to cherish a reverence for the character and for the personality of all intelligent responsible beings, and to be under a constant fear of making mistakes, and calling good evil, and evil good. In the words of an ancient philosopher, "We ought always to be very careful when about to blame or praise a man, lest we speak not rightly. For this purpose it is necessary to learn to discriminate between good and bad men. For God is displeased when one blames a person like Himself, or praises one unlike Himself. Do not imagine that stones, and sticks, and birds, and serpents are holy, and that men are not. For of all things, the holiest is a good man, and the most detestable a bad."[1]

2. If we cannot be Christians like Mary, let us at all events not be disciples like Judas. Some may think it would not be desirable that all should be like the woman of Bethany : plausibly alleging that, considering the infirmity of human nature, it is necessary that the romantic, impulsive, mystic school of Christians should be kept in check by another school of more prosaic, conservative, and so to say, plebeian character ; while perhaps admitting that a few Christians like Mary in the church help to preserve religion from degenerating into coarseness, vulgarity, and formalism. Be this as it may, the church has certainly no need for Judases. Judas and Mary ! these two represent the two extremes of human character. The one exemplifies Plato's

[1] Plato, *Minos*.

πάντων μιαρώτατον, the other his *πάντων ἱερώτατον*. Characters so diverse compel us to believe in a heaven and a hell. Each one goeth to his and her own place: Mary to the "land of the leal;" Judas to the land of the false, who sell their conscience and their God for gold.

CHAPTER XIX.

SIR, WE WOULD SEE JESUS.

JOHN XII. 20–33.

THIS narrative presents interesting points of affinity with that contained in the fourth chapter of John's Gospel: the story of the woman by the well. In both, Jesus comes into contact with persons outside the pale of the Jewish church; in both, He takes occasion from such contact to speak in glowing language of an hour that is coming, yea, now is, which shall usher in a glorious new era for the kingdom of God; in both He expresses, in the most intense, emphatic terms, His devotion to His Father's will, His faith in the future spread of the gospel, and His lively hope of a personal reward in glory;[1] in both, to note yet one other point of resemblance, He employs, for the expression of His thought, agricultural metaphors: in one case, the earlier, borrowing his figure from the process of reaping; in the other, the later, from that of sowing.

But, besides resemblances, marked differences are observable in these two passages from the life of the Lord Jesus. Of these the most outstanding is this, that while on the earlier occasion there was nothing but enthusiasm, joy, and hope in the Saviour's breast, on the present occasion these feelings are blended with deep sadness. His soul is not only elated with the prospect of coming glory, but troubled as with the prospect of impending disaster. The reason is, that His death is nigh: it is within three days of the time when He must be lifted up on the cross; and sentient nature shrinks from the bitter cup of suffering.

[1] John iv. 34–36. Ver. 34 expresses Christ's devotion; ver. 35 His faith, making visible and present things not seen and future; ver. 36 His hope of a great reward in common with all sowers and reapers.

But while we observe the presence of a new emotion here, we also see that its presence produces no abatement in the old emotions manifested by Jesus in connection with His interview with the woman of Samaria. On the contrary, the near prospect of death only furnishes the Saviour with the means of giving enhanced intensity to the expression of His devotion, and His faith and hope. Formerly He said that the doing of His Father's will was more to Him than *meat;* now He says in effect that it is more to Him than *life.*[1] At the beginning He had seen by the eye of faith a vast extent of fields, white already to the harvest, in the wide wilderness of Gentile lands; now He not only continues to see these fields in spite of His approaching passion, but He sees them as the *effect* thereof,—a whole world of golden grain, growing out of one corn of wheat cast into the ground, and rendered fruitful of life by its own death.[2] At the well of Sychar He had spoken with lively hope of the wages in store for Himself, and all fellow-labourers in the kingdom of God, whether sowers or reapers; here death is swallowed up in victory, through the power of His hope. To suffer is to enter into glory; to be lifted up on the cross, is to be exalted to heaven, and seated on the throne of a world-wide dominion.[3]

The men who desired to see Jesus while He stood in one of the courts of the temple, were, the evangelist informs us, Greeks. Whence they came, whether from east or from west, or from north or from south, we know not; but they were evidently bent on entering into the kingdom of God. They had got so far on the way to the kingdom already. They had embraced the faith of One living, true God, as taught by the Jews, and were come at this time up to Jerusalem to worship at the passover as Jewish proselytes; but they had not, it would seem, found rest to their souls: there was something more to be known about God which was still hid from them. This they hoped to learn from Jesus, with whose name and fame they had somehow become acquainted. Accordingly, an opportunity presenting itself to them of communicating with one of those who belonged to His company, they re-

[1] John xii. 28. [2] Ver. 24. [3] Vers. 23, 32.

spectfully expressed to him their desire to meet his Master. "Sir," said they, "we would see Jesus." In themselves, the words might be nothing more than the expression of a curious wish to get a passing glimpse of one who was understood to be a remarkable man. Such an interpretation of the request, however, is excluded by the deep emotion it awakened in the breast of Jesus. Idle curiosity would not have stirred His soul in such a fashion. Then the notion that these Greeks were merely curious strangers, is entirely inconsistent with the connection in which the story is introduced. John brings in the present narrative immediately after quoting a reflection made by the Pharisees respecting the popularity accruing to Jesus from the resurrection of Lazarus. "Perceive ye," said they to each other, "how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him." "Yes indeed," rejoins the evangelist in effect, "and that to an extent of which ye do not dream. He whom ye hate is beginning to be inquired after, even by Gentiles from afar, as the following history will show."

We do right, then, to regard the Greek strangers as earnest inquirers. They were true seekers after God. They were genuine spiritual descendants of their illustrious countrymen Socrates and Plato, whose utterances, written or unwritten, were one long prayer for light and truth, one deep unconscious sigh for a sight of Jesus. They wanted to see the Saviour, not with the eye of the body merely, but above all, with the eye of the spirit.

The bearing of these Gentiles quite harmonizes with the character we ascribe to them. They are modest, courteous, reverential. They seek admission to the presence of Jesus, as one might to the presence of a king. They are most respectful even to His servants. Sir, Lord, is the title they give even to a humble disciple like Philip. True seekers after God and truth are ever the same—ingenuous, meek, lowly.

It is natural to ask, Did these men, then, see Jesus after all? We reply confidently, Yes, now or at another time: if not with the eye of sense, then with the eye of faith. We rest our belief of this not on the Gospel narrative, but on the

sure word, that they who seek shall find. No one ever sought God with his whole heart in vain. We think it highly probable that the Greeks were present when Jesus uttered the deep thoughts here recorded. It is not conclusive against this view that the evangelist takes no notice of their presence, because he is concerned not to inform us of the issue of the request, but to record the fact of its being made. But be this as it may, of one thing we are sure, that the prayer of these devout inquirers was granted by Jesus, either while He was on earth or after He was lifted up into glory.

The part played by the two disciples named in the narrative, in connection with this memorable incident, claims a brief notice. Philip and Andrew had the honour to be the medium of communication between the representatives of the Gentile world, and Him who had come to fulfil the desire and be the Saviour of all nations. The devout Greeks addressed themselves to the former of these two disciples, and he in turn took his brother-disciple into his counsels. How Philip came to be selected as the bearer of their request by these Gentile inquirers, we do not know. Reference has been made to the fact that the name Philip is Greek, as implying the probability that the disciple who bore it had Greek connections, and the possibility of a previous acquaintance between him and the persons who accosted him on this occasion. There may be something in these conjectures, but it is more important to remark that the Greeks were happy in their choice of an intercessor. Philip was himself an inquirer, and had an inquirer's sympathy with all who might be in a similar state of mind. The first time he is named in the Gospel history he is introduced expressing his faith in Jesus, as one who had carefully sought the truth, and who, having at length found what he sought, strove to make others partakers of the blessing. "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses, in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." The exactness and fulness of this confession speaks to careful and conscientious search. And Philip has still the inquirer's temper. A day or two subsequent to this meeting with the Greeks, we find him making for himself

the most important request: "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

But why, then, does this sympathetic disciple not convey the request of the Greeks direct to Jesus? Why take Andrew with him, as if afraid to go alone on such an errand? Just because the petitioners are Greeks and Gentiles. It is one thing to introduce a devout Jew like Nathanael to Jesus, quite another to introduce Gentiles, however devout. Philip is pleased that his Master should be inquired after in such a quarter, but he is not sure about the propriety of acting on his first impulse. He hesitates, and is in a flurry of excitement in presence of what he feels to be a new thing, a significant event, the beginning of a religious revolution.[1] His inclination is to play the part of an intercessor for the Greeks; but he distrusts his own judgment, and, before acting on it, lays the case before his brother-disciple and fellow-townsman Andrew, to see how it will strike him.

The result of the consultation was, that the two disciples came and told their Master. They felt that they were perfectly safe in mentioning the matter to Him, and then leaving Him to do as He pleased.

It is interesting to consider that these two brethren, Philip and Andrew, being of the five who were introduced to Jesus at the very beginning of His ministry, were in all probability present at the memorable scene by the well of Sychar. Comparing their spiritual state now with their state then, we perceive they have made some progress. Then, they and the rest of the disciples marvelled that their Master talked with a Samaritan woman, and were only restrained by reverence from expressing their surprise; now, they are apparently elated with joy to find their beloved Master attracting the attention of foreigners, and see no insuperable objections to an interview between them and Him. Still it is the day of small things with these disciples. They are far, far yet from the joy of being reapers in Gentile fields, far from the faith

[1] Luthardt (*Das Joh. Evan.* i. 102) thinks this hesitancy specially characteristic of Philip, and contrasts with it the promptitude of Andrew, as exhibited here, and also in John vi. 9. This is possible. Thoughtful, inquiring men are often unready in practical matters.

that could see in heathen nations fields white to the harvest, far from comprehending what that "hour" was whereof Jesus spoke in mystic but glowing language, the hour of a new spiritual worship and of His own glorification. But to all this they will attain ere long.

Passing on now to the reception given by Jesus to the communication of the two disciples, we observe that His soul was mightily stirred by the information which they brought to Him. Manifestations of spiritual susceptibility, by persons who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, did always greatly move His feelings. The open-mindedness of the people of Sychar, the faith of the centurion, the gratitude of the Samaritan leper, touched Him profoundly. Such things came upon His spirit like breezes on an Æolian harp, drawing forth from it sweetest tones of faith, hope, joy, charity; and alas! also sometimes sad, plaintive tones of disappointment and sorrow, like the sighing of the autumn wind among Scottish pines, when He thought of the unbelief and spiritual deadness of the chosen people, for whom He had done so much.[1]

Never was the heart of the Son of man more deeply affected than on the present occasion. No wonder! What sight more moving than that of a human being seeking after God, the fountain of light and of life! Then the spontaneity of these Greek inquirers is beautiful. It is something to be thankful for in this unspiritual, unbelieving world, when one and another, here and there, responds to God's call, and receives a divine word which has been spoken to him. But here we have the rare spectacle of men coming uncalled: not sought after by Christ, and accepting Him offering Himself to them as a Saviour and Lord, but seeking Him, and begging it as a great favour to be admitted to His presence, that they may offer Him their sincere homage, and hear Him speak words of eternal life. They come, too, from a most unusual quarter; and, what is still more worthy to be noticed, at a most critical time. Jesus is just about to be conclusively rejected by His own people; just on the point of being

[1] John xii. 37–43. See next chapter of this work, the perusal of which may help the reader to understand the emotion awakened in Christ's breast by the request of these Greek strangers.

crucified by them. Some have shut their eyes, and stopped their ears, and hardened their hearts in the most determined manner against Him and His teaching; others, not insensible to His merits, have meanly and heartlessly concealed their convictions, fearing the consequences of an open profession. The saying of the prophet Esaias has been fulfilled in His bitter experience, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Pharisaism, Sadduceeism, ignorance, indifference, fickleness, cowardice, have confronted Him on every side. How refreshing, amidst abounding contradiction, stupidity, and dull insusceptibility, this intimation brought to Him at the eleventh hour: "Here are certain Greeks who are interested in you, and want to see you!" The words fall on His ear like a strain of sweet music; the news is reviving to His burdened spirit, like the sight of a spring to a weary traveller in a sandy desert; and in the fulness of His joy He exclaims: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." Rejected by His own people, He is consoled by the inspiring assurance that He shall be believed on in the world, and accepted by the outlying nations as all their salvation and all their desire.

The thoughts of Jesus at this time were as deep as His emotions were intense. Specially remarkable is the first thought to which He gave utterance in these words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He speaks here with the solemnity of one conscious that he is announcing a truth new and strange to his hearers. His object is to make it credible and comprehensible to His disciples, that death and increase may go together. He points out to them that the fact is so in the case of grain; and He would have them understand that the law of increase, not only in *spite* but in *virtue* of death, will hold true equally in His own case. "A grain of wheat, by dying, becometh fruitful; so I must die in order to become, on a large scale, an object of faith and source of life. During my lifetime I have had little success. Few have believed, many have disbelieved; and they are about to crown their unbelief by putting me to death. But my death, so far from being, as they fancy, my

defeat and destruction, will be but the beginning of my glorification. After I have been crucified, I shall begin to be believed in extensively as the Lord and Saviour of men."

Having, by the analogy of the corn of wheat, set forth death as the condition of fruitfulness, Jesus, in a word subsequently spoken, proclaimed His approaching crucifixion as the secret of His future *power*. "I," said He, "if I be lifted up from the earth, will *draw* all men unto me." He used the expression "lifted up" in a double sense,—partly, as the evangelist informs us, in allusion to the manner of His death, partly with reference to His ascension into heaven; and He meant to say, that after He had been taken up into glory, He would, through His cross, attract the eyes and hearts of men towards Himself. And, strange as such a statement might appear before the event, the fact corresponded to the Saviour's expectation. The cross—symbol of shame!—did become a source of glory; the sign of weakness became an instrument of moral power. Christ crucified, though to unbelieving Jews a stumbling-block, and to philosophic Greeks foolishness, became to many believers the power of God and the wisdom of God. By His voluntary humiliation and meek endurance of suffering, the Son of God *drew* men to Him in sincerest faith, and devoted reverential love.

The largeness of Christ's desires and expectations is very noteworthy. He speaks of "much fruit," and of drawing "all men" unto Him. Of course we are not to look here for an exact definition of the extent of redemption. Jesus speaks as a man giving utterance, in the fulness of his heart, to his high, holy hope; and we may learn from His ardent words, if not the theological extent of atonement, at least the *extensiveness* of the Atoner's good wishes. He would have all men believe in Him and be saved. He complained with deep melancholy of the fewness of believers among the Jews; He turned with unspeakable longing to the Gentiles, in hope of a better reception from them. The greater the number of believers at any time and in any place, the better He is pleased; and He certainly does not contemplate with indifference the vast amount of unbelief which still prevails in all quarters of the world. His heart is set on the complete expulsion of the prince of

this world from his usurped dominion, that He Himself may reign over all the kingdoms of the earth.

The narrative contains a word of application addressed by Jesus to His disciples in connection with the law of increase by death, saying in effect that it applied to them as well as to Himself.[1] This appears at first surprising, insomuch that we are tempted to think that the sayings alluded to are brought in here by the evangelist out of their true historical connection. But on reconsideration we come to think otherwise. We observe that in all cases, wherever it is possible, Christ in His teaching takes His disciples into partnership with Himself. He does not insist on those aspects of truth which are peculiar to Himself, but rather on those which are common to Him with His followers. If there be any point of contact at all, any sense in which what He states of Himself is true of those who believe in Him, He seizes on that, and makes it a prominent topic of discourse. So He did on the occasion of the meeting by the well; so when He first plainly announced to His disciples that He was to be put to death. And so also He does here. Here, too, He asserts a fellowship between Himself and His followers in respect to the necessity of death as a condition of fruitfulness. And the fellowship asserted is not a far-fetched conceit: it is a great practical reality. The principle laid down is this, that in proportion as a man is a partaker of Christ's suffering in His estate of humiliation, shall he be a partaker of the glory, honour, and power which belong to His estate of exaltation. This principle holds true even in this life. The bearing of the cross, the undergoing of death, is the condition of fruit-bearing both in the sense of personal sanctification, and in the sense of effective service in the kingdom of God. In the long-run the measure of a man's power is the extent to which he is baptized into Christ's death. We must fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in our flesh for His body's sake, which is the church, if we would be the honoured instruments of advancing that great work in the world for which He was willing, like a corn of wheat, to fall into the ground and die.

[1] John xii. 25, 26.

CHAPTER XX.

O JERUSALEM, JERUSALEM!

MATT. XXI.–XXV. ; MARK XI.–XIII. ; LUKE XIX. 29–48, XX. XXI.

THE few days intervening between the anointing and the passover were spent by Jesus in daily visits to Jerusalem in company with His disciples, returning to Bethany in the evening. During that time He spoke much in public and in private, on themes congenial to His feelings and situation: the sin of the Jewish nation, and specially of its religious leaders; the doom of Jerusalem, and the end of the world. The record of His sayings during these last days fills five chapters of Matthew's Gospel,—a proof of the deep impressions which they made on the mind of the twelve.

Prominent among these utterances, which together form the dying testimony of the "Prophet of Nazareth," stands the great philippic delivered by Him against the scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem. This terrible discourse had been preceded by various encounters between the speaker and His inveterate foes, which were as the preliminary skirmishes that form the prelude to a great engagement. In these petty fights Jesus had been uniformly victorious, and had overwhelmed His opponents with confusion. They had asked Him concerning His authority for taking upon Him the office of a reformer, in clearing the temple precincts of traders; and He had silenced them by asking in reply their opinion of John's mission, and by speaking in their hearing the parables of *the Two Sons, the Vinedressers,* and *the Rejected Stone;*[1] wherein their hypocrisy, unrighteousness, and ultimate damnation were vividly depicted. They had tried to catch Him in a trap by an ensnaring question concerning the tribute paid to the Roman government; and He had extricated Himself with ease,

[1] Matt. xxi. 23–46.

by simply asking for a penny, and pointing to the emperor's head on it, demanding of His assailants "whose is this image and superscription;" and on receiving the reply, "Cæsar's," giving His judgment in these terms: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."[1] Twice foiled, the Pharisees (with their friends the Herodians) gave place to their usual foes, but present allies, the Sadducees, who attempted to puzzle Jesus on the subject of the resurrection, only to be ignominiously discomfited;[2] whereupon the pharisaic brigade returned to the charge, and through the mouth of a lawyer not yet wholly perverted inquired, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" To this question Jesus gave a direct and serious reply, summing up the whole law in love to God and love to man, to the entire contentment of His interrogator. Then, impatient of further trifling, He blew a trumpet-peal, the signal of a grand offensive attack, by propounding the question, "What think ye of Christ, whose son is He?" and taking occasion from the reply to quote the opening verse of David's martial psalm, asking them to reconcile it with their answer.[3] In appearance fighting the Pharisees with their own weapons, and framing a mere theological puzzle, He was in reality reminding them who *He* was, and intimating to them the predicted doom of those who set themselves against the Lord's anointed.

Thereupon David's Son and David's Lord proceeded to fulfil the prophetic figure, and to make a footstool of the men who sat in Moses' seat, by delivering that discourse in which, to change the figure, the Pharisee is placed in a moral pillory, a mockery and a byword to all after ages; and a sentence is pronounced on the pharisaic character inexorably severe, yet justified by fact, and approved by the conscience of all true Christians.[4] This anti-pharisaic speech may be regarded as the final, decisive, comprehensive, dying testimony of Jesus against the most deadly and damning form of evil prevailing in His age, or that can prevail in any age—religious hypocrisy; and as such it forms a necessary part of the Righteous One's

[1] Matt. xxii. 15–22.
[2] Matt. xxii. 23–33.
[3] Matt. xxii. 41–45.
[4] Matt. xxiii.

witness-bearing in behalf of the truth, to which His disciples are expected to say Amen with no faltering voice. For the spirit of moral resentment is as essential in Christian ethics as the spirit of mercy; nor can any one who regards the anti-pharisaic polemic of the Gospel history as a scandal to be ashamed of, or a blemish to be apologized for, or at least as a thing which, however necessary at the time, propriety now requires us to treat with neglect,—a practice too common in the religious world,—be cleared of the suspicion of having more sympathy at heart with the men by whom the Lord was crucified than with the Lord Himself. Blessed is he who is not ashamed of Christ's sternest words; who, far from stumbling at those bold prophetic utterances, has rather found in them an aid to faith at the crisis of his religious history, as evincing an identity between the moral sentiments of the Founder of the faith and his own, and helping him to see that what he may have mistaken for, and what claimed to be, Christianity, was not that at all, but only a modern reproduction of a religious system which the Lord Jesus Christ could not endure, or be on civil terms with.

Without for a moment admitting that there is anything in these invectives against hypocrisy to be apologized for, we must nevertheless advert to the view taken of them by some recent critics of the sceptical school. These speeches, then, we are told, are the rash, unqualified utterances of a young man, whose spirit was unmellowed by years and experience of the world; whose temperament was poetic, therefore irritable, impatient, and unpractical; and whose temper was that of a Jew, morose, and prone to bitterness in controversy. At this time, we are further to understand, provoked by persevering opposition, He had lost self-possession, and had abandoned Himself to the violence of anger; His bad humour having reached such a pitch as to make Him guilty of actions seemingly absurd, such as that of cursing the fig-tree. He had, in fact, become reckless of consequences, or even seemed to court such as were disastrous; and, weary of conflict, sought by violent language to precipitate a crisis, and provoke His enemies to put Him to death.[1]

[1] See Renan, *Vie de Jesus*, pp. 319, 324–6.

These are blasphemies against the Son of man as unfounded as they are injurious. The last days of Jesus were certainly full of intense excitement, but to a candid mind no traces of passion are discernible in His conduct. All His recorded utterances during those days are in a high key suited to one whose soul was animated by the most sublime feelings. Every sentence is eloquent, every word tells; but all throughout is natural, and appropriate to the situation. Even when the terrible attack on the religious leaders of Israel begins, we listen awe-struck, but not shocked. We feel that the speaker has a right to use such language, that what He says is true, and that all is said with commanding authority and dignity, such as became the Messianic King. When the speaker has come to an end we breathe freely, sensible that a delicate though necessary task has been performed with not less wisdom than fidelity. Deep and undisguised abhorrence is expressed in every sentence, such as it would be difficult for any ordinary man, yea, even for an extraordinary one, to cherish without some admixture of that wrath which worketh not the righteousness of God. But in the antipathies of a Divine Being the weakness of passion finds no place: His abhorrence may be deep, but it is also ever calm; and we challenge unbelievers to point out a single feature in this discourse inconsistent with the hypothesis that the speaker is divine. Nay, leaving out of view Christ's divinity, and criticising His words with a freedom unfettered by reverence, we can see no traces in them of a man carried headlong by a tempest of anger. We find, after strictest search, no loose expressions, no passionate exaggerations, but rather a style remarkable for artistic precision and accuracy. The pictures of the ostentatious, place-hunting, title-loving rabbi; of the hypocrite, who makes long prayers and devours widows' houses; of the zealot, who puts himself to infinite trouble to make converts, only to make his converts worse rather than better men; of the Jesuitical scribe, who teaches that the gold of the temple is a more sacred, binding thing to swear by than the temple itself; of the Pharisee, whose conscience is strict or lax as suits his convenience; of the whited sepulchres, fair without, full within of dead men's bones; of the men whose piety manifests itself

in murdering living prophets and garnishing the sepulchres of dead ones,—are moral daguerrotypes which will stand the minutest inspection of criticism, drawn by no irritated, defeated man, feeling sorely and resenting keenly the malice of his adversaries, but by one who has gained so complete a victory, that He can make sport of His foes, and at all events runs no risk of losing self-control.

The aim of the discourse, equally with its style, is a sufficient defence against the charge of bitter personality. The direct object of the speaker was not to expose the blind guides of Israel, but to save from delusion the people whom they were misguiding to their ruin. The audience consisted of the disciples and the multitude who heard Him gladly. It is most probable that many of the blind guides were present; and it would make no difference to Jesus whether they were or not, for He had not two ways of speaking concerning men—one before their faces, another behind their backs. It is told of Demosthenes, the great Athenian orator, and the determined opponent of Philip of Macedon, that he completely broke down in that king's presence on the occasion of his first appearance before him as an ambassador from his native city. But a greater than Demosthenes is here, whose sincerity and courage are as marvellous as His wisdom and eloquence, and who can say all He thinks of the religious heads of the people in their own hearing. Still, in the present instance, the parties formally addressed were not the heads of the people, but the people themselves; and it is worthy of notice how carefully discriminating the speaker was in the counsel which He gave them. He told them that what He objected to was not so much the teaching of their guides, as their lives: they might follow all their precepts with comparative impunity, but it would be fatal to follow their example. How many reformers in similar circumstances would have joined doctrine and practice together in one indiscriminate denunciation! Such moderation is not the attribute of a man in a rage.

But the best clue of all to the spirit of the speaker is the manner in which His discourse ends: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" Strange ending for one filled with angry passion! O Jesus, Jesus! how Thou risest above the petty thoughts

and feelings of men! Who shall fathom the depths of Thy heart? What mighty waves of righteousness, truth, pity, and sorrow roll through Thy bosom!

Having uttered that piercing cry of grief, Jesus left the temple, never, so far as we know, to return. His last words to the people of Jerusalem were: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." On the way from the city to Bethany, by the Mount of Olives, the rejected Saviour again alluded to its coming doom. The light-hearted disciples had drawn His attention to the strength and beauty of the temple buildings, then in full view. In too sad and solemn a mood for admiring mere architecture, He replied in the spirit of a prophet: "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."[1]

Arrived at Mount Olivet, the company sat down to take a leisurely view of the majestic pile of which they had been speaking. How different the thoughts and feelings suggested by the same object to the minds of the spectators! The twelve look with merely outward eye; their Master looks with the inward eye of prophecy. They see nothing before them but the goodly stones; He sees the profanation in the interior, greedy traders within the sacred precincts, religion so vitiated by ostentation, as to make a poor widow casting her two mites into the treasury, in pious simplicity, a rare and pleasing exception. The disciples think of the present only; Jesus looks forward to an approaching doom fearful to contemplate, and doubtless backward too, over the long and chequered history through which the once venerable, now polluted, house of God had passed. The disciples are elated with pride as they gaze on this national structure, the glory of their country, and are happy as thoughtless men are wont to be; the heart of Jesus is heavy with the sadness of wisdom and prescience, and of love that would have saved, but can now do nothing but weep, and proclaim the awful words of doom.

Yet, with all their thoughtlessness, the twelve could not

[1] Matt. xxiv. 1, 2.

quite forget those dark forebodings of their Master. The weird words haunted their minds, and made them curious to know more. Therefore they came to Jesus, or some of them —Mark mentions Peter, James, John, and Andrew[1]—and asked two questions: when Jerusalem should be destroyed; and what should be the signs of His coming, and of the end of the world. The two events referred to in the questions—the end of Jerusalem, and the end of the world—were assumed by the questioners to be contemporaneous. It was a natural and by no means a singular mistake. Local and partial judgments are wont to be thus mixed up with the universal one in men's imaginations; and hence almost every great calamity which inspires awe, leads to anticipations of the last day. Thus Luther, when his mind was clouded by the dark shadow of present tribulation, would remark: "The world cannot stand long, perhaps a hundred years at the outside. At the last will be great alterations and commotions, and already there are great commotions among men. Never had the men of law so much occupation as now. There are vehement dissensions in our families, and discord in the church."[2] In apostolic times, Christians expected the immediate coming of Christ with such confidence and ardour, that some even neglected their secular business, just as towards the close of the tenth century people allowed churches to fall into disrepair because the end of the world was deemed close at hand.

In reality, the judgment of Jerusalem and that of the world at large were to be separated by a long interval. Therefore Jesus treated the two things as distinct in His prophetic discourse, and gave separate answers to the two questions which the disciples had combined into one, that respecting the end of the world being disposed of first.[3]

The answer He gave to this question was general and negative. He did not fix a time, but said in effect: "The end will not be till such and such things have taken place;" specifying six antecedents of the end in succession, the first being the appearance of false Christs.[4] Of these He assured His disciples there would be many, deceiving many; and most

[1] Mark xiii. 3.
[2] Luther's *Table Talk*, Bohn's edition, p. 325.
[3] Matt. xxiv. 4–14.
[4] Ver. 5.

truly, for several quack Messiahs did appear even before the destruction of Jerusalem, availing themselves of, and imposing on, the general desire for deliverance, even as quack doctors do in reference to bodily ailments, and succeeding in deceiving many, as unhappily in such times is only too easy. But among the number of their dupes were found none of those who had been previously instructed by the true Christ to regard the appearance of pseudo-Christs merely as one of the signs of an evil time. The deceivers of others were for them a preservative against delusion.

The second antecedent is, "wars and rumours of wars." Nation must rise against nation; there must be times of upheaving and dissolution; declines and falls of empires, and risings of new kingdoms on the ruins of the old. This second sign would be accompanied by a third, in the shape of commotions in the physical world, emblematic of those in the political. Famines, earthquakes, pestilences, etc., would occur in divers places.[1]

Yet these things, however dreadful, would be but the beginning of sorrows; nor would the end come till those signs had repeated themselves again and again. No one could tell from the occurrence of such phenomena that the end would be now; he could only infer that it *was not yet*.[2]

Next in order come persecutions, with all the moral and social phenomena of persecuting times.[3] Christians must undergo a discipline of hatred among the nations because of the name they bear, and as the reputed authors of all the disasters which befall the people among whom they live. Times must come when, if the Tiber inundate Rome, if the Nile overflow not his fields, if drought, earthquake, famine, or plague visit the earth, the cry of the populace will forthwith be, "The Christians to the lions!"

Along with persecutions, as a fifth antecedent of the end, would come a sifting of the church.[4] Many would break down or turn traitors; there would spring up manifold animosities, schisms, and heresies, each named from its own false prophet. The prevalence of these evils in the church

[1] Matt. xxiv. 6, 7.
[2] Ver. 8.
[3] Ver. 9.
[4] Ver. 10.

would give rise to much spiritual declension. "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."[1]

The last thing that must happen ere the end come is the evangelization of the world;[2] which being achieved, the end would at length arrive. From this sign we may guess that the world will last a long while yet; for, according to the law of historical probability, it will be long ere the gospel shall have been preached to all men for a witness. Ardent Christians or enthusiastic students of prophecy who think otherwise, must remember that sending a few missionaries to a heathen country does not satisfy the prescribed condition. The gospel has not been preached to a nation for a witness, that is, so as to form a basis of moral judgment, till it has been preached to the whole people as in Christendom. This has never yet been done for all the nations, and at the present rate of progress it is not likely to be accomplished for centuries to come.

Having rapidly sketched an outline of the events that must precede the end of the world, Jesus addressed Himself to the more special question which related to the destruction of Jerusalem. He could now speak on that subject with more freedom, after He had guarded against the notion that the destruction of the holy city was a sign of His own immediate final coming. "When, then," He began—the introductory formula signifying, to answer *now* your first question—"ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains;" the abomination of desolation being the Roman army with its eagles—abominable to the Jew, desolating to the land. When the eagles appeared, all might flee for their life; resistance would be vain, obstinacy and bravery utterly unavailing. The calamity would be so sudden that there would be no time to save anything. It would be as when a house is on fire; people would be glad to escape with their life.[3] It would be a fearful time of tribulation, unparalleled before or after.[4] Woe to poor nursing mothers in those horrible days, and to such as were with child! What barbarities and inhumanities awaited them!

[1] Matt. xxiv. 12. [2] Ver. 14. [3] Vers. 17, 18. [4] Ver. 21.

The calamities that were coming would spare nobody, not even Christians. They would find safety only in flight, and they would have cause to be thankful that they escaped at all. But their flight, though unavoidable, might be more or less grievous according to circumstances; and they should pray for what might appear small mercies, even for such alleviations as that they might not have to flee to the mountains in winter, when it is cold and comfortless, or on the Sabbath, the day of rest and peace.[1]

After giving this brief but graphic sketch of the awful days approaching, intolerable by mortal men were they not shortened "for the elect's sake," Jesus repeated His warning word against deception, as if in fear that His disciples, distracted by such calamities, might think "surely now is the end." He told them that violence would be followed by apostasy and falsehood, as great a trial in one way as the destruction of Jerusalem in another. False teachers should arise, who would be so plausible as almost to deceive the very elect. The devil would appear as an angel of light; in the desert as a monk, in the shrine as an object of superstitious worship. But whatever men might pretend, the Christ would not be there; nor would His appearance take place then, nor at any fixed calculable time, but suddenly, unexpectedly, like the lightning flash in the heavens. When moral corruption had attained its full development, then would the judgment come.[2]

In the following part of the discourse, the end of the world seems to be brought into immediate proximity to the destruction of the holy city.[3] If a long stretch of ages was to intervene, the perspective of the prophetic picture seems at fault. The far distant mountains of the eternal world, visible beyond and above the near hills of time in the foreground, want the dim blue haze, which helps the eye to realize how far off they are. This defect in Matthew's narrative, which we have been taking for our text, is supplied by Luke, who interprets the θλίψις so as to include the subsequent long-lasting dispersion of Israel among the nations.[4]

The parable of the fig-tree, employed by Jesus to indicate the sure connection between the signs foregoing and the grand

[1] Matt. xxiv. 19, 20. [2] Vers. 23–28. [3] Ver. 29. [4] Luke xxi. 24.

event that was to follow, seems at first to exclude the idea of a protracted duration, but on second thoughts we shall find it does not. The point of the parable lies in the comparison of the signs of the times to the first buds of the fig-tree. This comparison implies that the last judgment is not the thing which is at the doors. The last day is the harvest season, but from the first buds of early summer to the harvest there is a long interval. The parable further suggests the right way of understanding the statement: "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." Christ did not mean that the generation then living was to witness the end, but that in that generation all the things which form the incipient stage in the development would appear. It was the age of beginnings, of shoots and blossoms, not of fruit and ingathering. In that generation fell the beginnings of Christianity and the new world it was to create, and also the end of the Jewish world, of which the symbol was a fig-tree covered with leaves, but without any blossom or fruit, like that Jesus Himself had cursed, by way of an acted prophecy of Israel's coming doom. The buds of most things in the church's history appeared in that age: of gospel preaching, of antichristian tendencies, of persecutions, heresies, schisms, and apostasies. All these, however, had to grow to their legitimate issues before the end came. How long the development would take, no man could tell, not even the Son of man.[1] It was a state secret of the Almighty, into which no one should wish to pry.

This statement, that the time of the end is known alone to God, excludes the idea that it can be calculated, or that data are given in Scripture for that purpose. If such data be given, then the secret is virtually disclosed. We therefore regard the calculations of students of prophecy respecting the times and seasons as random guesses unworthy of serious attention. The death-day of the world needs to be hid for the purposes of providence as much as the dying-day of individuals. And we have no doubt that God has kept His secret; though some fancy they can cast the world's horoscope

[1] Mark xiii. 32. Christ would have contradicted Himself if He had committed Himself to any statement of time, and yet made that profession of ignorance.

from prophetic numbers, as astrologers were wont to determine the course of individual lives from the positions of the stars.

Though the prophetic discourse of Jesus revealed nothing as to times, it was not therefore valueless. It taught effectively two lessons: one specially for the benefit of the twelve, and the other for all Christians and all ages. The lesson for the twelve was, that they might dismiss from their minds all fond hopes of a restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Not reconstruction, but dissolution and dispersion, was Israel's melancholy doom.

The general lesson for all in this discourse is: "Watch, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." The call to watchfulness is based on our ignorance of the time of the end, and on the fact that, however long delayed the end may be, it will come suddenly at last, as a thief in the night. The importance of watching and waiting, Jesus illustrated by two parables, *the Absent Goodman*, and *the Wise and Foolish Virgins*.[1] Both parables depict the diverse conduct of the professed servants of God during the period of delay. The effect on some, we are taught, is to make them negligent; they being eye-servants and fitful workers, who need oversight and the stimulus of extraordinary events. Others, again, are steady, equal, habitually faithful, working as well when the master is absent as when they are under his eye. The treatment of both on the master's return corresponds to their respective behaviour, one class being rewarded, the other punished. Such is the substance of the parable of the Absent Goodman. Luke gives an important appendix, which depicts the conduct of persons in authority in the house of the absent lord.[2] While the common servants are for the most part negligent, the upper servants play the tyrant over their fellows. This is exactly what church dignitaries did in after ages; and the fact that Jesus contemplated such a state of things, which required the lapse of centuries to bring it about, is another proof that in this discourse His prophetic eye swept over a vast tract of time. Another remark is suggested by the great reward promised to such as should not abuse their authority:

[1] Matt. xxiv. 45–51, xxv. 1–13. [2] Luke xii. 41–48.

"He will make him ruler over all that he hath." The greatness of the reward indicates an expectation that fidelity will be rare among the stewards of the house. Indeed, the Head of the church seems to have apprehended the prevalence of a negligent spirit among all His servants, high and low; for He speaks of the lord of the household as so gratified with the conduct of the faithful, that he girds himself to serve them while they sit at meat.[1] Has not the apprehension been too well justified by events?

The parable of the ten virgins, familiar to all, and full of instruction, teaches us this peculiar lesson, that watching does not imply sleepless anxiety and constant thought concerning the future, but quiet, steady attention to present duty. While the bridegroom tarried, all the virgins, wise and foolish alike, slumbered and slept, the wise differing from their sisters in having all things in readiness against a sudden call. This is a sober and reasonable representation of the duty of waiting by one who understands what is possible; for, in a certain sense, sleep of the mind in reference to eternity is as necessary as physical sleep is to the body. Constant thought about the great realities of the future would only result in weakness, distraction, and madness, or in disorder, idleness, and restlessness; as in Thessalonica, where the conduct of many who watched in the wrong sense made it needful that Paul should give them the wholesome counsel to be quiet, and work, and eat bread earned by the labour of their own hands.[2]

The great prophetic discourse worthily ended with a solemn representation of the final judgment of the world, when all mankind shall be assembled to be judged either by the historical gospel preached to them for a witness, or by its great ethical principle, the law of charity written on their hearts; and when those who have loved Christ and served Him in person, or in His representatives—the poor, the destitute, the suffering—shall be welcomed to the realms of the blessed, and those who have acted contrariwise shall be sent away to keep company with the devil and his angels.

[1] Luke xii. 37. [2] 2 Thess. iii. 12.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MASTER SERVING.

SECTION I.—*The Washing.*

JOHN XIII. 1–11.

UP to this point, the fourth evangelist has said very little indeed of the special relations of Jesus and the twelve. Now, however, he abundantly makes up for any deficiency on this score. The third part of his Gospel, which begins here, is, with the exception of two chapters relating the history of the passion, entirely occupied with the tender, intimate intercourse of the Lord Jesus with "His own," from the evening before His death to the time when He departed out of the world leaving them behind! The thirteenth and four following chapters relate scenes and discourses from the last hours spent by the Saviour with His disciples previous to His betrayal into the hands of His enemies. He has uttered His final word to the outside world, and withdrawn Himself within the bosom of His own family; and we are privileged here to see Him in their midst, and to hear His farewell words to *them* in view of His decease. It becomes us to enter the supper chamber with deep reverence. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

The first thing we see, on entering, is Jesus washing His disciples' feet. Marvellous spectacle! and the evangelist has taken care, in narrating the incident, to enhance its impressiveness by the manner in which he introduces it. He has put the beautiful picture in the best light for being seen to advantage. The preface to the story is indeed a little puzzling to expositors, the sentences being involved, and the sense somewhat obscure. Many thoughts and feelings crowd into the

apostle's mind as he proceeds to relate the *memorabilia* of that eventful night; and, so to speak, they jostle one another in the struggle for utterance. Yet it is not very difficult to disentangle the meaning of these opening sentences. In the first, John adverts to the peculiar tenderness with which Jesus regarded His disciples on the eve of His crucifixion, and in prospect of His departure from the earth to heaven. "Before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world"—how at such an hour did He feel towards those who had been His companions throughout the years of His public ministry, and whom He was soon to leave behind Him? "He loved them unto the end." Not selfishly engrossed with His own sorrows, or with the prospect of His subsequent joys, He found room in His heart for His followers still; nay, His love burned out towards them with extraordinary ardour, and His whole care was by precept and example, by words of comfort, warning, and instruction, to prepare them for future duty and trial, as the narrative here commencing would abundantly demonstrate.

The second verse of the preface alludes parenthetically to a fact which served as a foil to the constancy of Jesus: "The devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him." John would say: "Jesus loved His disciples to the end, though they did not all so love Him. One of them at this very moment entertained the diabolic purpose of betraying his Lord. Yet that Lord loved even him, condescending to wash even his feet; so endeavouring, if possible, to overcome his evil with good."

The aim of the evangelist, in the last sentence of his preface, is to show by contrast what a wondrous condescension it was in the Saviour to wash the feet of any of the disciples. Jesus knowing these things,—these things being true of Him: that "the Father had given all things into His hands"—sovereign power over all flesh; "that He was come from God"—a divine being by nature, and entitled to divine honours; "and that He was about to return to God," to enter on the enjoyment of such honours,—did as is here recorded. He, the august Being who had such intrinsic dignity, such a consciousness, such prospects—even "He riseth from supper

and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded."

The time when all this took place was, it would seem, about the commencement of the evening meal. The words of the evangelist rendered in the English version, "supper being ended," may be translated supper being begun, or better, supper-time having arrived;[1] and from the sequel of the narrative, it is evident that in this sense they must be understood here. The supper was still going on when Jesus introduced the subject of the traitor, which He did not only after He had washed the feet of His disciples, but after He had resumed His seat at the table, and given an explanation of what He had just done.[2]

That explanation will fall to be more particularly considered afterwards; but meantime it bears on its face that the occasion of the feet-washing was some misbehaviour on the part of the disciples. Jesus had to condescend, we judge, because His disciples would not condescend. This impression is confirmed by a statement in Luke's Gospel, that on the same evening a strife arose among the twelve which of them should be accounted the greatest. Whence that new strife arose we know not, but it is possible that the old quarrel about place was revived by the words uttered by Jesus as they were about to sit down to meat: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."[3] The allusion to the kingdom was quite sufficient to set their imaginations on fire and reawaken old dreams about thrones, and from old dreams to old feuds and jealousies the transition was natural and easy; and so we can conceive how even before the supper began, the talk of the brethren had waxed noisy and warm. Or the point in dispute may have

[1] Alford, *in loco*, gives as examples of a similar use of γενομένος: Matt. xxvi. 6; John xxi. 4; Mark vi. 2. Hoffman (*Schriftbeweis*, iii. 207–8) renders the phrase as in the Eng. ver., and reconciles this view with the narrative concerning Judas by assuming that vers. 26, 27 relate a transaction distinct from and subsequent to the supper.

[2] John xiii. 21.

[3] Luke xxii. 15, 16.

been in what order they should sit at table, or who should be the servant for the occasion, and wash the feet of the company. Any one of these suppositions might account for the fact recorded by Luke; for it does not require much to make children quarrel.

The expedient employed by Jesus to divert the minds of His disciples from unedifying themes of conversation, and to exorcise ambitious passions from their breasts, was a most effectual one. The very preliminaries of the feet-washing scene must have gone far to change the current of feeling. How the spectators must have stared and wondered, as the Master of the feast rose from His seat, laid aside His upper garment, girt Himself with a towel, and poured out water into a basin; doing all with the utmost self-possession, composure, and deliberation!

With which of the twelve Jesus made a beginning we are not informed; but we know, as we might have guessed without being told, who was the first to speak his mind about the singular transaction. When Peter's turn came, he had so far recovered from the amazement, under whose influence the first washed may have yielded passively to their Lord's will, as to be capable of reflecting on the indecency of such an inversion of the right relation between master and servants. Therefore, when Jesus came to him, that outspoken disciple asked, in astonishment, "Lord, washest *Thou* my feet?" His spirit rose in rebellion against the proposal, as one injurious to the dignity of his beloved Lord, and as an outrage upon his own sense of reverence. This impulse of instinctive aversion was by no means discreditable to Peter, and it was evidently not regarded with disapprobation by his Master. The reply of Jesus to his objection is markedly respectful in tone: "What I do," He said, "thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter;" virtually admitting that the proceeding in question needed explanation, and that Peter's opposition was, in the first place, perfectly natural. "I acknowledge," He meant to say, "that my present action is an offence to the feelings of reverence which you rightly cherish towards me. Nevertheless, suffer it. I do this for reasons which you do not comprehend now, but which you shall understand ere long."

Had Peter been satisfied with this apologetic reply, his conduct would have been entirely free from blame. But he was not content, but persisted in opposition after Jesus had distinctly intimated His will, and vehemently and stubbornly exclaimed: "Thou shalt *never* wash my feet!" The tone here changes utterly. Peter's first word was the expression of sincere reverence; his second is simply the language of unmitigated irreverence and downright disobedience. He rudely contradicts his Master, and at the same time, we may add, flatly contradicts himself. His whole behaviour on this occasion presents an odd mixture of moral opposites: self-abasement and self-will, humility and pride, respect and disrespect for Jesus, to whom he speaks now as one whose shoe-latchet he is not worthy to unloose, and anon as one to whom he might dictate orders. What a strange man! But, indeed, how strange are we all!

Peter having so changed his tone, Jesus found it needful to alter His tone too, from the apologetic mildness of the first reply to that of magisterial sternness. "If I wash thee not," He said gravely, "thou hast no part with me;" meaning, "Thou hast taken up a most serious position, Simon Peter; the question at issue being simply, Are you or are you not to be admitted into my kingdom—to be a true disciple, and to have a true disciple's reward?"

On a surface view, it is difficult to see how this could be the state of the question. One is tempted to think that Jesus was indulging in exaggeration, for the purpose of intimidating a refractory disciple into compliance with His will. If we reject this method of interpretation as incompatible with the character of the speaker and the seriousness of the occasion, we are thrown back on the inquiry, What does washing in this statement mean? Evidently it signifies more than meets the ear, more than the mere literal washing of the feet; and is to be regarded as a symbol of the washing of the soul from sin, or still more comprehensively, and in our opinion more correctly, *as representing all in Christ's teaching and work which would be compromised by the consistent carrying out of the principle on which Peter's opposition to the washing of his feet by Jesus was based.* On either supposition, the statement of

Jesus was true: in the former case obviously; in the latter not so obviously, but not less really, as we proceed to show.

Observe, then, what was involved in the attitude assumed by Peter. He virtually took his stand on these two positions: that he would admit of nothing which seemed inconsistent with the personal dignity of his Lord, and that he would adopt as his rule of conduct his own judgment in preference to Christ's will; the one position being involved in the question, Dost Thou wash my feet? the other in the resolution, Thou shalt never wash my feet. In other words, the ground taken up by this disciple compromised the whole sum and substance of Christianity; the former principle sweeping away Christ's whole state and experience of humiliation, and the latter not less certainly sapping the foundation of Christ's *lordship*.

That this is no exaggeration on our part, a moment's reflection will show. Look, then, first at the objection to the feet-washing on the score of reverence. If Jesus might not wash the feet of His disciples because it was beneath His dignity, then with equal reason objection might be taken to any act involving self-humiliation. One who said, Thou shalt not wash my feet, because the doing of it is unworthy of Thee, might as well say, Thou shalt not wash my soul, or do aught towards that end, because it involves humiliating experiences. Why, indeed, make a difficulty about a trifling matter of detail? Go to the heart of the business at once, and ask, "Shall the Eternal Son of God become flesh, and dwell among us? shall He who was in the form of God lay aside His robes of state, and gird Himself with the towel of humanity, to perform menial offices for His own creatures? shall the ever-blessed One become a curse by enduring crucifixion? shall the Holy One degrade Himself, by coming into close companionship with the depraved sons of Adam? shall the Righteous One pour His life-blood into a basin, that there may be a fountain wherein the unrighteous may be cleansed from their guilt and iniquity?" In short, incarnation, atonement, and Christ's whole earthly experience of temptation, hardship, indignity, and sorrow must go, if Jesus may not wash a disciple's feet.

Not less clearly is Christ's lordship at an end if a disciple

may give Him orders, and say, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." If Peter meant anything more by these words than a display of temper and caprice, he meant this: that he would not submit to the proposed operation, because his moral feelings and his judgment told him it was wrong. He made his own reason and conscience the supreme rule of conduct. Now, in the first place, by this position the *principle* of obedience was compromised, which requires that the will of the Lord, once known, whether we understand its reason or perceive its goodness or not, shall be supreme. Then there are other things much more important than the washing of the feet, to which objection might be taken on the score of reason or conscience with equal plausibility. For example, Christ tells us that those who would be His disciples, and obtain entrance into His kingdom, must be willing to part with earthly goods, and even with nearest and dearest friends. To many men this seems unreasonable, and on Peter's principle they should forthwith say, "I will never do any such thing." Or, again, Christ tells us that we must be born again, and that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. To me these doctrines may seem incomprehensible, and even absurd; and therefore, on Peter's principle, I may turn my back on the great Teacher, and say, "I will not have this speaker of dark, mystic sayings for my master." Once more, Christ tells us that we must give the kingdom of God the first place in our thoughts, and dismiss from our hearts carking care for to-morrow. To me this appears in my present mood simply impossible; and therefore, on Peter's principle, I may set aside this moral requirement as utopian, however beautiful, without even seriously attempting to comply with it.

Now that we know whither Peter's refusal tends, we can see that Jesus spake the simple truth when He said: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Look at that refusal as an objection to Christ humbling Himself. If Christ may not humble Himself, then, in the first place, He can have no part with us. The Holy Son of God is forbidden by a regard to His dignity to become in anything like unto His brethren, or even to acknowledge them as His brethren. The grand fraternal law, by which the Sanctifier is identified with

them that are to be sanctified, is disannulled, and all its consequences made void. A great impassable gulf separates the Divine Being from His creatures. He may stand on the far-off shore, and wistfully contemplate their forlorn estate; but He cannot, He dare not—His majesty forbids it—come near them, and reach forth a helping hand.

But if the Son of God may have no part with us, then, in the second place, we can have no part with Him. We cannot share His fellowship with the Father, if He come not forth to declare Him. We can receive no acts of brotherly kindness from Him. He cannot deliver us from the curse of the law, or from the fear of death; He cannot succour us when we are tempted; He cannot wash our feet; nay, what is a far more serious matter, He cannot wash our souls. If there is to be no fountain opened for sin in the human nature of Emmanuel, sinners must remain impure. For a God afar off is not able, even if He were willing, to purify the human soul. A God whose majesty, like an iron fate, kept Him aloof from sinners, could not even effectively forgive them. Still less could He sanctify them. Love alone has sanctifying virtue, and what room is there for love in a Being who cannot humble Himself to be a servant?

Look now at Peter's refusal as resistance to Christ's will. In this view also it justified the saying, "Thou hast no part with me." It excluded from salvation; for if Jesus is not to be Lord, He will not be Saviour.[1] It excluded from fellowship; for Jesus will have no communion with self-will. His own attitude towards His Father was, "Not my will, but Thine;" and He demands this attitude towards Himself in turn from all His disciples. Not that He would have us be always servants, blindly obeying a Lord whose will we do not understand. His aim is to advance us ultimately to the status of friends,[2] doing His will intelligently and freely—not as complying mechanically with an outward commandment, but as being a law to ourselves. But we can attain that high position only by beginning with a servant's obedience. We must

[1] Peter the *apostle* understood this well. Four times in his second epistle he conjoins *Lord* and *Saviour* in naming Christ (i. 11, ii. 20, iii. 2, 18).

[2] John xv. 15.

do, and suffer to be done to us, what we know not now, in order that we may know hereafter the philosophy of our duty to our Lord, and of our Lord's dealings with us.

It was a serious thing, therefore, to say, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." But Peter was not aware how serious it was. He knew not what he said, or what he did. He had hastily taken up a position whose ground and consequences he had not considered. And his heart was right, though his temper was wrong. Therefore the stern declaration of Jesus at once brought him to reason, or rather to unreason in an opposite direction. The idea of being cut off from his dear Master's sympathy or favour, through his waywardness, drove him in sheer fright to the opposite extreme of overdone compliance; and he said in effect, "If my interest in Thee depends on my feet being washed, then, Lord, wash my whole body—hands, head, feet, and all." How characteristic! how like a child, in whose heart is much foolishness, but also much affection, and who can always be managed by the bands of love! There is as yet a sad want of balance in this disciple's character: he goes, swinging like a pendulum, from one extreme to another; and it will take some time ere he settle down into a harmonious equipoise of all parts of his being—intellect, will, heart, and conscience. But the root of the matter is in him: he is sound at the core; and after the due amount of mistakes, he will become a wise man by and by. He is clean, and needs not more than to have his feet washed. Jesus Himself admits it of him, and of all his brother-disciples—save one, who is unclean all over.

Fellow-Christians, can as much be said of us? Are we clean-hearted and true-hearted, however ignorant, erratic, or faulty? Or are we of those who put lip-homage in the place of obedience, pious sentiment in place of godly conduct; of those who, not in haste, but deliberately, act on the principle of believing and doing nothing which they do not fully understand and sympathize with; of those who not merely commit occasional offences against the will of the Lord, but systematically exempt whole departments of their life from the reign of His law? If we belong to this latter category, then have we no part with the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He who,

though a Son, humbled Himself to be a servant, is the author of eternal salvation only *to them that obey Him.*

Note, finally, as a lesson from this passage, in what the perfection of obedience consists. It lies in letting the Lord change places with us, and, if it seem good to Him, humble Himself to be our servant. Our true humility is not to object to Christ's humiliation, but, on the contrary, to recognise its necessity, in order to our deliverance from sin. They honour not God who deny the incarnation and the redeeming death of the eternal Son as unworthy of Him. Rather do they doubly dishonour the Divine Being; first by misconceiving wherein His glory lies, and next by ignoring their own need of redemption. The only genuine piety is that which owns man's moral defilement, and leaves God to remove it in His own way.

Section II.—*The Explanation.*

John xiii. 12–20.

Peter's resistance overcome, the washing proceeded without further interruption. When the process had come to an end, Jesus, putting on again His upper garment, resumed His seat, and briefly explained to His disciples the purport of the action. "Know ye," He inquired, "what I have done unto you?" Then, answering His own question, He went on to say: "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

It was another lesson in humility which Jesus had been giving "His own,"—a lesson very similar to the earlier ones recorded in the synoptical Gospels. John's Christ, we see here, teaches the same doctrine as the Christ of the three first evangelists. The twelve, as they are depicted in the fourth Gospel, are just such as we have found them in Matthew, Mark, and Luke—grievously needing to be taught meekness

and brotherly-kindness; and Jesus teaches them these virtues in much the same way here as elsewhere—by precept and example, by symbolic act, and added word of interpretation. Once He held up a little child, to shame them out of ambitious passions; here He rebukes their pride, by becoming the menial of the household. At another time He hushed their angry strife by adverting to His own self-humiliation, in coming from heaven to be a minister to men's needs in life and in death; here He accomplishes the same end, by expressing the spirit and aim of His whole earthly ministry in a representative, typical act of condescension.

This lesson, like all the rest, Jesus gave with the authority of one who might lay down the law. In the very act of playing the servant's part, He was asserting His sovereignty. He reminds His disciples, when the service is over, of the titles they were wont to give Him, and in a marked, emphatic manner He accepts them as His due. He tells them distinctly that He is indeed their Teacher, whose doctrine it is their business to learn, and their Lord, whose will it is their duty to obey. His humility, therefore, is manifestly not an affectation of ignorance as to who and what He is. He knows full well who He is, whence He has come, whither He is going; His humility is that of a king, yea, of a Divine Being. The pattern of meekness is at the same time one who prescribes Himself to His followers as a pattern, and demands that they fix their attention on His behaviour, and strive to copy it.

In making this demand, Jesus is obviously very thoroughly in earnest. He is not less earnest in requiring the disciples to wash one another's feet, than He was in insisting that He Himself should wash the feet of one and all. As He said to Peter in express words, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me;" so He says to them all in effect, though not in words, "If ye wash not each other, if ye refuse to serve one another in love, ye have again no part with me." This is an hard saying; for if it be difficult to believe in the humiliation of Christ, it is still more difficult to humble ourselves. Hence, notwithstanding the frequency and urgency with which the Saviour declares that we must have the spirit manifested in His humiliation *for* us dwelling *in* us, and giving birth in

our life to conduct kindred to His own, even sincere disciples are constantly, though it may be half unconsciously, inventing excuses for treating the example of their Lord as utterly inimitable, and therefore in reality no example at all. Even the apparently unanswerable argument employed by Jesus to enforce imitation does not escape secret criticism. "Verily, verily," saith He, "the servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." "It may," say we, "be more incumbent on the servant to humble himself than on the master, but in some respects it is also more difficult. The master can afford to condescend: his action will not be misunderstood, but will be taken for what it is. But the servant cannot afford to be humble: he must assert himself, and assume airs, in order to make himself of any consequence."

The great Master knew too well how slow men would ever be to learn the lesson He had just been teaching His disciples. Therefore He appended to His explanation of the feet-washing this reflection: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them;" hinting at the rarity and difficulty of such high morality as He had been inculcating, and declaring the blessedness of the few who attained unto it. And surely the reflection is just! Is not the morality here enjoined indeed rare? Are not the virtues called into play by acts of condescension and charity most high and difficult? Who dreams of calling them easy? How utterly contrary they are to the native tendencies of the human heart! how alien from the spirit of society! Is it the way of men to be content with the humblest place, and to seek their felicity in serving others? Doth not the spirit that is in us lust unto envy, strive ambitiously for positions of influence, and deem it the greatest happiness to be served, and to be exempt from the drudgery of servile tasks? The world itself does not dispute the difficulty of Christ-like virtue; it rather exaggerates its difficulty, and pronounces it utopian and impracticable—merely a beautiful, unattainable ideal.

And as for the sincere disciple of Jesus, no proof is needed to convince him of the arduousness of the task appointed him by his Lord. He knows by bitter experience how far conduct

lags behind knowledge, and how hard it is to translate admiration of unearthly goodness into imitation thereof. His mind is familiarly conversant with the doctrine and life of the Saviour; he has read and re-read the Gospel story, fondly lingering over its minutest details; his heart has burned as he followed the footsteps of the Blessed One walking about on this earth, ever intent on doing good: sweeter to his ear than the finest lyric poems are the stories of the woman by the well, the sinner in the house of Simon, and of Zacchæus the publican; those touching incidents of the little child upheld as a pattern of humility, and of the Master washing quarrelsome disciples' feet, and the exquisite parables of the Prodigal, the Lost Sheep, and the Good Samaritan. He has sat down at the foot of the cross, and watched the Redeemer hanging thereon, and said to himself with perfect sincerity:

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend;
Life, and health, and peace possessing,
From the sinner's dying Friend.
Here I'll sit, for ever viewing
Mercy's streams in streams of blood;
Precious drops, my soul bedewing,
Plead and claim my peace with God."

But when he has to close his New Testament, and rise from the foot of the cross, and go away into the rude, ungodly, matter-of-fact world, and *be* there a Christ-like man, and *do* the things which he knows so intimately, and counts himself blessed in knowing, alas, what a descent! It is like a fall from Eden into a state of mere sin and misery. And the longer he lives, and the more he gets mixed up with life's relations and engagements, the further he seems to himself to degenerate from the gospel pattern; till at length he is almost ashamed to think or speak of the beauties of holiness exhibited therein, and is tempted to adopt a lower and more worldly tone, out of a regard to sincerity, and in fear of becoming a mere sentimental hypocrite like Judas, who kissed his Master at the very moment he was betraying Him.

In proportion to the difficulty and the rarity of the virtue prescribed, is the felicity of those who, by divine grace vouchsafed in answer to earnest persevering prayer, are enabled to

practise it. Theirs is a threefold blessedness. First, they have the joy connected with the achievement of an arduous task. Easy undertakings bring small pains, but they also bring small pleasures: rapturous delight is reserved for those who attempt and accomplish that which passes for impossible. And what raptures can be purer, holier, and more intense than those of the man who has at length succeeded in making the mind of the meek and lowly One his own; who, after long climbing, has reached the alpine summit of self-forgetful, self-humbling love!

Another ingredient in the felicity of those who practise the things here enjoined is, that they win for themselves the approbation of their Lord. A master is pleased when a pupil understands his lesson, but a lord is pleased only when his servants do his bidding. Christ, being Lord as well as Master, demands that we shall not only *know*, but *do*. And in proportion to the peremptoriness of the demand is the satisfaction with which the Lord of Christians regards all earnest efforts to comply with His will, and to follow His example. And to all who make such efforts it is a great happiness to be assured of the approval of Him whom they serve. The thought, "I am guided in my present action by the spirit of Jesus, and He approves what I do," sustains the mind in peace, even when one has not the happiness to win the approbation of his fellow-men; which is not an impertinent remark here, for it will often happen to us to please men least when we are pleasing the Lord *most*. You shall please many men by a prudent selfishness much more readily than by a generous uncalculating devotion to what is *right*. "Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself;" and they will wink at very considerable deviations from the line of pure Christian morality in the prosecution of self-interest, provided you be successful. Even religious people will often vex and grieve you by advices savouring much more of worldly wisdom than of Christian simplicity and godly sincerity. Many a true follower of Jesus has had occasion to repeat his Master's complaint, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me;" and to re-echo the bitter reflections of David,

"It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I would have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked into the house of God in company." Verily a sore case! Yet, if the Lord approve, we may make shift to do without the sympathy and approbation of men. Their approbation is at most but a comfort; His is matter of life and death. For He is the Judge: He, not men, not priests, not fellow-disciples, hath the keys of the kingdom. Blessed, therefore, are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

There is yet another element in the felicity of the man who is not merely a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the perfect law of Christ. He escapes the guilt of unimproved knowledge. It is a religious commonplace, that to sin against light is more heinous than to sin in ignorance. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." And, of course, the clearer the light the greater the responsibility. Now, in no department of Christian truth is knowledge clearer than in that which belongs to the department of ethics. There are some doctrines which the church, as a whole, can hardly be said to know, they are so mysterious, or so disputed. But the ethical teaching of Jesus is simple and copious in all its leading features; it is universally understood, and as universally admired. Protestants and Papists, Trinitarians, Socinians, and Deists, are all at one here. Happy then are they, of all sects and denominations, who do the things which all know and agree in admiring; for a heavy woe lies on those who do them not. The woe is not indeed expressed, but it is implied in Christ's words. The common Lord of all believers virtually addresses all Christendom here, saying: "Ye behold the sunlight of a perfect example; ye have been made acquainted with a high and lovely ideal of life, such as pagan moralists never dreamed of. What are ye doing with your light? Are ye merely looking at it, and writing books about it, and boasting of it, and talking of it, meanwhile allowing men outside the pale of

the church to surpass you in humane and philanthropic virtue? If this is all the use you are making of your knowledge, it will be more tolerable for pagans at the day of judgment than for you."

Having made the reflection we have been considering, Jesus followed it up with a word of apology for the tone of suspicion with which it was uttered, and which was no doubt felt by the disciples. "I speak not," He said, "of you all; I know whom I have chosen," etc. The remark may be thus paraphrased: "In hinting at the possibility of a knowledge of right, unaccompanied by corresponding action, I have not been indulging in gratuitous insinuation. I do not indeed think so badly of you all, as to imagine you capable of deliberate and habitual neglect of known duty. But there is one among you who is capable of such conduct. I have chosen you twelve, and I know the character of every one of you; and, as I said a year ago, after asking a question which hurt your feelings, that one of you had a devil,[1] so now, after making a suspicious reflection, I say there is one among you whose character illustrates negatively its meaning: one who knows, but will not do; who puts sentiment in place of action, and admiration in place of imitation; one who, having eaten bread with me as a familiar friend, will repay me for all my kindness, not by loving obedience, but by lifting up his heel against me."

When we conceive of the reflection, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them," as addressed, not to the twelve, but to the great Christian public, we feel that it needs no apology. Alas, the divorce of light and life, of knowledge and practice, is not so rare, that one may regard an allusion to it as an injurious imputation. Knowing unaccompanied with doing, orthodoxy severed from sanctity, evangelical faith and sentiment disunited from evangelical, gospel-like conduct, is the great scandal of the church. The thing is so common

[1] John vi. 66–70. The words of Jesus on the present occasion become clearer when viewed in the light of the earlier occurrence, comparing the two passages together. We are satisfied that the words, "I speak not of you all," mean, "I do not suspect you all of the sin of knowing and not doing," rather than, "You shall not all partake of the happiness of those who both know and do."

that it is thought nothing of. Insincerity is looked on as a matter of course. Who infers anything as to a man's goodness from the fact of his being a church member? Who attaches high importance to a church certificate? Who does not know that the document, far from guaranteeing the possession of or aspiration after the high Christian virtue taught by Jesus in the supper chamber, is not even a reliable guarantee of the most commonplace morality, and that your certificated Christian may be a cheat, a sot, a prodigal, or a wanton?

Unhappy is the religious society in which it has become the fashion to know and not to do. There has the salt indeed lost its savour, and become good for nothing. For what can be more worthless, than knowledge of the true and good divorced from the practice thereof? Knowledge puffeth up, charity buildeth up; the product of the one is a balloon, that of the other is a temple of God. A character in which correct thinking and fine sentiment are combined with practical laxity—in which to promise is put instead of performance, and to utter the becoming word about a matter is substituted for doing the appropriate deed—is, to say the least, not one to be desired. It may look well at a distance, but it will not stand close inspection; it may be fair, but it is false; its superficial verdure is that of the turf which covers a grave; its beauty that of a decaying tree, o'erspread with mosses of various species and motley hues. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."

CHAPTER XXII.

IN MEMORIAM.

Matt. xxvi. 26–29; Mark xiv. 22–25; Luke xxii. 17–20 (1 Cor. xi. 23–26).

THE Lord's Supper is a monument sacred to the memory of Jesus Christ. "This do in remembrance of me." In Bethany Jesus had spoken as if He desired that Mary should be kept in remembrance in the preaching of His gospel; in the supper chamber He expressed His desire to be remembered Himself. He would have Mary's deed of love commemorated by the rehearsal of her story; He would have His own deed of love commemorated by a symbolic action, to be often repeated throughout the ages to the end of the world.

The rite of the Supper, besides commemorating, is likewise of use to *interpret* the Lord's death. It throws important light on the meaning of that solemn event. The institution of this symbolic feast was in fact the most important contribution made by Jesus during His personal ministry to the doctrine of atonement through the sacrifice of Himself. Therefrom, more clearly than from any other act or word performed or spoken by Him, the twelve might learn to conceive of their Master's death as possessing a *redemptive* character. Thereby Jesus, as it were, said to His disciples: My approaching passion is not to be regarded as a mere calamity, or dark disaster, falling out contrary to the divine purpose or my expectation; not as a fatal blow inflicted by ungodly men on me and you, and the cause which is dear to us all; not even as an evil which may be overruled for good; but as an event fulfilling, not frustrating, the purpose of my mission, and fruitful of blessing to the world. What men mean for evil, God means for good, to

bring to pass to save much people alive. The shedding of my blood, in one aspect the crime of wicked Jews, is in another aspect my own voluntary act. I pour forth my blood for a gracious end, even for the remission of sins. My death will initiate a new dispensation, and seal a new testament; it will fulfil the purpose, and therefore take the place, of the manifold sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual, and in particular of the paschal lamb, which is even now being eaten. I shall be the Paschal Lamb of the Israel of God henceforth; at once protecting them from death, and feeding their souls with my crucified humanity, as the bread of eternal life.

These truths are very familiar to us, however new and strange they may have been to the disciples; and we are more accustomed to explain the Supper by the death, than the death by the Supper. It may be useful, however, here to reverse the process, and, imagining ourselves in the position of the twelve, as witnesses to the institution of a new religious symbol, to endeavour to rediscover therefrom the meaning of the event with which it is associated, and whose significance it is intended to shadow forth. Let us then take our stand beside this ancient monument, and try to read the Runic inscription on its weather-worn surface.

1. First, then, we perceive at once that it is to the death of Jesus this monument refers. It is not merely erected to His memory in general, but it is erected specially in memory of His decease. All things point forward to what was about to take place on Calvary. The sacramental acts of breaking the bread and pouring out the wine manifestly look that way. The words also spoken by Jesus in instituting the Supper all involve allusions to His death. Both the fact and the manner of His death are hinted at, by the distinction He makes between His body and His blood: "This is my body," "this is my blood." Body and blood are one in life, and become separate things only by death; and not by every kind of death, but by one whose manner involves blood-shedding, as in the case of sacrificial victims. The epithets applied to the body and the blood point at death still more clearly. Jesus speaks of His body as "given"—as if to be slain or "broken"[1] in

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 24.

sacrifice, and of His blood as "shed." Then, finally, by describing the blood about to be shed as the blood of a new testament, the Saviour put it beyond all doubt what He was alluding to. Where a testament is, there must also be the death of the testator. And though an ordinary testator may die an ordinary death, the Testator of the *new* testament must die a sacrificial death; for the epithet *new* implies a reference to the old Jewish covenant, which was ratified by the sacrifice of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings of oxen, whose blood was sprinkled on the altar and on the people, and called by Moses "the blood of the covenant."

2. The mere fact that the Lord's Supper commemorates specially the Lord's *death*, implies that that death must have been an event of a very important character. By instituting a symbolic rite for such a purpose, Jesus, as it were, said to His disciples and to us: "Fix your eyes on Calvary, and watch what happens there. That is the great event in my earthly history. Other men have monuments erected to them because they have lived lives deemed memorable. I wish you to erect a monument to me because I have died: not forgetful of my life indeed, yet specially mindful of my death; commemorating it for its own sake, not merely for the sake of the life whereof it is the termination. The memory of other men is cherished by the celebration of their birth-day anniversaries; but in my case, better is the day of my death than the day of my birth for the purpose of a commemorative celebration. My birth into this world was marvellous and momentous; but still more marvellous and momentous is my exit out of it by crucifixion. Of my birth no festive commemoration is needed; but of my death keep alive the memory by the Holy Supper till I come again. Remembering it well, you remember all my earthly history; for of all it is the secret, the consummation, and the crown."

But why, in a history throughout so remarkable, should the death be thus singled out for commemoration? Was it its tragic character that won for it this distinction? Did the crucified One mean the Supper which goes by His name to be a mere dramatic representation of His passion, for the purpose of exciting our feelings, and eliciting a sympathetic tear, by

renewing the memory of His dying sorrows? So to think of the matter were to degrade our Christian feast to the level of the pagan festival of Adonis,

> "Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
> The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
> In amorous ditties all a summer's day."

Or was it the foul wrong and shameful indignity done to the Son of God by the wicked men who crucified Him, that Jesus wished to have kept in perpetual remembrance? Was the Holy Supper instituted for the purpose of branding with eternal infamy a world that knew no better use to make of the Holy One than to nail Him to a tree, and felt more kindness even for a robber than for Him? Certainly the world well deserved to be thus held up to reprobation; but the Son of man came not to condemn sinners, but to save them; and it was not in His loving nature to erect an enduring monument to His own resentment or to the dishonour of His murderers. *The blood of Jesus speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

Or was it because His death on the cross, in spite of its indignity and shame, was *glorious*, as a testimony to His invincible fidelity to the cause of truth and righteousness, that Jesus instructed His followers to keep it ever in mind, by the celebration of the new symbolic rite? Is the festival of the Supper to be regarded as a solemnity of the same kind as those by which the early church commemorated the death of the martyrs? Is the *Coena Domini* simply the *natalitia* of the great Proto-martyr? So Socinians would have us believe. To the question why the Lord wished the memory of His crucifixion to be specially celebrated in His church, the Racovian Catechism replies: "Because of all *Christ's* actions, it (the voluntary enduring of death) was the greatest and most proper to Him. For although the resurrection and exaltation of Christ were far greater, these were acts of God the Father rather than of Christ."[1] In other words, the death above all things deserves to be remembered, because it was the most signal and sublime act of witness-bearing on Christ's part to the truth, the glorious copestone of a noble life of self-sacrificing devotion to the high and perilous vocation of a prophet.

[1] *De Coenâ Domini*, Quæstio iv.

That Christ's death was all this is of course true, and that it is worthy of remembrance as an act of martyrdom is equally true; but whether Jesus instituted the Holy Supper for the purpose of commemorating His death exclusively, principally, or at all, as a martyrdom, is a different question. On this point we must learn the truth from Christ's own lips. Let us return, then, to the history of the institution, to learn His mind about the matter.

3. Happily the Lord Jesus explained with particular clearness in what aspect He wished His death to be the subject of commemorative celebration. In distributing to His disciples the sacramental bread, He said, "This is my body, given, or broken, *for you*;"[1] thereby intimating that His death was to be commemorated because of a benefit it procured for the communicant. In handing to the disciples the sacramental cup, He said, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, shed (for you[2] and) for many for the remission of sins;"[3] thereby indicating the nature of the benefit procured by His death, on account of which it was worthy to be remembered.

In this creative word of the new dispensation, Jesus represents His death as a sin-offering, atoning for guilt, and purchasing forgiveness of moral debt. His blood was to be shed for the remission of sins. In view of this function, the blood is called the blood of the new testament, in apparent allusion to the prophecy of Jeremiah, which contains a promise of a new covenant to be made by God with the house of Israel,—a covenant whose leading blessing should be the forgiveness of iniquity, and called new, because, unlike the old, it would be a covenant of pure grace, of promises unclogged with legal stipulations.[4] By mentioning His blood and the *new* covenant together, Jesus teaches that, while annulling, He would at the same time fulfil the old, in introducing the new. The new covenant would be ratified by sacrifice, even as was the old one at Sinai, and remission of sin would be granted after blood-

[1] Luke and Paul. [2] Luke.

[3] Matthew. On the genuineness of these words, see Neander, *Life of Christ.*

[4] Jer. xxxi. 31–34. Such a covenant is on man's side hardly a covenant at all. See Witsius, *de Œc. Fid.* lib. iii. cap. i. 8–12.

shedding. But in bidding His disciples drink the cup, the Lord intimates that after His death there will be no more need of sacrifices. The sin-offering of blood will be converted into a thank-offering of wine, a cup of salvation, to be drunk with grateful, joyful hearts by all who through faith in His sacrifice have received the pardon of their sins. Finally, Jesus intimates that the new covenant concerns the *many*, not the few—not Israel alone, but all nations: it is a gospel which He bequeaths to sinners of mankind.

Well may we drink of this cup with thankfulness and joy; for the "new covenant" (new, yet far older than the old), of which it is the seal, is in all respects well ordered and sure. Well ordered; for surely it is altogether a good and God-worthy constitution of things, which connects the blessing of pardon with the sacrificial death of Him through whom it comes to us. It is good in the interests of righteousness: for it provides that sin shall not be pardoned till it has been adequately atoned for by the sacrifice of the sinner's Friend; and it is just and right that without the shedding of the Righteous One's blood there should be no remission for the unrighteous. Then this economy serves well the interest of divine love, as it gives that love a worthy career, and free scope to display its magnanimous nature in bearing the burden of the sinful and the miserable. And yet once more, the constitution of the new covenant is admirably adapted to the great practical end aimed at by the scheme of redemption, viz. the elevation of a fallen, degraded race out of a state of corruption into a state of holiness. The gospel of forgiveness through Christ's death is the moral power of God to raise such as believe it out of the world's selfishness, and enmities, and baseness, into a celestial life of devotion, self-sacrifice, patience, and humility. If by faith in Christ be understood merely belief in the *opus operatum* of a vicarious death, the power of such a faith to elevate is more than questionable. But when faith is taken in its true scriptural sense, as implying not only belief in a certain transaction, the endurance of death by one for others, but also, and more especially, hearty appreciation of the spirit of the deed and the Doer, then its purifying and ennobling power is beyond all question. "The

love of Christ constraineth me;" and "I am crucified with Christ," as the result of such faith.

How poor is the Socinian scheme of salvation in comparison with this of the new covenant! In that scheme pardon has no real dependence on the blood of Jesus: He died as a martyr for righteousness, not as a Redeemer for the unrighteous. We are forgiven on repenting by a simple word of God. Forgiveness cost the Forgiver no trouble or sacrifice; only a word, or stroke of the pen signing a document, "Thus saith the Lord." What a frigid transaction! What cold relations it implies between the Deity and His creatures! How vastly preferable a forgiveness which means a giving: for[1]—and costs the Forgiver sorrow, sweat, pain, blood, wounds, death,—a forgiveness coming from a God who says in effect: "I will not, to save sinners, repeal the law which connects sin with death as its penalty; but I am quite willing for that end to become myself the law's victim." Such a forgiveness is at once an act of righteousness and an act of marvellous love; whereas forgiveness without satisfaction, though at first sight it may appear both rational and generous, manifests neither God's righteousness nor His love. A Socinian God, who pardons without atonement, is destitute alike of a passionate abhorrence of sin and of a passionate love to sinners.

Jesus once said, "He loveth much who hath much forgiven him." It is a deep truth, but there is another not less deep to be put alongside of it: we must feel that our forgiveness has cost the Forgiver much, in order to love Him much. It is because they feel this, that true professors of the catholic faith exhibit that passionate devotion to Christ which forms such a contrast to the cold intellectual homage paid by the Deist to his God. When the orthodox Christian thinks of the tears, agonies, bloody sweat, shame, and pain endured by the Redeemer, of His marred vision, broken heart, pierced side, lacerated hands and feet, his bosom burns with devoted love. The story of the passion opens all the fountains of feeling; and by no other way than the *via dolorosa* could Jesus have ascended the throne of His people's hearts.

The new covenant inaugurated by Christ's death is sure as

[1] This idea is well put in Bushnell's *Vicarious Sacrifice.*

well as orderly. It is reliably sealed by the blood of the Testator. For, first, what better guarantee can we have of the good-will of God? "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us." Looking at the matter in the light of justice, again, this covenant is equally sure. God is not unrighteous, to forget His Son's labour of love. As He is true, Christ *shall* see of the travail of His soul. It cannot be otherwise under the moral administration of Jehovah. Can the God of truth break His word? Can the Judge of all the earth permit one, and especially His own Son, to give Himself up, out of purest love, to sorrow, and pain, and shame, for His brethren, without receiving the hire which He desires, and which was promised Him—many souls, many lives, many sinners saved? Think of it: holiness suffering for righteousness' sake, and yet not having the consolation of doing something in the way of destroying unrighteousness, and turning the disobedient to the obedience of the just; love, by the impulse of its nature, and by covenant obligations, laid under a necessity of labouring for the lost, and yet doomed by the untowardness, or apathy, or faithlessness of the Governor of the universe to go unrewarded;—love's labour lost, nobody the better for it, things remaining as before: no sinner pardoned, delivered from the pit and restored to holiness; no chosen people brought out of darkness into marvellous light! Such a state of things cannot be in God's dominions. The government of God is carried on in the interest of Holy Love. It gives love free scope to bear others' burdens: it arranges that if she will do so, she shall feel the full weight of the burden she takes upon her; but it also arranges, by an eternal covenant of truth and equity, that when the burden has been borne, the Burden-bearer shall receive His reward in the form He likes best—in souls washed, pardoned, sanctified, and led to everlasting glory by Himself as His ransomed brethren or children.

The principle of vicarious merit involved in the doctrine that we are pardoned simply because Christ died for our sins, when looked at with unprejudiced eyes, commends itself to reason as well as to the heart. It means practically a

premium held out to foster righteousness and love. This offered premium carried Jesus through His heavy task. It was because, relying on His Father's promise, He saw the certain joy of saving many before Him, that He endured the cross. It is the same principle, in a restricted application of it, which stimulates Christians to fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of their Lord. They know that, if they be faithful, they shall not live unto themselves, but shall benefit Christ's mystic body the church, and also the world at large. If the fact were otherwise, there would be very little either of moral fidelity or of love in the world. If the moral government of the universe made it impossible for one being to benefit another by prayer or loving pains, impossible for ten good men to be a shield to Sodom, for the elect to be a salt to the earth, men would give up trying to do it; generous concern about public well-being would cease, and universal selfishness become the order of the day. Or if this state of things should not ensue, we should only have darkness in a worse form: the inscrutable enigma of Righteousness crucified without benefit to any living creature,—a scandal and a reproach to the government and character of God. If, therefore, we are to hold fast our faith in the divine holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, we must believe that the blood of Jesus doth most certainly procure for us the remission of sins; and likewise, that the blood of His saints, though neither available nor necessary to obtain for sinners the blessing of pardon before the divine tribunal—Christ's blood alone being capable of rendering us that service, and having rendered it effectually and once for all—is nevertheless precious in God's sight, and makes the people precious among whom it is shed, and is by God's appointment, in manifold ways, a source of blessing unto a world unworthy to number among its inhabitants men whom it knows not how to use otherwise than as lambs for the slaughter.

4. The sacrament of the Supper exhibits Christ not merely as a Lamb to be slain for a sin-offering, but as a Paschal Lamb to be eaten for spiritual nourishment. "Take, eat, this is my body." By this injunction Jesus taught the twelve, and through them all Christians, to regard His crucified humanity as the bread of

God for the life of their souls. We must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man spiritually by faith, as we eat the bread and drink the wine literally with the mouth.

In regarding Christ as the Bread of Life, we are not to restrict ourselves to the one benefit mentioned by Him in instituting the feast, the remission of sins, but to have in view all His benefits tending to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. Christ is the Bread of Life in all His offices. As a Prophet, He supplies the bread of divine truth to feed our minds; as a Priest, He furnishes the bread of righteousness to satisfy our troubled consciences; as a King, He presents Himself to us as an object of devotion, that shall fill our hearts, and whom we may worship without fear of idolatry.

As often as the Lord's Supper is celebrated, we are invited to contemplate Christ as the food of our souls in this comprehensive sense. As often as we eat the bread and drink the cup, we declare that Christ has been, and is now, our soul's food in all these ways. And as often as we use the Supper with sincerity, we are helped to appropriate Christ as our spiritual food more and more abundantly. Even as a symbol or picture—mysticism and magic apart—the Holy Supper aids our faith. Through the eye it affects the heart, as do poetry and music through the ear. The very mysticism and superstition that have grown around the sacraments in the course of ages, are a witness to their powerful influence over the imagination. Men's thoughts and feelings were so deeply stirred, they could not believe such power lay in mere symbols; and by a confusion of ideas natural to an excited imagination, they imputed to the sign all the virtues of the things signified. By this means faith was transferred from Christ the Redeemer, and the Spirit the Sanctifier, to the rite of baptism and the service of the mass. This result shows the need of knowledge and spiritual discernment to keep the imagination in check, and prevent the eyes of the understanding from being put out by the dazzling glare of fancy. Some, considering how thoroughly the eyes of the understanding have been put out by theories of sacramental grace, have been tempted to deny that sacraments are even *means* of

grace, and to think that institutions which have been so fearfully abused ought to be allowed to fall into desuetude. This is a natural reaction, but it is an extreme opinion. The sober, true view of the matter is, that sacraments are means of grace, not from any magic virtue in them or in the priest administering them, but as helping faith by sense, and still more by the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit, as the reward of an intelligent, sincere, believing use of them.

This, then, is what we have learned from the monumental stone. The Lord's Supper commemorates the Lord's *death;* points out that death as an event of transcendent importance; sets it forth, indeed, as the ground of our hope for the pardon of sin; and finally exhibits Christ the Lord, who died on the cross, as all to us which our spirits need for health and salvation—our mystic bread and wine. This rite, instituted by Jesus on the night on which He was betrayed, He meant to be repeated not merely by the apostles, but by His believing people in all ages till He came again. So we learn from Paul; so we might have inferred, apart from any express information. An act so original, so impressive, so pregnant with meaning, so helpful to faith, once performed, was virtually an enactment. In performing it, Jesus said in effect: "Let this become a great institution, a standing observance in the community to be called by my name."

And now, finally, in what spirit should an ordinance having such a significance as we have seen be observed by the church? In a spirit, surely, of humility, thankfulness, and brotherly love. Christians should come to the table as men confessing their sinfulness, acknowledging their desert of condemnation, devoutly thanking God for His covenant of grace, and His mercy to them in Christ, loving Him who loved them, and washed them from their sins in His own blood, and who daily feedeth their souls with heavenly food, and giving Him all glory and dominion; and loving one another—loving all redeemed men and believers in Jesus as brethren, and taking the Supper together as a family meal; withal praying that an ever-increasing number may experience the saving efficacy of Christ's death, and swell the song of those who sing the praise of the Lamb that was slain to take away the sin of the world.

After this fashion did the apostles and the apostolic church celebrate the Supper at Pentecost, after Jesus had ascended to glory. Continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Would that we now could keep the feast as they kept it then! But how much must be done ere that be possible! The moss of Time must be cleared away from the monumental stone, that its inscription may become once more distinctly legible; the accumulated debris of a millennium and a half of theological controversies about sacraments must be carted out of sight and mind;[1] the truth as it is in Jesus must be separated from the alloy of human error; the homely rite of the Supper must be divested of the state robes of elaborate ceremonial by which it has been all but stifled, and allowed to return to congenial primitive simplicity. These things, so devoutly to be wished, will come at last: if not on earth, in that day when the Lord Jesus will drink new wine with His people in the kingdom of His Father.

[1] The history of these controversies is very humiliating, and their consequences most disastrous. Through them the symbol of union has been turned into a chief cause of division. The church has remembered her Lord, and obeyed His commandment of love, as members of families sometimes remember a deceased parent; casting angry glances at each other across his grave, and retiring to the house, whose head they have buried, to squabble about the meaning of his will.

CHAPTER XXIII.

JUDAS ISCARIOT.

MATT. XXVI. 20–23 ; MARK XIV. 17–21 ; LUKE XXII. 21–23 ; JOHN XIII. 21–30.

BESIDES the feet-washing and the institution of the Supper, yet another scene occurred on the night preceding the Lord's death, helping to render it for ever memorable. On that same night, during the course of the evening meal,[1] Jesus exposed and expelled the false disciple, who had undertaken to deliver his Master into the hands of those who sought His life. Already, while occupied with the washing, He had made premonitory allusions to the fact that there was a traitor among the twelve, hinting that they were not all clean, and insinuating that there was one of them who *knew*, and would not *do*. Having finished and explained the service of lowly love, He next proceeded to the unwelcome task of indicating distinctly to which of the disciples He had been alluding. With spirit troubled at thought of the painful duty, and shuddering in presence of such satanic wickedness, He introduced the subject by making the general announcement: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." Thereafter, in answer to inquiries, He indicated the particular individual, by explaining that the traitor was he to whom He should give a sop or morsel after He had dipped it.[2]

The fact then announced was new to the disciples, but it

[1] Whether before or after the institution of the Supper has been much discussed, and is of no theological importance, though it has been thought to be so in connection with the question of strict communion.

[2] On the harmony of this subject, see Ebrard, *Gospel History;* and also Stier, *Reden Jesu*, who reconciles the Synoptics with John, by supposing two announcements of the traitor, with the Lord's Supper intervening, which he brings in between vers. 22 and 23 of John's narrative.

was not new to their Master. Jesus had known all along that there was a traitor in the camp. He had even hinted as much a full year before. But, excepting on that one occasion, He had not spoken of the matter hitherto, but had patiently borne it as a secret burden on His own heart. Now, however, the secret may be hid no longer. The hour is come when the Son of man must be glorified. Judas, for his part, has made up his mind to be the instrument of betraying his Lord to death; and such bad work, once resolved on, should by all means be done without delay. Then Jesus wants to be rid of the false disciple's company. He desires to spend the few last hours of His life in tender, confidential fellowship with His faithful ones, free from the irritation and distraction caused by the presence of an undeclared yet deadly enemy. Therefore He does not wait till it pleases Judas to depart; He bids him go, asserting His authority over him even after he has renounced his allegiance and given himself up to the devil's service. Reaching the sop, He says to him in effect: "I know thee, Judas; thou art the man: thou hast resolved to betray me: away, then, and do it." And then He says expressly: "That thou doest, do quickly." It was an order to go, and go at once.

Judas took the hint. He "went immediately *out*," and so finally quitted the society of which he had been an unworthy member. One wonders how such a man ever got *in:* how he ever was admitted into such a holy fellowship: how he came to be chosen one of the twelve. Did Jesus not know the real character of this man when He chose him? The words of our Lord, spoken just before, not to say a right view of His person, forbid us to think this. "I know," said He, while expounding the feet-washing, "whom I have chosen," meaning evidently to claim knowledge of them all, Judas included, at the time He chose them. Did He then choose Judas, knowing what he was, that He might have among the twelve one by whom He might be betrayed, and the Scriptures in that particular be fulfilled? So He seems to hint in the declaration just alluded to; for He goes on to say: "But, that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."[1] But it is not credible that Iscariot was

[1] John xiii. 18.

chosen merely to be a traitor, as an actor might be chosen by a theatre manager to play the part of Iago. The end pointed at in the scripture quoted might be ultimately served by his being chosen, but that end was not the motive of the choice. We may regard these two points as certain: on the one hand, that Judas did not become a follower of Jesus with treacherous intentions; and on the other, that Jesus did not elect Judas to be one of the twelve because He foreknew that he would eventually become a traitor.

If the choice of the false disciple was not due either to ignorance or to foreknowledge, how is it to be explained? The only explanation that can be given is that, apart from secret insight, Judas was to all appearance an eligible man, and could not be passed over on any grounds coming under ordinary observation. His qualities must have been such, that one not possessing the eye of omniscience, looking on him, would have been disposed to say of him, what Samuel said of Eliab: "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him."[1] In that case, his election by Jesus is perfectly intelligible. The Head of the church simply did what the church has to do in analogous instances. The church chooses men to fill sacred offices on a conjunct view of ostensible qualifications, such as knowledge, zeal, apparent piety, and correctness of outward conduct. In so doing, she often makes unhappy appointments, and confers dignity on persons of the Judas type, who dishonour the positions they fill. The mischief resulting is great; but Christ has taught us, by His example in choosing Judas, as also by the parable of the tares, that we must submit to the evil, and leave the remedy in higher hands. Out of evil God often brings good, as He did in the case of the traitor.

Supposing Judas to have been chosen to the apostleship on the ground of apparent fitness, what manner of man would that imply? A vulgar, conscious hypocrite, seeking some mean by-end, while professedly aiming at a higher? Not necessarily; not probably. Rather such an one as Jesus indirectly described Judas to be when He made that reflection: If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. The false disciple was a sentimental, plausible, self-deceived pietist,

[1] 1 Sam. xvi. 6.

who knew and approved the good, though not conscientiously practising it; one who, in æsthetic feeling, in fancy, and in intellect, had affinities for the noble and the holy, while in will and in conduct he was the slave of base selfish passions; one who, in the last resource, would always put self uppermost, yet could zealously devote himself to well-doing when personal interests were not compromised. In thus describing Judas, we draw not the picture of a solitary monster. Men of such a type are by no means so rare as some may imagine. History, sacred and profane, supplies numerous examples of them, playing an important part in human affairs. Balaam, who had the vision of a prophet and the soul of a miser, was such a man. Robespierre, the evil genius of the French Revolution, was another. The man who sent thousands to the guillotine had in his younger days resigned his office as a provincial judge, because it was against his conscience to pronounce sentence of death on a culprit found guilty of a capital offence.[1] A third example, more remarkable than either, may be found in the famous Greek Alcibiades, who, to unbounded ambition, unscrupulousness, and licentiousness, united a warm attachment to the greatest and best of the Greeks. The man who in after years betrayed the cause of his native city, and went over to the side of her enemies, was in his youth an enthusiastic admirer and disciple of Socrates. How he felt towards the Athenian sage, may be gathered from words put into his mouth by Plato in one of his dialogues: words which involuntarily suggest a parallel between the speaker and the unworthy follower of a greater than Socrates: "I experience towards this man alone (Socrates) what no one would believe me capable of: a sense of shame. For I am conscious of an inability to contradict him, and decline to do what he bids me; and when I go away, I feel myself overcome by the desire of popular esteem. Therefore I flee from him, and avoid him. But when I see him, I am ashamed of my admissions, and oftentimes I would be glad if he ceased to exist among the living; and yet I know well, that were that to happen, I should be still more grieved."[2]

[1] Carlyle, *French Revolution*, vol. i. pp. 170–1.

[2] Plato, Συμπόσιον: Alcibiades *loquitur*.

The character of Judas being such as we have described, the *possibility* at least of his turning a traitor becomes comprehensible. One who loves himself more than any man, however good, or any cause, however holy, is always capable of bad faith more or less heinous. He is a traitor at heart from the outset, and all that is wanted is a set of circumstances calculated to bring into play the evil elements of his nature. The question therefore arises, What were the circumstances which converted Judas from a possible into an actual traitor?

This is a question very hard indeed to answer. The crime committed by Iscariot, through which he has earned for himself "a frightful renown," remains, in spite of all the discussion whereof it has been the subject, still mysterious and unaccountable. Many attempts have been made to assign probable motives for the nefarious deed, some tending to excuse the doer, and others to aggravate his guilt; all more or less conjectural, and none perfectly satisfactory. As for the Gospel narratives, they do not explain, but merely record, the wickedness of Judas. The synoptical evangelists do indeed mention that the traitor made a bargain with the priests, and received from them a sum of money for the service rendered; and John, in his narrative of the anointing at Bethany, takes occasion to state that the fault-finding disciple was a thief, appropriating to his own uses money out of the common purse, of which he had charge.[1] These facts, of course, show Iscariot to have been a covetous man. None but a man of greedy, covetous spirit could have taken money for such a service. A vindictive man, whose vanity had been wounded, or who fancied himself in some way wronged, might play the traitor for love of revenge, but he would scorn to be paid for his work. The petty pilfering from the bag was also a sure sign of a mean, sordid soul. Perhaps the very fact of his being the purse-bearer to the company of Jesus may be regarded as an indication that his heart hankered after greed. He got the bag to carry, we imagine, because the other disciples were all supremely careless about money matters, while he had decided proclivities towards finance, and showed a desire to have charge of the superfluous funds. All the rest would be only

[1] John xii. 6.

too glad to find a brother willing to take the trouble; and having imbibed the spirit of their Master's precept, Take no thought for the morrow, they would not think of presenting themselves as rival candidates for the office.

The evangelists do therefore most distinctly represent Judas as a covetous man. But they do not represent his covetousness as the sole, or even as the principal, motive of his crime. That, indeed, it can hardly have been. For, in the first place, would it not have been a better speculation to have continued purse-bearer, with facilities for appropriating its contents, than to sell his Master for a paltry sum not exceeding five pounds?[1] Then what could induce a man whose chief and ruling passion was to amass money to become a disciple of Jesus at all? Surely following Him who had no place where to lay His head was not a likely way to money-making! Then, finally, how account for the repentance of the traitor, so great in its vehemence, though most unholy in its nature, on the hypothesis that his sole object was to gain a few pieces of silver? Avarice may make a man of splendid talents thoroughly mercenary and unscrupulous, as is said to have been the case with the famous Duke of Marlborough; but it is rarely, indeed, that a man given up to avaricious habits takes seriously to heart the crimes committed under their influence. It is the nature of avarice to destroy conscience, and to make all things, however sacred, venal. Whence, then, that mighty volcanic upheaving in the breast of Judas? Surely other passions were at work in his soul when he sold his Lord, than the cold and hardening love of gain!

Pressed by this difficulty, some have suggested that, in betraying Jesus, Judas was actuated principally by feelings of jealousy or spite, arising out of internal dissensions or imagined injuries. This suggestion is in itself not improbable. Offences might very easily come from various sources. The mere fact that Judas was not a Galilean,[2] but a native of another province, might give rise to misunderstanding. Human sympathies and antipathies depend on very little things. Kinsmanship, a common name, or a common birthplace, have far more power than the grand bonds which

[1] Renan, *Vie de Jesus*, p. 381. [2] *Vide* cap. iv.

connect us with all the race. In religion the same remark holds good. The ties of a common Lord, a common hope, and a common spiritual life, are feeble, as compared with those of sect and sectional religious custom and opinion. Then who knows what offences sprang from those disputes among the disciples who should be the greatest in the kingdom? What if the man of Kerioth had been made to feel that, whoever was to be the greatest, he at least had no chance, not being a Galilean? The mean, narrow habits of Judas as treasurer would be a third cause of bad feeling in the apostolic company. Supposing his dishonesty to have escaped observation, his tendency to put the interest of the bag above the objects for which its contents were destined, and so to dole out supplies either for the company or for the poor grudgingly, would be sure to be noticed, and, being noticed, would certainly, in such an outspoken society, not fail to be remarked on.[1]

These reflections show how ill-feeling might have arisen between Judas and his fellow-disciples; but what we have to account for is the hatred of the false disciple against his Master. Had Jesus, then, done anything to offend the man by whom He was betrayed? Yes! He had seen through him, and that was offence enough! For, of course, Judas knew that he was seen through. Men cannot live together in close fellowship long without coming to know with what feelings they are regarded by each other. If I distrust a brother, he will find it out, even should I attempt to conceal it. But the guileless and faithful One would make no attempt at concealment. He would not, indeed, offensively obtrude His distrust on the notice of Judas; but neither would He studiously hide it, to make matters go smoothly between them. He who so faithfully corrected the faults of the other disciples, would do His duty to this one also, and make him aware that He regarded his spirit and evil habits with disapprobation, in order

[1] Renan, *Vie de Jesus*, p. 382.

The poor were not forgotten by Jesus and His disciples (John xii. 5, xiii. 29). When supplies overflowed, they were not hoarded for to-morrow, but for the destitute. That they had more than they needed was the result of the love of grateful souls (Luke viii. 1–3), and the bag was kept, that nothing might be wasted; for the ethics of Jesus condemn waste as strongly as they discountenance carefulness. "Gather up the fragments," etc.

to bring him to repentance. And what the effect of such dealing would be, it is not difficult to imagine. On a Peter, correction had a most wholesome influence ; it brought him at once to a right mind. In the case of a Judas the result would be very different. The mere consciousness that Jesus did not *think* well of him, and still more the shame of an open rebuke, would breed sullen resentment and ever-deepening alienation of heart; till at length love was turned to hatred, and the impenitent disciple began to cherish *vindictive* passions.

The manner in which the betrayal was gone about supports the idea that the agent was actuated by malicious, revengeful feelings. Not content with giving such information as would enable the Jewish authorities to get their victim into their hands, Judas conducted the band that was sent to apprehend his Master, and even pointed Him out to them by an affectionate salutation. To one in a vengeful mood that kiss might be sweet; but to a man in any other mood, even though he were a traitor, how abhorrent and abominable! The salutation was entirely gratuitous: it was not necessary for the success of the plot ; for the military detachment was furnished with torches, and Judas could have indicated Jesus to them, while he himself kept in the background. But that way would not satisfy a bosom friend turned to be a mortal enemy.[1]

Along with malice and greed, the instinct of self-preservation may have had a place among the motives of Judas. Perfidy might be recommended by the suggestions of selfish prudence. The traitor was a shrewd man, and believed that a catastrophe was near. He understood better than his single-minded brethren the situation of affairs; for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. The other disciples, by their generous enthusiasms and patriotic hopes, were blinded to the signs of the times; but the false disciple, just because he was less noble, was more discerning. Disaster, then, being imminent, what was to

[1] Renan, *Vie de Jesus*, favours the idea that Judas was actuated by spite. He remarks, on the number of denunciators connected with secret societies: "Un léger dépit," he says, "suffisait pour faire d'un sectaire un traître" (p. 382).

be done? What but turn king's evidence and make terms for himself, so that Christ's loss might be his gain? If this baseness could be perpetrated under pretence of provocation, why then, so much the better!

These observations help to bring the crime of Judas Iscariot within the range of human experience. And on this account it was worth our while to make them; for it is not desirable that we should think of the traitor as an absolutely unique character, as the solitary perfect incarnation of satanic wickedness.[1] We should rather so think of his crime as that the effect of contemplating it on our minds shall be to make us, like the disciples, ask, Is it I? Is it I?[2] "Who can understand his errors? Keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins." There have been many traitors, besides Judas, who, from malice or for gain, have played false to noble men and noble causes; some of them perhaps even worse men than he. It was his unenviable distinction to betray the most exalted of all victims; but many who have been substantially guilty of his sin have not taken it so much to heart, but have been able to live happily after their deed of villany was wrought.

Yet, while it is important for our warning not to conceive of Judas as an isolated sinner, it is also most desirable that we should regard his crime as an incomprehensible mystery of iniquity. It is in this light that the fourth evangelist would have us look at it. He could have told us much about the mutual relations of Judas and Jesus tending to explain the deed of the former. But he has not chosen to do so. The only explanation he gives of the traitor's crime is, that Satan had taken possession of him. This he mentions twice over in one chapter, as if to express his own horror, and to awaken similar horror in his readers.[3] And to deepen the impression, after relating the exit of Judas, he adds the suggestive reflection that it took place after nightfall: "He then, having

[1] Such is the view of Daub in his *Judas Iscariot, oder Das Böse in Verhältniss zum Guten.*

[2] The disciples first trembled, each one for himself; then, after recovering their composure, began to wonder who it could be; and finally, Peter made a sign to John, who was next Jesus, to inquire.

[3] John xiii. 2, 27. Satan entered Judas first as the Satan of wicked purpose; then, after the sop (Christ's challenge to Judas), as the Satan of action.

received the sop, went immediately out: *and it was night.*" Fit time for such an errand!

Judas went out and betrayed his Lord to death, and then he went and took his own life. What a tragic accompaniment to the crucifixion was that suicide! What an impressive illustration of the evil of a double mind! To be happy in some fashion, Judas should either have been a better man or a worse. Had he been better, he would have been saved from his crime; had he been worse, he would have escaped torment before the time. As it was, he was bad enough to do the deed of infamy, and good enough to be unable to bear the burden of its guilt. Woe to such a man! Better for him, indeed, that he had never been born!

What a melancholy end was that of Judas to an auspicious beginning! Chosen to be a companion of the Son of man, and an eye and ear witness of His work, once engaged in preaching the gospel and casting out devils; now possessed of the devil himself, driven on by him to damnable deeds, and finally employed by a righteous Providence to take vengeance on his own crime. In view of this history, how shallow the theory that resolves all moral differences between men into the effect of circumstances! Who was ever better circumstanced for becoming good than Judas? Yet the very influences which ought to have fostered goodness served only to provoke into activity latent evil. Surely there are predestined vessels of wrath as well as predestined vessels of mercy!

If the conjecture be well founded, that disagreements among the disciples had their own share in putting Judas into bad humour, what an impressive lesson is his crime on the importance of a good understanding being maintained among brethren! Who can tell what public mischiefs, what tragedies, what treasons, may arise from private grudges? Two churchmen quarrel, and thenceforth they take different roads in all things. Whom the one loves, the other feels bound to hate. Whatever view of a public question the one espouses, the other as a matter of course determinedly opposes; and the church is rent asunder, and the cause of God is frustrated, and either or each of the alienated disciples

repeats the part of Judas, and betrays truth and the King of truth, to gratify unholy, wicked resentments.

Yet one other reflection. What a bitter cross must the constant presence of such a man as Judas have been to the pure, loving heart of Jesus! Yet how patiently it was borne for years! Herein He is an example and a comfort to His true followers, and for this end among others had He this cross to bear. The Redeemer of men had a companion who lifted up his heel against Him, that in this as in all other respects He might be like unto, and able to succour, His brethren. Has any faithful servant of Christ to complain that his love has been requited by hatred, his truth with bad faith; or that he is obliged to treat as a true Christian one whom he more than suspects to be a hypocrite? It is a hard trial, but let him look unto Jesus and be patient!

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DYING PARENT AND HIS LITTLE ONES (STILL RECLINING AT TABLE).

SECTION I.—*Words of Comfort and Counsel to the Sorrowing Children.*

JOHN XIII. 31–35, XIV. 1–4, 15–21.

THE exit of Judas into the darkness of night, on his still darker errand, was a summons to Jesus to prepare for death. Yet He was thankful for the departure of the traitor. It took a burden off His heart, and allowed Him to breathe and to speak freely; and if it brought Him, in the first place, near to His last sufferings, it brought Him also near to the ulterior joy of resurrection and exaltation to glory. Therefore His first utterance, after the departure took place, was an outburst of unfeigned gladness. When the false disciple was gone out, and the sound of his retiring footsteps had died away, Jesus said: "*Now* is the Son of man glorified: and God is glorified in Him; and God shall glorify Him in Himself, yea, He shall straightway glorify Him."[1]

But while, by a faith which substantiated things hoped for, and made evident things not visible, Jesus was able to see in present death coming glory, He remembered that He had around Him disciples to whom, in their weakness, His decease and departure would mean simply bereavement and desolation. Therefore He at once turned His thoughts to them, and proceeded to say to them such things as were suitable to their inward state and their outward situation.

In His last words to His own, the Saviour employed two

[1] John xiii. 31, 32. The words εἰ ὁ θεὸς ἐδοξάσθη ἐν αὐτῷ are regarded as spurious by Luthardt and other critics.

different styles of speech. First, He spoke to them as a dying parent addressing his children; and then He assumed a loftier tone, and spoke to them as a dying Lord addressing His servants, friends, and representatives. The words of comfort and counsel spoken by Jesus in the former capacity, we find in the passages cited from the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of John's Gospel; while the directions of the departing Lord to His future apostles are recorded in the two chapters which follow. We have to consider in this chapter the dying Parent's last words to His sorrowing children.

These, it will be observed, were not spoken in one continuous address. While the dying Parent spake, the children kept asking Him child's questions. First one, then another, then a third, and then a fourth, asked Him a question, suggested by what He had been saying. To these questions Jesus listened patiently, and returned answer as He could. The answers He gave, and the things He meant to say, without reference to possible interrogations, are mixed up together in the narrative. It will be convenient for our purpose to separate these from those; and to consider first, taken together, the words of comfort spoken by Jesus to His disciples, and then their questionings of Him, with the replies which these elicited.

Knowing to whom He speaks, Jesus begins at once with the nursery dialect. He addresses His disciples not merely as children, but as "little children," by the endearing name expressing His tender affection towards them, and His compassion for their weakness. Then He alludes to His death in a delicate roundabout way, adapted to childish capacity and feelings. He tells them He is going a road they cannot follow, and that they will miss Him as children miss their father when he goes out and never returns. "Yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you."

After this brief, simple preface, Jesus went on to give His little ones His first dying counsel. That was, that they should *love one another*. Surely it was a counsel well worthy

to come first! For what solace can be greater to orphaned ones than mutual love? Let the world be ever so dark and cheerless, while brothers in affliction are true brothers to each other in sympathy and reciprocal helpfulness, they have an unfailing well-spring of joy in the desert of sorrow. If, on the other hand, to all the other ills of life there be added alienation, distrust, antagonism, the bereaved are desolate indeed; their night of sorrow hath not even a solitary star to alleviate its gloom.

Anxious to secure due attention to a precept in itself most seasonable, and even among the disciples needing enforcement, Jesus conferred on it all the dignity and importance of a new commandment, and made the love enjoined therein the distinctive mark of Christian discipleship. "A new commandment," said He, "I give unto you, that ye love one another;" thus, on that memorable night, adding a third novelty to those already introduced—the new sacrament and the new covenant. The commandment and the covenant were new in the same sense; not as never having been heard of before, but as now for the first time proclaimed with the due emphasis, and assuming their rightful place of supremacy above the details of Mosaic moral legislation and the shadowy rites of the legal religious economy. *Now* love was to be the outstanding royal law, and free grace was to antiquate Sinaitic ordinances. And why now? In both cases, because Jesus was about to die. His death would be the seal of the New Testament, and it would exemplify and ratify the new commandment. Hence He goes on to say, after giving forth that new law, "as I have loved you." The past tense is not to be interpreted strictly here: the perfect must be taken as a *future perfect*, so as to include the death which was the crowning act of the Saviour's love. "Love one another," Jesus would say, "as I shall have loved you, and as ye shall know that I have loved you when ye come to need the consolation of so loving each other." So understanding His words, we see clearly why He calls the law of love new. His own love in giving His life for His people was a new thing on earth; and a love among His followers, one towards another, kindred in spirit and ready to do the same thing if

needful, would be equally a novelty at which the world would stare, asking in wonder whence it came, till at length it perceived that the men who so loved had been with Jesus.

The *second* word of comfort spoken by Jesus to the little ones He was about to leave was an exhortation to faith: "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, and believe in me."[1] The exhortation embraces in its scope the whole interests of the disciples, secular and spiritual, temporal and eternal. Their dying Master recommends them first to exercise faith in God, mainly with reference to temporal anxieties. He says to them, in effect: "I am going to leave you, my children; but be not afraid. You shall not be in the world as poor orphans, defenceless and unprovided for; God my Father will take care of you; trust in Divine Providence, and let peace rule in your hearts." Having thus exhorted them to exercise faith in God the Provider, Jesus next exhorts His little ones to believe in Himself, with special reference to those spiritual and eternal interests for the sake of which they had left all and followed Him. "Believing in God for food and raiment, believe in me too, and be assured that all I said to you about the kingdom and its joys and rewards is true. Soon ye will find it very hard to believe this: it will seem to you as if the promises I made were deceptive, and the kingdom a dream and a hallucination. But do not allow such dark thoughts to take possession of your minds: recollect what you know of me, and ask yourselves whether it is likely that He whose companions you have been during these years, would deceive you with romantic promises that were never to be fulfilled."

The kingdom and its rewards; these were the things which Jesus had encouraged His followers to expect. Of these, accordingly, He proceeded next to speak, in the style suited to the character He had assumed,—that, viz., of a dying parent addressing his children. "In my Father's house," said He, "are

[1] John xiv. 1. The verb πιστεύετε in either clause may be either imperative or indicative, and four different renderings are possible. The rendering in the Eng. ver. and that given above come practically to the same thing. Even in the indicative, Ye believe in God, an imperative is implied: Exercise and draw comfort from your faith in God.

many mansions." Here was a cheering prospect for them! In the hour of despondency the little ones would think themselves orphans, without a home either in earth or in heaven. But their Friend assures them that they should not merely have a home, but a splendid one; not merely a humble shed to shelter them from the storm, but a glorious palace to reside in, in a region where storms were unknown,—a house with a great many rooms in it, supplying abundant accommodation for them all, incomparably more capacious than the temple which had been the earthly dwelling-place of God.

This child-like yet profound saying of the Lord Jesus is not only cheering, but most stimulating to the imagination. The "many mansions" suggest many thoughts. We think with pleasure of the vast numbers which the many-mansioned house is capable of containing. We may too, harmlessly, though perhaps fancifully, with the saints of other ages, think of the lodgings in the Father's house as not only many in number, but also as many in kind, corresponding to the classes or ranks of the residents.[1] But to some the most comfortable thought of all suggested by this pregnant poetic word is the certainty of an eternal life. To men who have doubted concerning the life beyond, the grand desideratum is not detailed information respecting the site, and the size, and the architecture of the celestial city, but to know for certain that there is such a city, that there is an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. This desideratum is supplied in this word of Christ. For whatever the many mansions may mean besides, they do at the least imply that there is a state of happy existence to be reached by believers, as He in whom they believe reached it, viz. through death. The life everlasting, whatever its conditions, is undoubtedly taught here. And it is taught with authority. Jesus speaks as one who knows, not (like Socrates) as one who merely has an opinion on the subject. At his farewell meeting with his friends

[1] For Cyprian's opinion, see p. 257 of this work. The same idea occurs in Irenæus, *Hæres.* v. 36. No doubt there is a truth in this view. There will be Christians of various ranks in heaven—princes and doorkeepers; also of various schools, High Church, Broad Church, and Low Church, able at last to believe each other to *be* Christians.

before he drank the hemlock cup, the Athenian sage discussed with them the question of the immortality of the soul. On that question he strongly maintained the affirmative; but still only as one who looked on it as a fair subject for discussion, and knew that there was a good deal to be said on both sides. But Jesus does more than maintain the affirmative on the subject of the life to come. He speaks thereon with oracular confidence, offering to us not the frail raft of a probable opinion, whereon we may perilously sail down the stream of life towards death; but the strong ship of a divine word, wherein one may sail securely, for which Socrates and his companions sighed.[1] And He so speaks with a full sense of the responsibility He thereby takes upon Himself. "If it were not so," He remarked to His disciples, "I would have told you;" which is as much as to say, that one should not encourage such expectations as He had led them to entertain unless he were sure of his ground. It was not enough to have an opinion about the world to come: one who took the responsibility of asking men to leave this present world for its sake, should be quite certain that it was a reality, and not a dream.

What condescension to the weakness of the disciples is shown in this self-justifying reflection of their Lord! What an aid also it lends to our faith in the reality of future bliss! Surely such an one as Jesus Christ would not have spoken in this way, unless He had possessed authentic information about the world beyond! Look at Him simply as a man. Did He not know the difference between opinion and knowledge, probability and certainty; and could He have assumed, in connection with the former, the confident tone which is justifiable only in connection with the latter, even when expressing His own convictions, much more when dealing with the convictions of other men? The man Jesus could not have spoken with such confidence at all, and the fact that He does so speak

[1] *Phædo*, cap. xxxv.: "One must do one of two things (in reference to the question of a future state): either learn how the case stands, or find out; or if these are impossible, taking the best and least easily refuted of human opinions, and embarking on it as on a raft (σχεδίας), sail perilously through life; unless one could more securely and less perilously sail upon a stronger vessel or some divine word (λόγου θείου τινος)."

shows that He is more than man. He speaks of the world above so confidently because He has been there, and is about to go thither again.

One thing more we have to notice in this second word of consolation, viz. the light in which Jesus presents His own death to His disciples, without expressly naming it. "I go," said He, "to prepare a place for you."[1] What a beautiful aspect can be put by faith on the blackest providences! To men who did not understand the mystery of Christ's death, there could not be a darker outlook than that of the eleven at the present crisis. It was as if their hope of a divine kingdom, and of redemption to Israel, had turned out a delusion, and as if Jesus their Master was not a deceiver, only because He was Himself deceived. Yet that death which seemed to say, There is no hope for you, my children; there is no home for you, you are verily orphans, was to be the very means by which their hope would be fulfilled, and a home secured. Jesus, in dying and leaving the earth, was simply going to a happy land, to prepare a place of abode for His children; intending, when all things were ready, to return, and take them to their new home, where they should dwell with Him for ever. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

What He meant by "preparing" the place, and when He was to come again for those He left behind, Jesus did not explain. He only added, as if coaxing them to take a cheerful view of the situation, "And whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know;"[2] meaning, "Think whither I go—to the Father; and think of my death as merely my way thither; and so let my absence from the world not make you sad, nor my death seem something dreadful."

The *third* λόγος τῆς παρακλήσεως begins at the fifteenth verse of the same chapter, and extends to the twenty-first.

[1] The ὅτι before πορεύομαι in the reading preferred by Alford and others is perplexing for expositors, but for our object it is not necessary to advert to it at all.

[2] Luthardt and Alford read here, καὶ ὅπου ἐγὼ ὑπάγω—οἴδατε τὴν ὁδόν: and whither I go—ye know the way.

The leading thought therein is the promise of another Comforter who should take the place of Him who was going away, and make the bereaved feel as if He were still with them. In the second word of comfort, Jesus had said that He was going to provide a home for the little ones, and that then He would return and take them to it. In this third final word He virtually promises to be present with them by substitute, even when He is absent. "I will pray the Father," He says, "and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever"[1] (not for a season, as has been the case with me). Then He tells them who this wonderful Comforter is: His name is "the *Spirit of Truth*."[2] Then, lastly, He gives them to understand that this Spirit of Truth will be a Comforter to them, by restoring, as it were, the consciousness of His own presence, so that the coming of this other Comforter will just be, in a sense, His own spiritual return. "I will not leave you comfortless," He assures them: "I will not leave you *orphans, I* will come to you;"[3] promising thereby not a different thing, but the same thing which He had promised just before, in different terms. How the other Comforter would make Himself an *alter ego* of the departed one, He does not here distinctly explain. At a subsequent stage in His discourse, He did inform His disciples how the wonder would be achieved. The Spirit would make the absent Jesus present to them again, by bringing to their remembrance all His words,[4] by testifying of Him,[5] and by guiding them into an intelligent apprehension of all Christian truth.[6] All this, though not said here, is sufficiently hinted at by the name given to the new Paraclete. He is called the Spirit of Truth, not the Holy Spirit, as elsewhere, because He was to comfort by enlightening the minds of the disciples in the knowledge of Christ, so that they should see Him clearly by the spiritual eye, when He was no longer visible to the eye of the body.

This spiritual vision, when it came, was to be the true effectual consolation for the absence of the Jesus whom the eleven had known after the flesh. It would be as the dawn

[1] John xiv. 16. [2] Ver. 17. [3] Ver. 18.
[4] Ver. 26. [5] John xv. 26. [6] John xvi. 13, 14.

of day, which banishes the fears and discomforts of the night. While the night lasts, all comforts are but partial alleviations of discomfort. A father's hand and voice have a reassuring effect on the timid heart of his child, as they walk together by night; but while the darkness lasts, the little one is liable to be scared by objects dimly seen, and distorted by fear-stricken fancy into fantastic forms. "In the night-time men (much more children) think every bush a thief;" and all can sympathize with him who said, "It is my nature to be afraid of darkness." Light is welcome even when it only reveals to us the precise nature and extent of our miseries. If it do not in that case drive sorrow away, it helps at least to make it calm and sober.

Such cold comfort, however, was not what Jesus promised His followers. The Spirit of Truth was not to come merely to show them their desolation in all its nakedness, and to reconcile them to it as inevitable, by teaching them to regard their early hopes as romantic dreams, the kingdom of God as a mere ideal, and the death of Jesus as the fate that awaits every earnest attempt to realize that ideal. Miserable comfort this! to be told that all earnest religion must end in infidelity, and all enthusiasm in despair!

The third word of consolation was introduced by an injunction laid by Jesus on His disciples. "If ye love me," said He to them, "keep my commandments." It is probable that the speaker meant here to set the true way of showing love over against an unprofitable, bootless one, which His hearers were in danger of taking; that, namely, of grieving over His loss. We may paraphrase the words so as to indicate the connection of thought somewhat as follows: "If ye love me, show not your love by idle sorrow, but by keeping my commandments; whereby ye shall render to me a real service. Let the precepts which I have taught you from time to time be your concern, and be not troubled about yourselves. Leave your future in my hands; I will look after it: for I will pray the Father, and He will send you another Comforter."[1]

[1] The words of Germanicus dying (at Antioch A.D. 19: supposed to be poisoned by direction of Tiberius) to his friends occur to the mind here: "Non hoc

But this paraphrase, though true so far as it goes, does not exhaust the meaning of this weighty word. Jesus prefaces the promise of the Comforter by an injunction to keep His commandments, because He wishes His disciples to understand that the fulfilment of the promise and the keeping of the commandments go together. This truth is hinted at by the word "and" which forms the link of connection between precept and promise; and it is reiterated under various modes of expression in the passage we are now considering. The necessity of moral fidelity in order to spiritual illumination is plainly taught when the promised Comforter is described as a Spirit "whom the *world* cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him."[1] It is still more plainly taught in the last verse of this section: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."[2] As in His first great sermon (on the mount) Jesus had said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" so in His farewell discourse to His own, He says in effect: Be pure in heart, and through the indwelling Spirit of Truth ye shall see me, even when I am become invisible to the world.[3]

Life and light go together: such is the doctrine of the Lord Jesus, as of all Scripture. Keeping in mind this great truth, we comprehend the diverse issues of religious perplexities; in one resulting in the illuminism of infidelity; in another, in an enlightened, unwavering faith. The "illumination" which consists in the extinction of the heavenly luminaries of faith and hope, is the penalty of not faithfully keeping Christ's commandments; that which consists in the restoration of the spiritual lights after a temporary obscuration by the clouds of doubt, is the reward of holding fast moral integrity when faith is eclipsed, and of fearing God while walking in darkness. A man, *e.g.*, who, having believed for

præcipuum amicorum munus est, prosequi defunctum ignavo quæstu: sed quæ voluerit meminisse, quæ mandaverit exsequi: flebunt Germanicum etiam ignoti: vindicabitis vos, si me potius quam fortunam meam fovebatis."—Taciti *Annal.* ii. 71.

[1] John xiv. 17. [2] John xiv. 21. [3] John xiv. 19.

a time the divinity of Christ and the life to come, ends by believing that Jesus was only a deluded enthusiast, and that the divine kingdom is but a beautiful dream, will not be found to have made any great effort to realize his own ideal, certainly not to have been guilty of the folly of suffering for it. To many, the creed which resolves all religion into impracticable ideals is very convenient. It saves a world of trouble and pain; it permits them to think fine thoughts, without requiring them to do noble actions, and it substitutes romancing about heroism in the place of being heroes.

Section II.—*The Children's Questions, and the Adieu.*

John xiii. 36–38, xiv. 5–7, 8–14, 22–31.

The questions put successively by four of the little ones to their dying Parent now invite our attention.

The *first* of these was asked by the disciple who was ever the most forward to speak his mind—Simon Peter. His question had reference to the intimation made by Jesus about His going away. Peter had noted and been alarmed by that intimation. It seemed to hint at danger; it plainly spoke of separation. Tormented with uncertainty, terrified by the vague presentiment of hidden peril, grieved at the thought of being parted from his beloved Master, he could not rest till he had penetrated the mystery; and at the very first pause in the discourse he abruptly inquired, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" thinking, though he did not say, "Where Thou goest, I will go."

It was to this unexpressed thought that Jesus directed His reply. He did not say where He was going; but, leaving that to be inferred from His studied reserve, and from the tone in which He spoke, He simply told Peter: "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards." By this answer He showed He had not forgotten that it was with children He had to deal. He does not look for heroic behaviour on the part of Peter and his brother disciples at the approaching crisis. He does indeed expect that they shall play the hero by and by, and follow Him on the martyr's

path, bearing their cross, in accordance with the law of discipleship proclaimed by Himself in connection with the first announcement of His own death. But meantime He expects them to behave simply as little children, running away in terror when the moment of danger arrives.

While this was the idea Jesus had of Peter, it was not the idea which Peter had of himself. He thought himself no child, but a man every inch. Dimly apprehending what following his Master meant, he deemed himself perfectly competent to the task *now*, and felt almost aggrieved by the poor opinion entertained of his courage. "Why," he therefore asked in a tone of injured virtue, "Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now?" Is it because there is danger, imprisonment, death, in the path? If that be all, it is no good reason, for "I will lay down my life for Thy sake." Ah, that "why," how like a child; that self-confidence, what an infallible mark of spiritual weakness!

If the answer of Jesus to Peter's first question was indirect and evasive, that which He gave to his second was too plain to be mistaken. "Wilt thou," He said, taking up the disciple's words, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice."[1] Better for Peter had he been content with the first reply! Yet no: not better, only pleasanter for the moment. It was good for Peter to be thus bluntly told what his Lord thought of him, and to be shown once for all his own picture drawn by an unerring hand. It was just what was needed to lead him to self-knowledge, and to bring on a salutary crisis in his spiritual history. Already more than once he had been faithfully dealt with for faults springing from his characteristic vices of forwardness and self-confidence. But such correction in detail had produced no deep impression, no decisive lasting effect on his mind. He was still ignorant of himself, still as forward, self-confident, and self-willed as ever, as the declaration he had just made

[1] So substantially in the synoptical Gospels (Matt. xxvi. 33–35; Mark xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 34). The harmony of this subject is difficult. Some suppose two allusions to Peter's denial, once in the upper chamber, and a second time on the way to Gethsemane. See Stier for this view.

most clearly showed. There was urgent need, therefore, for a lesson that would never be forgotten; for a word of correction that would print itself indelibly on the erring disciple's memory, and bear fruit throughout his whole after life. And here it is at last, and in good season. The Lord tells His *brave* disciple that he will forthwith play the coward; He tells His *attached* disciple, to whom separation from his Master seems more dreadful than death, that he will, ere many hours are past, deny all acquaintance or connection with Him whom he so fondly loves. He tells him all this at a time when the prophecy must be followed by its fulfilment almost as fast as a flash of lightning is followed by its peal of thunder. The prediction of Jesus, so minutely circumstantial, and the denial of Peter, so exactly corresponding, both by themselves so remarkable, and coming so close together, will surely help to make each other impressive; and it will be strange indeed if the two combined do not, by the blessing of God, in answer to the Master's intercessory prayer, make of the fallen disciple quite another man. The result will doubtless prove the truth of another prophetic word reported by Luke as having been spoken by the Lord to His disciple on the same occasion.[1] The chaff will be separated from the wheat in Peter's character; he will undergo a great change of spirit; and being converted from self-confidence and self-will to meekness and modesty, he will be fit at length to strengthen others, to be a shepherd to the weak, and, if needful, to bear his cross, and so follow his Master through death to glory.

The *second* question proceeded from Thomas, the melancholy disciple, slow to believe, and prone to take sombre views of things. The mind of this disciple fastened on the statement wherewith Jesus concluded His second word of consolation: "Whither I go, the way ye know." That statement seemed to Thomas not only untrue, but unreasonable. For himself, he was utterly unconscious of possessing the knowledge for which the speaker had given His hearers credit; and, moreover, he did not see how it was possible for any of them to possess it. For Jesus had never yet distinctly told them whither He was going; and not knowing the *terminus*

[1] Luke xxii. 31.

ad quem, how could any one know the road which led thereto? Therefore, in a dry, matter-of-fact, almost cynical tone, this second interlocutor remarked: "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?"[1]

This utterance was thoroughly characteristic of the man, as we know him from John's portraiture.[2] While the practical-minded Peter asks Jesus where He is going, determined if possible to follow Him, Thomas does not think it worth his while to make any such inquiry. Not that he is unconcerned about the matter. He would like well to know whither his Lord is bound; and, if it were possible, he would be as ready as his brother disciple to keep Him company. Danger would not deter him. He had said once before, "Let us go, that we may die with Him," and he could say the same thing honestly again; for though he is gloomy, he is not selfish or cowardly. But just as on that earlier occasion, when Jesus, disregarding the warnings of His disciples, resolved to go from Peræa to Judæa on a visit to the afflicted family of Bethany, Thomas took the darkest view of the situation, and looked on death as the certain fate awaiting them all, so now he resigns himself to a hopeless, desponding mood. The thought of the Master's departure makes him so sad, that he has no heart to ask questions concerning the why or the whitherward. He resigns himself to ignorance on these matters as an inevitable doom. Whither? whither? I know not; who can tell? The future is dark. The Father's house you spoke of, where in the universe can it be? Is there really such a place at all?

Even the question put by Thomas, "How can we know the way?" is not so much a question, as an apology for not asking questions. It is not a demand for information, but a gentle complaint against Jesus for expecting His disciples to be informed. It is not the expression of a desire for knowledge, but an excuse for ignorance. The melancholy disciple is for the present hopeless of knowing either *end* or *way*, and therefore he is incurious and listless. Far from seeking light, he is rather in the humour to exaggerate the darkness. As Jonah in his angry mood indulged in querulousness, so Thomas

[1] John xiv. 5. [2] John xi. 16, xx. 24–29.

in his sadness delights in gloom. He waits not eagerly for the dawn of day; he rather takes pleasure in the night, as congenial to his present frame of mind. Good men of melancholic temperament are, at the best, like men walking amid the solemn gloom of a forest. Sadness is the prevailing feeling in their souls, and they are content to have occasional broken glimpses of heaven, like peeps of the sky through the leafy roof of the wood. But Thomas is so heavy-hearted, that he hardly cares even for a glimpse of the celestial world; he looks not up, but walks through the dark forest at a slow pace, with his eyes fixed upon the ground.

The argumentative proclivities [1] of this disciple appear in his words as well as his proneness to despondency. Another man in despairing mood might have said: We know neither end nor way; we are utterly in the dark both as to whither you are going, and as to the road by which you are to go thither. But Thomas must needs reason; his mental habit leads him to represent one piece of ignorance as the necessary consequence of another: We know not the *terminus ad quem*, and therefore it is impossible that we can know the way. This man is afflicted with the malady of thought; he gives reasons for everything, and he will demand reasons for everything. Here he demonstrates the impossibility of a certain kind of knowledge; at another crisis we shall find him insisting on palpable demonstration that his Lord is indeed risen from the dead.

How does Jesus reply to the lugubrious speech of Thomas? Most compassionately and sympathetically, now as at another time. To the curious question of Peter He returned an evasive answer; to the sad-hearted Thomas, on the other hand, He vouchsafes information which had not been asked. And the information given is full even to redundancy. The disciple had complained of ignorance concerning the end, and especially concerning the way; and it would have been a sufficient reply to have said, The Father is the end, and I am the way. But the Master, out of the fulness of His heart, said more than this. With firm, emphatic tones He uttered this oracular response, meant for the ear not of Thomas alone,

[1] On the so-called Rationalism of Thomas, see cap. xxviii. sec. 3.

but of all the world: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Comparing this momentous declaration with the preceding word of consolation, we observe a change in the mode of presenting the truth. The Father Himself takes the place of the Father's house with its many mansions, as the end; and Jesus, instead of being the guide who shall one day lead His children to the common home, becomes Himself the *way*. The kind Master alters His language, in gracious accommodation to childish capacities. Of Christians at the best it may be said, in the words of Paul, that now, in this present time-life, they see the heavenly and the eternal as through a glass, in enigmas.[1] But the disciples at this crisis in their history were not able to do even so much. Jesus had held up before their eyes the brightly polished mirror of a beautiful parable concerning a house of many mansions, and they had seen nothing there; no image, but only an opaque surface. The future remained dark and hidden as before. What, then, was to be done? Just what Jesus did. Persons must be substituted for places. Disciples weak in faith must be addressed in this fashion: Can ye not comprehend whither I am going? Think, then, to *whom* I go. If ye know nothing of the place called heaven, know at least that ye have a Father there. And as for the way to heaven, let that for you mean *me*. Knowing me, ye need no further knowledge; believing in me, ye may look forward to the future, even to death itself, without fear or concern.

Oh that doubting, melancholy Thomases would but listen to Him who speaketh to them thus! With a Father in heaven, and with Jesus Christ ever in our eye and in our heart, we might get through this world very comfortably, notwithstanding the darkness which hems us in on every side.

On looking more narrowly into the response given by Jesus to Thomas, we find it by no means easy to satisfy ourselves as to how precisely it should be expounded. The very fulness of this saying perplexes us; it is dark with excess of light. Interpreters differ as to how the Way, the Truth, and the Life are to be distinguished, and how they are related to each other.

[1] ἐν αἰνίγματι, 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

One offers, as a paraphrase of the text: I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of the ladder which leads to heaven; another: I am the example, the teacher, the giver of eternal life; while a third subordinates the two last attributes to the first, and reads: I am the true way of life.[1] Each view is true in itself, yet one hesitates to accept either of them as exhausting the meaning of the Saviour's words.

Whatever be the preferable method of interpreting these words of our Lord, two things at least are clear from them. Jesus sets Himself forth here as all that man needs for eternal salvation, and as the only Saviour. He is way, truth, life, everything; and He alone conducts to the Father. He says to men in effect: "What is it you want? Is it light? I am the light of the world, the revealer of the Father: for this end I came, that I might declare Him. Or is it reconciliation you want? I by that very death which I am about to endure am the *Reconciler.* My very end in dying is to bring you who are far off nigh to God, as to a forgiving, gracious Father. Or is it life, spiritual, never-ending life, you seek? Believe in me, and ye shall never die; or though ye die, I will raise you again to enter on an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens. Let all who seek these things look to *Me.* Look to me for light, not to rabbis or philosophers; not even to nature and providence. These last do indeed reveal God, but they do so dimly. The light of creation is but the starlight of theology, and the light of providence is but its moonlight, while I am the sunlight. My Father's name is written in hieroglyphics in the works of creation; in providence and history it is written in plain letters, but so far apart that it takes much study to put them together, and so spell out the divine name: in me the divine name is written so that he may read who runs, and the wisdom of God is become milk for babes.[2] Look to me also for reconciliation, not to legal

[1] Luther, Grotius, Augustine, quoted in Lange, *Bibelwerk das Evang. Johan.*

[2] Verbum caro factum est, ut infantiæ nostræ lactesceret sapientia tua, per quam creasti omnia. August. *Conf.* vii. 18. The idea that Christ became man to be the Revealer of God is made very prominent in the tract of Athanasius, περὶ τῆς Ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ λόγου.

sacrifices. That way of approaching God is antiquated now. I am the new, the living, the eternal way into the holy of holies, through which all may draw near to the divine presence with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. Look to me, finally, for eternal blessedness. I am He who, having died, shall rise again, and live for evermore, and shall hold in my hands the keys of Hades and of death, and shall open the kingdom of heaven to all believers."

The doctrine that in Christ is the fulness of grace and truth, is very comforting to those who know Him; but what of those who know Him not, or who possess only such an implicit, unconscious knowledge, as hardly merits the name? Does the statement we have been considering exclude such from the possibility of salvation? It does not. It declares that no man cometh to the Father but by Christ, but it does not say how much knowledge is required for salvation.[1] It is possible that some may be saved by Christ, and for His sake, who know very little about Him indeed. This we may infer from the case of the disciples themselves. What did they know about the way of salvation at this period? Jesus addresses them as persons yet in ignorance concerning Himself, saying: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." Nevertheless, He has no hesitation in speaking to them as persons who should be with Him in the Father's house. And what shall we say of Job, and the Syrophœnician woman, and the Ethiopian eunuch, and Cornelius, and we may add, after Calvin, the Syrian courtier Naaman? We cannot say *more*

[1] The doctrine of the Westminster Confession is ambiguous on this point. Its words are: "Much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess." This statement may mean either that the persons in question absolutely cannot be saved,—their non-profession of the Christian religion excluding them from being saved in the true way, and all other ways being unavailable; or that they cannot be saved by any other way: if saved, it must be in spite of other ways, and through the one true way—Christ. The statement in the first chapter, *Of the Holy Scripture*, seems to make the balance incline towards the former view. In that chapter the insufficiency of the light of nature to give that knowledge of God which is necessary for salvation is affirmed, and the affirmation is made the basis of the doctrine of revelation. The strongest statement of all is in the *Larger Catechism*, Q. 60, which seems to affirm positively that none can be saved who have not heard the gospel.

than the great theologian of Geneva has himself said concerning such cases: "I confess," he writes, "that in a certain respect their faith was implicit, not only as to the person of Christ, but as to His virtue and grace, and the office assigned Him by the Father. Meanwhile it is certain that they were imbued with principles which gave some taste of Christ, however slight."[1] It is doubtful whether even so much can be said of Naaman; though Calvin, without evidence, and merely to meet the exigencies of a theory, argues that it would have been too absurd, when Elisha had spoken to him of little matters, to have been silent on the most important subject. Or if we grant to Naaman the slight taste contended for, must we not grant it also, with Justin Martyr[2] and Zwingli, to Socrates and Plato and others, on the principle that all true knowledge of God, by whomsoever possessed and however obtained, whether it be sunlight, moonlight, or starlight, is virtually Christian; in other words, that Christ, just because He is the only light, is the light of every man who hath any light in him?

This principle, while it has its truth, may very easily be perverted into an argument against a supernatural revelation. Hence in its very first chapter, *Of the Holy Scripture*, the Westminster Confession broadly asserts that the light of nature and the works of creation and providence are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of His will which is necessary unto salvation. While strongly maintaining this truth, however, we must beware of being drawn into a tone of disparagement in speaking of what may be learnt of God from these lower sources. While walking in the sunlight, we must not despise the dimmer luminaries of the night, or forget their existence, as in the day-time men forget the moon and the

[1] Calv. *Inst.* iii. ii. 32.

[2] Χριστῷ δὲ τῷ καὶ ὑπὸ Σωκράτου ἀπὸ μέρους γνωσθέντι (λόγος γὰρ ἦν, καὶ ἔστιν ὁ ἐν παντὶ ὤν). *Apol.* ii. 10; so also *Apol.* i. 5. The anticipations of Christian thought in Plato and in Euripides are familiar to scholars. The following opinion on the salvation of the heathen from Richard Baxter deserves notice:—"I am not so much inclined (as he once was) to pass a peremptory sentence of damnation upon all that never heard of Christ, having some more reasons than I knew of before to think that God's dealing with such is much unknown to us." *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, lib. i. part i., comparing his earlier and later religious views.

stars. By so doing, we should be virtually disparaging the Scriptures themselves. For much that is in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, is but a record of what inspired men had learned from observation of God's works in creation, and of His ways in providence. All cannot, indeed, see as much there as they saw. On the contrary, a revelation was needed not only to make known truths lying beyond the teachings of natural religion, but even to direct men's dim eyes to truths which, though visible in nature, were in fact for the most part not seen. The Bible, in the quaint language of Calvin, is a pair of spectacles, through which our weak eyes see the glory of God in the world.[1] Yet what is seen through the spectacles by weak eyes is in many passages just what might be seen by strong eyes without their aid,—"nothing being placed there which is not visible in the creation."[2]

These observations may help us to cherish hope for those whose opportunities of knowing Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life," are small. They do not, however, justify those who, having abundant facilities for knowing Christ, are content with the minimum of knowledge. There is more hope for the heathen than for such men. To their number no true Christian can belong. A genuine disciple may know little to begin with: this was the case even with the apostles themselves; but he will not be satisfied to be in the dark. He will desire to be enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, and will pray, "Lord, show us the Father."

Such was the prayer of Philip, the *third* disciple who took part in the dialogue at the supper-table. Philip's request, like Thomas's question, was a virtual denial of a statement previously made by Jesus. "If ye had known me," Jesus had said to Thomas, "ye should have known my Father also;" and then He had added, "and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him." This last statement Philip felt himself

[1] Sicuti senes vel lippi, et quicunque oculis caligant si vel pulcherrimum volumen illis objicias quamvis agnoscant esse aliquid scriptum, vix tamen duas voces contexere poterunt; specillis autem interpositis adjuti distincte legere incipient: ita Scriptura confusam alioqui Dei notitiam in mentibus nostris colligens, discussâ caligine liquido nobis verum Deum ostendit.—*Inst.* i. vi. 1.

[2] Nihil tamen illic (Ps. cxlv., etc.) ponitur quod non liceat in creaturis contemplari.—CALV. *Inst.* i. x. 2.

unable to homologate. "Seen the Father! would it were so! nothing would gratify us more: Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

In itself, the prayer of this disciple was most devout and praiseworthy. There can be no loftier aspiration than that which seeks the knowledge of God the Father, and no better index of a spiritual mind than to account such knowledge the *summum bonum*. In these respects, the sentiments uttered by Philip were fitted to gratify his Master. In other respects, however, they were not so satisfactory. The ingenuous inquirer had evidently a very crude notion of what seeing the Father amounted to. He fancied it possible, and he appears to have wished, to see the Father as he then saw Jesus—as an outward object of vision to the eye of the body. Then, supposing that to be his wish, how foolish the reflection, "and it sufficeth us!" What good could a mere external vision of the Father do any one? And finally, that same reflection painfully showed how little the disciples had gained hitherto from intercourse with Jesus. They had been with Him for years, yet had not found rest and satisfaction in Him, but had still a craving for something beyond Him; while what they craved they had, without knowing it, been getting from Him all along.

Such ignorance and spiritual incapacity so late in the day were very disappointing. And Jesus was disappointed, but, with characteristic patience, not irritated. He took not offence either at Philip's stupidity, or at the contradiction he had given to His own statement (for He would rather be contradicted than have disciples pretend to know when they do not), but endeavoured to enlighten the little ones somewhat in the knowledge of the Father. For this end He gave great prominence to the truth, that the knowledge of the Father and of Himself, the Son, were one; that He that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father. The better to fix this great principle in the minds of His hearers, He put it in the strongest possible manner, by treating their ignorance of the Father as a virtual ignorance of Himself. "Have I," He asked, "been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known *me*, Philip?" Then He went on to reason, as if to be ignorant of the Father

was to be so far ignorant of Himself, as in effect to deny His divinity. "Believest thou not," He again asked, "that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" and then He followed up the question with a reference to those things which went to prove the asserted identity—His *words* and His *works*.[1] Nor did He stop even here, but proceeded next to speak of still more convincing proofs of His identity with the Father, to be supplied in the marvellous works which should afterwards be done by the apostles themselves, in His name, and through powers granted to them by Himself in answer to their prayers.[2]

The first question put by Jesus to Philip, "Hast thou not known *me?*" was something more than a logical artifice to make stupid disciples reflect on the contents of the knowledge they already possessed. It hinted at a real fact. The disciples had really not yet *seen* Jesus, for as long as they had been with Him. They knew Him, and they did not know Him: they knew not *that* they knew, nor *what* they knew. They were like children, who can repeat the Catechism without understanding its sense, or who possess a treasure without being capable of estimating its value. They were like men looking at an object through a telescope without adjusting the focus, or like an ignorant peasant gazing up at the sky on a winter night, and seeing the stars which compose a constellation, such as the Bear or Orion, yet not recognising the constellation itself. The disciples were familiar with the words, parables, discourses, etc., spoken, and with the miraculous works done, by their Master; but they knew these only as isolated particulars: the separate rays of light emanating from the fountain of divine wisdom, power, and love in Jesus, had never been gathered into a focus, so as to form a distinct image of Him who came in the flesh to reveal the invisible God. They had seen many a star shine out in the spiritual heavens while in Christ's company; but the stars had not yet assumed to their eye the aspect of a constellation. They had no clear, full, consistent, spiritual conception of the mind, heart, and character of the man Christ Jesus, in whom dwelt all the fulness of Godhead bodily. Nor would they possess such a

[1] John xiv. 10, 11. [2] John xiv. 12–14.

conception till the Spirit of truth, the promised Comforter, came. The very thing He was to do for them was to show them Christ; not merely to recall to their memories the details of His life, but to show them the one mind and spirit which dwelt amid the details, as the soul dwells in the body, and made them an organic whole, and which once perceived, would of itself recall to recollection all the isolated particulars at present lying latent in their consciousness. When the apostles had got that conception, they would know Christ indeed: the same Christ whom they had known before, yet different: a new Christ, because a Christ comprehended—seen with the eye of the spirit, as the former had been seen with the eye of the flesh. And when they had thus seen Christ, they would feel that they had also seen the Father. The knowledge of Christ would satisfy them, because in Him they should see with unveiled face the glory of the Lord.

The soul-satisfying vision of God being a future good, to be attained after the advent of the Comforter, it could not have been the intention of Jesus to assure the disciples that they possessed it already, still less to force it on them by a process of reasoning. When He said, "From henceforth ye know Him (the Father), and have seen Him," He evidently meant: "Ye now know how to see Him, viz. by reflecting on your intercourse with me." And the sole object of the statements made to Philip concerning the close relations between the Father and the speaker, evidently was to impress upon the disciples the great truth, that the solution of all religious difficulties, the satisfaction of all longings, was to be found in the knowledge of Himself. "Know me," Jesus would say, "trust me, pray to me, and all shall be well with you. Your mind shall be filled with light, your heart shall be at rest; you shall have everything you want; your joy shall be full."

A most important lesson this; but also one which, like Philip and the other disciples, all are slow to learn. How few, even of those who confess Christ's divinity, do see in Him the true Perfect Revealer of God! To many Jesus is one Being, and God is another and quite a different Being; though the truth that Jesus is divine is all the while honestly acknowledged. That great truth lies in the mind like an

unfructifying seed buried deep in the soil, and we may say of it what has been said of the doctrine of the soul's immortality: "One may believe it for twenty years, and only in the twenty-first, in some great moment, discover with astonishment the rich contents of this belief, the warmth of this naphtha spring."[1] Impressions of God have been received from one quarter, impressions of Christ from another; and the two sets of impressions lie side by side in the mind, incompatible, yet both receiving house-room. Hence, when a Christian begins to carry out consistently the principle that, Jesus being God, to know Jesus is to know God, he is apt to experience a painful conflict between a new and an old class of ideas about the Divine Being. Two Gods—a christianized God, and a sort of pagan divinity—struggle for the place of sovereignty; and when at last the conflict ends in the enthronement in the mind and heart of the God whom Jesus revealed, the day-dawn of a new spiritual life has arrived.

One most prominent idea in the conception of God as revealed by Jesus Christ, is that expressed by the name Father. According to the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour, God is not truly known till He is thought of and heartily believed in as a Father; neither can any God who is not regarded as a Father satisfy the human heart. Hence His own mode of speaking concerning God was in entire accordance with this doctrine. He did not speak to men about the Deity, or the Almighty. Those epithets which philosophers are so fond of applying to the Divine Being, the Infinite, the Absolute, etc., never crossed His lips. No words ever uttered by Him could suggest the idea of the gloomy arbitrary tyrant, before whom the guilty conscience of superstitious heathenism cowers. He spake evermore, in sermon, parable, model prayer, and private conversation, of a Father. Such expressions as "the Father," "my Father," "your Father," were constantly on His tongue; and all He taught concerning God harmonized perfectly with the feelings these expressions were fitted to call forth.

Yet notwithstanding all His pains, and all the beauty of His utterances concerning the Being whom no man hath seen,

[1] Jean Paul Richter, *Siebenkäs Erstes Blumenstück.*

Jesus, it is to be feared, has only imperfectly succeeded in establishing the worship of the Father. From ignorance or from preference, men still extensively worship God under other names and categories. Some deem the paternal appellation too homely, and prefer a name expressive of more distant and ceremonious relations. The Deity, or the Almighty, suffices them. Philosophers dislike the appellation Father, because it makes the personality of God too prominent. They prefer to think of the Uncreated as an Infinite, Eternal Abstraction—an object of speculation rather than of faith and love. Legal-minded professors of religion take fright at the word Father. They are not sure that they have a right to use it, and they deem it safer to speak of God in general terms, which take nothing for granted, as the Judge, the Taskmaster, or the Lawgiver. The worldly, the learned, and the religious, from different motives, thus agree in allowing to fall into desuetude the name into which they have been baptized, and only a small minority worship the *Father* in spirit and in truth.

Superficial readers of the gospel may cherish the idea that the name Father, applied to God by Jesus, is simply or mainly a sentimental poetic expression, whose loss were no great matter for regret. There could not be a greater mistake. The name, in Christ's lips, always represents a definite thought, and teaches a great truth. When He uses the term to express the relation of the Invisible One to Himself, He gives us a glimpse into the mystery of the Divine Being, telling us that God is not abstract being, as Platonists and Arians conceived Him; not the absolute, incapable of relations; not a passionless being, without affections; but one who eternally loves, and is loved, in whose infinite nature the family affections find scope for ceaseless play—One in three: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons in one divine substance. Then, again, when He calls God Father, in reference to mankind in general, as He does repeatedly, He proclaims to men sunk in ignorance and sin this blessed truth: "God, my Father, is your Father too; cherishes a paternal feeling towards you, though ye be so marred in moral vision that He might well not know you, and so degenerate that He might well be

ashamed to own you; and I His Son am come, your elder brother, to bring you back to your Father's house. Ye are not worthy to be called His sons, for ye have ceased to bear His image, and ye have not yielded Him filial obedience and reverence; nevertheless He is willing to be a Father unto you, and receive you graciously in His arms. Believe this, and become in heart and conduct sons of God, that ye may enjoy the full, the spiritual and eternal, benefit of God's paternal love."[1] When, finally, He calls God Father, with special reference to His own disciples, He assures them that they are the objects of God's constant, tender, and effective care; that all His power, wisdom, and love are engaged for their protection, preservation, guidance, and final eternal salvation; that their Father in heaven will see that they lack no good, and will make all things minister to their interest, and in the end secure to them their inheritance in the everlasting kingdom. "Fear not," is His comforting message to His little chosen flock, "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Before parting with Philip, we must advert in a sentence to the good qualities exhibited by him on this occasion. If he be ignorant, and even stupid, he is also honest and anxious to

[1] The Fatherhood of God, its nature and extent, like all other things, has become a subject of controversy. Principal Candlish, in the Cunningham Lectures, maintains that the term Father applies exclusively to the sonship of believers; while Dr. Crawford, Professor of Theology, University of Edinburgh, in his reply, contends for a universal Fatherhood, as well as a special one founded in grace. The question is mainly verbal; for both admit that God in many ways performs a Father's part towards all men, and, on the other hand, that the full benefit of God's paternal love cannot be enjoyed unless men have the hearts of sons. A more important question is, How the sonship of believers is to be defined. Dr. Candlish asserts that it is substantially identical with that of Christ,—a position which (as it seems to us), consistently carried out, deifies man, or reduces Christ to man's level. In point of fact, Athanasius controverted this view, as maintained by the Arians. His Arian opponent adduced John xvii. 20–23 to prove the identity of Christ's Sonship with that of believers, and contended that the only difference was one of *time*. Athanasius, on the contrary, contended that in that case the epithet μονογενὴς was inapplicable to Christ; and distinguished the two sonships, by saying that the one, that of Christ, was κατ' οὐσίαν; the other, that of believers, was ἐξ ἀρετῆς. The latter he regarded as liable to be lost with the loss of ἀρετή.—Athanasius, *de Decretis Nic. Syn.* capp. 6 and 22. Also *Orationes contra Arianos*, i. cap. 37, and iii. capp. 17, 30.

learn. He desires knowledge, and he frankly confesses his want of it. One of whom these things can be said will not always be ignorant. The candid, aspiring disciple will one day be a wise, enlightened apostle. For such as Philip there is no cause to be anxious. Open the windows of the mind, and the light of truth will stream in. Those who remain in the dark, are they who are too indolent to aspire after knowledge, or too proud to learn, or both together. Such say in effect: We are not ambitious; we do not envy those who live in the regions of the day; we are very happy in the unbroken night of the Arctic Circle, burrowing in our earth-holes; and we don't care though we never see the sun. Or they say: We are not satisfied; we would like to have more light about God and the way of salvation, and our own spiritual condition; but we have a reputation for spiritual knowledge and advanced piety, and we cannot afford to let our real state be known. Shall I, a master in Israel, acknowledge that I have difficulties about this and the other doctrine, that I want the spirit of adoption, and do not bask in the sunlight of God's love? Shall I, a convert, who made years ago conspicuous professions of my faith in Christ, and of my assurance of salvation, confess that now all is changed within me, Calvary and the face of God being hid in a mist, and my mind dark as midnight in reference to my own spiritual state? Why not? Away with pride, and take your seat beside Philip in the school of Jesus. Assume not the air of apostles, aping the graces, and repeating the phrases of aged sanctity and wisdom. Be disciples first, and talk like the disciples, and ask questions like them; and in your abhorrence of insincerity, rather than speak in a style in advance of your attainments, refuse, with Philip, to say that you know what you don't know, even though the Lord Himself should tell you that you do know it. So acting, "what thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." The Spirit of truth will come, and in His own way, not in the way human teachers or you yourself might prefer, will lead you into all truth.

We have now to notice the last of the children's questions, which was put by Judas, "not Iscariot" (he is otherwise occu-

pied), but the other disciple of that name, also called Lebbæus and Thaddæus.[1]

In His third word of consolation, Jesus had spoken of a reappearance (after His departure) specially and exclusively to "His own." "The world," He had said, "seeth me no more; but ye see me," that is, shall see after a little while. Now two questions might naturally be asked concerning this exclusive manifestation: How was it possible? and what was the reason of it? How could Jesus make Himself visible to His disciples, and yet remain invisible to all others? and granting the possibility, *cui bono*, why not show Himself to the world at large? It is not easy to decide which of these two difficulties Judas had in his mind; for his question might be interpreted either way. Literally translated, it was to this effect: "Lord, what has happened, that Thou art about to manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" The disciple might mean, like Nicodemus, to ask, "How can these things be?" or he might mean, "We have been hoping for the coming of Thy kingdom in power and glory, visible to the eyes of all men: what has led Thee to change Thy plan?"

In either case, the question of Judas was founded on a misapprehension of the nature of the promised manifestation. He imagined that Jesus was to reappear corporeally, after His departure to the Father, therefore so as to be visible to the outward eye, and not of this one or that one, but of all, unless He took pains to hide Himself from some while revealing Himself to others.[2] Neither Judas nor any of his brethren was capable as yet of conceiving a spiritual manifestation, not to speak of finding therein a full compensation for the loss of the corporeal presence. Had they grasped the thought of a spiritual presence, they could have had no difficulty in reconciling visibility to one with invisibility to another; for they would have understood that the vision *could* be enjoyed only by those who possessed the inward sense of sight.

[1] *Vid.* chap. iv. of this work.

[2] Luthardt (*Das Johan. Evang.* ii. 313) contends that a corporeal manifestation (at the end of the world) is meant, and weakly argues, that if only a spiritual presence were meant, Jesus would have said ἐν αὐτῷ instead of παρ' αὐτῷ in ver. 23. Παρὰ suits the parabolic style of speech; ἐν would be an *interpretation* of the figure.

How was a question dictated by incapacity to understand the subject to which it referred to be answered? Just as you would explain the working of the electric telegraph to a child. If your child asked you, Father, how is it that you can send a message by the telegraph to my uncle or aunt in America, so far, far away? you would not think of attempting to explain to him the mysteries of electricity. You would take him to a telegraph office, and bid him look at the man actually engaged in sending a message, and tell him, that as the man moved the handle, a needle in America pointed at letters of the alphabet, which, when put together, made up words which said just what you wished to say.

In this way it was that Jesus answered the question of Judas. He did not attempt to explain the difference between a spiritual and a corporeal manifestation, but simply said in effect: Do you so and so, and what I have promised will come true. "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." It is just the former statement repeated, in a slightly altered, more pointed form. Nothing new is said, because nothing new can be said intelligibly. The old promise is simply so put as to arrest attention on the condition of its fulfilment. "*If* a man love me, he will keep my words:" attend to that, my children, and the rest will follow. The divine Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit—will verily dwell with the faithful disciple, who with trembling solicitude strives to observe my commandments. As for those who love me not, and keep not my sayings, and believe not on me, it is simply impossible for them to enjoy such august company. The pure in heart alone shall see God.

Jesus had now spoken all He meant to say to His disciples, in the capacity of a dying parent addressing his sorrowing children. It remained now only to wind up the discourse, and bid the little ones adieu.

In drawing to a close, Jesus does not imagine that He has removed all difficulties and dispelled all gloom from the minds of the disciples. On the contrary, He is conscious that all He has said has made but a slight impression. Nevertheless

He will say no more in the way of comfort. There is, in the first place, no time. Judas and his band, the prince of this world, whose servants Judas and all his associates are, may now be expected at any moment, and He must hold Himself in readiness to go and meet the enemy.[1] Then, secondly, to add anything further would be useless. It is not possible to make things any clearer to the disciples in their present state, by any amount of speech. Therefore He does not attempt it, but refers them for all other explanations to the promised Comforter,[2] and proceeds to utter the words of farewell: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you,"[3]—words touching at all times, unspeakably affecting in the circumstances of the Speaker and hearers. We know not but they did more to comfort the dispirited little ones than all that had been said before. There is a pathos and a music in the very sound of them, apart from their sense, which are wonderfully soothing. We can imagine, indeed, that as they were spoken, the poor disciples were overtaken with a fit of tenderness, and burst into tears. That, however, would do them good. Sorrow is healed by weeping: the sympathy which melts the heart at the same time comforts it.

This touching sympathetic farewell is more than a good wish: it is a promise—a promise made by One who knows that the blessing promised is within reach. It is like the cheering word spoken by David to brothers in affliction: "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." David spoke that word from experience; and even so does Jesus speak here. The peace He offers His disciples is His own peace—"my peace:" not merely peace of His procuring, but peace of His experiencing. He has had peace in the world, in spite of sorrow and temptation: perfect peace through faith. Therefore He can assure them that such a thing is possible. They, too, can have peace of mind and heart in the midst of untoward tribulation. The world can neither understand nor impart such peace; the only peace it knows anything about being that connected with prosperity, which trouble can destroy as easily as a breath of wind agitates the calm surface of the sea. But there is a peace

[1] John xiv. 30, 31. [2] John xiv. 25, 26. [3] John xiv. 27.

which is independent of outward circumstances, whose sovereign virtue and blessed function it is to keep the heart against fear and care. Such peace Jesus had Himself enjoyed; and He gives His disciples to understand, that through faith and singleness of mind they may enjoy it also.

The farewell word is not only a promise made by One who knows whereof He speaks, but the promise of One who can bestow the blessing promised. Jesus does not merely say: Be of good cheer; ye may have peace, even as I have had peace, in spite of tribulation. He says moreover, and more particularly: Such peace as I have had I bequeath to you as a dying legacy, I bestow on you as a parting gift. The inheritance of peace is made over to the little ones by a last will and testament, though, being minors, they do not presently enter into actual possession. When they arrive at their majority, they shall inherit the promise, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The after-experience of the disciples proved that the promise made to them by their Lord had not been false and vain. The apostles, as Jesus foretold, found in the world much tribulation; but in the midst of all they enjoyed perfect peace. Trusting in the Lord, and doing good, they were without fear and without care. In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, they made their requests known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth understanding, did verily keep their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Jesus had not yet said His last word to the little ones. Seeing in their faces the signs of grief, in spite of all that He had spoken to comfort them, He abruptly threw out an additional remark, which gave to the whole subject of His departure quite a new turn. He had been telling them, all through His *farewell* address, that though He was going away, He would come again to them, either personally or by deputy, in the body at last, in the Spirit meanwhile. He now told them, that apart from His return, His departure itself should be an occasion of joy rather than of sorrow, because of what it signified for Himself. "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you:" extract comfort from that promise by all means. But "if ye loved me (as

you ought), ye would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father,"[1] forgetting yourselves, and thinking what a happy change it would be for me. Then He added: "For my Father is greater than I." The connection between this clause and the foregoing part of the sentence is somewhat obscure, as is also its theological import. Our idea, however, is, that when Jesus spake these words, He was thinking of His death, and meeting an objection thence arising to the idea of rejoicing in His departure. "You are going to the Father," one might have said—"yes; but by what a way!" Jesus replies: The way is rough, and abhorrent to flesh and blood; but it is the way my Father has appointed, and that is enough for me: for my Father is greater than I. So interpreting the words, we only make the speaker hint therein at a thought which we find Him plainly expressing immediately after, in His concluding sentence, where He represents His voluntary endurance of death as a manifestation to the world of His love to the Father, and as an act of obedience to His commandment.

And now, finally, by word and act, Jesus strives to impress on the little children the solemn reality of their situation. First, He bids them mark what He has told them of His departure, that when the separation takes place, they may not be taken by surprise. "Now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye might believe."[2] Then He gives them to understand that the parting hour is at hand. Hereafter He will not talk much with them: there will not be opportunity; for the prince of this world cometh. Then He adds words to this effect: "Let him come; I am ready for him. He has indeed nothing in me; no claim upon me; no power over me; no fault which he can charge against me. Nevertheless I yield myself up into his hands, that all men may see that I love the Father, and am loyal to His will: that I am ready to die for truth, for righteousness, for the unrighteous."[3] Then, lastly, with firm, resolute voice, He gives the word of command to all to rise up from the couches on which they have been reclining, doubtless suiting His own action to the word: "Arise, let us go hence."[4]

From the continuation of the discourse, as recorded by

[1] John xiv. 28. [2] Ver. 29. [3] Vers. 30, 31. [4] Ver. 31.

John, as well as from the statement made by him at the commencement of the eighteenth chapter of his Gospel (When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth, etc.), we infer that the company did not at this point leave the supper-chamber. They merely assumed a new attitude, and exchanged the recumbent for a standing posture, as if in readiness to depart. This movement was, in the circumstances, thoroughly natural. It fitly expressed the resolute temper of Jesus; and it corresponded to the altered tone in which He proceeded to address His disciples. The action of rising formed, in fact, the transition from the first part of His discourse to the second. Better than words could have done, it altered the mood of mind, and prepared the disciples for listening to language not soft, tender, and familiar, as heretofore, but stern, dignified, impassioned. It struck the keynote, if we may so express it, by which the speaker passed from the lyric to the heroic style. It said, in effect: Let us have done with the nursery dialect, which, continued longer, would but enervate: let me speak to you now for a brief space as men who have got to play an important part in the world. Arise; shake off languor, and listen, while I utter words fitted to fire you with enthusiasm, to inspire you with courage, and to impress you with a sense of the responsibilities and the honours connected with your future position.

So understanding the rising from the table, we shall be prepared to listen along with the disciples, and to enter on the study of the remaining portion of Christ's farewell discourse, without any feeling of abruptness.

CHAPTER XXV.

DYING CHARGE TO THE APOSTLES.

SECTION I.—*The Vine and its Branches.*

JOHN XV. XVI.

THE subject of discourse in these chapters is the future work of the apostles; its nature, honours, hardships, and joys. Much that is said therein admits of application to Christians in general, but the reference in the first place is undoubtedly to the eleven then present; and only by keeping this in mind can we get a clear idea of the import of the discourse as a whole.

The first part of this charge to the future apostles has for its object to impress upon them that they have a great work before them.[1] The keynote of the passage may be found in the words: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."[2] Jesus would have His chosen ones understand that He expects more of them than that they shall not lose heart when He has left the earth. They must be great actors in the world, and leave their mark permanently on its history: they must, in fact, take His place, and be in His stead, and carry on the work He had begun, in His name and through His aid.

To put their duty clearly before the minds of His disciples, Jesus made large use of a beautiful figure drawn from the vine-tree, which He introduced at the very outset of His discourse. "I am the true vine:" that is the theme, which in the sequel is worked out with considerable minuteness of detail, — figure and interpretation being freely mixed up

[1] John xv. 1–17. [2] John xv. 16.

together in the exposition. The question has often been asked, What led Jesus to adopt this particular emblem as the vehicle of His thoughts? and many conjectural answers have been hazarded. In absence of information in the narrative, however, we must be content to remain in ignorance on this point, without attempting to supply the missing link in the association of ideas. This is no great hardship; for, after all, what does it matter how a metaphor is suggested (a thing which even the person employing the metaphor often does not know), provided it be in itself apt to the purpose to which it is applied? Of the aptness of the metaphor *here* employed there can be no doubt in the mind of any one who attentively considers the felicitous use which the speaker made of it.

Turning our attention, then, to the discourse of Jesus on His own chosen text, we cannot but be struck with the manner in which He hurries on at once to speak of fruit. We should have expected that, in introducing the figure of the vine, He would, in the first place, state fully in terms of the figure how the case stood. After hearing the words, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman," we expect to hear, "and ye, my disciples, are the branches, through which the vine brings forth fruit." That, however, is not said here; but the speaker passes on at once to tell His hearers how the branches (of which no mention has been made) are dealt with by the divine Husbandman; how the fruitless branches, on the one hand, are lopped off, while the fruitful ones are pruned that they may become still more productive.[1] This shows what is uppermost in the mind of Jesus. His heart's desire is, that His disciples may be spiritually fruitful. "Fruit, fruit, my disciples," He exclaims in effect; "ye are useless unless ye bear fruit: my Father desires fruit, even as I do; and His whole dealing with you will be regulated by a purpose to increase your fruitfulness."

While urgent in His demand for fruit, Jesus does not, we observe, in any part of this discourse on the vine, indicate wherein the expected fruit consists. When we consider to whom He is speaking, however, we can have no doubt as to what He principally intends. The fruit He looks for is the

[1] John xv. 2.

spread of the gospel and the ingathering of souls into the kingdom of God by the disciples, in the discharge of their apostolic vocation. Personal holiness is not overlooked; but it is required rather as a means towards fruitfulness, than as itself the fruit. It is the purging of the branch which leads to increased fertility.

The next sentence ("Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you"[1]) it seems best to regard as a parenthesis, in which for a moment the figure of the vine is lost sight of. The mention of branches which, as unproductive, are cut off, recalls to the Lord's thoughts the case of one who had already been cut off—the false disciple Judas—and leads Him naturally to assure the eleven that He hopes better things of them. The process of excision had already been applied among them in one instance: therefore they should not be high-minded, but fear. But, on the other hand, as He had said before in connection with the feet-washing, that they were clean, with one exception; so now He would say they were all clean, without exception, through the word which He had spoken to them. As branches they might need pruning, but there would be no occasion for cutting off.

Having strongly declared the indispensableness of fruit-bearing in order to continued connection with the vine, Jesus proceeded next to set forth the conditions of fruitfulness, and (what we should have expected at the very commencement of the discourse) the relation subsisting between Himself and His disciples. "I am the vine," He said (to take the latter first), "ye are the branches."[2] By this statement He explains why He is so urgent that His disciples should be fruitful. The reason is, that they are the media through which He Himself brings forth fruit, serving the same purpose to Him that the branches serve to the vine. His own personal work had been to choose and train them,—to fill them, so to speak, with the sap of divine truth; and their work was now to turn that sap into grapes. The Father in heaven, by sending Him into the world, had planted Him in the earth, a new, mystic, spiritual vine; and He had produced them, the eleven, as His branches. Now His personal ministry was at an end, and it

[1] John xv. 3. [2] John xv. 5.

remained for the branches to carry on the work to its natural consummation, and to bring forth a crop of fruit, in the shape of a church of saved men believing in His name. If they failed to do this, His labour would be all in vain.

Returning now to the conditions of fruitfulness, we find Jesus expressing them in these terms: "Abide in me, and I in you."[1] These words point to a dependence of the disciples on their Lord under two forms, which by help of the analogy of a tree and its branches it is easy to distinguish. The branch abides in the vine *structurally;* and the vine abides in the branch through its sap, *vitally.* Both of these abidings are necessary to fruit-bearing. Unless the branch be organically connected with the stem, the sap which goes to make fruit cannot pass into it. On the other hand, *although* the branch be organically connected with the stem, yet if the sap of the stem do not ascend into it (a case which is possible and common in the natural world), it must remain as fruitless as if it were broken off and lying on the ground.

All this is clear; but when we ask what do the two abidings signify in reference to the mystic vine, the answer is not quite so easy. The tendency here is to run the two into one, and to make the distinction between them merely nominal. The best way to come at the truth is to adhere as closely as possible to the natural analogy. What, then, would one say most nearly corresponded to the structural abiding of the branch in the tree? We think, abiding in the doctrine of Christ, in the doctrine He taught; and acknowledging Him as the source whence it had been learned. In other words, "Abide in me" means, Hold and profess the truth I have spoken to you, and give yourselves out merely as my witnesses. The other abiding, on the other hand, signifies the indwelling of the Spirit of Jesus in the hearts of those who believe. Jesus gives His disciples to understand that, while abiding in His doctrine, they must also have His Spirit abiding in them; that they must not only hold fast the truth, but be filled with the Spirit of truth.

As thus distinguished, the two abidings are not only different in conception, but separable in fact. On the one

[1] John xv. 4.

hand, there may be Christian orthodoxy in the letter, where there is little or no spiritual life; and there may, on the other hand, be a certain species of spiritual vitality, a great moral, and in some respects most Christian-like earnestness, accompanied with serious departure from the faith. The one may be likened unto a dead branch on a living tree, bleached, barkless, moss-grown, and even in summer leafless, stretching out like a withered arm from the trunk into which it is inserted, and with which it still maintains an organic structural connection. The other is a branch cut off by pride or self-will from the tree, full of the tree's sap, and clothed with verdure at the moment of excision, and foolishly imagining, because it does not wither at once, that it can live and grow and blossom independently of the tree altogether. Have such things never been since Christianity began? Alas, would it were so! In the grand primeval forest of the church too many dead orthodoxies have ever been visible; and as for branches setting up for themselves, their name is legion.

The two abidings, which we have seen to be not only separable, but often separated, cannot be separated without fatal effects. The result ever is in the end to illustrate the truth of Christ's words, "Without, or severed from, me ye can do nothing."[1] Dead orthodoxy is notoriously impotent. Feeble, timid, torpid, averse to anything arduous, heroic, stirring in thought or conduct at best, it becomes at last insincere and demoralizing: salt without savour, fit only to be thrown out; worthless vine-wood, good for nothing except for fuel, and not worth much even for that purpose. Heresies, not abiding in the doctrine of Christ, are equally helpless: at first, indeed, they possess a spurious ephemeral vitality, and make a little noise in the world; but by and by their leaf begins to wither, and they bring forth no abiding fruit. Look at the conceited pretentious Deists of last century. They thought they were going to supersede Christianity, and bring in a new rational philosophic creed, infinitely superior to the superstitious, supernatural, incredible one which had previously been in vogue. What has become of them now? Their leaf has withered: their very writings have long ago become

[1] John xv. 5.

like rotten branches fit for the fire, and are now read only by antiquarians; while Paul, and Peter, and James, whose Epistles they meant to banish from the civilised world, are still as much in favour as ever,—*their* fruit remaining because they abode in Christ's word, and had His Spirit abiding in them.

The conception of a dead branch, applied to individuals as distinct from churches or the religious world viewed collectively, is not without difficulty. A dead branch on a tree was not always dead: it was produced by the vital force of the tree, and had some of the tree's life in it. Does the analogy between natural and spiritual branches hold at this point? Not in any sense, as we believe, that would compromise the doctrine of perseverance in grace, nowhere taught more clearly than in the words of our Lord. At the same time, it cannot be denied that there is such a thing as abortive religious experience. There are blossoms on the tree of life which are blasted by spring frosts, green fruits which fall off ere they ripen, branches which become sickly and die. Jonathan Edwards, a high Calvinist, but also a candid, shrewd observer of facts, remarks: "I cannot say that the greater part of supposed converts give reason by their conversation to suppose that they are true converts. The proportion may perhaps be more truly represented by the proportion of the blossoms on a tree which abide, and come to mature fruit, to the whole number of blossoms in spring."[1] The permanency of many spiritual blossoms is here denied, but the very denial implies an admission that they were blossoms.

That some branches should become unfruitful, and even die, while others flourish and bring forth fruit, is a great mystery, whose explanation lies deeper than theologians of the Arminian school are willing to admit. Yet, while this is true, the responsibility of man for his own spiritual character cannot be too earnestly insisted on. Though the Father, as the husbandman, wields the pruning-knife, the process of purging cannot be carried on without our consent and co-operation. For that process means practically the removal of moral hindrances to life and growth—the cares of

[1] See memoir by Sereno E. Dwight, prefixed to English edition of the Works of Edwards, in two volumes: vol. i. p. clxxii.

life, the insidious influence of wealth, the lusts of the flesh, and the passions of the soul: evils which cannot be overcome unless our will and all our moral powers be brought to bear against them. Hence Jesus lays it upon His disciples as a *duty* to abide in Him, and have Him abiding in them, and resolves the whole matter at last, in plain terms, into keeping His commandments.[1] If they diligently and faithfully do their part, the divine Husbandman, He assures them, will not fail to give them liberally all things needful for the most abundant fruitfulness. "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."[2]

The doom of branches coming short in either of the two possible ways is very plainly declared by Jesus. The doom of the branch which, while in Him structurally, beareth not fruit, either because it is absolutely dead and dry, or because it is afflicted with a vice which makes it barren, is to be taken away—judicially severed from the tree.[3] The doom of the branch which *will* not abide in the vine is, not to be cut off—for that it does itself—but to be thrown out of the vineyard, there to lie till it be withered, and at length, at a convenient season, to be gathered along with all its self-willed, erratic brethren into a heap, and burned in a bonfire like the dry rubbish of a garden.[4]

The doom of excision or ejection may be very serious in its consequences to those on whom it is inflicted, but it is very salutary for the vine. Hypocrisy and infidelity, quietly tolerated, are fatal to the church's life. Men living lives which make their profession of faith incredible, and men openly professing unbelief in the great fundamentals of Christianity, must be expelled from the communion of the faithful, as remorselessly as the surgeon cuts off a mortifying limb, and for the same reason, viz. to save the life of the body. What is lost in numbers by the excommunication of unworthy persons, is gained in moral power and spiritual fertility. The loss is simply a collection of branches dead or barren, whose presence on the tree renders it utterly unproductive; the gain is a goodly crop of fruit on the branches left behind.

[1] John xv. 10. [2] Ver. 7. [3] Ver. 2. [4] Ver. 6.

In the latter portion of the discourse on the vine,[1] Jesus expresses His high expectations with respect to the fruitfulness of the apostolic branches, and suggests a variety of considerations which, acting on the minds of the disciples as motives, might lead to the fulfilment of His hopes.

As to the former, He gave the disciples to understand that He expected of them not only fruit, but much fruit,[2] and fruit not only abundant in quantity, but good in quality;[3] fruit that should remain, grapes whose juice should be worthy of preservation, as wine in bottles; a church that should endure till the world's end.

On these two requirements we make four remarks:—

1. Taken together, they amount to a very high demand. It is very hard indeed to produce fruit at once abundant and enduring. The two requirements, to a certain extent, limit each other. Aiming at high quality leads to undue thinning of the clusters, while aiming at quantity may easily lead to deterioration in the quality of the whole. The thing to be studied is, to secure as large an amount of fruit as is consistent with permanence; and, on the other hand, to cultivate excellence as far as is consistent with obtaining a fair crop which will repay labour and expense. This is, so to speak, the ideal theory of vine-culture; but in practice we must be content with something short of the perfect realization of our theory. We cannot, for example, rigorously insist that all the fruit shall be such as can endure. Many fruits of Christian labour are only transient means towards other fruits of a permanent nature; and if we satisfy the law of Christ so far as to produce much fruit, *some* of which shall remain, we do well. The permanent portion of a man's work must always be small in proportion to the whole. At highest, it can only bear such a proportion to the whole, as the grape-juice bears to the grapes out of which it is pressed. A small cask of wine represents a much larger bulk of grapes; and in like manner, the perennial result of a Christian life is very inconsiderable in volume, compared with the mass of thoughts, words, and deeds of which that life was made up. One little book, for instance, may preserve to all generations the soul and

[1] John xv. 8–17. [2] Ver. 8. [3] Ver. 16.

essence of the thoughts of a most gifted mind, and of the graces of a noble heart. Witness that wondrous book the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which contains more wine in it than may be found in the ponderous folios of some wordy authors, whose works are but huge wine-casks with very little wine in them, and sometimes hardly even the scent of it.

2. To satisfy these two requirements, two virtues are above all needful, viz. diligence and patience: the one to ensure quantity, the other to ensure superior quality. One must know both how to labour and how to wait; never idle, yet never hurrying. Diligence alone will not suffice. Bustling activity does a great many things badly, but nothing well. On the other hand, patience unaccompanied by diligence degenerates into indolence, which brings forth no fruit at all, either good or bad. The two virtues must go together; and when they do, they never fail to produce, in greater or less abundance, fruit that remaineth in a holy, exemplary life, whose memory is cherished for generations, in books or in philanthropic institutions, in the character of descendants, scholars, or hearers.

3. When the two requirements are taken as applying to all believers in Christ, the term "much" must be understood relatively. It is not required of all indiscriminately to produce an absolutely large quantity of fruit, but only of those who, like the apostles, have been chosen and endowed to occupy distinguished positions. Of him to whom little is given, shall little be required. For men of few talents it is better not to attempt much, but rather to endeavour to do well the little for which they have capacity. Aspiration is good in the abstract; but to aspire to exceed the appointed dimensions of our career, is to supply a new illustration of the old fable of the frog and the ox. The man who would be and do more than he is fit for, is worse than useless. He brings forth, not the sweet, wholesome fruits of the Spirit, but the inflated fruits of vanity, which, like the apples of Sodom, are fair and delicious to the eye and soft to the touch, but are yet full of wind, and being pressed, explode like a puff ball.[1]

4. The demand for much fruit, while very exacting as

[1] Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, i. 523.

towards the apostles, to whom it in the first place refers, has a very gracious aspect towards the world. The fruit which Jesus expected from His chosen ones, was the conversion of men to the faith of the gospel—the ingathering of souls into the kingdom of God. A demand for much fruit in this sense is an expression of goodwill to mankind, a revelation of the Saviour's loving compassion for a world lying in sin, and error, and darkness. In making this demand, Jesus says in effect to His apostles: Go into the world, bent on evangelizing all the nations: be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it. Ye cannot bring too many to the obedience of faith: the greater the number of those who believe on me through your word, the better I shall be pleased. We have here, in short, but an echo of the impassioned utterances of that earlier occasion, when Jesus welcomed death as the condition of abundant fruitfulness, and the cross as a power by whose irresistible attraction He should draw all unto Him.[1]

From the high requirements of the Lord, we pass on to the arguments with which He sought to impress on the disciples the duty of bringing forth much and abiding fruit. Of these there are no less than six, grouped in pairs. The first pair we find indicated in the words: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, and that ye may be my disciples."[2] In other words, Jesus would have His chosen ones remember that the credit, both of the divine Husbandman, and of Himself, the Vine, largely depended on their behaviour. The world would judge by results. If they, the apostles, abounded in fruitfulness, it would be remarked that God had not sent Christ into the world in vain; and their success would be ascribed to Him whose disciples they had been. If they failed, men would say: God planted a vine which has not thriven; and the vine produced branches which have borne no fruit; or in plain terms, Christ chose agents who have done nothing.

The force of these arguments for fruitfulness is more obvious in the case of the apostles, the founders of the church, than in reference to the present condition of the church, when the

[1] John xii. 24, 33.

[2] John xv. 8. *Vide* various reading, γένησθε instead of γενήσεσθε. The sense is the same ultimately, whichever reading we prefer.

honour of Christ and of God the Father seems to depend in a very small measure on the conduct of individuals. The whole stress then lay on eleven men. Now it is distributed over millions. Nevertheless there is great need, even yet, for spiritually fruitful life in the church, to uphold the honour of Christ's name; for there is a tendency at the present time to look on Christianity as used up. The old vine-stock is considered by many to be effete, and past fruit-bearing; and a new plant of renown is called for. This idea can be exploded effectually only in one way, viz. by the rising up of a generation of Christians whose life shall demonstrate that the "true vine" is not one of the things that wax old and vanish away, but possesses eternal vitality, sufficient not only to produce new branches and new clusters, but to shake itself clear of dead branches, and of all the moss by which it may have become overgrown in the course of ages.

A second pair of motives to fruitfulness we find hinted at in the words: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be fulfilled."[1] Jesus means to say, that the continuance of His joy in the disciples, and the completion of their own joy as believers in Him, depended on their being fruitful. The emphasis in the first clause lies on the word "remain." Jesus has joy in His disciples even now, though spiritually crude, even as the gardener hath joy in the clusters of grapes when they are green, sour, and uneatable. But He rejoices in them at present, not for what they are, but because of the promise that is in them of ripe fruit. If that promise were not fulfilled, He should feel as the gardener feels when the blossom is nipped by frost, or the green fruit destroyed by mildew; or as a parent feels when a son belies in his manhood the bright promise of his youth. He can bear delay, but He cannot bear failure. He can wait patiently till the process of growth has passed through all its stages, and can put up with all the unsatisfactory qualities of immaturity, for the sake of what they shall ripen into. But if they never ripen, if the children never become men, if the pupils never become teachers, then He will exclaim, in bitter disappointment: "Woes me! my

[1] John xv. 11.

soul desired ripe fruit; and is this what I find after waiting so long?"

In the second clause the stress lies on the word "fulfilled." It is not said or insinuated that a Christian can have no joy till his character be matured and his work accomplished. The language of Jesus is quite compatible with the assertion, that even at the very commencement of the spiritual life there may be a great, even passionate, outburst of joy. But, on the other hand, that language plainly implies that the joy of the immature disciple is necessarily precarious, and that the joy which is stable and full comes only with spiritual maturity. This is a great practical truth, which it concerns all disciples to bear in mind. Joy in the highest sense is one of the ripe fruits of the Holy Spirit; it is the reward of perseverance and fidelity. Rejoicing at the outset is good, so far as it goes; but all depends on the sequel. If we stop short and grow not, woe to us; for failure in all things, and specially in religion, is misery. If we be comparatively unfruitful, we may not be absolutely unhappy; but we can never know the fulness of joy: for it is only to the faithful servant that the words are spoken, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The perfect measure of bliss is for the soldier who hath won the victory, for the reaper celebrating harvest-home, for the athlete who hath gained the prize of strength, skill, and swiftness.

The two last considerations by which Jesus sought to impress on His disciples the duty of being fruitful, were: the honourable nature of their apostolic calling, and the debt of gratitude they owed to Him who had called them, and who was now about to die for them. The dignity of the apostleship, in contrast to the menial position of the disciple, He described in these terms: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."[1] In other words: the disciples had been apprentices, the apostles would be partners; the disciples had been as government clerks, the apostles would be confidential ministers of the king; the disciples had been pupils in the school of Jesus, the apostles would be the trea-

[1] John xv. 15.

surers of Christian truth, the reporters and expositors of their Master's doctrine, the sole reliable sources of information concerning the letter and the spirit of His teaching. What office could possibly be more important than theirs, and how needful that they should realize their responsibilities in connection with it!

While endeavouring to walk worthy of so high a vocation, it would become the apostles also to bear in mind their obligations to Him who had called them to the apostolic office. The due consideration of these would be an additional stimulus to diligence and fidelity. Hence Jesus is careful to impress on His disciples that they owe all they are and will be to Him. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,"[1] He tells them. He wishes them to understand that they had conferred no benefit on Him by becoming His disciples; the benefit was all on their side. He had raised them from obscurity to be the lights of the world, to be the present companions and future friends and representatives of the Christ. Having done so much for them, He was entitled to ask that they would earnestly endeavour to realize the end for which He had chosen them, and to fulfil the ministry to which they were ordained.

One thing more is noteworthy in this discourse on the true vine: the reiteration of the commandment to love one another. At the commencement of the farewell address, Jesus enjoined on the disciples brotherly love as a source of consolation under bereavement; here He re-enjoins it once and again as a condition of fruitfulness.[2] Though He does not say it in so many words, He evidently means the disciples to understand, that abiding in each other by love is just as necessary to their success as their common abiding in Him by faith. Division, party strife, jealousy, will be simply fatal to their influence, and to the cause they represent. They must be such fast friends, that they will even be willing to die for each other.

There are some who think that the apostles did not pay that respect to the will of their Lord on this point which He demanded of them ere He left the world. The existence of

[1] John xv. 16. [2] Vers. 12, 17.

dissension and ill feeling in the apostolic cabinet is confidently asserted by negative criticism.[1] But the progress of the apostolic church gives the lie to this assumption. When a community, wherein confessedly many weak and weakening passions prevail, is kept together and even prospers notwithstanding, there must be some men of a better spirit at the head, who rise superior to the vices of the multitude, and rule their weaker brethren because they have already learned to rule themselves. If there were such men in the infant Christian community, who were they? who but the men who had been with Jesus, and had learned in His school to subordinate self to duty, and to put the good of the whole before the interest of a party?

Would that Christians in all subsequent ages had remembered the commandment of love as well as the apostles! The history of the church abundantly explains the urgency with which Jesus insisted on brotherly concord in connection with a demand for fruitfulness. Divisions and alienations have been one main cause of the church's barrenness. What an arrest, for example, was put on the progress of the Reformation by the misunderstandings which arose between the leading reformers — Luther, Calvin, and Zwingle! And how impotent and spiritually unfruitful is the church now from a similar cause! How scanty are the fruits of the Spirit on the vine; how abundant the works of the flesh—hatreds, variances, emulations, unseemly heats of anger, strifes, seditions, heresies, not to speak of grosser sins into which careless professors frequently fall in an evil and adulterous time! "Return, we beseech Thee, O God of hosts: Look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine."

[1] The dissension is alleged to have existed not so much among the twelve, as between them and Paul the apostle of the Gentiles. Renan, however, does not hesitate to ascribe to John jealousy of Peter, and to find traces thereof in his Gospel. *Vid. Vie de Jesus*, Introduction, p. xxvii.

Section II.—*Apostolic Tribulations and Encouragements.*

John xv. 18–27, xvi. 1–15.

From apostolic duties Jesus passed on to speak of apostolic tribulations. The transition was natural: for all great actors in God's cause, whose fruit remains, are sure to be more or less men of sorrow. To be hated and evil-entreated is one of the penalties of moral greatness and spiritual power; or, if you please, one of the privileges Christ confers on His "friends."

Hatred is very hard to bear, and the desire to escape it is one main cause of unfaithfulness and unfruitfulness. Good men shape their conduct so as to keep out of trouble, and through excess of cowardly prudence degenerate into spiritual nonentities. It was of the first importance that the apostles of the Christian faith should not become impotent through this cause. For this reason Jesus introduces the subject of tribulation here. He would fortify His disciples for the endurance of sufferings, by speaking of them beforehand. "These things," saith He, in the course of His address on the unpleasant theme, as if apologizing for its introduction, "have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be scandalized,"[1] that is, be taken by surprise when the time of trouble came.

To nerve the young soldiers of the cross, the Captain of salvation has recourse to various expedients, among which the first is to tell them, without disguise, what they have to expect, that familiarity with the dark prospect may make it less terrible. Of the world's hatred Jesus speaks as an absolutely certain matter, not even deeming it necessary to assert its certainty, but assuming that as a thing of course: "If the world hate you"[2]—as of course it will. Further on He describes, without euphemism or circumlocution, the kind of treatment they shall receive at the world's hands: "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."[3] Harsh, appalling words; but since such things were to be, it was well to know the worst.

[1] John xvi. 1; see also ver. 4. [2] John xv. 18. [3] John xvi. 2.

Jesus further tells His disciples, that whatever they may have to suffer, they can be no worse off than He has been before them. "If the world hate you, ye know that it has hated me before you." Poor comfort, one is disposed to say; yet it is not so poor when you consider the relative position of the parties. He who has already been hated is the Lord; they who are to be hated are but the servants. Of this Jesus reminds His disciples, repeating and recalling to their remembrance a word He had already spoken the same evening.[1] The consideration ought at least to repress murmuring; and duly laid to heart, it might even become a source of heroic inspiration. The servant should be ashamed to complain of a lot from which his Master is not, and does not wish to be, exempted; he should be proud to be a companion in tribulations with One who is so much his superior, and regard his experience of the cross not as a fate, but as a privilege.

A third expedient employed by Jesus to reconcile the apostles to the world's hatred is to represent it as a necessary accompaniment of their *election*.[2] This thought, well weighed, has great force. Love ordinarily rests on a community of interest. Men love those who hold the same opinions, occupy the same position, follow the same fashions, pursue the same ends with themselves; and they regard all who differ from them in these respects with indifference, dislike, or positive animosity, according to the degree in which they are made sensible of the contrast. Hence arises a dilemma for the chosen ones. Either they must forfeit the honour, privileges, and hope of their election, and descend into the dark world which is without God and without hope; or they must be content, while retaining their position as called out of darkness, to accept the drawbacks which adhere to it, and to be hated by those who love the darkness rather than the light, because their life is evil. What true child of light will hesitate in his choice?

To show the disciples that they have no alternative but to submit patiently to their appointed lot as the chosen ones, Jesus enters yet more deeply into the philosophy of the world's hatred. He explains that what in the first place will

[1] John xv. 20; comp. xiii. 16, also xii. 26. [2] John xv. 19.

be hatred to them, will mean in the second place hatred to Himself, and in the last place, and radically, ignorance of and hostility to God His Father.[1] In setting forth this truth, He takes occasion to make some severe reflections on the unbelieving world of Judæa, in which He had Himself laboured. He puts the worst construction on its unbelief, declares it to be utterly without excuse, accuses those who have been guilty of it of hating Him without a cause, that is, of hating one whose whole character and conduct, words and works, should have won their faith and love; and in their hatred of Him, He sees revealed a hatred of that very God for whose glory they professed to be so zealous.[2]

How painful is the view here given of the world's enmity to truth and its witnesses! One would like to see, in the bitterness with which the messengers of truth have been received (not excepting the case of Jesus), the result of a pardonable misunderstanding. And without doubt this is the origin of not a few religious animosities. There have been many sins committed against the Son of man, and those like-minded, which were only in a very mitigated degree sins against the Holy Ghost. Were it otherwise, alas for us all! For who has not persecuted the Son of man or His interest, cherishing ill-feeling and uttering bitter words against His members, if not against Him personally, under the influence of prejudice; yea, it may be, going the length of inflicting material injury on the apostles of unfamiliar, unwelcome truths, in obedience to the blind impulses of panic fear, or selfish passion?

If there be few who have not in one way or another persecuted, there are perhaps also few of the persecuted who have not taken too sombre views of the guilt of their persecutors. Men who suffer for their convictions are greatly tempted to regard their opponents as in equal measure the opponents of God. The wrongs they endure provoke them to think and speak of the wrong-doers as the very children of the devil. Then it gives importance to one's cause, and dignity to one's sufferings, to conceive of the former as God's, and of the latter as endured for God's sake. Finally, broadly

[1] John xv. 21. [2] Vers. 22–25.

to state the question at stake as one between God's friends and God's foes, satisfies both the intellect and the conscience; the former demanding a *status questionis* which is simply and easily understood; the latter, one which puts you obviously in the right, and your adversaries obviously in the wrong.

All this shows that much candour, humility, and patience of spirit is needed before one can safely say, "He that hateth me hateth God." Nevertheless it remains true that a man's real attitude towards God is revealed by the way in which he treats God's present work and His living servants. On this principle Jesus judged His enemies, though He cherished no resentment, and was ever ready to make due allowance for ignorance. In spite of His charity, He believed and said that the hostility He had encountered sprang from an evil will, and a wicked, godless heart. He had in view mainly the leaders of the opposition who organized the mob of the ignorant and the prejudiced into a hostile army. These men He unhesitatingly denounced as haters of God, truth, and righteousness; and He pointed to their treatment of Himself as the conclusive evidence of the fact. His appearance and ministry among them had stript off the mask, and shown them in their real character as hypocrites, pretending to sanctity, but inwardly full of baseness and impiety, who hated genuine goodness, and could not rest till they had got it flung out of the world and nailed to a cross. With the history and the sayings of Christ before our eyes, we must beware lest we carry apologies for unbelief too far.

Jesus having spoken, as in a brief digression, of His bitter experience in the past, very naturally goes on next to express the hope which He cherishes of a brighter future. Hitherto He has been despised and rejected of men, but He believes it will not always be so. The world, Jewish and Gentile, will ere long begin to change its mind, and the Crucified One will become an object of faith and reverence. This hope He builds on a strong and sure foundation, even the combined testimony of the Spirit of truth and of His own apostles. "But," saith He, His face brightening as He speaks, "when the Comforter (of whom He had spoken to His little ones, and to whom He now alludes as His own Comforter not less than

theirs) is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me."[1] What results the Spirit would bring about by His testimony, He does not here state. To that point He speaks shortly after, on discovering that His hearers have not apprehended His meaning, or at least have failed to find in His words any comfort for themselves. Meantime He hastens to intimate that the disciples as well as the Spirit of truth will have a share in the honourable work of redeeming from disgrace their Master's name and character. They also should bear witness, as they were well qualified to do, having been with Him from the beginning of His ministry,[2] and knowing fully His doctrine and manner of life.

In this future witness-bearing of the Spirit and of the apostles, Jesus sought comfort to His own heart under the depressing weight of a gloomy retrospect, and the immediate prospect of crucifixion. But not the less did He mean the disciples also to seek from the same quarter strength to encounter their tribulations. In truth, no considerations could tend more effectually to reconcile generous minds to a hard lot than those implied in what Jesus had just said,—viz. that the apostles would suffer in a cause favoured by Heaven, and tending to the honour of Him whom they loved more than life. Who would not choose to be on the side for which the Divine Spirit fights, even at the risk of receiving wounds? Who would not be happy to be reproached and evil-entreated for a name which is worthy to be above every name, especially if assured that the sufferings endured contributed directly to the exaltation of that blessed name to its rightful place of sovereignty?

It was just these considerations which more than anything else supported the apostles under their great and manifold trials. They learned to say: "For Christ's sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. But what does it matter? The church is spreading, believers

[1] John xv. 26.

[2] John xv. 27. Hoffman takes μαρτυρεῖτε in ver. 27 as an imperative: And do ye also bear witness of me: tell the world what I am.—*Schriftbeweis*, 2te Hälfte, 2te Abtheilung, p. 19.

are multiplying on every side, springing up an hundred-fold from the seed of the martyrs' blood; the name of our Lord is being magnified. We will gladly suffer, therefore, bearing witness to the truth."

Having premised these observations concerning the aids to endurance, Jesus proceeded at length to state distinctly, in words already quoted, what the apostles would have to endure.[1] On these words we make only one additional remark, viz. that the disciples would learn from them not only the nature of their future tribulations, but the quarter whence they were to come. The world, against whose hatred their Master forewarns them in this part of His discourse, is not the irreligious, sceptical, easy-going, gross-living world of paganism. It is the world of antichristian Judaism; of synagogue-frequenting men, accustomed to distinguish themselves from "the world" as the people of God, very zealous after a fashion for God's glory, fanatically in earnest in their religious opinions and practices, utterly intolerant of dissent, relentlessly excommunicating all who deviated from established belief by a hair's-breadth, and deeming their death no murder, but a religious service, an acceptable sacrifice to the Almighty. To this Jewish world is assigned the honour of representing the entire *kosmos* of men alienated from God and truth; and if hatred to the good be the central characteristic of worldliness, the honour was well earned, for it was among the Jews that the power of hating attained its maximum degree of intensity. No man could hate like a religious Jew of the apostolic age: he was renowned for his diabolic capacity of hating. Even a Roman historian, Tacitus, commemorates the "hostile odium" of the Jewish race against all mankind; and the experience of the Christian apostles fully justified the prominence given to the Jew by Jesus in discoursing on the world's hatred. It was to the unbelieving Jews they mainly owed their knowledge of what the world's hatred meant. The pagan world despised them rather than hated them. The Greek laughed, and the Roman passed by in contemptuous indifference, or at most opposed temperately, as one who would rather not. But the persevering, implacable, malignant hostility of the Jewish

[1] John xvi. 2.

religionist!—it was bloodthirsty, it was pitiless, it was worthy of Satan himself. Truly might Jesus say to the Jews, with reference thereto, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

What a strange fruit was this wicked spirit of hatred, to grow upon the goodly vine which God had planted in the holy land! Chosen to be the vehicle of blessing to the world, Israel ends by becoming the enemy of the world, "contrary to all men," so as to provoke even the humane to regard and treat her as a nuisance, whose destruction from the face of the earth would be a common cause of congratulation. Behold the result of election abused! Peculiar favours minister to pride, instead of stirring up the favoured ones to devote themselves to their high vocation as the benefactors of mankind; and a divine commonwealth is turned into a synagogue of Satan, and God's most deadly foes are those of His own house. Alas, the same phenomenon has reappeared in the Christian church. The world that is most opposed to Christ, Antichrist itself, is to be found, not in heathendom, but in Christendom; not among the irreligious and the sceptical, but among those who account themselves the peculiar people of God.

The announcement made by Jesus concerning their future tribulations, produced, as was to be expected, a great sensation among the disciples. The dark prospect revealed by the momentary lifting of the veil utterly appalled them. Consternation appeared in their faces, and sorrow filled their hearts. To be forsaken by their Master was bad enough, but to be left to such a fate was still worse, they thought. Jesus noticed the impression He had produced, and did what He could to remove it, and help the poor disciples to recover their composure.

First, He makes a sort of apology for speaking of such painful matters, to this effect: "I would gladly have been silent concerning your coming troubles, and I have been silent as long as possible; but I could not think of leaving you without letting you know what was before you, which accordingly I have done now, as the hour of my departure is at hand."[1] The kind feeling which dictated the statement

[1] John xvi. 4.

thus paraphrased is manifest, but the statement itself appears inconsistent with the records of the other Gospels, from which we learn that the hardships connected with discipleship in general, and with the apostleship in particular, were a frequent subject of remark in the intercourse of Jesus with the twelve. The difficulty has been variously dealt with by commentators. Some admit the contradiction, and assume that such earlier discourses concerning persecutions as are found, *e.g.*, in the tenth chapter of Matthew, are introduced by the evangelist out of their chronological order. Others insist on the difference between the earlier utterances and the present in respect to *plainness:* representing the former as vague and general, like the early allusions made by Jesus to His own death; the latter as particular, definite, and unmistakeable, like the announcements which Jesus made respecting His passion towards the end of His ministry. A third class of expositors make the novelty of this discourse on the world's hatred lie in the explanation given therein of its cause and origin;[1] while a fourth class insist that the grand distinction between this discourse and all that went before is to be found in the fact that it is a farewell discourse, and therefore one which, owing to the situation, made quite a novel impression.[2]

Where so much difference of opinion prevails, it would be unbecoming to dogmatize. Our own opinion, however, is, that the peculiarity of the present utterance concerning apostolic tribulations lies in the manner or style rather than in the matter. On former occasions, especially on the occasion of the trial mission of the twelve, Jesus had said much the same things: He had spoken of scourging in synagogues at least, if not of excommunication from them, and had alluded to death by violence as at least a possible fate for the apostles of the kingdom. But He had said all things in a different way. There He *preached* concerning persecution; here He makes an awfully real *announcement.* There is all the difference between that discourse and the present communication, that there would be between a sermon on the text, "It is appointed unto men once to die," and a special intimation to an individual, "This year thou shalt die." The sermon may

[1] Stier. [2] Luthardt.

say far more about death than the intimation, but in how different a manner, and with what a different effect!

The next expedient for curing grief to which Jesus has recourse is friendly remonstrance. He gently taunts the disciples for their silence, which He regards as a token of hopeless, despairing sorrow. "But now I go my way to Him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest Thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart."[1] "Why," He means to say, "are you so utterly cast down? have you no questions to ask me about my departure? You were full of questions at the first. You were curious to know whither I was going. I would be thankful to have that question asked over again, or indeed to have any question put to me, whether wise or foolish. The most childish interrogations would be better than the gloom of speechless despair."

As the question, "Whither goest Thou?" had been sufficiently answered already, it might have been superfluous to ask it again. There were, however, other questions neither superfluous nor impertinent, which the disciples might have taken occasion to ask from the communication just made to them concerning their future lot, and which they probably would have asked had they not been so depressed in spirits. "If," they might have said, "If it is to fare so ill with us after you go, why do not you stay? While you have been with us you have sheltered us from the world's hatred, and you tell us that when you, our leader and head, are gone, that hatred will be directed against us, your followers. If so, how can we possibly regard your departure as anything but a calamity?"

These unspoken questions Jesus proceeds in the next place to answer. He boldly asserts, that whatever they may think, it is for their good that He should go away.[2] The assertion, true in other respects also, is made with special reference to the work of the apostleship. In the early part of His farewell address, Jesus had explained to His disciples how His departure would affect them as private persons or individual

[1] John xvi. 5, 6. Olshausen joins the first part of ver. 5 to the preceding, and supposes a pause arter the words were uttered.

[2] John xvi. 7.

believers. He had assured them, that when "the Comforter" came, He would make them feel as if their departed Master were returned to them again; yea, as if He were more really present to them than ever He had been. Here His object is to show the bearing of His departure on their work as apostles, and to make them understand that His going away would be good for them as public functionaries.

The proof of this assertion follows:[1] its substance is to this effect: "When I leave you and go to my Father,[2] two *desiderata* of essential importance for the success of your work as apostles will be supplied. Then you will have receptive hearers, and you yourselves will be competent to preach. Neither of these *desiderata* exists for the present. The world has rejected me and my words; and you, though sincere, are very ignorant, and understand not what I have taught you. After my ascension there will be a great alteration in both respects: the world will be more ready to hear the truth, and you will be able to declare it intelligently. The change cannot come till then; for it will be brought about by the work of the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, and He cannot come till I go."

In the section of His discourse of which we have given the general meaning, Jesus sketches in rapid outline, first the Spirit's converting work in the world,[3] and then His enlightening work in the minds of the apostles.[4] The former He describes in these terms: "When He is come, He will convince (produce serious thought and conviction in) the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment." Then He explains in what special aspects the Spirit will bring these great moral realities before men's minds; and here He but expounds what He has already said concerning the Spirit's testimony in His own behalf.[5] He tells His disciples that the Comforter, witnessing for Himself in the hearts and consciences of men, will convince them of sin specially as unbelievers in Him; of righteousness in connection with His departure to the Father; and of judgment (to come), because the prince of this world is

[1] John xvi. 7–15.
[2] ἀπέρχομαι, πορεύομαι.
[3] John xvi. 8–11.
[4] John xvi. 12–15.
[5] John xv. 26.

judged already (that is, shall have been, when the Comforter commences His work).

The second and third explanatory remarks are enigmatical, and instead of throwing light on the subject in hand, seem rather to involve it in darkness. They have given rise to so much dispute and diversity of opinion, that to expatiate on them were vain, and to dogmatize presumption. One great point of dispute has been: What righteousness does Jesus allude to—His own, or that of sinners? Does He mean to say that the Spirit will convince the world after He has left the earth that He was a righteous man? or does He mean that the Spirit will teach men to see in the Crucified One the Lord their righteousness? Our own opinion is, that He means neither, and both. Righteousness is to be taken in its undefined generality; and the idea is, that the Spirit will make use of the exaltation of Christ to make men think earnestly on the whole subject of righteousness: to show them the utterly rotten character of their own righteousness, whose crowning feat was to crucify Jesus, to bring home to their hearts the solemn truth, that the Crucified One was the Just One, and ultimately to put them on a track for finding in Jesus their true righteousness, by raising in their minds the question, Why then did the Just One suffer?

The meaning of the third explanatory remark we take to be to this effect: "When I am crucified, the god of this world shall have been judged. Both the world and its god indeed, but the latter only finally and irreversibly; the world, though presently following Satan, being convertible. When I am ascended, the Spirit will use the then past judgment of Satan to convince men of a judgment to come; teaching them to see therein a prophecy of a final separation between me and all who obstinately persist in unbelief, and so, by the terrors of perdition, bringing them to repentance and faith."

What Jesus says of the enlightening work of the Spirit on the minds of the disciples, amounts to this: He will fit you to be intelligent and trustworthy witnesses to me, and to be guides of the church in doctrine and practice. For these high purposes two things would be necessary: that they should understand Christian truth, and that they should possess the

gift of prophecy, so as to be able to foretell in its general outlines the future, for the warning and encouragement of believers. Both these advantages Jesus promises them, as fruits of the Spirit's enlightening influence. He assures them that, when the Comforter is come, He will guide them into all the truth He had Himself taught them, recalling things forgotten, explaining things not understood, developing germs into a system of doctrine which was entirely above their present power of comprehension.[1] He further informs them that this same Spirit will show them things to come: such as the rise of heresies and apostasies, the coming of Antichrist, the conflict between light and darkness, and their final issue, as described in the book of Revelation.

Such were the changes to be brought about in the world and in the disciples by the advent of the Comforter. Great beneficent changes truly; but *why cannot they take place before Jesus leaves the world?* The answer to this question is hinted at by Jesus, when He says of the Spirit: "He shall not speak of Himself,"[2] and "He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."[3] The personal ministry of Jesus behoved to come to an end before the ministry of the Spirit began, because the latter is merely an application of the former. The Spirit does not speak as from Himself; He simply takes of the things relating to Christ, and shows them to men: to unbelievers, for their conviction and conversion; to believers, for their enlightenment and sanctification. But till Jesus had died, risen, ascended, the essentials about Him would remain incomplete: the materials for a gospel would not be ready to hand. There could be neither apostolic preaching nor the demonstration of the Spirit with power accompanying it. It must be possible for the apostles and the Spirit to bear witness of One who, though perfectly holy, had been crucified, to show the world the heinousness of its sin. They must have it in their power to declare that God hath made that same Jesus whom they have crucified both Lord and Christ, exalted to heavenly glory, before their hearers can be pricked in the heart, and made to exclaim in terror, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Only after Jesus had

[1] John xvi. 12. [2] John xvi. 13. [3] John xvi. 14.

ascended to glory, and become invisible to mortal eyes,[1] could men be made to understand that He was not only personally a righteous man, but the Lord their righteousness. Then the question would force itself upon their minds: What could be the meaning of the Lord of glory becoming man, and dying on the cross? and by the teaching of the Spirit they would learn to reply, not as in the days of their ignorance, "He suffers for His own offences," but, "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions."

Finally, not till the apostles were in a position to say that their Lord was gone to heaven, could they bring to bear with full effect on the impenitent the doctrine of a judgment. Then they could say, Christ is seated on the heavenly throne, a Prince and a Saviour to all who believe, but also a Judge to those who continue in rebellion and unbelief. "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

All this the disciples for the present did not understand. Of the Spirit's work on the conscience of the world and in their own minds, and of the relation in which the third person of the Trinity[2] stood to the second, they had simply no conception. Hence Jesus does not enlarge on these topics, but restricts Himself to what is barely necessary to indicate the truth. But the time came when the disciples did get to understand these matters, and then they fully appreciated the eulogium of their Lord on the dispensation of the Comforter. Then they acknowledged that the assertion was indeed true, that it was expedient for them that He should go away, and smiled when they remembered that they had once thought otherwise; yea, they perceived that the word "expedient," far from being too strong, was rather a weak expression, chosen in gracious accommodation to their feeble spiritual capacity, instead of the

[1] John xvi. 10, "And ye see me no more," = I am no longer seen on earth; suggesting the idea that earth was Christ's place of sojourn, heaven His home, therefore inferentially asserting His divinity.

[2] The personality of the Holy Ghost is assumed throughout this discourse. See ver. 13, ἐκεῖνος.

stronger one "indispensable." Then they felt, as we imagine good men feel about death when they have got to heaven. On this side the grave,

> "Timorous mortals start and shrink
> To cross the narrow sea;
> And linger, shivering, on the brink,
> And fear to launch away."

But to those on the other side how insignificant a matter must death seem, and how strange must it appear to their purged vision, that it should ever have been needful to prove to them that it was better to depart to heaven than to remain in a world of sin and sorrow!

SECTION III.—*The Little While, and the End of the Discourse.*

JOHN XVI. 16–33.

The eulogium on the dispensation of the Comforter winds up with a paradox. Jesus has been telling His disciples that His departure will be beneficial for them in various respects, but particularly in this, that they shall attain thereafter to a clear, full comprehension of Christian truth. In effect, what He has said is: It is good for you that I go, for not till I become invisible physically shall I be visible to you spiritually—I must be withdrawn from the eye of your flesh, before I can be seen by the eye of your mind. Hence He fitly ends His discourse on the Comforter by repeating a riddle, which He had propounded in a less pointed form in His first farewell address: "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again a little while, and ye shall see me; because I go to the Father."

This riddle, like all riddles, is very simple when we have the key to it. As in that other paradoxical saying of Jesus, concerning losing and saving life,[1] the principal word—"see"—is used in two senses;[2] first in a physical, and then, in the second clause, in a spiritual sense. Hence the possibility of one event, the departure of Christ to the Father, becoming a

[1] Matt. xvi. 25. [2] There are two words in the Greek—*θεωρεῖτε, ὄψεσθε*.

cause at once of not seeing and of seeing. When Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples saw Him no more as they saw Him then in the supper-chamber. But immediately thereafter they began to see Him in another way. The idea of His life did sweetly creep into the eye and prospect of their soul. And the sight was satisfying: it justified the glowing language in which their Master had spoken of it before He left them. Though they saw Him no more in the flesh, yet believing in Him, to quote the words of the Apostle Peter, they rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

For the present, however, the disciples have no conception of the vision and the joy which await them. Their Lord's words have no meaning for them; they are a riddle indeed, yea, a contradiction. Standing around the inspired speaker, they whisper remarks to each other concerning the strange enigmatical words He has just uttered, about a little while, and about seeing and not seeing, and about going to the Father. The riddle has evidently served one purpose at least; it has roused the disciples out of the stupor of grief, and awakened for a little their curiosity. That, however, is the amount of the service it has rendered; it has created surprise, but it has conveyed no sense: the hearers are constrained to confess, "We cannot tell what He saith."[1]

Yet, we observe, they ask no questions at Jesus. They would like to do so at this point, but they do not feel able to take the liberty; restrained, we imagine, by respect for the lofty sustained tone in which their Master has been addressing them in the second part of His farewell discourse. Jesus, however, reads a question in their countenances, and kindly favours them with a word of explanation.[2]

That word does not, strictly speaking, explain the riddle. Jesus does not tell His disciples what the little while means, nor does He distinguish the two kinds of seeing: He leaves the enigma to be solved, as it only can be, by experience. All He attempts is to make it conceivable how the same event which in immediate prospect causes sorrow, may, after its occurrence, be a cause of joy. For this purpose He com-

[1] John xvi. 18. [2] John xvi. 19–21.

pares the crisis through which the disciples are about to pass, not, as we have already done, to the solemn event by which a Christian makes his exit out of this world into a better, but to the event with which human life begins.[1]

The comparison is apt to the purpose for which it is introduced; but we cannot with certainty, not to say propriety, pursue it into detail. Interpreters who aspire to understand all mysteries and all knowledge, have raised many questions thereanent, such as: Who is represented by the mother in the parable—Christ or the disciples? When does the sorrow begin, and when and in what does it end? The answers given to these questions are very various. According to one, Jesus Himself is the new man, and the sorrow He alludes to is His own death, viewed as the painful birth-hour for the redemption of sinful humanity. Another will have it that Jesus represents His own disciples as with child of a spiritual Christ, who will be born when the Comforter comes. Most make the time of sorrow begin with Christ's passion, but there is much difference of opinion as to when it ends. One makes the joy date from the resurrection, which, after a little while of painful separation, restored Jesus to His sorrowing disciples; another extends the "little while" to Pentecost, when the church was born into the world a new man in Christ; a third makes the little while a long while indeed, by making the words "I will see you again" refer to Christ's second coming, and to the blessed era when the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, for which the whole creation groans, shall at length come into being.[2]

We do not think it necessary to pronounce on these disputed points. As little do we think it necessary to give the analogy a doctrinal turn, and find in it a reference to regeneration. What Jesus has in view throughout this part of His discourse is not the new birth either of the disciples or of the church, but the spiritual illumination of the apostles; their transition from the *chrysalis* into the winged state, from an ignorant implicit faith to a faith developed and intelligent; their initia-

[1] John xvi. 20–22.

[2] See, for the various opinions on these points, Stier, Luthardt, Lange, Olshausen, Alford, etc.

tion into the highest grade of the Christian mysteries, when they should see clearly things presently unintelligible, and be *Epopts* in the kingdom of heaven.[1] For them, as for Christians generally (for there is a sense in which the experience of the apostles repeats itself in the spiritual history of many believers), this crisis is not less important than the initial one by which men pass from death into life. It is a great thing to be regenerated, but it is a not less great thing to be illuminated. It is a great, ever-memorable time that, when Christ first enters the heart, an object of faith and love; but it is an equally important crisis when Christ, after having departed perhaps for a season, leaving the mind clouded with doubt and the heart oppressed with sorrow, returns never to depart, driving away wintry frosts and darkness, and bringing light, gladness, summer warmth, and spiritual fruitfulness to the soul. Verily one might be content that Christ, as he first knew Him, should depart, for the sake of having his sorrow after a little while turned into such joy!

Having shown, by a familiar and pathetic analogy, the possibility of present sorrow being transmuted into great joy, Jesus proceeds next to describe, by a few rapid strokes, the characteristics of the state at which the apostles will ere long arrive.[2] First among these He mentions an enlarged comprehension of truth; for it is to this He refers when He says, "In that day ye shall ask me nothing." He means that they will then ask Him no questions such as they had been asking all along, and especially that night; child's questions, asked with a child's curiosity, and also with a child's incapacity to understand the answers. The questioning spirit of childhood would be replaced by the understanding spirit of manhood. The truths of the kingdom would no longer, as heretofore, be inscrutable mysteries to them; they should have an unction from the Holy One, and should know all things.

Some think this too much to be said of any Christian, not even excepting the apostles themselves, while in the earthly

[1] One who had been introduced into the highest (third) grade of the Eleusinian mysteries was called ἐπόπτης. See Plato, *Convivium* (Socrates reporting discourse of Diotime on Ἔρως).

[2] John xvi. 23, 24.

state, and therefore argue that the day alluded to here is that of Christ's second coming, or of His happy reunion with His own in the kingdom of His Father.[1] And, without doubt, it is true that in that final day only shall Christians know as they are known, and have absolutely no need to ask any questions. Then,

> "'Midst power that knows no limit,
> And wisdom free from bound,
> The beatific vision
> Shall glad the saints around,"

as it can never gladden them here below. Still the statement before us has a relative truth in reference to this present life. While, in comparison with the perfect state, the clearest vision of any Christian is but a seeing in a glass darkly, the degree of illumination attained by the apostles might be described, without exaggeration, in contrast to their ignorance as disciples, as that of men who needed not any longer to ask questions. In promising His disciples that they would ere long attain this high degree, Jesus was but saying in effect, that as apostles they would be teachers, not scholars—doctors of divinity, with titles conferred by heaven itself—capable of answering questions of young disciples, similar to those which they once asked themselves.

The second feature of the apostolic illumination mentioned by Jesus is unlimited influence with God through prayer. Of this He speaks with much emphasis: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you."[2] That is to say: The apostles were to have at command the whole power of God; the power of miracles, to heal diseases; of prophecy, to foretell things to come bearing on the church's interest, and which it was desirable that believers should know; of providence, to

[1] So Luthardt, ii. 348, who holds that the first clause of ver. 23 refers to the final condition of the church, and the second to its imperfect state, on the ground that the two cannot be contemporaneous. He says where there is praying there is asking, and *vice versa*. Yet it is also true that the less a man needs to ask questions, that is, the more enlightened he is, the more he will *pray*.

[2] John xvi. 23. The verb translated *ask* in this clause is not the same as that rendered by the same English word in the first. In the first clause it is ἐρωτήσατε; in the second, αἰτήσητε.

make all events subservient to their well-being, and that of the cause in which they laboured.

Bating the miraculous elements, which most Protestants agree in regarding as peculiar to the apostolic age, this magnificent promise of Jesus is made to all who aspire to Christian manhood, and is fulfilled to all who reach it. The secret of the Lord is open to such. In a sense, they can divine. Possessing clear insight into, and firm faith in, the laws which govern the moral world, they foresee and predict events which to other men are unsuspected, or at most problematical. In this way we are to account for the remarkable predictions of Savonarola, Knox, Peden, and many others, eminent for spiritual discernment and unwavering faith in the reality of a divine providence in human affairs. Then, further, the friends of God not only know in part His secrets, but have power by prayer to influence the future. The effectual fervent prayer of righteous men availeth much to bring down from heaven the blessing of the Spirit, and to secure the favourable disposal of all events to promote the interests of the divine kingdom.

In the next sentence, Jesus, if we mistake not, particularizes a third feature in the state of spiritual maturity to which He would have His disciples aspire. It is a heart enlarged to desire, ask, and expect great things for themselves, the church, and the world. "Hitherto," He says to them, "have ye asked nothing in my name." Of course there was a reason for this, distinct from the spiritual state of the twelve. The time had not yet come for asking anything in Christ's name: they could not fitly or naturally make "Christ's sake" their plea till Christ's work was completed, and He was glorified. But Jesus meant more than this by His remark. He meant to say, what was in fact most true, that hitherto His disciples had asked little in any name. Their desires had been petty, their ideas of what to ask obscure and crude; any wishes of large dimensions they had cherished had been of a worldly character, and therefore such as God could not grant. They had been like children, to whom a penny appears greater than a thousand pounds does to a wealthy man. But Jesus hints, though He does not plainly say, that it will be otherwise with the apostles after the advent of the Comforter. Then they

will be poor boys grown to rich merchants, whose ideas of enjoyment have enlarged with their outward fortunes. Then they will be able to pray such prayers as that of Paul in his Roman prison in behalf of the Ephesian church, and of the church in all ages; able to pray the Lord's Prayer, and especially to say "Thy kingdom come," with a comprehensiveness of meaning, a fervency of desire, and an assurance of faith, whereof at present they have simply no conception. Hitherto they have been but as children, asking of their father trifles, toys, pence; then they shall make large demands on the riches of God's grace, for themselves, the church, and the world.

Along with this enlargement, Jesus promises, will come fulness of joy. What is asked, the Father will grant; and the answer to prayer will fill the cup of joy to the brim. Hope may be deferred for a season, but in the end will come the unspeakable joy of hope fulfilled. "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

So it turned out in the experience of the apostles. They had fulness of joy in the Holy Ghost, in His work in their own hearts and in the world. Does the law hold good still? Why should it not? But why, then, is the work of the Spirit at a stand-still in individual Christians, and in the church generally? Why is the cause of Christianity not progressing, but rather, one might almost say, retrograding? We must answer these questions by asking others: How many have large hearts, cherishing comprehensive desires? How many with their whole soul desire for themselves above all things sanctification and illumination? How many earnestly, passionately desire the conversion of the heathen, the unity and peace and purity of the church, the prevalence of righteousness in society at large? Verily we are straitened in our own hearts, not in God!

The farewell discourse is now at an end. Jesus has said to His disciples what time permits, and what they are able to hear. He does not imagine that He has conveyed much instruction to their minds, or that He has done much for them in the way of consolation. He has a very humble idea of the

character and practical effect of the address He has just delivered. Casting a glance backwards at the whole, while perhaps specially alluding to what had been said just before, He remarks: "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs." A few parables or figurative sayings about the house of many mansions, and about the Divine Trinity coming to make their abode with the faithful, and about the vine and its branches, and about maternal sorrows and joys: such, in the speaker's view, is the sum of His discourse.

Conscious of the inevitable deficiency not only of the present discourse, but of His whole past teaching, Jesus takes occasion for the third time to repeat the promise of future spiritual illumination; this time speaking of Himself as the illuminator, and representing the doctrine of the Father as the great subject of illumination. "The time cometh when *I* shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but *I* shall show you plainly of the Father." The time referred to is still the era dating from the ascension. Shortly thereafter the disciples would begin to experience the fulfilment of Philip's prayer, to understand what their Lord meant by His going to the Father, and to realize its blessed consequences for themselves. Then would their exalted Lord, through the Spirit of truth, speak to them plainly of these and all other matters; plainly in comparison with His present mystic, hidden style of speech, if not so plainly as to falsify the statements in other places of Scripture concerning the partiality and dimness of all spiritual knowledge in this earthly state of being.

Of the good time coming Jesus has yet another thing to say; not a new thing, but an old thing said in a new, wondrously kind, and pathetic way. It has reference to the hearing of prayer, and is to this effect: "In the day of your enlightenment you will, as I have already hinted, pray not less than heretofore, but far more, and you will use my name as your plea to be heard. Let me once more assure you that you *shall* be heard. In support of this assurance, I might remind you that I will be in heaven with the Father, ever ready to speak a word in your behalf, saying: 'Father, hear them for my sake, whose name they plead in their petitions.' But I do not insist on this, not only because I believe you do

not need to be assured of my continued interest in your welfare, but more especially because my intercession will not be necessary. My Father will not need to be entreated to hear *you*, the men who have been with me in all my temptations,[1] who have loved me with leal-hearted affection, who have believed in me as the Christ, the Son of the living God, while the world at large has regarded me as an impostor and a blasphemer. For these services to His Son my Father loves you, is grateful to you—in a sense, accounts Himself your debtor." [2]

What heart, what humanity, what poetry, is in all this! Yes, poetry, but also truth: truth unspeakably comforting not only to the eleven faithful companions of Jesus, but to all sincere believers in Him. For, all Popish notions of merit apart, it is undoubtedly true that God loves all in this world who love and serve His Son. The eyes of God run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself gracious to those who are perfect in heart towards the Lord Jesus Christ, honestly believing that He came out from the bosom of the Eternal, and returned thither again, ever careful for the honour of His name, ever zealous in His cause, willingly enduring hardship for His sake,—in one word, true Christians.

Having alluded to the faith of His disciples—so meritorious, because so rare—Jesus takes occasion in closing His discourse, and at the close of His life, solemnly to declare its truth. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father."[3] The first part only of this statement the disciples believed; the second they did not yet understand; but Jesus puts both together, as the two halves of one whole truth, either of which necessarily implies the other. The declaration is a most momentous one: it sums up the history of Christ; it is the substance of the Christian faith; it asserts doctrines utterly incompatible with a merely human view of Christ's person, and makes His divinity the fundamental article of the creed.

These last words of Jesus burst on the disciples like a star suddenly shining out from the clouds in a dark night. At length one luminous utterance had pierced through the haze of their Master's mysterious discourse, and they fancied that

[1] Luke xxii. 28. [2] John xvi. 26, 27. [3] John xvi. 28.

now at last they understood its import. Jesus had just told them that He came forth from the Father into the world. That, at least, they understood; it was because they believed it that they had become disciples. Delighted to have heard something to which they could give a hearty response, they make the most of it, and inform their Master that the intelligible, plain speaking on His part, and the intelligent apprehending on theirs which He had projected into the future, were already in existence. "Lo," said they, with emphasis on the temporal particle, "*now* Thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. *Now* are we sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee: in this we believe that Thou camest forth from God."

Alas, how impossible it is for children to speak otherwise than as children! The disciples, in the very act of professing their knowledge, betray their utter ignorance. The statement beginning with the second "now" indicates an almost ludicrous misapprehension of what Jesus had said about their asking Him no questions in the day of their enlightenment. He meant they would not then need to ask questions as learners; they took Him to mean that He Himself had no need to be asked questions as to who He was and whence He came, His claim to a heavenly descent being already admitted at least by them. And as to the inference drawn from that statement, "By this we believe," we can make nothing of it. After many attempts to understand the logic of the disciples, we must confess ourselves utterly baffled. The only way by which we can put a tolerable sense on the words is to regard the phrase translated "by this" as an adverb of time, and to read "at this present moment:" Meanwhile, whatever additional light may be in store for us in the future, we even now believe that Thou camest forth from God. This translation, however, is not favoured, or even suggested, by any of the critics.[1]

That the disciples did honestly believe what they professed to believe, was true. Jesus had just before admitted as much. But they did not understand what was involved in their belief.

[1] Winer, *Neutest. Grammatik*, states that he knows no clear example of the use of ἐν τούτῳ = by this, or because of. Of its use = *interea* he gives several examples from classic authors, pp. 361–2 (Moulton's translation, p. 484).

They did not comprehend that the coming of Jesus from the Father implied a going thither again. They had not comprehended that at the beginning of the discourse; they did not comprehend it when the discourse was finished; they would not comprehend it till their Lord had taken His departure, and the Spirit had come who should make all things plain. In consequence of this ignorance, their faith would not carry them through the evil hour that was now very near. The death of their Master, the first step in the process of His departure, would take them by surprise, and make them flee panic-stricken like sheep attacked by wolves. So Jesus plainly told them. "Do ye now believe?" He said; "behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone."[1]

Stern fact sternly announced; but however stern, Jesus is not afraid to look it in the face. His heart is in perfect peace, for He has two great consolations. He has a good conscience: He can say, "I have overcome the world." He has held fast His moral integrity against incessant temptation. The prince of this world has found none of his spirit in Him, and for that very reason is going to crucify Him. But by that proceeding the devil will not nullify, but rather seal, His victory. Outward defeat by worldly power will be but the index and measure of His spiritual conquest. The world itself knows well, that putting Him to death is but the second best way of overcoming Him. His enemies would have been much better pleased if they had succeeded in intimidating or bribing Him into compromise. The ungodly powers of the world always prefer corruption to persecution as a means of getting rid of truth and righteousness; only after failing in attempts to debauch conscience, and make men venal, do they have recourse to violence.

Christ's other source of consolation in prospect of death is the approval of His Father: "I am not alone, because the Father is with me." The Father has been with Him all

[1] The commentators tell us that ἄρτι πιστεύετε is not a question. If not, why is there no adversative particle in next clause (ἔρχεται δέ)? The clause is undoubtedly interrogative in effect. Christ calls in question not the reality indeed, but the sufficiency, of the faith of His disciples.

along. On three critical occasions—at the baptism, on the hill of transfiguration, in the temple a few days ago—the Father had encouraged Him with an approving voice. He feels that the Father is with Him still. He expects that He will be with Him when He is deserted by His chosen ones, and all through the awful crisis at hand, even in that darkest, bitterest moment, when the loss of His Father's sensible presence will extort from Him the cry: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" He expects that His Father will be with Him then, not to save Him from the *sense* of desertion (He does not wish to be saved from that, for He would know by experience that sorest of all sorrows, that in this as in all other respects He might be like His brethren, and be able to succour them when they are tempted to despair), but to sustain Him under the sore affliction, and enable Him with filial faith to cry "*my* God" even when complaining of being forsaken.

Free from all anxiety for Himself, Jesus bids His disciples also be of good cheer; and for the same reason why He Himself is without fear, viz. because He has overcome the world. He will have them understand that His victory is theirs too. "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world, therefore so have ye in effect,"—such is His meaning.

Men of Socinianizing tendencies would interpret the words differently. They would read: I have overcome the world, therefore so may ye. Follow my example, and manfully fight the battle of righteousness in spite of tribulations. The meaning is good enough, so far as it goes. It does nerve one for the battle of life, to know that the Lord of glory has been through it before him. It is an inspiring thought that He has even been a combatant at all; for who would not follow when the divine Captain of salvation leads through suffering to glory? Then, when we think that this august combatant has been completely victorious in the fight, His example becomes still more cheering. His victory shows that the God of this world is not omnipotent, that it is always in the power of any one to overcome him simply by being willing to bear the cross. Looking at Jesus enduring the contradiction of sinners even unto death, and despising the shame of crucifixion, His followers get more heart to fight the good fight of faith.

But while this is true, it is the smallest part of the truth. The grand fact is, that Christ's victory is the victory of His followers, and ensures that they too shall conquer. Jesus fought His battle not as a private person, but as a public character, as a representative man. And all are welcome to claim the benefits of His victory—the pardon of sin, power to resist the evil one, admission into the everlasting kingdom. Because Christ hath overcome, we may say to all, Be of good cheer. The victory of the Son of God in human nature is an available source of consolation for all who partake of that nature. It is the privilege of every man (as well as the duty) to acknowledge Christ as His representative in this great battle. "The Head of every man is Christ." All who sincerely recognise the relationship will get the benefit of it. Claim kindred with the High Priest, and you shall receive from Him mercy and grace to help in your hour of need. Lay it to heart that men are not isolated units, every one fighting his own battle without help or encouragement. We are members one of another, and above all, we have in Christ an elder brother. We have at least a human relationship to Him, if not a regenerate one. Let us therefore look up to Him as our Head in all things: as our King, and lay down the weapons of our rebellion; as our Priest, and receive from Him the pardon of our sins; as our Lord, to be ruled by His will, defended by His might, and guided by His grace. If we do this, the accuser of the brethren will have no chance of prevailing against us. The words of St. John in the Apocalypse will be fulfilled in our history: "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

JOHN XVII.

THE prayer uttered by Jesus at the close of His farewell address to His disciples, of unparalleled sublimity, whether we regard its contents or the circumstances amid which it was offered up, it was for years our fixed purpose to pass over in solemn, reverent silence, without note or comment. We reluctantly depart from our intention now, constrained by the considerations that the prayer was not offered up mentally by Jesus, but in the hearing and for the instruction of the eleven men present; that it has been recorded by one of them for the benefit of the church in all ages; and that what it hath pleased God to preserve for our use, we must endeavour to understand, and may attempt to interpret.

The prayer falls naturally into three divisions; in the first of which Jesus prays for Himself, in the second for His disciples, and in the third for the church which was to be brought into existence by their preaching.

The prayer of Jesus for Himself (vers. 1–5) contains just one petition, with two reasons annexed. The petition is, "Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son;" in which the manner of address, simple, familiar, confidential, is noteworthy. "Father!"—such is the first word of the prayer, six times repeated in its course, with or without epithet attached, and the name which Jesus gives to Him to whom His prayer is addressed. He speaks to God as if He were already in heaven, as indeed He expressly says He is a little further on: "Now I am no more in the world."

The significant phrase, "the hour is come," is not less worthy of notice. How much it expresses!—filial obedience,

filial intimacy, filial hope and joy. The hour! It is the hour for which He has patiently waited, which He has looked forward to with eager expectation, yet has never sought to hurry on; the hour appointed by His Father, about which Father and Son have always had an understanding, and of which none but they have had any knowledge. That hour is come, and its arrival is intimated as a plea in support of the petition. "Thou knowest, Father, how patiently I have waited for what I now ask, not wearying in well-doing, nor shrinking from the hardships of my earthly lot. Now that my work is finished, grant me the desire of my heart, and glorify me."

"Glorify me," that is, "take me to be with Thyself." The prayer of Jesus is, that His Father would be pleased now to translate Him from this world of sin and sorrow into the state of glory He left behind when He became man. Thus He explains His own meaning when He repeats His request in a more expanded form, as given in the fifth verse: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self, with the glory I had with Thee before the world was," *i.e.* with the glory He enjoyed in the bosom of the Father before His incarnation as God's eternal Son.

It is observable that, in this prayer for Himself, Jesus makes no allusion to His approaching sufferings. Very shortly after, in Gethsemane, He prayed: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" But here is no mention of the cup of sorrow, but only of the crown of glory. For the present, heaven is in full view, and its anticipated glories make Him oblivious of everything else. Not till He is gone out into the night do the sulphurous clouds begin to gather, which overshadow the sky and shut out the celestial world from sight.

Yet the coming passion, though not mentioned, is virtually included in the prayer. Jesus knows that He must pass through suffering to glory, and that He must behave Himself worthily under the last trial, in order to reach the desired goal. Therefore the uttered prayer includes this unuttered one: "Carry me well through the approaching struggle; let me pass through the dark valley to the realms of light without flinching or fear."

The first reason annexed to the prayer is, "That Thy Son also may glorify Thee." Jesus seeks His own glorification merely as a means to a higher end, the glorification of God the Father. And in so connecting the two glorifyings as means and end, He but repeats to the Father what He had said to His disciples in His farewell address. He had told them that it was good for them that He should go, as not till His departure would any deep impression be made on the world's conscience with respect to Himself and His doctrine. He now tells His Father in effect: "It is good for Thy glory that I leave the earth and go to heaven; for henceforth I can promote Thy glory in the world better there than by a prolonged sojourn here."

To enforce the reason, Jesus next declares that what He desires is to glorify the Father, in His office as the Saviour of sinners: "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him."[1] Interpreted in the light of this sentence, the prayer means: "Thou sentest me into the world to save sinners, and hitherto I have been constantly occupied in seeking the lost, and communicating eternal life to such as would receive it. But the time has come when this work can be best carried on by me lifted up. Therefore exalt me to Thy throne, that from thence, as a Prince and a Saviour, I may dispense the blessings of salvation."

It is important to notice how Jesus defines His commission as the Saviour. He represents it at once as concerning all flesh, and as specially concerning a select class, thus ascribing to His work a general and a particular reference, in accordance with the teaching of the whole New Testament, which sets forth Christ at one time as the Saviour of all men, at another as the Saviour of His people, of the elect, of His sheep, of those who believe. This style of speaking concerning the redeeming work of our Saviour it is our duty and our privilege to imitate; avoiding extremes, both that of denying or ignoring the universal aspects of Christ's mission, and that of maintaining that He is in the same sense the Saviour of all, or that He will eventually save all. Both extremes are

[1] John xvii. 2.

excluded by the carefully selected words of Jesus in His intercessory prayer. On the one hand, He speaks of all flesh as belonging to His jurisdiction as the Saviour, of humanity at large as the mass into which the leaven is to be deposited, with a view to leavening the whole lump. On the other hand, there is an obvious restriction on the universality of the first clause in the terms of the second. The advocates of universal restoration have no support for their tenet here. They may indeed ask: If Jesus has power over all flesh, is it credible that He will not use it to the uttermost? In reply, we shall not seek to evade the question, by resolving the power claimed into a mere mediatorial sovereignty over the whole solely for the sake of a part, because we know that the elect part is chosen not *merely* for its own sake, but also for the sake of the whole, to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and the leaven to leaven the corrupt mass.[1] We simply observe that the power of the Saviour is not compulsory. Men are not saved by force as machines, but by love and grace as free beings; and there are many whom brooding love would gather under its wings, who prefer remaining outside to their own destruction.

The essence of eternal life is defined in the next sentence of the prayer, and represented as consisting in the knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ His messenger: knowledge being taken comprehensively as including faith, love, and worship, and the emphasis lying on the *objects* of such knowledge. The Christian religion is here described in opposition to paganism on the one hand, with its many gods, and to Judaism on the other, which, believing in the one true God, rejected the claims of Jesus to be the Christ. It is further so described as to exclude by anticipation Arian and Socinian views of the person of Christ. The names of God and of Jesus are put on a level as objects of religious regard, whereby an importance is assigned to the latter incompatible with the dogma that Jesus is a mere man. For eternal life cannot depend on knowing any man, however wise and good: the utmost that can be said of the benefit derivable from such

[1] On this see Martensen, *Die Christliche Dogmatik*, § 215 (translated in Foreign Theological Library).

knowledge is, that it is helpful towards knowing God better, which can be affirmed not only of Jesus, but of Moses, Paul, John, and all the apostles.

It may seem strange that, in addressing His Father, Jesus should deem it needful to explain wherein eternal life consists; and some, to get rid of the difficulty, have supposed that the sentence is an explanatory reflection interwoven into the prayer by the evangelist. Yet the words were perfectly appropriate in the mouth of Jesus Himself. The first clause is a confession by the man Jesus of His own faith in God His Father as the supreme object of knowledge; and the whole sentence is really an argument in support of the prayer, Glorify Thy Son. The force of the declaration lies in what it implies respecting the existing ignorance of men concerning the Father and His Son. It is as if Jesus said: Father, Thou knowest that eternal life consists in knowing Thee and me. Look around, then, and see how few possess such knowledge. The heathen world knoweth Thee not—it worships idols: the Jewish world is equally ignorant of Thee in spirit and in truth; for, while boasting of knowing Thee, it rejects me. The whole world is overspread with a dark veil of ignorance and superstition. Take me out of it therefore, not because I am weary of its sin and darkness, but that I may become to it a sun. Hitherto my efforts to illuminate the darkness have met with small success. Grant me a position from which I can send forth light over all the earth.

But why does the Saviour here alone, in the whole Gospel history, call Himself *Jesus Christ?* Some see in this compound name, common in the apostolic age, another proof that this verse is an interpolation. Again, however, without reason, for the style in which Jesus designates Himself exactly suits the object He has in view. He is pleading with the Father to take Him to glory, that He may the more effectually propagate the true religion. What more appropriate in this connection than to speak of Himself objectively under the name by which He should be known among the professors of the true religion?

The second reason pled by Jesus in support of His prayer is that His appointed service has been faithfully accomplished, and

now claims its guerdon: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. Now, therefore, glorify Thou me."[1] The great Servant of God speaks here not only with reference to the past, but by anticipation with reference to His passion already endured in purpose; so that the "I have finished" of the prayer is equivalent in meaning to the "It is finished" spoken from the cross. And what He says concerning Himself is true: the declaration, though one which no other human being could make without abatement, is on His part no exaggerated, boastful piece of self-laudation, but the sober, humble utterance of a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men. Nor can we say that the statement, though true, was ultroneous and uncalled for. It was necessary that Jesus should be able to make that declaration; and though the fact declared was well known to God, it was desirable to proclaim in the hearing of the twelve, and unto the whole church through their record, the grounds on which His claim to be rewarded with glory rested, for the strengthening of faith. For as our faith and hope towards God are based on the fact that Jesus Christ was able to make the declaration in question, so they are confirmed by the actual making of it; His protestation that He has kept His covenant of work being to us as it were a seal of the covenant of grace, serving the same end as the sacrament of the Supper.

Having offered this brief petition for Himself, Jesus proceeded to pray for His disciples at much greater length; all that follows having reference to them mainly, and from the sixth to the twentieth verse referring to them exclusively. The transition is made by a special declaration, applying the general one of the preceding sentence to that part of Christ's personal work which consisted in the training of these men: "I have manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest me out of the world."[2] After this introductory statement follows a short description of the persons about to be prayed for. Jesus gives His disciples a good character. First, scrupulously careful not to exaggerate the importance of the service He has rendered in training them for the apostolate,

[1] John xvii. 4. [2] John xvii. 6.

He acknowledges that they were good when He got them: "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me:" they were pious, devout men, God-taught, God-drawn, God-given. Then He testifies, that since they had been with Him they had sustained the character they had when they joined His company: "They have kept Thy word." And finally, He bears witness that the men whom His Father had given Him had been true believers in Himself, and had received all His words as the very truth of God, and Himself as One sent forth into the world by God.[1] Here, surely, is a generous eulogy on disciples, who, while sincere and devoted to their Master, were, as we know, exceedingly faulty in conduct and slow to learn.

Having thus generously praised His humble companions, Jesus intimates His intention to pray for them: "I pray for them." But the prayer comes not just yet; for some prefatory words must be premised, to give the prayer more emphasis when it does come. First, the persons prayed for are singled out as for the moment the sole objects of a concentrated solicitude. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world."[2] The design of Jesus in making this statement is not, of course, to intimate the absolute exclusion of the world from His sympathies. Not exclusion, but concentration in order to eventual inclusion, is His purpose here. He would have His Father fix His special regards on this small band of men, with whom the fortunes of Christianity are bound up. He prays for them as a mother dying might pray exclusively for her children; not that she is indifferent to the interest of all beyond, but that her family, in her solemn situation, is for her the natural legitimate object of an absorbing, all-engrossing solicitude. He prays for them as the precious fruit of His life labour, the hope of the future, the founders of the church, the Noah's ark of the Christian faith, the missionaries of the truth to the whole world: for them *alone, but* for the world's sake; it being the best thing He can do for the world meantime to commend them to the Father's care.

What Jesus means to ask for the men thus singled out, we can now guess for ourselves. It is that His Father would keep them, now that He is about to leave them. But before

[1] John xvii. 7, 8. [2] John xvii. 9.

the request, come the reasons why it should be granted. The first is expressed in these terms: "They are Thine: and all mine are Thine, and Thine are mine; and I am glorified in them,"[1]—and means in effect this: "It is Thy business, Thy interest, to keep these men. They are Thine: Thou gavest them me; keep Thine own. Although, since they became my disciples, they have been mine, that makes no difference: they are still Thine; for between me and Thee is no distinction of *meum* and *tuum*. Then I am glorified in them: my cause, my name, my doctrine, are to be henceforth identified with them; and if they miscarry, my interest will be shipwrecked. Therefore, as Thou valuest the honour of Thy Son keep these men."

Another reason why the request about to be proffered should be granted follows in the next verse: "And now I am no more in the world."[2] The Master, about to depart from the earth, commends to His Father's care those whom He is leaving behind without a head.

And now at length comes the prayer for the eleven, ushered in with due solemnity by a new emphatic address to the Hearer of prayer: "Holy Father, keep in Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."[3] The epithet "holy" suits the purport of the prayer, which is, that the disciples may be kept pure in faith and practice, separate from all existing error and sin, that they may be eventually a salt to the corrupt world in which their Lord is about to leave them.

The prayer embraces two particulars. The first is, that the disciples may be kept *in* the name of the Father, which Jesus has manifested to them; that is, that they may continue to believe what He had taught them of God, and so become His instruments for diffusing the knowledge of the true God and the true religion throughout the earth. The second is, that they may be one, that is, that they may be kept in love to each other, as well as in the faith of the Divine Name; separate from the world, but not divided among themselves.[4] These two things, truth and love, Jesus asks for His own, as of vital moment: truth as the badge of

[1] John xvii. 10. [2] Ver. 11. [3] Ver. 11. [4] Ver. 11.

distinction between His church and the world; love as the bond which unites believers of the truth into a holy brotherhood of witness-bearers to the truth. These two things the church should ever keep in view as of co-ordinate importance: not sacrificing love to truth, dividing those who should be one, by insisting on too minute and detailed a testimony; nor sacrificing truth to love, making the church a very broad comprehensive society, but a society without a vocation, or *raison d'être,* having no truth to guard and teach, nor testimony to bear.

Having commended His disciples to His Father's care, Jesus next gives an account of His own stewardship as their Master, and protests that He has faithfully kept them in divine truth.[1] He claims to have done His duty by them all, not even excepting Judas; in whose case He admits failure, but at the same time clears Himself of blame. The reference to the false disciple shows how conscientious He is in rendering His account. He feels, as it were, put on His defence with reference to the apostate; and supposing Himself to be asked the question, What have you to say about this man? He replies in effect: "I admit I have not been able to keep him from falling, but I have done all I could. The son of perdition is not lost through my fault."[2] We know how well entitled Jesus was to make this protestation.

In the next part of the prayer[3] Jesus defines the sense in which He asks that His disciples may be kept, and in doing this virtually offers new reasons why the petition should be heard. He commends them to His Father's care as the depositaries of truth, worth keeping on that account, and needing to be kept, because of the world's dislike of the truth.[4] And He explains that by keeping He means not translation out of the world, but preservation in the world from its moral evil; their presence there as a salt being necessary, and their purity not less needful, that the salt might not be without savour and virtue. This explanation He meant not for the ear of His Father alone, but also for the ears of His disciples. He wished them to understand that two things were equally to

[1] John xvii. 12.
[2] Ver. 12.
[3] Vers. 14–20.
[4] Ver. 14.

be shunned—conformity to the world, and weariness of the world. They must abide in the truth, and they must abide in the world for the truth's sake; mindful for their consolation, that when they felt the world's hatred most, they were doing most good, and that the weight of their cross was the measure of their influence.

The keeping asked by Jesus for His own is but the continuance and perfecting of an existing moral condition. He needs not to ask His Father now for the first time to separate His disciples in spirit and character from the world. That they are already; that they were when first they joined His society; that they have continued to be. This, in justice to them, their Master is careful to state twice over in this portion of His prayer. "They," He testifies, "are not of the world, even as I am not of the world;"[1] putting them on a level with Himself with characteristic magnanimity, and not without truth; for the persons thus described, though in many respects defective, were very unworldly, caring nothing for the world's trinity—riches, honours, and pleasures—but only for the words of eternal life.

Yet, notwithstanding their sincerity, the eleven still needed not only keeping, but *perfecting;* and therefore their Master went on to pray for their sanctification in the truth, having in view not only their perseverance, growth, and maturity in grace as private Christians, but more especially their spiritual equipment for the office of the apostleship. Hence He goes on in the next breath to make mention of their apostolic vocation, showing that that is principally in His eye: "As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."[2] That they may be fitted for their mission is His intense desire. Hence He proceeds to speak of His own sanctification as a means towards their apostolic sanctification as the end, as if His own ministry were merely subordinate to theirs. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."[3] Remarkable words, whose meaning is obscure, and has been much debated, but in which we may at least with confidence discover a singular display of condescension and love. Jesus talks

[1] John xvii. 14, 16. [2] Ver. 18. [3] Ver. 19.

here like a parent who lives for the sake of his children, having a regard to their moral training in all His personal habits, denying Himself pleasures for their benefit, and making it His chief end and care to form their characters, perfect their education, and fit them for the duties of the position which they are destined to fill.

The remainder of the prayer (with exception of the two closing sentences[1]) respects the church at large—those who should believe in Christ through the word of the apostles, heard from their lips, or reported in their writings. What Jesus desires for the body of believers is partly left to be inferred; for when He says, "I pray not for these *alone*," He intimates that He desires for the parties next to be prayed for the same things He has already asked for His disciples: preservation in the truth, and from the evil in the world, and sanctification by the truth. The one blessing He expressly asks for the church is "Unity." His heart's desire for believers in Him, is "that they all may be one." His ideal of the church's unity is very high, its divine exemplar being the unity subsisting between the persons in the Godhead, and specially between the Father and the Son, and its ground the same divine unity: "one *as* we are one, and *in* us who are one," bound together as closely and harmoniously by the common name into which they are baptized, and by which they are called.[2]

This unity, desirable for its own sake, Jesus specially desiderates because of the moral power which it will confer on the church as an institute for propagating the Christian faith: "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent me."[3] Now this end is one which cannot be promoted unless the unity of believers be in some way made manifest. A unity which is not apparent can have no effect on the world, but must needs be as a candle under a bushel, which gives no light, nay, ceases to be a light, and goes out. There can be no doubt, therefore, that our Lord had a visible unity in view, and the only question is how that is to be reached.

The first and most obvious way is by union in one church organization, with appointed means for representing the whole

[1] John xvii. 20–24. [2] Ver. 21. [3] Vers. 21, 23.

body, and expressing its united mind; such, *e.g.*, as the œcumenical councils of the early centuries. This, the most complete manifestation of unity, was exhibited in the primitive church.

In our day incorporating union on a great scale is not possible, and other methods of expressing the feeling of catholicity must be resorted to. One method that might be tried is that of confederation, whereby independent church organizations might be united after the fashion of the United States of America, or of the Greek republics, which found a centre of unity in the legislative and judicial assembly called the Amphictyonic Council. But whatever may be thought of that, one thing is certain, that the unity of believers in Christ must be made more manifest as an undeniable fact somehow, if the church is to realize her vocation as a holy nation called out of darkness to show forth the virtues of Him whose name she bears, and win for Him the world's homage and faith. It is true, indeed, that the unity of the church does find expression in its creed; by which we mean not the sectional creed of this or that denomination, but the creed within the creeds, expressive of the catholic orthodoxy of Christendom, and embracing the fundamentals, and only the fundamentals, of the Christian faith. There is a church within all the churches to which this creed is the thing of value, all else being, in the esteem of its members, but the husk containing the precious kernel. But the existence of that church is a fact known by faith, not by sight: its influence is little felt by the world; and however thankful we may be for the presence in the midst of ecclesiastical organizations of this holy commonwealth, we cannot accept it as the realization of the ideal which the Saviour had in His mind when He uttered the words, "That they all may be one."

In the next two sentences[1] Jesus fondly lingers over this prayer, repeating, expanding, enforcing the petition in language too deep for our fathoming line, but which plainly conveys the truth, that without unity the church can neither glorify Christ, commend Christianity as divine, nor have the glory of Christ abiding on herself. And this is a truth which, on reflection,

[1] John xvii. 22, 23.

approves itself to reason. Wrangling is not a divine thing, and it needs no divine influence to bring it about. Anybody can quarrel; and the world knowing that, has little respect for a quarrelling church. But the world opens its eyes in wonder at a community in which peace and concord prevail, saying: Here is something out of the common course; selfishness and self-will rooted out of human nature: nothing but a divine influence could thus subdue the centrifugal forces which separate men from each other.

The endearing name Father, with which the next sentence begins, marks the commencement of a new final paragraph in the prayer of the great High Priest.[1] Jesus at this point casts a glance forward to the end of things, and prays for the final consummation of God's purpose with regard to the church; that the church militant may become the church triumphant; that the body of saints, imperfectly sanctified on earth, may become perfectly sanctified and glorified in heaven, with Himself where He will be, beholding His glory, and changed into the same image by the Spirit of God.

Then comes the conclusion, in which Jesus returns from the distant future to the present, and gathers in His thoughts from the church at large to the company assembled in the supper-chamber, Himself and His disciples.[2] These two closing sentences serve the same use in Christ's prayer that the phrase "for Christ's sake" serves in ours. They contain two pleas—the service of the parties prayed for, and the righteousness of the Being prayed to: the last coming first, embodied in the title "O righteous Father." The services, merits, and claims of Jesus and His disciples are specifically mentioned as matters to which the righteous Father will doubtless attach the due weight. The world's ignorance of God is alluded to, to enhance the value of the acknowledgment which He has received from His Son and His Son's companions. That ignorance explains why Jesus deems it necessary to say, "I have known Thee." Even *His* knowledge was not a thing of course in such a world. It was an effort for the man Jesus to retain God in His knowledge, quite as much as to keep Himself unspotted from the world's corruptions. It was as hard for

[1] John xvii. 24. [2] Vers. 25, 26.

Him to know and confess God as Father in a world that in a thousand ways practically denied that Fatherhood, as to live a life of love amid manifold temptations to self-seeking. In truth, the two problems were one. To be light in the midst of darkness, love in the midst of selfishness, holiness in the midst of depravity, are in effect the same thing.

While pleading His own merit, Jesus forgets not the claims of His disciples. Of them He says in effect: They have known Thee at second-hand through me, as I have known Thee at first-hand by direct intuition.[1] Not content with this statement, He expatiates on the importance of these men as objects of divine care; representing that they are worth keeping, as already possessing the knowledge of God's name, and destined ere long to know it yet more perfectly, so that they shall be able to make it known as an object of homage to others, and God shall be able to love them even as He loved His own Son, when He was in the world faithfully serving His heavenly Father. "And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."[2] Wonderful words to be uttered concerning mere earthen vessels!

[1] John xvii. 25*b*. [2] Ver. 26.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SHEEP SCATTERED.

SECTION I.—"*All the Disciples forsook Him, and fled.*"

MATT. XXVI. 36–41, 55–6, 69–75, et parall.; JOHN XVIII. 15–18.

FROM the supper-chamber, in which we have lingered so long, we pass into the outside world, to witness the behaviour of the eleven in the great final crisis. The passages cited describe the part they played in the solemn scenes connected with their Master's end. That part was a sadly unheroic one. Faith, love, principle, all gave way before the instincts of fear, shame, and self-preservation. The best of the disciples—the three who, as most reliable, were selected by Jesus to keep Him company in the garden of Gethsemane—utterly failed to render the service expected of them. While their Lord was passing through His agony they fell asleep, as they had done before on the Mount of Transfiguration. Even the picked men thus proved themselves to be raw recruits, unable to shake off drowsiness while they did duty as sentinels. "What! could ye not watch with me one hour?" Then when the enemy appeared, both these three and the other eight ran away panic-stricken. "All the disciples forsook Him, and fled." And, finally, that one of their number who thought himself bolder than his brethren, not only forsook, but denied his beloved Master, declaring with an oath, "I know not the man."

The conduct of the disciples at this crisis in their history, so weak and so unmanly, naturally gives rise to two questions: How should they have acted? and why did they act as they did—what were the causes of their failure?

Now, to take up the former of these questions first, when we try to form to ourselves a distinct idea of the course of

action demanded by fidelity, it is not at once quite apparent wherein the disciples, Peter of course excepted, were at fault. What could they do when their Lord was apprehended, but run away? Offer resistance? Jesus had positively forbidden that just immediately before. On the appearance of the band of armed men, "when they which were about Him saw what would follow, they said unto Him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?"[1] Without waiting for a reply, one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. The fighting disciple, John informs us, was Simon Peter. He had brought a sword with him, one of two in the possession of the company, from the supper-chamber to Gethsemane, thinking it might be needed, and fully minded to use it if there was occasion; and, coward as he proved himself afterwards among the serving-men and maids, he was no such arrant coward in the garden. He used his weapon boldly if not skilfully, and did some execution, though happily not of a deadly character. Thereupon Jesus interposed to prevent further bloodshed, uttering words variously reported, but in all the different versions clearly inculcating a policy of non-resistance. "Put up again thy sword into his place," he said to Peter, adding as His reason, "for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword;" which was as much as to say, "In this kind of warfare we must necessarily have the worst of it." Then He went on to hint at higher reasons for non-resistance than mere considerations of prudence or expediency. "Thinkest thou," he asked the warlike disciple, "that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"[2] He could meet human force by superior, divine, celestial force if He chose, but He did not choose; for to overpower His enemies would be to defeat His own purpose in coming to the world, which was to conquer, not by physical force, but by truth and love and god-like patience: by drinking the cup which His Father had put into His hands, bitter though it was to flesh and blood.[3]

Quite in harmony with these utterances in Gethsemane are the statements made by Jesus on the same subject ere He left

[1] Luke xxii. 49. [2] Matt. xxvi. 52–54. [3] John xviii. 11.

the supper-room, as recorded by Luke.[1] In the letter, indeed, these statements seem to point at a policy the very opposite of non-resistance. Jesus seems to say that the great business and duty of the hour, for all who are on His side, is to furnish themselves with swords: so urgent is the need, that he who wants a weapon must sell his garment to buy one. But the very emphasis with which He speaks shows that His words are not to be taken in the literal prosaic sense. It is very easy to see what He means. His object is by graphic language to convey to His disciples an idea of the gravity of the situation. "Now," He would say, "now is the day, yea, the hour of battle: if my kingdom be one of this world, as ye have imagined, now is the time for fighting, not for dreaming: now matters have come to extremities, and ye have need of all your resources; equip yourselves with shoes and purse and knapsack, and above all, with swords and warlike courage."

The disciples did not understand their Lord's meaning. They put a stupid, prosaic interpretation upon this part, as upon so many other parts, of His farewell discourse. So, with ridiculous seriousness, they said: "Lord, behold, here are two swords." The foolish remark provoked a reply which should surely have opened their eyes, and kept Peter from carrying the matter so far as to take one of the swords with him. "It is enough," said Jesus, probably with a melancholy smile on His face, as He thought of the stupid simplicity of those dear childish and childlike men: "It is enough." Two swords: well, they are enough only for one who does not mean to fight at all. What were two swords for twelve men, and against a hundred weapons of offence? The very idea of fighting in the circumstances was preposterous: it had only to be broadly stated to appear an absurdity.

The disciples, then, were not called on to fight for their Master, that He might not be delivered to the Jews. What else, then, should they have done? Was it their duty to suffer with Him, and, carrying out the professions of Peter, to go with Him to prison and to death? This was not required of them either. When Jesus surrendered Himself into the hands of His captors, He proffered the request that, while

[1] Luke xxii. 35–38.

taking Him into custody, they should let His followers go their way.[1] This He did not merely out of compassion for them, but as the Captain of salvation making the best terms for Himself and for the interests of His kingdom; for it was not less necessary to these that the disciples should live than that He Himself should die. He gave Himself up to death, that there might be a gospel to preach; He desired the safety of His disciples, that there might be men to preach it. Manifestly, therefore, it was not the duty of the disciples to expose themselves to danger: their duty lay rather, one would say, in the direction of taking care of their life for future usefulness.

Where, then, if not in failing to fight for or suffer with their Lord, did the fault of the eleven lie? It lay in their lack of faith. "Believe in God, and believe in me," Jesus had said to them at the commencement of His farewell address, and at the critical hour they did neither. They did not believe that all would yet end well both with them and their Master, and especially that God would provide for *their* safety without any sacrifice of principle, or even of dignity, on their part. They put confidence only in the swiftness of their feet. Had they possessed faith in God and in Jesus, they would have witnessed their Lord's apprehension without dismay, assured both of His return and of their own safety; and, as feeling might incline, would either have followed the officers of justice to see what happened, or, averse to exciting and painful scenes, would have retired quietly to their dwellings until the tragedy was finished. But wanting faith, they neither calmly followed nor calmly retired; but faithlessly and ignominiously forsook their Lord, and *fled*. The sin lay not so much in the outward act, but in the inward state of mind of which it was the index. They fled in unbelief and despair, as men whose hope was blasted, from a man whose cause was lost, and whom God had abandoned to his enemies.

Having ascertained wherein the disciples were at fault, we have now to inquire into the causes of their misconduct; and here, at the outset, we recall to mind that Jesus anticipated the breakdown of His followers. He did not count on their

[1] John xviii. 8.

fidelity, but expected desertion as a matter of course. When Peter offered to follow Him wheresoever He might go, He told him that ere cock-crowing next morning he would deny Him thrice. At the close of the farewell address, He told all the disciples that they would leave Him alone. On the way to the Mount of Olives He repeated the statement in these terms: "All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."[1] And on all these occasions the tone in which He spoke was rather prophetic than reproachful. He expected His disciples to be panic-stricken, just as one should expect sheep to flee on the appearance of a wolf, or women to faint in presence of a scene of carnage.

From this leniency we should infer that, in the view of Jesus, the sin of the disciples was one of infirmity; and that this was the view which He took thereof, we *know* from the words He addressed to the three drowsy brethren in Gethsemane. "Watch and pray," He said to them, "that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."[2] The kind judgment thus expressed, though pronounced with special reference to the shortcoming of Peter, James, and John in the garden, manifestly applies to the whole conduct of all the disciples (not even excepting Peter's denial) throughout the terrible crisis. Jesus regarded the eleven as men whose attachment to Himself was above suspicion, but who were liable to fall, through the weakness of their flesh, on being exposed to sudden temptation.

But what are we to understand by the weakness of the flesh? Mere instinctive love of life, dread of danger, fear of man? No; for these instincts continued with the apostles through life, without leading, except in one instance, to a repetition of their present misconduct. Not only the flesh of the disciples, but even the willing spirit, was weak. Their spiritual character at this season was deficient in certain elements which give steadiness to the good impulses of the heart, and mastery over the infirmities of sentient nature. The missing elements of strength were: *forethought, clear*

[1] Matt. xxvi. 31. [2] Ver. 41.

perceptions of truth, self-knowledge, and *the discipline of experience.*

For want of forethought, it came to pass that the apprehension of their Lord took the eleven by surprise. This may seem hardly credible, after the frequent intimations Christ had given them of His approaching death; after the institution of the Supper, the farewell address, the reference to the traitor, the prophetic announcement concerning their own frailty, and the discourse about the sword, which was like a trumpet-peal calling to battle. Yet there can be no doubt that such was the fact. The eleven went out to Gethsemane without any definite idea of what was coming. These raw recruits actually did not know that they were on the march to the battle-field. The sleep of the three disciples in the garden is sufficient proof of this. Had the three sentinels been thoroughly impressed with the belief that the enemy was at hand, weary and sad though they were, they would not have fallen asleep. Fear would have kept them awake. "Know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up."

The breakdown of the disciples at the final crisis was due in part also to the want of clear perceptions of truth. They did not understand the doctrine concerning Christ. They believed their Master to be the Christ, the Son of the living God; but their faith was twined around a false theory of Messiah's mission and career. In that theory the cross had no place. So long as the cross was only spoken about, their theory remained firmly rooted in their minds, and the words of their Master were speedily forgotten. But when the cross at length actually came, when the things which Jesus had foretold began to be fulfilled, then their theory went down like a tree suddenly smitten by a whirlwind, carrying the woodbine plant of their faith along with it. From the moment that Jesus was apprehended, all that remained of faith in their minds was simply a regret that they had been mistaken: "We trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel." How could any one act heroically in such circumstances?

A third radical defect in the character of the disciples was self-ignorance. One who knows his weakness may become strong even at the weak point; but he who knows not his weak points cannot be strong at any point. Now the followers of Jesus did not know their weakness. They credited themselves with an amount of fidelity and valour which existed only in their imagination; all adopting as their own the sentiment of Peter: "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee."[1] Alas, they did not know how much fear of man was in them, how much abject cowardice in presence of danger. Of course, when danger actually appeared, the usual consequence of self-conscious valour followed. All these stout-hearted disciples forsook their Master, and fled.

The last, and not the least, cause of weakness in the disciples was their inexperience of such scenes as they were now to pass through. Experience of war is one great cause of the coolness and courage of veteran soldiers in the midst of danger. Practical acquaintance with the perils of military life makes them callous and fearless. But Christ's disciples were not yet veterans. They were now but entering into their first engagement. Hitherto they had experienced only such trials as befall even the rawest recruits. They had been called on to leave home, friends, fishing-boats, and their earthly all, to follow Jesus. But these initial hardships do not make a soldier. No; nor even the discipline of the drill-sergeant, or the donning of a uniform. For behold the green soft youth with his bright uniform brought face to face with the stern reality of battle. His knees smite each other, his heart sickens, perchance he faints outright, and is carried to the rear, unable to take any part in the fight. Poor lad, pity him, do not scorn him; he may turn out a brave soldier yet. Even Frederick the Great ran away from his first battle. The bravest of soldiers probably do not feel very heroic the first time they are under fire.

These observations help us to understand how it came to pass that the little flock was scattered when Jesus their shepherd was smitten. The explanation amounts in substance to a proof that the disciples were sheep, not yet fit to be shep-

[1] Matt. xxvi. 35.

herds of men. That being so, we do not wonder at the leniency of Jesus, to which reference has already been made. No one expects sheep to do anything else than flee when the wolf cometh. Only in shepherds is craven fear severely reprehensible. Bearing this in mind, we shall more readily forgive Peter for denying his Lord in an unguarded moment, than for his cowardice at Antioch some years after, when he gave the cold shoulder to his Gentile brethren, through fear of the Jewish sectaries from Jerusalem. Peter was a shepherd then, and it was his duty to lead the sheep, or even to carry them against their inclination into the wide green pastures of Christian liberty, instead of tamely following those who, by their scrupulosity, showed themselves to be but lambs in Christ's flock. His actual behaviour was very culpable and very mischievous. For though in reality not leading, but led, he, as an apostle, enjoyed the reputation and influence of a chief shepherd, and therefore had no option but either to lead or to mislead; and he did mislead to such an extent, that even Barnabas was carried away by his dissimulation. It is a serious thing for the church, when those who are shepherds in office and influence are sheep in opinion and heart; leaders in name, led in fact.

Section II.—*Sifted as Wheat.*

Luke xxii. 31, 32.

This fragment of the conversation at the supper-table is important, as showing us the view taken by Jesus of the crisis through which His disciples were about to pass. In form an address to Peter, it is really a word in season to all, and concerning all. This is evident from the use of the plural pronoun in addressing the disciple directly spoken to. "Satan," says Jesus, "hath desired to have (not thee, but) you:" thee, Simon, and also all thy brethren along with thee. The same thing appears from the injunction laid on Peter, to turn his fall to account for the benefit of his *brethren*. The brethren, of course, are not the other disciples then present alone, but

all who should believe as well. The apostles, however, are not to be excluded from the brotherhood who were to be benefited by Peter's experience; on the contrary, they are probably the parties principally and in the first place intended.

Looking, then, at this utterance as expressive of the judgment of Jesus on the character of the ensuing crisis in the history of the future apostles, we find in it three noticeable particulars.

1. First, Jesus regards the crisis as a *sifting* time for the disciples. Satan, the accuser of the brethren, sceptical of their fidelity and integrity, as of Job's and of all good men's, was to sift them as wheat, hopeful that they would turn out mere chaff, and become apostates like Judas, or at least that they would make a miserable and scandalous breakdown. In this respect, this final crisis was like the one at Capernaum a year before. That also was a sifting time for Christ's discipleship. Chaff and wheat were then, too, separated; the chaff proving to be out of all proportion to the wheat, for "*many* went back, and walked no more with Him."

But alongside of this general resemblance between the two crises — the minor and the major we may call them — an important difference is to be observed. In the minor crisis, the chosen few were the pure wheat, the fickle multitude being the chaff; in the major, they are both wheat and chaff in one, and the sifting is not between man and man, but between the good and the bad, the precious and the vile, in the same man. The hearts of the eleven faithful ones are to be searched, and all their latent weakness discovered; the old man is to be divided asunder from the new; the vain, self-confident, self-willed, impetuous Simon son of Jonas, from the devoted, chivalrous, heroic, rock-like Peter.

This distinction between the two crises implies that the later was of a more searching character than the earlier; and that it was so indeed, is obvious on a moment's reflection. Consider only how different the situation of the disciples in the two cases! In the minor crisis, the multitude go, but Jesus remains; in the major, Jesus Himself is taken from them, and they are left as sheep without a shepherd. A

mighty difference truly; sufficiently explaining the difference in the conduct of the same men on the two occasions. It was no doubt very disappointing and disheartening to see the mass of people who had lately followed their Master with enthusiasm, dispersing like an idle mob after seeing a show. But while the Master remained, they would not break their hearts about the defection of spurious disciples. They loved Jesus for His own sake, not for His popularity or for any other by-end. He was their teacher, and could give them the bread of eternal truth, which, and not the bread that perisheth, was what they were in quest of; He was their Head, their Father, their Elder Brother, their spiritual Husband, and they would cling to Him through all fortunes, with filial, brotherly, wifely fidelity, He being more to them than the whole world outside. If their prospects looked dark even with Him, where could they go to be any better? They had no choice but to remain where they were.

Remain accordingly they did, faithfully, manfully; kept stedfast by sincerity, a clear perception of the alternatives, and ardent love to their Lord. But now, alas, when it is not the multitude, but Jesus Himself, that leaves them, not forsaking them indeed, but torn from them by the strong hand of worldly power, what are they to do? Now they may well ask Peter's question, "To whom shall we go?" despairing of an answer. He whose presence was their solace at a trying, discouraging season, who at the worst, even when His doctrine was mysterious and His conduct incomprehensible, was more to them than all else in the world at its best; even He is reft from their side, and now they are utterly forlorn, without a master, a champion, a guide, a friend, a father. Worse still, in losing Him they lose not merely their best friend, but their faith. They could believe Jesus to be the Christ, although the multitude apostatized; for they could regard such apostasy as the effect of ignorance, shallowness, insincerity. But how can they believe in the Messiahship of one who is led away to prison in place of a throne; and instead of being crowned a king, is on his way to be executed as a felon? Bereft of Jesus in this fashion, they are bereft of their Christ as well. The unbelieving world asks them, "Where is thy God?" and they can make no reply.

"Christ and we against the world;" "Christ in the world's power, and we left alone:" such, in brief, was the difference between the two sifting seasons. The results of the sifting process were correspondingly diverse. In the one case, it separated between the sincere and the insincere; in the other, it discovered weakness even in the sincere. The men who on the earlier occasion stood resolutely to their colours, on the later fled panic-stricken, consulting for their safety without dignity, and, in one case at least, with shameful disregard of truth. Behold how weak even good men are without faith! With faith, however crude or ill-informed, you may overcome the whole world; without the faith that places God consciously at your side, you have no chance. Satan will get possession of you and sift you, and cause you to equivocate with Abraham, feign madness with David, dissemble and swear falsely or profanely with Peter. No one can tell how far you may fall if you lose faith in God. The just live justly, nobly, only by their faith.

2. Jesus regards the crisis through which His disciples are to pass as one which, though perilous, shall not prove deadly to their faith. His hope is, that though they fall, they shall not fall away; though the sun of faith be eclipsed, it shall not be extinguished. He has this hope even in regard to Peter, having taken care to avert so disastrous a catastrophe. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

The result was what Jesus anticipated. The disciples showed themselves weak in the final crisis, but not wicked. Satan tripped them up, but he did not enter into and possess them. In this respect they differed *toto cælo* from Judas, who not only lost his faith, but cast away his love, and abandoning his Lord, went over to the enemy, and became a tool for the accomplishment of their wicked designs. The eleven, at their worst, continued faithful to their Master in heart. They neither committed, nor were capable of committing, acts of perfidy, but even in fleeing identified themselves with the losing side.

But Peter; what of him? was not he an exception to this statement? Well, he certainly did more than fail in faith; and we have no wish to extenuate the gravity of his offence,

but would rather see in it a solemn illustration of the close proximity into which the best men may be brought with the worst. At the same time, it is only just to remark, that there is a wide difference between denying Christ among the servants of the high priest, and betraying Him into the hands of the high priest himself for a sum of money. The latter act is the crime of a traitor knave ; the former might be committed by one who would be true to his master on all occasions in which his interests seemed seriously involved. In denying Jesus, Peter thought that he was saving himself by dissimulation, without doing any material injury to his Lord. His act resembled that of Abraham, when he circulated the lying story about his wife being his sister, to protect himself from the violence of licentious strangers. That was certainly a very mean, selfish act, most unworthy of the father of the faithful. Peter's act was not less mean and selfish, but also not more. Both were acts of weakness rather than of wickedness, for which few, even among good men, can afford to throw stones at the patriarch and the disciple. Even those who play the hero on great occasions, will at other times act very unworthily. Many men conceal and belie their convictions at the dinner-table, who would boldly proclaim their sentiments from the pulpit or the platform. Standing in the place where Christ's servants are expected to speak the truth, they draw their swords bravely in defence of their Lord ; but mixing in society on equal terms, they too often say in effect, " I know not the man." Peter's offence, therefore, if grave, is certainly not uncommon. It is committed virtually, if not formally, by multitudes who are utterly incapable of public deliberate treason against truth and God. The erring disciple was much more singular in his repentance than in his sin. Of all who in mere acts of weakness virtually deny Christ, how few, like him, go out and weep bitterly !

That Peter did not fall as Judas fell, utterly and irrevocably, was due in part to a radical difference between the two men. Peter was at heart a child of God ; Judas, in the core of his being, had been all along a child of Satan. Therefore we may say, that Peter could not have sinned as Judas sinned,

nor could Judas have repented as Peter repented. Yet, while we say this, we must not forget that Peter was kept from falling away by *special* grace granted to him in answer to his Master's prayers. The precise terms in which Jesus prayed for Peter we do not know; for the prayer in behalf of the one disciple has not, like that for the whole eleven, been recorded. But the drift of these special intercessions is plain, from the account given of them by Jesus to Peter. The Master had prayed that His disciple's faith might not fail. He had not prayed that he might be exempt from Satan's sifting process, or even kept from falling; for He knew that a fall was necessary, to show the self-confident disciple his own weakness. He had prayed that Peter's fall might not be ruinous; that his grievous sin might be followed by godly sorrow, not by hardening of heart, or, as in the case of the traitor, by the sorrow of the world, which worketh death: the remorse of a guilty conscience, which, like the furies, drives the sinner headlong to damnation. And in Peter's repentance, immediately after his denials, we see the fulfilment of his Master's prayer, special grace being given to melt his heart, and overwhelm him with generous grief, and cause him to weep out his soul in tears. Not by his piety or goodness of heart was the salutary result produced, but by God's Spirit and God's providence conspiring to that end. But for the cock-crowing, and the warning words it recalled to mind, and the glance of Jesus' eye, and the tender mercy of the Father in heaven, who can tell what sullen devilish humours might have taken possession of the guilty disciple's heart? Remember how long even the godly David gave place to the devil, and harboured in his bosom the demons of pride, falsehood, and impenitence, after his grievous fall; and see how far it was from being a matter of course that Peter, immediately after denying Christ, should come under the blessed influence of a broken and contrite spirit, or even that the spiritual crisis through which he passed had a happy issue at all. By grace he was saved, as are we all.

3. Jesus regards the crisis about to be gone through by His disciples as one which shall not only end happily, but result in spiritual benefit to themselves, and qualify them for being helpful to others. This appears from the injunction He lays

on Peter: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Jesus expects the frail disciple to become strong in grace, and so able and willing to help the weak. He cherishes this expectation with respect to all, but specially in regard to Peter, assuming that the weakest might and ought eventually to become the strongest; the last first, the greatest sinner the greatest saint; the most foolish the wisest, most benignant, and sympathetic of men.

How encouraging this genial, kindly view of moral shortcoming to such as have erred! The Saviour says to them in effect: There is no cause for despair: sin can not only be forgiven, but it can even be turned to good account both for yourselves and for others. Falls, rightly improved, may become stepping-stones to Christian virtue, and a training for the office of a comforter and guide. How healing such a view to the troubled conscience! Men who have erred, and who take a serious thought of their sin, are apt to consume their hearts and waste their time in bitter reflections on their past misconduct. Christ gives them more profitable work to do. "When thou art converted," He says to them, "strengthen thy brethren:" cease from idle regrets over the irrevocable past, and devote thyself heart and soul to labours of love; and let it help thee to forgive thyself, that from thy very faults and follies thou mayest learn the meekness, patience, compassion, and wisdom necessary for carrying on such labours with success.

But while very encouraging to those who have sinned, Christ's words to Simon contain no encouragement *to* sin. It is a favourite doctrine with some, that we may do evil that good may come; that we must be prodigals in order to be good Christians; that a *mud bath* must precede the washing of regeneration and the baptism of the soul in the Redeemer's blood. This is a false, pernicious doctrine, of which the holy One could not be the patron. Do evil that good may come, say you? And what if the good come not? It does not come, as we have seen, as a matter of course; nor is it the likelier to come, that you make the hope of its coming the pretext for sinning. If the good ever come, it will come through the strait gate of repentance. You can become wise,

gracious, meek, sympathetic, a burden-bearer to the weak, only by going out first and weeping bitterly. But what chance is there of such a penitential melting of heart appearing in one who adopts and acts on the principle, that a curriculum of sin is necessary to the attainment of insight, self-knowledge, compassion, and all the humane virtues? The probable issue of such a training is a hardened heart, a seared conscience, a perverted moral judgment, the extirpation of all earnest convictions respecting the difference between right and wrong; the opinion that evil leads to good insensibly transforming itself into the idea that evil is good, and fitting its advocate for committing sin without shame or compunction.

'And dare we to this fancy give,
That had the wild oat not been sown,
The soil left barren scarce had grown
The grain by which a man may live?

Oh, if we held the doctrine sound,
For life outliving heats of youth;
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and be
Procuress to the lords of hell.'[1]

In Peter's case, good did come out of evil. The sifting time formed a turning-point in his spiritual history: the sifting process had for its result a second conversion, more thorough than the first—a turning from sin, not merely in general, but in detail: from besetting sins, in better informed if not more fervent repentance, and with a purpose of new obedience less self-reliant, but just on that account more reliable. A child hitherto—a child of God indeed, yet only a child—Peter became a man strong in grace, and fit to bear the burden of the weak. Yet it is worthy of notice, as showing how little sympathy the Author of our faith had with the doctrine that evil may be done for the sake of good, that Jesus, while aware how Peter's fall would end, did not on that account regard it as desirable. He said not, "*I* have

[1] Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, liii.

desired to sift thee," but assigns the task of sifting the disciple to the evil spirit who in the beginning tempted our first parent to sin by the specious argument, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil;" reserving to Himself the part of an intercessor, who prays that the evil permitted may be overruled for good. "Satan hath desired to have you:" "I have prayed for thee." What words could more strongly convey the idea of guilt and peril than these, which intimate that Simon is about to do a deed which is an object of desire to the evil one, and which makes it necessary that he should be specially prayed for by the Saviour of souls? Men must go elsewhere in quest of support for apologetic or Pantheistic views of sin.

But it may be thought that the reference to Satan tends in another way to weaken moral earnestness, by encouraging men to throw the blame of their falls on *him*. Theoretically plausible, this objection is practically contrary to fact; for the patrons of lax notions of sin are also the unbelievers in the personality of the devil. "The further the age has removed from the idea of a devil, the laxer it has become in the imputation and punishment of sin. The older time, which did not deny the temptations and assaults of the devil, was yet so little inclined on that account to excuse men, that it regarded the neglect of resistance against the evil spirit, or the yielding to him, as the extreme degree of guilt, and exercised against it a judicial severity from which we shrink with horror. The opposite extreme to this strictness is the laxity of recent criminal jurisprudence, in which judges and physicians are too much inclined to excuse the guilty from physical or psychical grounds, while the moral judgment of public opinion is slack and indulgent. It is undeniable, that to every sin not only a bad will, but also the spell of some temptation, contributes; and when temptation is not ascribed to the devil, the sinner does not on that account impute blame to his bad will, but to temptations springing from some other quarter, which he does not derive from sin, but from *nature*, although nature tempts only when under the influence of sin. The world and the flesh are indeed powers of temptation, not through their natural substance, but through the influence of the bad with which

they are infected. But when, as at present, the seduction to evil is referred to sensuality, temperament, physical lusts and passions, circumstances or fixed ideas, monomanias, etc., guilt is taken off the sinner's shoulders, and laid upon something ethically indifferent or simply natural."[1]

The view presented by Jesus of His disciple's fall cannot therefore be charged with weakening the sense of responsibility: on the contrary, it is a view tending at once to inspire hatred of sin and hope for the sinner. It exhibits sin about to be committed as an object of fear and abhorrence; and, already committed, as not only forgiveable, being repented of, but as capable of being made serviceable to spiritual progress. It says to us, on the one hand: Trifle not with temptation, for Satan is near, seeking thy soul's ruin—"fear, and sin not;" and, on the other hand: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous"—despair not: forsake thy sins, and thou shalt find mercy.

Section III.—*Peter and John.*

John xviii. 15–18, xix. 25–27.

Though all the disciples, without exception, forsook Jesus at the moment of His apprehension, two of them soon recovered their courage sufficiently to return from flight, and follow after their Master as He was being led away to judgment. One of these was Simon Peter, ever original both in good and in evil, who, we are told, followed Jesus "afar off, unto the high priest's palace, to see the end."[2] The other, according to the general, and we think correct, opinion of interpreters, was John. He is indeed not named, but merely described as another, or rather the other, disciple; but as John himself is our informant, the fact is almost certain evidence that he is the person alluded to. "The other disciple," who "was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest,"[3] is the well-known unnamed one who so often

[1] Sartorius, *Die Lehre von der heiligen Liebe*, pp. 79, 80.
[2] Matt. xxvi. 58. [3] John xviii. 15.

meets us in the fourth Gospel. Had the man whose conduct was so outstanding been any other than the evangelist, he would certainly not have remained nameless in a narrative so minutely exact, that even the name of the servant whose ear Peter cut off is not deemed too insignificant to be recorded.[1]

These two disciples, though very different in character, seem to have had a friendship for each other. On various occasions besides the present, we find their names associated in a manner suggestive of a special attachment. At the supper-table, when the announcement concerning the traitor had been made, Peter gave the disciple whom Jesus loved a sign that he should ask who it should be of whom He spake. Three times in the interval between the resurrection and the ascension the two brethren were linked together as companions. They ran together to the sepulchre on the resurrection morning. They talked together confidentially concerning the stranger who appeared at early dawn on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, when they were out on their last fishing expedition; the disciple whom Jesus loved, on recognising the Risen One, saying unto Peter, "It is the Lord." They walked together shortly after on the shore, following Jesus—Peter by commandment, John by the voluntary impulse of his own loving heart. An intimacy cemented by such sacred associations was likely to be permanent, and we find the two disciples still companions after they had entered on the duties of the apostleship. They went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer; and having got into trouble through the healing of the lame man at the temple gate, they appeared together before the ecclesiastical tribunal, to be tried by the very same men, Annas and Caiaphas, who had sat in judgment upon their Lord, companions now at the bar, as they had been before in the palace, of the high priest.

Such a friendship between the two disciples as these facts point at is by no means surprising. As belonging to the narrow circle of three whom Jesus honoured with His confidence on special occasions, they had opportunities for becoming intimate, and were placed in circumstances tending to unite them in the closest bonds of spiritual brotherhood. And, notwithstanding

[1] John xviii. 10.

their characteristic differences, they were fitted to be special friends. They were both men of marked originality and force of character, and they would find in each other more sources of interest than in the more commonplace members of the apostolic band. Their very peculiarities, too, far from keeping them apart, would rather draw them together. They were so constituted, that each would find in the other the complement of himself. Peter was masculine, John was feminine, in temperament; Peter was the man of action, John the man of thought and feeling; Peter's part was to be a leader and a champion, John's was to cling, and trust, and be loved; Peter was the hero, and John the admirer of heroism.

In their respective behaviour at this crisis, the two friends were at once like and unlike each other. They were like in this, that they both manifested a generous solicitude about the fate of their Master. While the rest retired altogether from the scene, they followed to see the end. The common action proceeded in both probably from the same motives. What these motives were we are not told, but it is not difficult to guess. A certain influence may be assigned, in the first place, to natural activity of spirit. It was not in the nature either of Peter or of John to be listless and passive while such grave events were going on. They could not sit at home doing nothing, while their Lord was being tried, sentenced, and treated as a malefactor. If they cannot prevent, they will at least witness, His last sufferings. The same irrepressible energy of mind which, three days after, made these two disciples run to see the empty grave, now impels them to turn their steps towards the judgment-hall to witness the transactions there.

Besides activity of mind, we perceive in the conduct of the two disciples a certain spirit of daring at work. We learn from the Acts of the Apostles, that when Peter and John appeared before the council in Jerusalem, the rulers were struck with their boldness. Their boldness then was only what was to be expected from men who had behaved as they did at this crisis. By that time, it is true, they had, in common with all their brethen, experienced a great spiritual change; but yet we cannot fail to recognise the identity of the characters. The apostles had but grown to such spiritual man-

hood as they gave promise of in the days of their discipleship. For it was a brave thing in them to follow, even at a distance, the band which had taken Jesus a prisoner. The rudiments at least of the martyr character were in men who could do that. Mere cowards would not have acted so. They would have eagerly availed themselves of the virtual sanction given by Jesus to flight, comforting their hearts with the thought that, in consulting for their safety, they were but doing the duty enjoined on them.

But the conduct of the two brethren sprang, we believe, mainly from their ardent love to Jesus. When the first paroxysm of fear was past, solicitude for personal safety gave place to generous concern about the fate of one whom they really loved more than life. The love of Christ constrained them to think not of themselves, but of Him whose hour of sorrow was come. First they slacken their pace, then they halt, then they look round; and as they see the armed band nearing the city, they are cut to the heart, and they say within themselves, "We cannot leave our dear Master in His time of peril; we must see the issue of this painful business." And so with anguished spirit they set out towards Jerusalem, Peter first, and John after him.

The two brethren, companions thus far, diverged widely on arriving at the scene of trial and suffering. John clung to his beloved Lord to the last. He was present, it would appear, at the various examinations to which Jesus was subjected, and heard with his own ears the judicial process of which he has given so interesting an account in his Gospel. When the iniquitous sentence was executed, he was a spectator. He took his stand by the foot of the cross, where he could see all, and not only be seen, but even be spoken to, by his dying Master. There he saw, among other things, the strange phenomenon of blood and water flowing from the spear-wound in the Saviour's side, which he so carefully records in his narrative. There he heard Christ's dying words, and among them those addressed to Mary of Nazareth and himself: to her, "Woman, behold thy son;" to him, "Behold thy mother."

John was thus persistently faithful throughout. And Peter,

what of him? Alas! what need to tell the familiar story of his deplorable weakness in the hall or inner court of the high priest's palace; how, having obtained an entrance through the street door by the intercession of his brother disciple, he first denied to the porteress his connection with Jesus; then repeated his denial to other parties, with the addition of a solemn oath; then, irritated by the repetition of the charge, and perhaps by the consciousness of guilt, a third time declared, not with a solemn oath, but with the degrading accompaniment of profane swearing, "I know not the man;" then, finally, hearing the cock crow, and catching Jesus' eye, and remembering the words, "Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice," went out to the street and wept bitterly!

What became of poor Peter after this melancholy exhibition, we are not informed. In all probability he retired to his lodging humbled, dispirited, crushed, there to remain overwhelmed with grief and shame till he was roused from stupor by the stirring tidings of the resurrection morn.

This difference in conduct between the two disciples corresponded to a difference in their characters. Each acted according to his nature. It is true, indeed, that the circumstances were not the same for both parties, being favourable for one, unfavourable for the other. John had the advantage of a friend at court, being somehow known to the high priest. This circumstance gained him admission into the chamber of judgment, and gave him security against all personal risk. Peter, on the other hand, not only had no friends at court, but might not unnaturally fear the presence there of personal foes. He had made himself obnoxious by his rash act in the garden, and might be apprehensive of getting into trouble in consequence. That such fears would not have been altogether groundless, we learn from the fact stated by John, that one of the persons who charged Peter with being a disciple of Jesus, was a kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, and that he brought his charge against the disciple in this form: "Did I not see thee in the garden with him?" It is therefore every way likely that the consciousness of having committed an offence, which might be resented, made Peter anxious to escape identification as one of Christ's disciples.

His unseasonable courage in the garden helped to make him a coward in the palace-yard.

Making all due allowance for the effect of circumstances, however, we think that the difference in the behaviour of the two disciples was mainly due to a difference in the men themselves. Though he had been guilty of no imprudence in the garden, Peter, we fear, would have denied Jesus in the hall; and, on the other hand, supposing John had been placed in Peter's position, we do not believe that he would have committed Peter's sin. Peter's disposition laid him open to temptation, while John's, on the other hand, was a protection against temptation. Peter was frank and familiar, John was dignified and reserved: Peter's tendency was to be on hail-fellow-well-met terms with everybody; John could keep his own place, and make other people keep theirs. It is easy to see what an important effect this distinction would have on the conduct of parties placed in Peter's position. Suppose John in Peter's place, and let us see how he might have acted. Certain persons about the court, possessing neither authority nor influence, interrogate him about his connection with Jesus. He is neither afraid nor ashamed to acknowledge his Lord; but, nevertheless, he turns away and gives the interrogators no answer. They have no right to question him. The spirit which prompts their questions is one with which he has no sympathy, and he feels that it will serve no good purpose to confess his discipleship to such people. Therefore, like his Master when confronted with the false witnesses, he holds his peace, and withdraws from company with which he has nothing in common, and for which he has no respect.

To protect himself from inconvenient interrogation by such dignified reserve is beyond Peter's capacity. He cannot keep people who are not fit company for him at their distance; he is too frank, too familiar, too sensitive to public opinion, without respect to its quality. If a servant-maid ask him a question about his relation to the Prisoner at the bar, he cannot brush past her as if he heard her not. He must give her an answer; and as he feels instinctively that the animus of the question is against his Master, his answer must needs be a

lie. Then, unwarned by this encounter of the danger arising from too close contact with the hangers on about the palace, the foolish disciple must involve himself more inextricably into the net, by mingling jauntily with the servants and officers gathered around the fire which has been kindled on the pavement of the open court. Of course he has no chance of escape here; he is like a poor fly caught in a spider's web. If these men, with the insolent tone of court menials, charge him with being a follower of the man whom their masters have now got into their power, he can do nothing else than blunder out a mean, base denial. Poor Peter, he is manifestly not equal to the situation. It would have been wiser in him to have stayed at home, restraining his curiosity to see the end. But he, like most men, was to learn wisdom only by bitter experience.

The contrast we have drawn between the characters of the two disciples suggests the thought, What different things growth in grace may signify for different Christians! Neither John nor Peter was mature as yet, but immaturity showed itself in them in opposite ways. Peter's weakness lay in the direction of indiscriminate cordiality. His tendency was to be friends with everybody. John, on the other hand, was in no danger of being on familiar terms with all and sundry. It was rather too *easy* for him to make a difference between friends and foes. He could take a side, and keep it; he could even hate with fanatical intensity, as well as love with beautiful womanly devotion. Witness his proposal to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritan villagers! That was a proposal which Peter could not have made; it was not in his nature to be so truculent against any human being. So far, his good nature was a thing to be commended, if in other respects it laid him open to temptation. The faults of the two brethren being so opposite, growth in grace would naturally assume two opposite forms in their respective experiences. In Peter, it would take the form of concentration; in John, of expansion. Peter would become less charitable; John would become more charitable. Peter would advance from indiscriminate goodwill to a moral decidedness which should distinguish between friends and foes, the

church and the world; John's progress, on the other hand, would consist in ceasing to be a bigot, and in becoming imbued with the genial, humane, sympathetic spirit of his Lord. Peter, in his mature state, would care much less for the opinions and feelings of men than he did at the present time; John, again, would care much more.

We add a word on the question, Was it right or was it wrong in these two disciples to follow their Lord to the place of judgment? In our view, it was neither right nor wrong in itself. It was right for one who was able to do it without spiritual harm; wrong for one who had reason to believe that, by doing it, he was exposing himself to harm. The latter was Peter's case, as the former seems to have been John's. Peter had been plainly warned of his weakness; and had he laid the warning to heart, he would have avoided the scene of temptation. By disregarding the warning, he wilfully rushed into the tempter's arms, and of course he caught a fall. His fall reads a lesson to all who, without seeking counsel of God, or disregarding counsel given, enter on undertakings beyond their strength.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SHEPHERD RESTORED.

SECTION I.—*Too good News to be true.*

MATT. XXVIII. 17; MARK XVI. 11–15; LUKE XXIV. 11, 13–22, 36–42; JOHN XX. 20, 24–29.

THE black day of the crucifixion is past; the succeeding day, the Jewish Sabbath, when the Weary One slept in His rock-hewn tomb, is also past; the first day of a new week and of a new era has dawned, and the Lord is risen from the dead. The Shepherd has returned to gather His scattered sheep. Surely a happy day for hapless disciples! What rapturous joy must have thrilled their hearts at the thought of a reunion with their beloved Lord! with what ardent hope must they have looked forward to that resurrection morn!

So one might think, but the real state of the case was not so. Such ardent expectations had no place in the minds of the disciples. The actual state of their mind at the resurrection of Christ rather resembled that of the Jewish exiles in Babylon, when they heard that they were to be restored to their native land. The first effect of the good news was, that they were as men that dreamed. The news seemed too good to be true. The captives who had sat by the rivers of Babylon, and wept when they remembered Zion, had ceased to hope for a return to their own country, and indeed to be capable of hoping for anything. "Grief was calm, and hope was dead" within them. Then, when the exiles had recovered from the stupor of surprise, the next effect of the good tidings was a fit

of over-joy. They burst into hysteric laughter and irrepressible song.[1]

Very similar was the experience of the disciples in connection with the rising of Jesus from the dead. Their grief was not indeed calm, but their hope was dead. The resurrection of their Master was utterly unexpected by them, and they received the tidings with surprise and incredulity. This appears from the statements of all the four evangelists. Matthew states, that on the occasion of Christ's meeting with His followers in Galilee after He was risen, some doubted, while others worshipped.[2] Mark relates that, when the disciples heard from Mary Magdalene that Jesus was alive, and had been seen of her, "they believed not;"[3] and that when the two disciples who journeyed toward Emmaus told their brethren of their meeting with Jesus on the way, "neither believed they them."[4] He further relates how, on a subsequent occasion, when Jesus Himself met with the whole eleven at once, He "upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen."[5]

In full accordance with these statements of the two first evangelists are those of Luke, whose representation of the mental attitude of the disciples towards the resurrection of Jesus is very graphic and animated. According to him, the reports of the women seemed to them "as idle tales, and they believed them not."[6] The two brethren vaguely alluded to by Mark as walking into the country when Jesus appeared to them, are represented by Luke as sad in countenance, though aware of the rumours concerning the resurrection; yea, as so depressed in spirits, that they did not recognise Jesus when He joined their company and entered into conversation with them.[7] The resurrection was not a fact for them: all they

[1] Ps. cxxxvii. The experience of the exiles and of the apostles recalls the lines of the Greek poet Euripides:

πολλαὶ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων
πολλὰ δ' ἀέλπτως κραίνουσι θεοί
καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἐτελέσθη
τῶν δ' ἀδοκήτων πόρον εὗρε θεός.

[2] Matt. xxviii. 17. [3] Mark xvi. 11. [4] Mark xvi. 13.
[5] Mark xvi. 14. [6] Luke xxiv. 11. [7] Luke xxiv. 16.

knew was that their Master was dead, and that they had vainly trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel. The same evangelist also informs us, that on the first occasion when Jesus presented Himself in the midst of His disciples, they did recognise the resemblance of the apparition to their deceased Lord, but thought it was only His ghost, and accordingly were terrified and affrighted, insomuch that, in order to charm away their fear, Jesus showed them His hands and feet, and besought them to handle His body, and so satisfy themselves that He was no ghost, but a substantial human being, with flesh and bones like another man.[1]

Instead of general statements, John gives an example of the incredulity of the disciples concerning the resurrection as exhibited in its extreme form by Thomas. This disciple he represents as so incredulous, that he refused to believe until he should have put his finger into the prints of the nails, and thrust his hand into the wound made by the spear in the Saviour's side. That the other disciples shared the incredulity of Thomas, though in a less degree, is implied in the statement made by John in a previous part of his narrative, that when Jesus met His disciples on the evening of the day on which He rose, "He showed unto them His hands and His side."[2]

The women who had believed in Christ had no more expectation of His resurrection than the eleven. They set forth towards the sepulchre, on the morning of the first day of the week, with the intention of embalming the dead body of Him whom they loved. They sought the living among the dead. When the Magdalene, who was at the tomb before the rest, found the grave empty, her idea was that some one had carried away the dead body of her Lord.[3]

When the incredulity of the disciples did at length give place to faith, they passed, like the Hebrew exiles, from extreme depression to extravagant joy. When the doubt of Thomas was removed, he exclaimed in rapture, "My Lord and my God!"[4] Luke relates, that when they recognised their risen Lord, the disciples "believed not for joy,"[5] as if toying with doubt as a stimulus to joy. The two disciples with

[1] Luke xxiv. 36, 37. [2] John xx. 20. [3] John xx. 2.
[4] John xx. 28. [5] Luke xxiv. 41.

whom Jesus conversed on the way to Emmaus, said to each other when He left them, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?"[1]

In yet another most important respect did the eleven resemble the ancient Hebrew exiles at the time of their recall. While their faith and hope were palsied during the interval between the death and the resurrection of Jesus, their love remained in unabated vitality. The expatriated Jew did not forget Jerusalem in the land of strangers. Absence only made his heart grow fonder. As he sat by the rivers of Babylon, listless, motionless, in abstracted dreamy mood, gazing with glassy eyes on the sluggish waters, the big round tears stole quietly down his cheeks because he had been thinking of Zion. The exile of poetic soul did not forget what was due to Jerusalem's honour. He was incapable of singing the Lord's songs in the hearing of a heathen audience, who cared nothing for their meaning, but only for the style of execution. He disdained to prostitute his talents for the entertainment of the voluptuous oppressors of Israel, even if thereby he could procure his restoration to the beloved country of his birth, as the Athenian captives in Sicily are said to have done by reciting the strains of their favourite poet Euripides in the hearing of their Sicilian masters.[2]

The disciples were not less true to the memory of their Lord. They were like a widow indeed, who remains faithful to her deceased husband, and dotes on his virtues, though his reputation be at zero in the general esteem of the world. Call Him a deceiver who might, they could not believe that Jesus had been a deceiver. Mistaken He as well as they might have been, but an impostor—*never!* Therefore, though He is dead and their hope gone, they still act as men who cherish the fondest attachment to the Master whom they have lost. They keep together like a bereaved family, with blinds down, so to speak, shutting and barring their doors for fear of the Jews, identifying themselves with the Crucified, and as

[1] Luke xxiv. 32.

[2] The story is told by Plutarch in his Παράλληλα (*Nikias*), and quoted and commented on by Gillies, *History of Greece*, cap. xx.

His friends dreading the ill-will of the unbelieving world. Admirable example to all Christians how to behave themselves in a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy, when the cause of Christ seems lost, and the powers of darkness for the moment have all things their own way. Though faith be eclipsed and hope extinguished, let the heart ever be loyal to its true Lord!

The state of mind in which the disciples were at the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is of great moment in an apologetic point of view. Their despair after their Lord's crucifixion gives great weight to the testimony borne by them to the *fact* of His resurrection. Men in such a mood were not likely to believe in the latter event except because it could not reasonably be disbelieved. They would not be lightly satisfied of its truth, as men are apt to be in the case of events both desired and expected; but would sceptically exact superabundant evidence, as men do in the case of events desirable but not expected. They would be slow to believe on the testimony of others, and might even hesitate to believe their own eyes. They would not be able, as M. Renan supposes, to get up a belief in the resurrection of Jesus from the simple fact that His grave was found empty on the third day after His death by the women who went to embalm His body. That circumstance, on being reported, might make a Peter and a John run to the sepulchre to see how matters stood; but after they had found the report of the women confirmed, it would still remain a question how the fact was to be explained; and Mary Magdalene's theory, that some one had carried off the corpse, would not appear at all improbable.

These inferences of ours, from what we know concerning the mental condition of the disciples, are fully borne out by the Gospel accounts of the reception they gave to the risen Jesus at His first appearances to them. One and all of them regarded these appearances sceptically, and took pains to satisfy themselves, or made it necessary that Jesus should take pains to satisfy them, that the visible object was no ghostly apparition, but a living man, and that man none other than He who had died on the cross. The disciples doubted now the substantiality, now the identity, of the person who appeared to them. They were therefore not content with seeing Jesus, but at His

own request handled Him. One of their number not only handled the body to ascertain that it possessed the incompressibility of matter, but insisted on examining with sceptical curiosity those parts which had been injured by the nails and the spear. All perceived the resemblance between the object in view and Jesus, but they could not be persuaded of the identity, so utterly unprepared were they for seeing the dead One alive again; and their theory at first was just that of Strauss, that what they saw was a ghost or mere vision. And the very fact that they entertained that theory makes it impossible for us to entertain it. We cannot, in the face of that fact, accept the Straussian dogma, that "the faith in Jesus as the Messiah, which by His violent death had received an apparently fatal shock, was subjectively restored by the instrumentality of the mind, the power of imagination, and nervous excitement." The power of imagination and nervous excitement we know can do much. It has often happened to men in an abnormal, excited state, to see projected into outward space the creations of a heated brain. But persons in a crazy state like that—subject to hallucination—are not usually cool and rational enough to *doubt* the reality of what they see; nor is it necessary in their case to take pains to overcome such doubts. What they need rather, is to be made aware that what they think they see is *not* a reality: the very reverse of what Christ had to do for the disciples, and *did*, by solemn assertion that He was no spirit, by inviting them to handle Him, and so satisfy themselves of His material substantiality, and by partaking of food in their presence.

When we keep steadily before our eyes the mental condition of the eleven at the time of Christ's resurrection, we see the transparent falsehood and absurdity of the *theft* theory invented by the Jewish priests. The disciples, according to this theory, came by night, while the guards were asleep, and stole the dead body of Jesus, that they might be able to circulate the belief that He was risen again. Matthew tells that even before the resurrection the murderers of our Lord were afraid this might be done; and then, to prevent any fraud of this kind, they applied to Pilate to have a guard put upon the grave, who accordingly contemptuously granted them permission to take

what steps they pleased to prevent all resurrectionary proceedings on the part either of the dead or of the living; scornfully replying: "Ye have a watch; go your way; make it as sure as ye can." This accordingly they did, sealing the stone and setting a watch. Alas, their precautions prevented neither the resurrection nor belief in it, but only supplied an illustration of the folly of those who attempt to manage providence, and to control the course of the world's history. They gave themselves much to do, and it all came to nothing, Not that we are disposed to deny the astuteness of these ecclesiastical politicians. Their scheme for preventing the resurrection was very prudent, and their mode of explaining it away afterhand very plausible. The story they invented was really a very respectable fabrication, and was certain to satisfy all who wanted a decent theory to justify a foregone conclusion, as in fact it seems to have done; for, according to Matthew, it was commonly reported in after years.[1] It was not improbable that soldiers should fall asleep by night on the watch, especially when guarding a dead body, which was not likely to give them any trouble; and in the eyes of the unbelieving world, the followers of the Nazarene were capable of using any means for promoting their ends.

But granting all this, and even granting that the Sanhedrists had been right in their opinion of the character of the disciples, their theft theory is ridiculous. The disciples, even if capable of such a theft, so far as scruples of conscience were concerned, were not in a state of mind to think of it, or to attempt it. They had not spirit left for such a daring action. Sorrow lay like a weight of lead on their hearts, and made them almost as inanimate as the corpse they are supposed to have stolen. Then the motive for the theft is one which could not have influenced them then. Steal the body to propagate a belief in the resurrection! What interest had they in propagating a belief which they did not entertain themselves? "As yet they knew not the Scriptures, that He must rise again from the dead;"[2] nor did they remember aught that their Master had said on this subject before His decease. To some this latter statement has appeared hard to believe; and to get over the

[1] Matt. xxviii. 15.

[2] John xx. 9.

difficulty, it has been suggested that the predictions of our Lord respecting His resurrection may not have been so definite as they appear in the Gospels, but may have assumed this definite form after the event, when their meaning was clearly understood.[1] We see no occasion for such a supposition. There can be no doubt that Jesus spoke plainly enough about His death at least; and yet His death, when it happened, took the disciples as much by surprise as did the resurrection. One explanation suffices in both cases. The disciples were not clever, quick-witted, sentimental men, such as Renan makes them. They were stupid, slow-minded persons; very honest, but very unapt to take in new ideas. They were like horses with blinders on, and could see only in one direction,—that, namely, of their prejudices. It required the surgery of events to insert a new truth into their minds. Nothing would change the current of their thoughts but a damwork of undeniable fact. They could be convinced that Christ must die only by His dying, that He would rise only by His rising, that His kingdom was not to be of this world, only by the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost and the vocation of the Gentiles. Let us be thankful for the honest stupidity of these men. It gives great value to their testimony. We know that nothing but facts could make such men believe that which now-a-days they get credit for inventing.

The apologetic use which we have made of the doubts of the disciples concerning the resurrection of Christ is not only legitimate, but manifestly that which was intended by their being recorded. The evangelists have carefully chronicled these doubts, that we might have no doubt. These things were written, that we might believe that Jesus really did rise from the dead; for the apostles attached supreme importance to that fact, which they had doubted in the days of their discipleship. It was the foundation of their doctrinal edifice, an essential part of their gospel. The Apostle Paul correctly summed up the gospel preached by the men who had been with Jesus, as well as by himself, in these three items: "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He rose again the third day,

[1] See Neander, *Life of Jesus.*

according to the Scriptures." All the eleven thoroughly agreed with Paul's sentiment, that if Christ were not risen, their preaching was vain, and the faith of Christians was also vain. There was no gospel at all, unless He who died for men's sins rose again for their justification. With this conviction in their minds, they constantly bore witness to the resurrection of Jesus wherever they went. So important a part of their work did this witness-bearing seem to them, that when Peter proposed the election of one to fill the place of Judas, he singled it out as the characteristic function of the apostolic office. "Of these men," he said, "which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, . . . must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection."

With this supreme value attached to the fact of Christ's rising again in apostolic preaching, it is our duty most heartily to sympathize. Modern unbelievers, like some in the Corinthian church, would persuade us that it does not matter whether Jesus rose or not, all that is valuable in Christianity being quite independent of mere historical truth. With these practically agree many believers addicted to an airy spiritualism, who treat mere supernatural facts with contemptuous neglect, deeming the high doctrines of the faith as alone worthy of their regard. To persons of this temper, such studies as those which have occupied us in this chapter seem a mere waste of time; and if they spoke as they feel, they would say, "Let these trifles alone, and give us the pure and simple gospel." Intelligent, sober, and earnest Christians differ *toto cœlo* from both these classes of people. In their view, Christianity is in the first place a religion of supernatural facts. These facts occupy the principal place in their creed. They know that if these facts are honestly believed, all the great doctrines of the faith must sooner or later be accepted; and, on the other hand, they clearly understand that a religion which despises, not to say disbelieves, these facts, is but a cloud-land which must soon be dissipated, or a house built on sand which the storm will sweep away. Therefore, while acknowledging the importance of all revealed truth, they lay very special stress on revealed facts. Believing with

the heart the precious truth that Christ died for our sins, they are careful with the apostles to include in their gospel these items of fact, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day.

SECTION II.—*The Eyes of the Understanding opened.*

MARK XVI. 14; LUKE XXIV. 25–32, 44–46; JOHN XX. 20–23.

Jesus showed Himself alive after His passion to His disciples in a body, for the first time, on the evening of His resurrection day. It was the fourth time He had made Himself visible since He rose from the dead. He had appeared in the morning first of all to Mary of Magdala. She had earned the honour thus conferred on her by her pre-eminent devotion. Of kindred spirit with Mary of Bethany, she had been foremost among the women who came to Joseph's tomb to embalm the dead body of the Saviour. Finding the grave empty, she wept bitter tears, because they had taken away her Lord, and she knew not where they had laid Him. Those tears, sure sign of deep true love, had not been unobserved of the Risen One. The sorrows of this faithful soul touched His tender heart, and brought Him to her side to comfort her. Turning round in distress from the sepulchre, she saw Him standing by, but knew Him not. "Jesus saith to her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, replies, Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary." Startled with the familiar voice, she looks more attentively, and forthwith returns the benignant salutation with an expressive word of recognition, "Rabboni." Thus "to holy tears, in lonely hours, Christ risen appears."

The second appearance was vouchsafed to Peter. Concerning this private meeting between Jesus and His erring disciple we have no details: it is simply mentioned by Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians, and by Luke in his Gospel; but we can have no doubt at all as to its object. The Risen

Master remembered Peter's sin; He knew how troubled he was in mind on account of it; He desired without delay to let him know he was forgiven; and out of delicate consideration for the offender's feelings, He contrived to meet him for the first time after his fall, *alone*.

In the course of the day Jesus appeared, for the third time, to the two brethren who journeyed to Emmaus. Luke has given greater prominence to this third appearance than to any other in his narrative, probably because it was one of the most interesting of the anecdotes concerning the resurrection which he found in the collections out of which he compiled his Gospel. And, in truth, anything more interesting than this beautiful story cannot well be imagined. How vividly is the whole situation of the disciples brought before us by the picture of the two friends walking along the way, and talking together of the things which had happened, the sufferings of Jesus three days ago, and the rumours just come to their ears concerning His resurrection; and as they talked, vibrating between despair and hope, now brooding disconsolately on the crucifixion of Him whom till then they had regarded as the Redeemer of Israel, anon wondering if it were possible that He could have risen again! Then how unspeakably pathetic the behaviour of Jesus throughout this scene! By an artifice of love He assumes the *incognito*, and, joining the company of the two sorrowful men, asks them in a careless way what is the subject about which they are talking so sadly and seriously; and on receiving for reply a question expressive of surprise that even a stranger in Jerusalem should not know the things which have come to pass, again asks dryly and indifferently, "What things?" Having thereby drawn out of them their story, He proceeds in turn to show them that an intelligent reader of the Old Testament ought not to be surprised at such things happening to one whom they believed to be Christ, taking occasion to expound unto them "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself," without saying that it is of Himself He speaks. On the arrival of the travellers at the village whither the two brethren were bound, the unknown One assumes the air of a man who is going farther on, as it would not become a

stranger to thrust himself into company uninvited; but receiving a pressing invitation, He accepts it, and at last the two brethren discover to their joy whom they have been entertaining unawares.

This appearing of Jesus to the two brethren by the way was a sort of prelude to that which He made on the evening of the same day in Jerusalem to the eleven, or rather the ten. As soon as they had discovered whom they had had for a guest, Cleopas and his companion set out from Emmaus to the Holy City, eager to tell the friends there the stirring news. And, behold, while they are in the very act of telling what things were done in the way, and how Jesus became known to them in the breaking of bread, Jesus Himself appeared in the midst of them, uttering the kindly salutation, "Peace be unto you!" He is come to do for the future apostles what He has already done for the two friends: to show Himself alive to them after His passion, and to open their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures, and see that, according to what had been written before of the Christ, it behoved Him to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.

While the general design of the two appearances is the same, we observe a difference in the order of procedure followed by Jesus. In the one case He opened the eyes of the understanding first, and the eyes of the body second; in the other He reversed this order. In His colloquy with the two brethren, He first showed them that the crucifixion and the rumoured resurrection were in perfect accordance with Old Testament Scriptures, and then at the close made Himself visible to their bodily eyes as Jesus risen. In other words, He first taught them the true scriptural theory of Messiah's earthly experience, and then He satisfied them as to the *matter of fact.* In the meeting at night with the ten, on the other hand, He disposed of the matter of fact first, and then took up the theory afterwards. He convinced His disciples, by showing them His hands and His feet, and by eating food, that He really was risen; and then He proceeded to show that the fact was only what they ought to have expected as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy.

In thus varying the order of revelation, Jesus was but adapting His procedure to the different circumstances of the persons with whom He had to deal. The two friends who journeyed to Emmaus did not notice any resemblance between the stranger who joined their company and their beloved Lord, of whom they had been thinking and speaking. "Their eyes were holden, that they should not know Him." The main cause of this, we believe, was sheer heaviness of heart. Sorrow made them unobserving. They were so engrossed with their own sad thoughts, that they had no eyes for outward things. They did not take the trouble to look who it was that had come up with them; it would have made no difference though the stranger had been their own father. It is obvious how men in such a mood must be dealt with. They can get outward vision only by getting the inward eye first opened. The diseased mind must be healed, that they may be able to look at what is before them, and see it as it is. On this principle Jesus proceeded with the two brethren. He accommodated Himself to their humour, and led them on from despair to hope, and then the outward senses recovered their perceptive power, and told who the stranger was. "You have heard," He said in effect, "a rumour that He who was crucified three days ago is risen. You regard this rumour as an incredible story. But why should you? You believe Jesus to be the Christ. If He was the Christ, His rising again was to be expected as much as the passion, for both alike are foretold in the Scriptures which ye believe to be the word of God." These thoughts having taken hold of their minds, the hearts of the two brethren begin to burn with the kindling power of a new truth; the day-dawn of hope breaks on their spirit; they waken up as from an oppressive dream; they look outward, and, lo, the man who has been discoursing to them is Jesus Himself!

With the ten the case was different. When Jesus appeared in the midst of them, they were struck at once with the resemblance to their deceased Master. They had been listening to the story of Cleopas and his companion, and were in a more observing mood. But they could not believe that what they saw really was Jesus. They were terrified and affrighted,

and supposed that they had seen a spirit—the ghost or spectre of the Crucified. The first thing to be done in this case, therefore, manifestly was to allay the fear awakened, and to convince the terrified disciples that the being who had suddenly appeared was no ghost, but a man: the very man He seemed to be: even Jesus Himself. Not till that has been done can any discourse be profitably held concerning the teaching of the Old Testament on the subject of Messiah's earthly history. To that task accordingly Jesus forthwith addressed Himself, and only when it was successfully accomplished did He proceed to expound the true Messianic theory.

Something analogous to the difference we have pointed out in the experience of the two and the ten disciples in connection with belief in the resurrection, may be found in the ways by which different Christians now are brought to faith. The evidences of Christianity are divisible into two great categories: the external and the internal; the one drawn from outward historical facts, the other from the adaptation of the gospel to man's nature and needs. Both sorts of evidence are necessary to a perfect faith, just as both sorts of vision, the outward and the inward, were necessary to make the disciples thorough believers in the fact of the resurrection. But some begin with the one, some with the other. Some are convinced first that the gospel story is true, and then perhaps long after waken up to a sense of the importance and preciousness of the things which it relates. Others, again, are like Cleopas and his companion; so engrossed with their own thoughts, as to be incapable of appreciating or seeing facts, requiring first to have the eyes of their understanding enlightened to see the beauty and the worthiness of the truth as it is in Jesus. They may at one time have had a kind of traditional faith in the facts as sufficiently well attested. But they have lost that faith, it may be not without regret. They are sceptics, and yet they are sad because they are so, and feel that it was better with them when, like others, they believed. Yet, though they attempt it, they cannot restore their faith by a study of mere external evidences. They read books dealing in such evidences, but they are not much impressed by them. Their eyes are holden, and they know

not Christ coming to them in that outward way. But He reveals Himself to them in another manner. By hidden discourse with their spirits, He conveys into their minds a powerful sense of the moral grandeur of the Christian faith, making them feel that, true or not, it is at least *worthy to be true.* Then their hearts begin to burn; they hope that what is so beautiful may turn out to be all objectively true; the question of the external evidences assumes a new interest to their minds; they inquire, they read, they look; and, lo, they see Jesus revived, a true historical person for them: risen out of the grave of doubt to live for evermore the sun of their souls, more precious for the temporary loss; coming

> "Apparelled in more precious habit,
> More moving, delicate, and full of life,
> Into the eye and prospect of their soul,"

than ever He did before they doubted.

From these remarks on the order of the two revelations made by Jesus to His disciples,—of Himself to the eye of their body, and of the scriptural doctrine of the Messiah to the eye of their mind,—we pass to consider the question, What did the latter revelation amount to? What was the precise effect of those expositions of Scripture with which the risen Christ favoured His hearers? Did the disciples derive therefrom such an amount of light as to supersede the necessity of any further illumination? Had Jesus Himself done the work of the Spirit of truth, whose advent He had promised before He suffered, and led them into all truth? Certainly not. The opening of the understanding which took place at this time, did not by any means amount to a full spiritual enlightenment in Christian doctrine. The disciples did not yet comprehend the moral grounds of Christ's sufferings and resurrection. Why He underwent these experiences they knew not: the words "ought" and "behoved" meant for them as yet nothing more than that, according to Old Testament prophecies rightly understood, the things which had happened might and should have been anticipated. They were in the same state of mind as that in which we can conceive the Jewish Christians to whom the Epistle to the Hebrews was addressed to have been, after perusing the contents of that profound writing.

These Christians were ill grounded in gospel truth: they saw not the glory of the gospel dispensation, nor its harmony with that which went before, and under which they had been themselves educated. In particular, the divine dignity of the Author of the Christian faith seemed to them incompatible with His earthly humiliation. Accordingly, the writer of the epistle sets himself to prove that the divinity, the temporary humiliation, and the subsequent glorification of the Christ are all taught in the Old Testament Scriptures, quoting these liberally for that purpose in the early chapters of his epistle. He does, in fact, by his written expositions for his readers, what Jesus did by His oral expositions for His hearers. And what shall we say was the immediate effect of the writer's argument on the minds of those who attentively perused it? This, we imagine, that the crude believer on laying down the book would be constrained to admit: "Well, he is right: these things are all written in the Scriptures of the Messiah; and therefore no one of them, not even the humiliation and suffering at which I stumble, can be a reason for rejecting Jesus as the Christ." A very important result, yet a very elementary one. From the bare concession that the real life of Jesus corresponded to the ideal life of the Messiah as portrayed in the Old Testament, to the admiring, enthusiastic, and thoroughly intelligent appreciation of gospel truth exhibited by the writer himself in every page of his epistle, what a vast distance!

Not less was the distance between the state of mind of the disciples after Jesus had expounded to them the things in the law, and the prophets, and the psalms concerning Himself, and the state of enlightenment to which they attained as apostles after the advent of the Comforter. Now they knew the alphabet merely of the doctrine of Christ; then they had arrived at perfection, and were thoroughly initiated into the mystery of the gospel. Now a single ray of light was let into their dark minds; then the daylight of truth poured its full flood into their souls. Or we may express the difference in terms suggested by the narrative given by John of the events connected with this first appearance of the risen Jesus to His disciples. John relates that, at a certain stage in the proceed-

ings, Jesus breathed on the disciples, and said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." We are not to understand that they then and there received the Spirit in the promised fulness. The breath was rather but a sign and earnest of what was to come. It was but an emblematic renewal of the promise, and a first instalment of its fulfilment. It was but the little cloud like a man's hand, that portended a plenteous rain, or the first gentle puff of wind which precedes the mighty gale. Now they have the little breath of the Spirit's influence, but not till Pentecost shall they feel the rushing wind. So great is the difference between now and then: between the spiritual enlightenment of the disciples on the first Christian Sabbath evening, and that of the apostles in after days.

It was but the day of small things with these disciples yet. The small things, however, were not to be despised. Nor were they. What value the *ten* set on the light they had received we are not indeed told, but we may safely assume that their feelings were much of kin to those of the two brethren who journeyed towards Emmaus. Conversing together on the discourse of Jesus after His departure, they said one unto another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" The light they had got might be small, but it was *new* light, and it had all the heart-kindling, thought-stirring power of new truth. That conversation on the road formed a crisis in their spiritual history. It was the dawn of the gospel day; it was the little spark which kindles a great fire; it deposited in their minds a thought which was to form the germ or centre of a new system of belief; it took away the veil which had been upon their faces in the reading of the Old Testament, and was thus the first step in a process which was to issue in their beholding with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and in their being changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord. Happy the man who has got even so far as these two disciples at this time!

Some disconsolate soul may say, Would that happiness were mine! For the comfort of such a forlorn brother, let us note the circumstances in which this new light arose for the

disciples. Their hearts were set a-burning when they had become very dry and withered: hopeless, sick, and life-weary, through sorrow and disappointment. It is always so: the fuel must be dry that the spark may take hold. It was when the people of Israel complained, "Our bones are dried and our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts," that the word went forth: "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." So with these disciples of Jesus. It was when every particle of the sap of hope had been bleached out of them, and their faith had been reduced to this, "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel," that their hearts were set burning by the kindling power of a new truth. So it has been in many an instance since then. The fire of hope has been kindled in the heart, never to be extinguished, just at the moment when men were settling down into despair; faith has been revived when a man seemed to himself to be an infidel; the light of truth has arisen to minds which had ceased to look for the dawn; the comfort of salvation has returned to souls which had begun to think that God's mercy was clean gone for ever.

There is nothing strange in this. The truth is, the heart needs to be dried by trial before it can be made to burn. Till sorrow comes, human hearts won't catch the divine fire; there is too much of this world's life-sap in them. That was what made the disciples so slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken. Their worldly ambition prevented them from learning the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, and pride made them blind to the glory of the cross. Hence Jesus justly upbraided them for their unbelief and their mindless stupidity. Had their hearts been pure, they might have known beforehand what was to happen. As it was, they comprehended nothing till their Lord's death had blighted their hope and blasted their ambition, and bitter sorrow had prepared them for receiving spiritual instruction.

Section III.—*The Doubt of Thomas.*

John xx. 24–29.

"Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came" on that first Christian Sabbath evening, and showed Himself to His disciples. One hopes he had a good reason for his absence; but it is at least possible that he had not. In his melancholy humour, he may simply have been indulging himself in the luxury of solitary sadness, just as some whose Christ is dead do now spend their Sabbaths at home or in rural solitudes, shunning the offensive cheerfulness or the drowsy dulness of social worship. Be that as it may, in any case he missed a good sermon; the only one, so far as we know, in the whole course of our Lord's ministry, in which He addressed Himself formally to the task of expounding the Messianic doctrine of the Old Testament. Had he but known that such a discourse was to be delivered that night! But one never knows when the good things will come, and the only way to make sure of getting them is to be always at our post.

The same melancholy humour which probably caused Thomas to be an absentee on the occasion of Christ's first meeting with His disciples after He rose from the dead, made him also sceptical above all the rest concerning the tidings of the resurrection. When the other disciples told him on his return that they had just seen the Lord, he replied with vehemence: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my fingers into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." He was not to be satisfied with the testimony of his brethren; he must have palpable evidence for himself. Not that he doubted their veracity; but he could not get rid of the suspicion, that what they said they had seen was but a mere ghostly appearance by which their eyes had been deceived.

The scepticism of Thomas was, we think, mainly a matter of temperament, and had little in common with the doubt of men of rationalistic proclivities, who are inveterately incredu-

lous respecting the supernatural, and stumble at everything savouring of the miraculous. It has been customary to call Thomas the Rationalist among the twelve, and it has even been supposed that he had belonged to the sect of the Sadducees before he joined the society of Jesus. On mature consideration, we are constrained to say that we see very little foundation for such a view of this disciple's character, while we certainly do not grudge modern doubters any comfort they may derive from it. We are quite well aware that among the sincere, and even the spiritually-minded, there are men whose minds are so constituted that they find it very difficult to believe in the supernatural and the miraculous: so difficult, that it is a question whether, if they had been in Thomas' place, the freest handling and the minutest inspection of the wounds in the risen Saviour's body would have availed to draw forth from them an expression of *unhesitating* faith in the reality of His resurrection. Nor do we see any reason *à priori* for asserting that no disciple of Jesus *could* have been a person of such a cast of mind. All we say is, there is no evidence that Thomas, as a matter of fact, was a man of this stamp. Nowhere in the Gospel history do we discover any unreadiness on his part to believe in the supernatural or the miraculous *as such*. We do not find, *e.g.*, that he was sceptical about the raising of Lazarus: we are only told that, when Jesus proposed to visit the afflicted family in Bethany, he regarded the journey as fraught with danger to his beloved Master and to them all, and said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." Then, as now, he showed himself not so much the Rationalist as the man of gloomy temperament, prone to look upon the dark side of things; living in the pensive moonlight rather than in the cheerful sunlight. His doubt did not spring out of his system of thought, but out of the state of his feelings.

Another thing we must say here concerning the doubt of this disciple. It did not proceed from *unwillingness* to believe. It was the doubt of a sad man, whose sadness was due to this, that the event whereof he doubted was one of which he would most gladly be assured. Nothing could give Thomas greater delight than to be certified that his Master was

indeed risen. This is evident from the joy he manifested when he was at length satisfied. "My Lord and my God!" that is not the exclamation of one who is forced reluctantly to admit a fact he would rather deny. It is common for men, who never had any doubts themselves, to trace all doubt to bad motives, and denounce it indiscriminately as a crime. Now, unquestionably, too many doubt from bad motives, because they do not wish and cannot afford to believe. Many deny the resurrection of the dead, because it would be to them a resurrection to shame and everlasting contempt. But this is by no means true of all. Some doubt who desire to believe; nay, their doubt is due to their excessive anxiety to believe. They are so eager to know the very truth, and feel so keenly the immense importance of the interests at stake, that they cannot take things for granted, and for a time their hand so trembles, that they cannot seize firm hold of the great objects of faith,—a living God; an incarnate, crucified, risen Saviour; a glorious eternal future. Theirs is the doubt peculiar to earnest, thoughtful, pure-hearted men, wide as the poles asunder from the doubt of the frivolous, the worldly, the vicious: a holy, noble doubt, not a base and unholy; if not to be praised as positively meritorious, still less to be harshly condemned and excluded from the pale of Christian sympathy,—a doubt which at worst is but an infirmity, and which ever ends in strong, unwavering faith.

That Jesus regarded the doubt of the heavy-hearted disciple as of this sort, we infer from His way of dealing with it. Thomas having been absent on the occasion of His first appearing to the disciples, the risen Lord makes a second appearance for the absent one's special benefit, and offers him the proof desiderated. The introductory salutation being over, He turns Himself at once to the doubter, and addresses him in terms fitted to remind him of his own statement to his brethren, saying: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." There may be somewhat of reproach here, but there is far more of most considerate sympathy. Jesus speaks as to a sincere disciple, whose faith is weak, not as to one who hath an evil heart of unbelief. When demands

for evidence were made by men who merely wanted an excuse for unbelief, He met them in a very different manner. "A wicked and adulterous generation," He was wont to say in such a case, "seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas."

Having ascertained the character of Thomas' doubt, let us now look at his faith.

The melancholy disciple's doubts were soon removed. But how? Did Thomas avail himself of the offered facilities for ascertaining the reality of his Lord's resurrection? Did he actually put his fingers and hand into the nail and spear wounds? Opinions differ on this point, but we think the probability is on the side of those who maintain the negative. Several things incline us to this view. First, the narrative seems to leave no room for the process of investigation. Thomas answers the proposal of Jesus by what appears to be an immediate profession of faith. Then the form in which that profession is made is not such as we should expect the result of a deliberate inquiry to assume. "My Lord and my God" is the warm, passionate language of a man who has undergone some sudden change of feeling, rather than of one who has just concluded a scientific experiment. Further, we observe there is no allusion to such a process in the remark made by Jesus concerning the faith of Thomas. The disciple is represented as believing because he has seen the wounds shown, not because he has handled them. Finally, the idea of the process proposed being actually gone through is inconsistent with the character of the man to whom the proposal was made. Thomas was not one of your calm, cold-blooded men, who conduct inquiries into truth with the passionless impartiality of a judge, and who would have examined the wounds in the risen Saviour's body with all the coolness with which anatomists dissect dead carcases. He was a man of passionate, poetic temperament, vehement alike in his belief and in his unbelief, and moved to faith or doubt by the feelings of his heart rather than by the reasonings of his intellect.

The truth, we imagine, about Thomas was something like this. When, eight days before, he made that threat to his brother disciples, he did not deliberately mean all he said.

It was the whimsical utterance of a melancholy man, who was in the humour to be as disconsolate and miserable as possible. "Jesus risen! the thing is impossible, and there's an end of it. I won't believe except I do so and so. I don't know if I shall believe when all's done." But eight days have gone by, and lo, there is Jesus in the midst of them, visible to the disciple who was absent on the former occasion as well as to the rest. Will Thomas still insist on applying his rigorous test? No, no! His doubts vanish at the very sight of Jesus, like morning mists at sunrise. Even *before* the Risen One has laid bare His wounds, and uttered those half-reproachful yet kind, sympathetic words, which evince intimate knowledge of all that has been passing through His doubting disciple's mind, Thomas is virtually a believer; and *after* he has seen the ugly wounds and heard the generous words, he is ashamed of his rash, reckless speech to his brethren, and overcome with joy and with tears, exclaims, "My Lord and my God!"

It was a noble confession of faith; the most advanced, in fact, ever made by any of the twelve during the time they were with Jesus. The last is first; the greatest doubter attains to the fullest and firmest belief. So has it often happened in the history of the church. Baxter records it as his experience, that nothing is so firmly believed as that which hath once been doubted. Many Thomases have said, or could say, the same thing of themselves. The doubters have eventually become the soundest and even the warmest believers. Doubt in itself is a cold thing, and, as in the case of Thomas, it often utters harsh and heartless sayings. No wonder; for when the mind is in doubt the soul is in darkness, and during the chilly night the heart becomes frozen. But when the daylight of faith comes the frost melts, and hearts which once seemed hard and stony show themselves capable of generous enthusiasm and ardent devotion.

Socinians, whose system is utterly overthrown by Thomas' confession naturally interpreted, tell us that the words "My Lord and my God" do not refer to Jesus at all, but to the Deity in heaven. They are merely an expression of astonishment on the part of the disciple, on finding that what he had doubted was really come to pass. He lifts up his eyes and

his hands to heaven, as it were, and exclaims: My Lord and my God! it is a fact: The crucified Jesus is restored to life again. This interpretation is utterly desperate. It disregards the statement of the text, that Thomas, in uttering these words, was answering and speaking to Jesus, and it makes a man bursting with emotion speak frigidly; for while the one expression "My God" might have been an appropriate utterance of astonishment, the two phrases, "My Lord and my God," are for that purpose weak and unnatural.

We have here, therefore, no mere expression of surprise, but a profession of faith most appropriate to the man and the circumstances; as pregnant with meaning as it is pithy and forcible. Thomas declares at once his acceptance of a miraculous fact, and his belief in a momentous doctrine. In the first part of his address to Jesus he recognises that He who was dead is alive: My Lord, my beloved Master! it is even He; the very same person with whom we enjoyed such blessed fellowship before He was crucified. In the second part of his address he acknowledges Christ's divinity, if not for the first time, at least with an intelligence and an emphasis altogether new. From the fact he rises to the doctrine: My Lord risen, yea, and therefore my God; for He is divine over whom death hath no power. And the doctrine in turn helps to give to the fact of the resurrection additional certainty; for if Christ be God, death *could* have no power over Him, and His resurrection was a matter of course. Thomas having reached the sublime affirmation, "My God," has made the transition from the low platform of faith on which he stood when he demanded sensible evidence, to the higher, on which it is felt that such evidence is superfluous.

We have now to notice, in the last place, the remark made by the Lord concerning the faith just professed by His disciple. "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

This reflection on the blessedness of those who believe without seeing, though expressed in the past tense, really concerned the future. The case supposed by Jesus was to be the case of all believers after the apostolic age. Since then

no one has seen, and no one can believe because he has seen, as the apostles saw. They saw, that we might be able to do without seeing, believing on their testimony.

But what does Jesus mean by pronouncing a beatitude on those who see not, yet believe?

He does not mean to commend those who believe without any inquiry. It is one thing to believe without seeing, another thing to believe without consideration. To believe without seeing is to be capable of being satisfied with something less than absolute demonstration, or to have such an inward illumination as renders us to a certain extent independent of external evidence. Such a faculty of faith is most needful; for if faith were possible only to those who see, belief in Christianity could not extend beyond the apostolic age. But to believe without consideration is a different matter altogether. It is simply not to care whether the thing believed be true or false. There is no merit in doing that. Such faith has its origin in what is base in men, in their ignorance, sloth, and spiritual indifference; and it can bring no blessing to its possessors. Be the truths credited ever so high, holy, blessed, what good can a faith do which receives them as matters of course without inquiry, or without even so much as knowing what the truths believed mean?

The Lord Jesus, then, does not here bestow a benediction on credulity.

As little does He mean to say that all the felicity falls to the lot of those who have never, like Thomas, doubted. The fact is not so. Those who believe with facility do certainly enjoy a blessedness all their own. They escape the torment of uncertainty, and the current of their spiritual life flows on very smoothly. But the men who have doubted, and now at length believe, have also their peculiar joys, with which no stranger can intermeddle. Theirs is the joy experienced when that which was dead is alive again, and that which was lost is found. Theirs is the rapture of Thomas when he exclaimed, with reference to a Saviour thought to be gone for ever, "My Lord and my God." Theirs is the bliss of the man who, having dived into a deep, deep sea, brings up a pearl of very great price. Theirs is the comfort of having their very bygone

doubts made available for the furtherance of their faith, every doubt becoming a stone in the hidden foundation on which the superstructure of their creed is built, the perturbations of faith being converted into confirmations, just as the perturbations in the planetary motions, at first supposed to throw doubt on Newton's theory of gravitation, were converted by more searching inquiry into the strongest proof of its truth.

What, then, does the Lord Jesus mean by these words? Simply this. He would have those who must believe without seeing, understand that they have no cause to envy those who had an opportunity of seeing, and who believed only after they saw. We, who live so far from the events, are very apt to imagine that we are placed at a great disadvantage as compared with the disciples of Jesus. So in some respects we are, and especially in this, that faith is more difficult for us than for them. But then we must not forget that, in proportion as faith is difficult, it is meritorious, and precious to the heart. It is a higher attainment to be able to believe without seeing, than to believe because we have seen; and if it cost an effort, the trial of faith but enhances its value. We must remember, further, that we never reach the full blessedness of faith till what we believe shines in the light of its own self-evidence. Think you the disciples were happy men because they had seen their risen Lord and believed? They were far happier when they had attained to such clear insight into the whole mystery of redemption, that proof of this or that particular fact or doctrine was felt to be quite unnecessary.

To that felicity Jesus wished His doubting disciple to aspire; and by contrasting his case with that of those who believe without seeing, He gives us to know that it is attainable for us also. We, too, may attain the blessedness of a faith raised above all doubt by its own clear insight into divine truth. If we are faithful, we may rise to this from very humble things. We may begin, in our weakness, with being Thomases, clinging eagerly to every spar of external evidence to save ourselves from drowning, and end with a faith amounting almost to sight, rejoicing in Jesus as our Lord and God, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE UNDER-SHEPHERDS ADMONISHED.

SECTION I.—*Pastoral Duty.*

JOHN XXI. 15–17.

"I GO a-fishing," said Simon to his companions, some time after they and he had returned from Jerusalem to the neighbourhood of the Galilean lake. "We also go with thee," replied Thomas and Nathanael, and James and John, and two others unnamed, making with Peter seven, probably all of the eleven who were fishermen by trade. One and all went on that fishing expedition *con amore*. It was an expedition, we presume, in the first place, in quest of food, but it was something more. It was a return to dear old ways, amid familiar scenes, which called up pleasing reminiscences of bygone times. It was a recreation and a solace, most welcome and most needful to men who had passed through very painful and exciting experiences; a holiday for men fatigued by sorrow, and surprise, and watching. Every student with overtasked brain, every artisan with overstrained sinews, may conceive the *abandon* with which those seven disciples threw themselves into their boats, and sailed out into the depths of the Sea of Tiberias to ply their old craft.

Out on the waters that night, what were these men's thoughts? From the significant allusion made by Jesus to Peter's youth in the colloquy of next morning, we guess they were something like the following:—"After all, were it not better to be simple fishermen than to be apostles of the Christian religion? What have we got by following Jesus? Certainly not what we expected. And have we any reason to

expect better things in the future? Our Master has told us that our future lot will be very much like His own—a life of sorrow, ending probably in martyrdom. But here, in our native province of Galilee, pursuing our old calling, we might think, believe, act as we pleased, shielded by obscurity from all danger. Then how delightfully free and independent this rustic life by the shores of the lake! In former days, ere we left our nets and followed Jesus, we girded ourselves with our fishermen's coats, and walked whither we would. When we shall have become apostles, all that will be at an end. We shall be burdened with a heavy load of responsibility; obliged continually to think of others, and not to please ourselves; liable to have our personal liberty taken away, yea, even our very life."

In putting such words into the mouths of the disciples, we do not violate probability; for such feelings as the words express are both natural and common in view of grave responsibilities and perils about to be incurred. Perhaps no one ever put his hand to the plough of an arduous enterprise, without indulging for at least a brief space in such a looking back. It is an infirmity which easily besets human nature.

Yet, natural as it comes to men to look back, it is not wise. Regretful thoughts of the past are for the most part delusive: they were so certainly in the case of the disciples. If the simple life they left behind them was so very happy, why did they leave it? Why so prompt to forsake their nets and their boats, and to follow after Jesus? Ah, fishing in the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee did not satisfy the whole man. Life is more than meat, and the kingdom of God is man's chief end. Besides, the fisherman's life has its drawbacks, and is by no means so romantic as it seems at the distance of years. You may sometimes go out with your nets, and toil all night, and catch nothing.

This was what actually happened on the present occasion. "That night they caught nothing."[1] The circumstance probably helped to break the spell of romance, and to waken the seven disciples out of a fond dream. Be that as it may, there was One who knew all their thoughts, and who would see to

[1] John xxi. 3.

it that they did not indulge long in the luxury of reactionary feeling. "When the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore."[1] He is come to show Himself for the third time[2] to His disciples, not, as before, to convince them that He is risen, but to induce them to dedicate their whole minds and hearts to their future vocation as fishers of men, and as under-shepherds of the flock, preparatory to His own departure from the world. His whole conduct on this occasion is directed to that object. First, He gives them directions for catching a great haul of fish, to remind them of their former call to be His apostles, and to be an encouraging sign or symbol of their success in their apostolic work. Then He invites them to dine on fish which He had procured,[3] roasted on a fire of His own kindling on the shore, to cure them of earthly care, and to assure them that, if they seek to serve the kingdom with undivided heart, all their wants will be attended to. Finally, when the morning meal is over, He enters into conversation, in the hearing of all, with the disciple who had been the leader in the night adventure on the lake, and addresses him in a style fitted to call forth all his latent enthusiasm, and intended to have a similar effect on the minds of all present.

On the surface, the words spoken by Jesus to Peter seem to concern that disciple alone; and the object aimed at appears to be to restore him to a position as an apostle, which he might not unnaturally think he had forfeited by his conduct in the high priest's palace. This, accordingly, is the view commonly taken of this impressive scene on the shore of the lake. And whether we agree with that view or not, we must admit that, for some reason or other, the Lord Jesus wished to recall to Peter's remembrance his recent shortcomings. Traces of allusion to past incidents in the disciple's history during the late crisis are unmistakeable. Even the time selected for the conversation is significant. It was when they had dined that Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him; it was after they had supped Jesus gave His disciples His new commandment of love, and that Peter made his vehement protestation of devo-

[1] John xxi. 4. [2] The *sixth* appearance since He was risen.

[3] When the disciples landed, they saw the fire and fish *already* laid on it, and bread set near by.

tion to his Master's cause and person. The name by which the risen Lord addressed His disciple—not Peter, but Simon son of Jonas—was fitted to remind him of his weakness, and of that other occasion on which, calling him by the same name, Jesus warned him that Satan was about to sift him as wheat. The thrice-repeated question, "Lovest thou me?" could not fail painfully to remind Peter of his threefold denial, and so to renew his grief. The form in which the question was first put—"Lovest thou me more than these?"—contains a manifest allusion to Peter's declaration, "Though all shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended." The injunction, "Feed my sheep," points back to the prophetic announcement made by Jesus on the way to the Mount of Olives, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad," and means: Suffer not the sheep to be scattered, as ye were for a season scattered yourselves. The injunction, "Feed my *lambs*," associated with the first question, "Lovest thou me more than these?" makes us think of the charge, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren;" the idea suggested in both cases being the same, viz. that the man who has fallen most deeply, and learned most thoroughly his own weakness, is, or ought to be, best qualified for strengthening the weak—for feeding the lambs.

Notwithstanding all these allusions to Peter's fall, we are unable to acquiesce in the view, that the scene here recorded signified the formal restoration of the erring disciple to his position as an apostle. We do not deny that, after what had taken place, that disciple needed restoration for his own comfort and peace of mind. But our difficulty is this: Had he not been restored already? What was the meaning of that private meeting between him and Jesus, and what its necessary result? Who can doubt, that after that meeting the disciple's mind was at ease, and that thereafter he was at peace, both with himself and with his Master? Or if evidence is wanted of the fact, look at Peter's behaviour on recognising Jesus from the boat, as He stood on the shore in the grey morning, casting himself as he was into the sea, in his haste to get near his

beloved Lord. Was that the behaviour of a man afflicted with a guilty conscience? But it may be replied, there was still need for a formal public restoration, the scandal caused by Peter's sin being public. This we doubt; but even granting it, what then? Why did the restoration not take place sooner, at the first or second meeting in Jerusalem? Then, does the scene by the shores of the lake really look like a formal transaction? Can we regard that casual, easy, familiar meeting and colloquy after breakfast with two-thirds of the disciples as an ecclesiastical diet, for the solemn purpose of restoring a fallen brother to church fellowship and standing? The idea is too frigid and pedantic to be seriously entertained. Then one more objection to this theory remains to be stated, viz. that it fails to give unity to the various parts of the scene. It may explain the questioning to which Jesus subjected Peter; but it does not explain the prophetic reference to his future history with which He followed it up. Between "I allow you, notwithstanding past misdemeanours, to be an apostle," and "I forewarn you, that in that capacity you shall not have the freedom of action in which you rejoiced in former days," there is no connection traceable. Peter's fall did not suggest such a turn of thought; for it sprang not from the love of freedom, but from the fear of man.

Not the restoration of Peter to a forfeited position, but his recall to a more solemn sense of his high vocation, do we find in this scene. Not "I allow you," but "I urge you," seems to us to be the burthen of Christ's words to this disciple, and through him to all his brethren. By all considerations he would move them to address themselves heart and soul to their apostolic work, and let boats, and nets, and everything else alone for ever. "By the memory of thine own weakness," He would say to Simon for that end; "by my forgiving love, and thy gratitude for it; by the need of brother disciples, which thine own past frailty may teach thee to understand and compassionate; by the ardent attachment which I know you cherish towards myself: by these and all kindred considerations, I charge thee, on the eve of my departure, be a hero, play the man, be strong for others, not for thyself, 'feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof, not by con-

straint, but willingly.' Shrink not from responsibility, covet not ease, bend thy neck to the yoke, and let love make it light. Sweet is liberty to thy human heart; but patient, burden-bearing love, though less pleasant, is far more noble."

Such being the message which Jesus meant for all present, Peter was most appropriately selected as the medium for conveying it. He was an excellent text on which to preach a sermon on self-consecration. His character and conduct supplied all the poetry, and argument, and illustration necessary to give pathos and point to the theme. How dear to his impetuous, passionate spirit, unrestrained freedom! And what heart is not touched by the thought of such a man schooling his high, mettlesome soul into patience and submission? The young, frolicsome, bounding fisherman, girding on his coat, and going hither and thither at his own sweet will; the aged saintly apostle, meek as a lamb, stretching forth his arms to be bound for the martyr's doom: what a moving contrast! Had that passionate man, in some senses the strongest character among the twelve, been in other senses the weakest, then who could better illustrate men's need of shepherding? Had he learnt his own weakness, and through his knowledge thereof grown strong? Then how better state the general duty of the strong to help the weak, than by assigning to this particular disciple the special duty of taking care of the weakest? To say to Peter, "Feed my lambs," was to say to all the apostles, "Feed my sheep."

In requiring Peter to show his love, by performing the part of shepherd to the little flock of believers, Jesus adapted His demand to the spiritual capacity of the disciple. Love to the Saviour does not necessarily take the form of feeding the sheep; in immature and inexperienced disciples, it rather takes the form of being sheep. It is only after the weak have become strong, and established in grace, that they ought to become shepherds, charging themselves with the care of others. In laying on Peter and his brethren pastoral duties, therefore, Jesus virtually announces that they have now passed, or are about to pass, out of the category of the weak into the category of the strong. "Hitherto," He virtually says to them, "ye have been as sheep, needing to be guided, watched over,

and defended by the wisdom and courage of another. Now, however, the time is arrived when ye must become shepherds, able and willing to do for the weak what I have done for you. Hitherto ye have left me to care for you; henceforth you must accustom yourselves to be looked to as guardians, even as I have been by you. Hitherto ye have been as children under me, your parent; henceforth ye must yourselves be parents, taking charge of the children. Hitherto ye have been as raw recruits, liable to panic, and fleeing from danger; henceforth ye must be captains superior to fear, and by your calm determination inspire the soldiers of the cross with heroic daring." In short, Jesus here in effect announces to Peter and to the rest, that they are now to make the transition from boyhood to manhood, from pupillage to self-government, from a position of dependence and exemption from care to one of influence, authority, and responsibility, as leaders and commanders in the Christian community, doing the work for which they have been so long under training. Such a transition and transformation did accordingly take place shortly after in the history of the disciples. They assumed the position of Christ's deputies or substitutes after His ascension, Peter being the leading or representative man, though not the Pope, in the infant church; and their character was altered to fit them for their high functions. The timid disciples became bold apostles. Peter, who weakly denied the Lord in the judgment-hall, heroically confessed Him before the Sanhedrim. The ignorant and stupid disciples, who had been continually misunderstanding their Master's words, became filled with the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, so that men listened to their words as they had been wont to listen to the words of Jesus Himself.

We have said that love to Christ does not impose on all His disciples the duty of a shepherd; showing itself rather in by far the larger number in simply hearing the shepherd's voice and following him, and generally in a willingness to be guided by those who are wiser than themselves. We must add, that all who are animated by the spirit of love to the Redeemer will be either shepherds or sheep, actively useful in caring for the souls of others, or thankfully using the pro-

vision made for the care of their own souls. Too many, however, come under neither designation. Some are sheep indeed, but sheep going astray: others are neither sheep nor shepherds, being self-reliant, yet indisposed to be helpful; too self-willed to be led, yet disinclined to make their strength and experience available for their brethren, utilizing all their talents for the exclusive service of their own private interests. Such men are to be found in Church and State, sedulously holding back from office and responsibility, and severely criticising those who have come under the yoke; animadverting on their timidity and bondage, as unbroken colts, if they could speak, might animadvert on the tameness of horses in harness; the bits and bridles that form a part of church harness, in the shape of formulas and confessions, coming in for a double share of censure.[1]

Now, it is all very well to be wild colts, rejoicing in unrestrained liberty, for a season in youth; but it will not do to be spurning the yoke all one's lifetime. "Ye, then, that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please yourselves." It is, no doubt, most agreeable to be free from care, and to walk about unfettered in opinion and action, and, shaking off those who would hang on our skirts, to live the life of gods, careless of mankind. But it is not the chief end of any man, least of all of a wise and strong man, to be free from care or trouble. He who has a Christian heart must feel that he is strong and wise for the sake of others who want strength and wisdom; and he will undertake the shepherd's office, though shrinking with fear and trembling from its responsibilities, and though conscious also that in so doing he is consenting to have his liberty and independence greatly circumscribed. The yoke of love which binds us to our fellows is sometimes not easy, and the burden of caring for them not light; but, on the whole, it is better and nobler to

[1] It is a fair question whether our venerable Confession is not too minute and stringent, a sort of double bridle, even for ministers; and whether subscription should be required at all for lay elders, who do not teach, want the professional knowledge necessary to intelligent subscription to all details, and are as amenable to discipline for belief as for *conduct* without subscription. No man signs an obligation to keep the ten commandments, in order to be subject to discipline for immorality.

be a drudge and a slave at the bidding of love, than to be a free man through the emancipating power of selfishness. Better Peter a prisoner and martyr for the gospel, than Simon inculcating on his Lord the selfish policy, "Save Thyself," or lying in luxurious ease on the hill of Transfiguration, exclaiming, "Lord, it is good to be here." Better Peter, bound by others, and led whither he would not, as a good shepherd to be sacrificed for the sheep, than Simon girding on his own garment, and walking along with the careless jaunty air of a modern *pococurantist.* A life on the ocean wave, a life in the woods, a life in the mountains or in the clouds, may be fine to dream and sing of; but the only life out of which genuine heroism and poetry comes, is that which is spent on this solid prosaic earth in the lowly work of doing good.

Note now, finally, the evidence supplied in Peter's answers to his Lord's questions, that he is indeed fitted for the responsible work to which he is summoned. It is not merely that he can appeal to Jesus Himself, as one who knows all things, and say, "Thou knowest that I love Thee;" for, as we have already hinted, every sincere disciple can do that. Two specific marks of spiritual maturity are discernible here, not to be found in those who are weak in grace, not previously found in Peter himself. There is, first, marked modesty: very remarkable in so forward a man. Peter does not now make any comparisons between himself and his brethren as he had done previously. In spite of appearances, he still protests that he does love Jesus; but he takes care not to say, "I love Thee more than those." He not only does not say this, but he manifestly does not think it: the bragging spirit has left him; he is a humble, subdued, wise man, spiritually equipped for the pastorate, just because he has ceased to think himself supremely competent for it.

The second mark of maturity discernible in Peter's replies is godly sorrow for past shortcoming: "Peter was grieved because He (Jesus) said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me?" He was grieved, because by the threefold interrogation he was reminded that the threefold denial of which he had been guilty afforded ground for calling his love in question. Observe particularly the feeling produced by this delicate

reference to his former sins. It was *grief*, not irritation, anger, or shame. There is no pride, passion, vanity in this man's soul, but only, holy meek contrition; no sudden colouring is observable in his countenance, but only the gracious softened expression of a penitent, chastised spirit. The man who can so take allusions to his sins is not only fit to tend the sheep, but even to nurse the lambs. He will restore those who have fallen in a spirit of meekness. He will be tender towards offenders, not with the spurious charity which cannot afford to condemn sin strongly, but with the charity of one who has himself received mercy for sins sincerely repented of. By his benignant sympathy, sinners will be converted unto God in unfeigned sorrow for their offences, and in humble hope of pardon; and by his watchful care many sheep will be kept from ever straying from the fold.

Section II.—*Pastor Pastorum.*

John xxi. 19–22.

To be a dutiful under-shepherd is, in another view, to be a faithful sheep, following the Chief Shepherd whithersoever He goes. Pastors are not lords over God's heritage, but mere servants of Christ, the great Head of the church, bound to regard His will as their law, and His life as their model. In the scene by the lake, Jesus took pains to make His disciples understand this. He did not allow them to suppose that, in committing to their pastoral charge His flock, He was abdicating His position as Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Having said to Peter, "Feed my lambs," "Feed my sheep," He said to him, as His final word, "Follow me."

It is implied in the narrative, that while Jesus said this, He arose and walked away from the spot where the disciples had just taken their morning meal. Whither He went we are not told, but it may have been towards that "mountain in Galilee," the pre-appointed rendezvous where the risen Saviour met "above five hundred brethren at once." The sheep have doubtless been wending thither to meet their Divine Shepherd, as in a

secluded upland fold; and it is more than possible that the object of the journey in which Peter is invited to join his Master, is to introduce him to the flock which had just been committed to his care.

Be this as it may, Peter obeyed the summons, and rose at once to follow Jesus. His first impression probably was that he was to be the solitary attendant of his Lord, and a natural wish to ascertain the state of the case led him to look behind to see what his companions were doing. On turning round, he observed the disciple whom Jesus loved, and whom he too loved, following close in his footsteps; and the question forthwith rose to his lips: "Lord, and what of this man?" The question was elliptical, but it meant: John is coming after us: Is the same lot in store for him that you have prophesied for me? Shall he, too, be bound and led whither he would not; or shall he, as the disciple most dearly beloved, be exempted from the hardships I am fated to endure?

That another and a happier fortune was reserved for John, seemed, we believe, probable to Peter. He could not but recall to mind that memorable scene in which John's mother made her ambitious request for her two sons; and in spite of what Jesus had said to them about tasting of His cup, and being baptized with His baptism, he, Peter, might well imagine that John's desire would be fulfilled, and that he would live to see the kingdom come, and to share its glories; especially as one and all of the disciples, down to the very last day of their Lord's sojourn on earth, still expected the kingdom to be restored to Israel very soon.

If such was Peter's thought, it is not surprising that he should ask, if not with envy, at least with a sadder sense of his own loss: "Lord, what of this man?" Adversity is hard to bear at best, but hardest of all when personal ill-fortune stands in glaring contrast with the prosperity of a brother who started on his career at the same time, and with no better prospects than the man whom he has far outstripped in the race.

To such considerations, however, Jesus paid little respect in His reply to Peter's question. "If I will," He said, "that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." "How

stern and unfeeling!" one is tempted to exclaim. Might not Jesus at least have reminded Simon, for his comfort, of the words He once uttered to James and John: "Ye shall drink of my cup?" Would it not have helped Peter more cheerfully to follow his Master in the arduous path of the cross, to have told him that, in whatever manner John might die, he too would have to suffer for the gospel; that his life, whether long or short, would be full of tribulation; that participation in the glory of the kingdom did not depend on longevity; that, in fact, the first to die would be the first to enter into glory? But no; it might not be. To administer such comfort would have been to indulge the disciple's weakness. One who is to play a soldier's part must be trained with military rigour. Effeminacy, sighing after happiness, brooding over the felicity we have missed, are out of place in an apostle's character; and Jesus, to whom such dispositions are most abhorrent, will take good care not to give them any countenance. He will have all His followers, and specially the heads of His people, to be heroes, "Ironsides," prompt to do bidding, fearless of danger, patient of fatigue, without a trace of selfish softness. He will give no quarter even to natural weaknesses, disregards present pain, cares not how we smart under rebuke, provided only He gain His end—the production of character temptation-proof.

Having this end in view, Jesus took no trouble to correct Peter's misapprehensions about his brother disciple. Misapprehensions, we say, for such they indeed were. John did not tarry till the Lord came, in the sense in which Peter understood the words. He lived, indeed, till the close of the first Christian century; therefore long after the Lord's coming to execute judgment on Jerusalem. But except for the longevity he enjoyed, the last of the apostles was in no respect to be envied. The church was militant all his days: he took part in many of its battles, and received therein many scars. Companion with Peter in the church's first conflict with the world, he was a prisoner in Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, after Peter had fallen asleep. One might perhaps say that, owing to temperament, the life of John was less stirring than that of his brother apostle. He

was a man of less impetuosity, though not of less intensity; and there was, perhaps, not so much in his character provocative of the world's opposition. Both by his virtues and by his infirmities, Peter was predestined to be the *champion* of the faith: the Luther of the apostolic age, giving and receiving the hardest blows, and bearing the brunt of the battle. John, again, was the Melancthon among the apostles, without, however, Melancthon's tendency to yield; and as such, enjoyed probably a quieter, and on the whole more peaceful life. But this difference between the two men was, after all, quite subordinate; and, all things considered, we may say that John drank not less deeply of Christ's cup than did Peter. There was nothing glorious or enviable in his lot on earth, except the vision in Patmos of the glory yet to be revealed.

Yet, while all this was clear to His prescient eye, Jesus did not condescend to give any explanations concerning the appointed lot of the beloved disciple, but allowed Peter to think what he pleased about the future of his friend. "If I will," He said, "that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" not meaning to give any information, as contemporary believers imagined, but rather refusing to give any, in the bluntest and most peremptory manner. "Suppose," such is the import of the words, "Suppose it were my pleasure that John should remain on the earth till I return to it, what is that to thee? Suppose I were to grant him to sit on my right hand in my Messianic kingdom, what, I ask again, is that to thee? Suppose John were not to taste of death, but, surviving till my second advent, were, like another Elijah, to be wafted directly into heaven, or to be endowed in his body with the power of an endless life, still what is that to thee? FOLLOW THOU ME."

"Follow thou me." The emphatic repetition of this injunction is very significant. It shows, for one thing, that when Jesus said to Peter, "Feed my sheep," He had no intention of making him a pastor of pastors, a shepherd or bishop over his fellow-disciples. The Romanists will have it that the lambs are the lay members of the church, and that the sheep are the under-shepherds—the whole body of the clergy, the Pope excepted. How strange, if this be true, that Peter should be checked for looking after one of the flock, and asking so simple

a question as that: "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus replies to him as if he were a busybody, meddling with matters with which he had no concern. And, indeed, busybodyism was one of Peter's faults. He was fond of looking after and managing other people; he tried once and again to manage the Lord Himself. Curious enough, it is from this apostle that the church gets the needful warning against the too common vice just named. "Let none of you," he writes in his first epistle, "suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or *as a busybody in other men's matters;*" literally, as a bishop intruding into another's diocese. Evidently the frequent rebukes administered to Peter by his Master had made a lasting impression on him.

Heavy as was the load of responsibility laid upon this disciple at this time, it did not amount to anything so formidable as that involved in being a visible Christ, so to speak, to the whole church. Neither Peter nor any other man is able to bear that burden, and happily no one is required to do so. The responsibility of even the highest in the church is restricted within comparatively narrow limits. The main business even of the chief under-shepherds is not to make others follow Christ, but to follow Him themselves. It is well that our Lord made this plain by the words addressed to the representative man among the apostles; for Christians of active, energetic, and earnest natures are very apt to have very exaggerated ideas of their responsibilities, and to take on themselves the care of the whole world, and impose on themselves the duty of remedying every evil that is done under the sun. They would be defenders-general of the faith wherever assailed, redressers-general of all wrongs, curates-general of all souls. There is something noble as well as quixotic in this temper; and it were not the best sign of a man's moral earnestness if he had not at some time of his life known somewhat of this fussy, over-zealous spirit. Still it should be understood that the Head of the church imposes on no man such unlimited responsibility, and that, when self-imposed, it does not conduce to a man's real usefulness. No one man can do all other men's work, and no one man is responsible for all other men's errors and failures; and each man contributes most effectually

and surely to the good of the whole, by conducting his own life on godly principles. The world is full of evils—scepticism, superstition, ignorance, immorality, on every side—a sight saddening in the extreme. What, then, am I to do? This one thing above all: Follow thou Christ. Be thou a believer, let who will be infidels. Let thy religion be reasonable, let who will pin their faith to a fallible human authority, and place their religion in fantastic ritualisms and gross idolatries. Be thou holy, an example of sobriety, justice, and godliness, though all the world should become a sweltering chaos of impurity, fraud, and impiety. Say with Joshua of old, "If it seem good unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; but as for me and my house, *we* will serve the Lord."

The repeated injunction, "Follow thou me," whilst restricting individual responsibility, prescribes undivided attention to personal duty. Christ demands of His disciples that they follow Him with integrity of heart, without distraction, without murmuring, envy, or calculations of consequences. Peter was, it is to be feared, not yet quite up to the mark in this respect. There was yet lingering in his heart a vulgar hankering after *happiness* as the chief end of man. Exemption from the cross still appeared to him supremely desirable, and he probably fancied that special favour on Christ's part towards a particular disciple would show itself in granting such exemption. He did not yet understand that Christ oftenest shows special favour to His followers by making them in a remarkable degree partakers of His bitter cup and His bloody baptism. The grand enthusiasm of Paul, which made him desire to know Jesus in the fellowship of His sufferings, had not yet taken possession of Simon's breast. When an arduous and perilous piece of service was to be done, those who were selected to be the forlorn hope seemed to him objects of pity rather than of envy. Far from volunteering for such a service, he would rather congratulate himself on having escaped it; and the highest conceivable virtue, in case one were so unlucky as not to escape, would, in his opinion, be submission to the inevitable.

Peter was deficient also as yet in the military virtue of un-

questioning obedience to orders, which is the secret of an army's strength. A general saith to one, Go, and he goeth; to another, Come, and he cometh: he appoints to one *corps* its station here, and to another its station there; and no one ventures to ask why, or to make envious comparisons. There is an absolute surrender of the individual will to the will of the commander; and so far as thoughts of preference are concerned, each man is a machine, having a will, a head, a hand, a heart, only for the effective performance of his own appointed task. Peter had not yet attained to this pitch of self-abnegation. He could not do simply what he was bidden, but must needs look round to see what another was doing. Nor let us think this a small offence in him. It was a breach of discipline which could not be overlooked by the Commander of the faithful. Implicit obedience is as necessary in the church as it is in the army. The old soldier Loyola understood this, and hence he introduced a system of military discipline into the constitution of the so-called "Society of Jesus." And the history of that society shows the wisdom of the founder; for whatever we may think of the quality of the work done, we cannot deny the energy of the Jesuitic fraternity, or the devotion of its members. Such devotion as the Jesuit renders to the will of his spiritual superior, Christ demands of all His people; and to none but He can it be rendered without impiety. He would have every believer give himself up to His will in cheerful, exact, habitual obedience, deeming all His orders wise, all His arrangements good, acknowledging His right to dispose of us as He pleases, content to serve Him in a little place or in a large one, by doing or by suffering, for a long period or a short, in life or by death, so He be glorified.

This is our duty, and it is also our blessedness. So minded, we shall be delivered from all care of consequences, from ambitious views of our responsibilities, from imaginary grievances, from envy, fretfulness, and the restlessness of self-will. We shall no longer be distracted or tormented with incessant looking round to see what is become of this or that fellow-disciple, but be able to go on with our own work in composure and peace. We shall not trouble ourselves either about our own future or about any other body's, but shall

healthily and happily live in the present. We shall get rid for ever of fear, and care, and scheming, and disappointment, and chagrin, and like larks at heaven's gate sing:

"Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out by Thee,
And the changes that will surely come
I do not fear to see;
But I ask Thee for a present mind,
Intent on serving Thee.

I would not have the restless will
That hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do,
Or secret thing to know;
I would be treated as a child,
And guided where I go."

Thus, brother, "go thou thy way till the end be;" and "thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

CHAPTER XXX.

POWER FROM ON HIGH.

MATT. XXVIII. 18–20 ; MARK XVI. 15 ; LUKE XXIV. 47–53 ; ACTS I. 1–8.

FROM Galilee, the disciples, of their own accord or by direction, found their way back to Jerusalem, where their risen Lord showed Himself to them once more, and for the last time, to give them their final instructions, and to bid them farewell.

Of this last meeting no distinct notice is taken in the Gospels. Each of the synoptical evangelists, however, has preserved some of the last words spoken by Jesus to His disciples ere He ascended to heaven. Among these we reckon the closing verses of Matthew's Gospel, where we read : " All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[1] Of this last word Mark gives, in the close of his Gospel, an abbreviated version, in these terms : " Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."[2] In Luke's narrative, the words spoken by Jesus, on the occasion of His final appearance to the eleven, are so interwoven with those which He spoke to them on the evening of His resurrection day, that, but for the supplementary and more circumstantial account given by the same author in the book of the Acts, we should never have thought of making a distinction, far less have known where to place the boundary line. On

[1] Matt. xxviii. 18-20.

[2] Mark xvi. 15. We enter not here into the authenticity of the closing verses of Mark's Gospel.

comparing the two accounts, however, we can see that words spoken at two different times are construed together into one continuous discourse; and we have no great difficulty in determining what belongs to the first appearance and what to the last. According to the book of Acts, Jesus, in His last conversation with His disciples, spoke to them of their apostolic duties as witnesses unto Himself and preachers of His gospel; of the promise of the Spirit, whose descent was to fit them for their work; and of what they should do till the promise should be fulfilled. Now these are just the topics adverted to in the verses cited from the last chapter of Luke's Gospel. There is first the apostolic commission to preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem; and a virtual injunction laid on the disciples to be faithful witnesses to all things they had seen and heard in their Lord's company, and especially to His resurrection from the dead. Then there is the renewal of this promise, here called the "promise of my Father." Then, finally, there is the direction to wait for the promised blessing in the holy city: "But tarry ye at Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."

All these sayings bear internal evidence of being last words, from their fitness to the situation. It was natural and needful that Jesus should thus speak to His chosen agents at the hour of His final departure, giving them instructions for their guidance in their future apostolic labours, and in the short interval that was to elapse before those labours began. Even the business-like brevity and matter-of-fact tone of these last words betray the occasion on which they were uttered. On first thoughts, we should perhaps have expected a more pathetic style of address in connection with a farewell meeting; but, on reflection, we perceive that everything savouring of sentimentality would have been beneath the dignity of the situation. In the farewell address, before the passion, pathos was in place; but in the farewell words, before the ascension, it would have been misplaced. In the former case, Jesus was a parent speaking His last words of counsel and comfort to His sorrowing children; in the latter, He was "as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority

to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch;" and His manner of speech was adapted to the character He sustained.

And yet the tone adopted by Jesus in His last interview with the eleven was not purely magisterial. The Friend was not altogether lost in the Master. He had kind words as well as commands for His servants. What could be kinder and more encouraging than that word: "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world?" And is there not an accent of friendship in that utterance, in which Jesus, now about to ascend to glory, seems by anticipation to resume the robe of divine majesty, which He laid aside when He became man: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth?" Why does He say that now? Not for the purpose of self-exaltation; not to put a distance between Himself and His quondam companions, and, as it were, degrade them from the position of friends to that of mere servants. No; but to cheer them on their way through the world as the messengers of the kingdom; to make them feel that the task assigned them was not, as it might well seem, an impossible one. "I have all power," saith He in effect, "in heaven, and jurisdiction over all the earth: go ye therefore[1] into all the world, making disciples of all the nations, nothing doubting that all spiritual influences and all providential agencies will be made subservient to the great errand on which I send you."

Jesus had kind actions as well as kind words for His friends at parting. There was indeed no farewell kiss, or shaking of hands, or other symbolic act in use among men who bid each other adieu. But the manner of the ascension was most gracious and benignant towards those whom the ascending One left behind. Jesus moved upwards as if lifted from the earth by some celestial attraction, with His face looking downwards upon His beloved companions, and with His hand stretched out in an attitude of benediction. Hence the eleven grieved not for their Lord's disappearance. They marvelled indeed, and gazed eagerly and wonderingly towards the skies,

[1] οὖν is a disputed reading, but the idea it expresses is implied in the connection.

as if trying to penetrate the cloud which received their Master's person; but the parting left no sadness behind. They bowed their heads in worship towards the ascended Christ, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, as if they had *gained,* not *lost* a friend, and as if the ascension were not a *sunset,* but a *sunrise*—as indeed it was, not for them alone, but for the whole world.

Of that miraculous event, by which our High Priest passed within the veil into the celestial sanctuary, we may not speak. Like the transfiguration, it is a topic on which we know not what to say; an event not to be explained, but to be devoutly and joyfully believed, in company with the kindred truth declared by the two men in white apparel to the disciples, who said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven? This same Jesus, which was taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."[1] Wherefore we pass from the ascension, to make some observations on the great commission given by the Lord to His apostles for the last time, just before He was taken up into glory.

That commission was worthy of Him from whom it emanated, whether we regard Him as Son of God or as Son of man. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." Surely this is the language of a Divine Being. What mere man ever entertained a plan of beneficence embracing the whole human race within its scope? and who but one possessing all power in heaven and on earth could dare to hope for success in so gigantic an undertaking? Then how full of grace and love the matter of the commission! The errand on which Jesus sends His apostles is to preach repentance and remission of sins in His name, and to make a peaceful conquest of the world to God by the word of reconciliation through His death. Such philanthropy approves itself to be at once divine and most intensely human. And mark, as specially characteristic of the gracious One, the direction, "beginning at Jerusalem." The words indicate a plan of operations adapted at once to the circumstances of the world, and to the capacities and idiosyncrasies of the agents; but

[1] Acts i. 11.

they do more. They open a window into the heart of Jesus, and show Him to be the same who prayed on the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Why begin at Jerusalem? Because "Jerusalem sinners" most need to repent and to be forgiven; and because Jesus would show forth in them at the outset the full extent of His long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should afterwards believe, in Samaria, Antioch, and the uttermost parts of the earth.

It was in every way a commission worthy of Jesus, as the Son of God and Saviour of sinners, to give. But what a commission for poor Galilean fishermen to *receive!* what a burden of responsibility to lay upon the shoulders of any poor mortal! Who is sufficient for these things? Jesus knew the insufficiency of His instruments. Therefore, having invested them with official authority, He proceeded to speak of an investment with another kind of power, without which the official must needs be utterly ineffectual. "And, behold," He said, "I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye at Jerusalem till ye be clothed with power from on high."

"Power from on high." The expression has a mystical sound, and its sense seems difficult to define; yet the general meaning is surely plain enough. The thing signified is not altogether or chiefly a power to work miracles, but just what Jesus had spoken of at such length in His farewell address before His death. "Power from on high" means: All that the apostles were to gain from the mission of the Comforter,—enlightenment of mind, enlargement of heart, sanctification of their faculties, and transformation of their characters, so as to make them whetted swords and polished shafts for subduing the world unto the truth: these, or the effect of these combined, constituted the power for which Jesus directed the eleven to wait. The power, therefore, was a spiritual power, not a *magical;* an inspiration, not a possession; a power which was not to act as a blind fanatical force, but to manifest itself as a spirit of love and of a sound mind. After the power descended, the apostles were to be not less rational, but more; not mad, but sober-minded; not excited rhapsodists, but calm, clear, dignified expositors of divine truth, such as they appear in Luke's history of their ministry. In a word, they were to

be less like their past selves, and more like their Master: no longer ignorant, childish, weak, carnal, but initiated into the mysteries of the kingdom, and habitually under the guidance of the Spirit of grace and holiness.

Such being the power promised, it was evidently indispensable to success. Vain were official titles—apostles, evangelists, pastors, teachers, rulers: vain clerical robes, without this garment of divine power to clothe the souls of the eleven. Vain then, and equally vain now. The world is to be evangelized, not by men invested with ecclesiastical dignities and with parti-coloured garments, but with men who have experienced the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and who are visibly endued with the divine power of wisdom, and love, and zeal.

As the promised power was indispensable, so it was in its nature a thing simply to be waited for. The disciples were directed to tarry till it came. They were neither to attempt to do without it, nor were they to try to get it *up*. And they were wise enough to follow their instructions. They fully understood that the power was needful, and that it could not be got up, but must come down. All are not equally wise. Many virtually assume that the power Christ spake of can be dispensed with, and that in fact it is not a reality, but a chimera. Others, more devout, believe in the power, but not in man's impotence to invest himself with it. They try to get the power up, by working themselves and others into a frenzy of excitement. Failure sooner or later convinces both parties of their mistake, showing the one, that to produce spiritual results, something more than eloquence, intellect, money, and organization are required; and showing the other, that true spiritual power cannot be produced, like electric sparks, by the friction of excitement, but must come sovereignly and graciously down from on high.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WAITING.

Acts i. 12–14.

AFTER that the Lord was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, the eleven returned to Jerusalem, and did as they had been commanded. They assembled together in an upper room in the city, and, in company with the believing women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His kinsmen and other brethren, amounting in all to one hundred and twenty, waited for Power and for Light, as men who wait for the dawn, or as men who have come to see a panorama wait for the lifting of the curtain that hides from view scenes which their eyes have not seen, nor their ears heard of, nor hath it entered into their hearts to conceive. These verses from the first chapter of the "Acts" show us the disciples and the rest in the act of so waiting.

How solemn is the situation of these men at this crisis in their history! They are about to undergo a spiritual transformation; to pass, so to speak, from the chrysalis to the winged state. They are on the eve of the great illumination promised by Jesus before His death. The Spirit of truth is about to come and lead them into all Christian truth. The day-star is about to arise in their hearts, after the dreary pitchy night of mental perplexity and despairing sorrow through which they have recently passed. They are about to be endowed with power of utterance and of character proportional to their enlarged comprehension of the words and work of Christ, so that men hearing them shall be amazed, and say one to another: "Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And now hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born the wonderful works of God." With a dim presentiment of what is coming, with hearts which throb

and swell under the excitement of expectation, and heaving with wondering thoughts of the great things about to be revealed, they sit there in that upper room for ten long days, and wait for the promise of the Father. Verily it is an impressive, a sublime scene.

But how do they wait? Do they sit still and silent, Quaker fashion, all that time expecting the descent of the Power? No; the meeting in the upper room was not a Quaker meeting. They prayed, they even transacted business; for in those days Peter stood up and proposed the election of a new apostle in the room of Judas, gone to his own place. Nor was their meeting a dull one, as those may imagine who have never passed through any great spiritual crisis, and to whom waiting on God is a synonym for listless indolence. The hundred and twenty believers did not, you may be sure, suffer from *ennui*. Prayers and supplications alone filled up many blessed hours. For to men in the situation of the disciples, prayer is not the dull "devotional" form with which we, in these degenerate days, are too familiar. It is rather a wrestling with God, during which hours pass unobserved, and the day breaks before one is aware. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." They prayed without fainting, without wearying, with one heart and mind.

Besides praying, the waiting disciples doubtless spent part of their time in reading the Scriptures. This is not stated; but it may be assumed as a matter of course, and it may also be inferred from the manner in which Peter handled Old Testament texts in his address to the people on the day of Pentecost. That pentecostal sermon of his bears marks of previous preparation. It was in one sense an extempore effusion, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, but in another it was the fruit of careful study. Peter and his brethren had, without doubt, reperused all those passages which Jesus had expounded on the evening of the day on which He rose from the dead, and among them that psalm of David, whose words the apostle quoted in his first gospel sermon, in support of the doctrine of Christ's resurrection. We may find evidence of the minute, careful attention bestowed on that and other Messianic portions of Scripture, in the exactness with which the quotation is

given. The four verses of the psalm stand word for word in Peter's discourse as they do in the original text,—a fact all the more remarkable, that New Testament speakers and writers do not, as a rule, slavishly adhere to the *ipsissima verba* in their Old Testament citations, but quote texts somewhat freely.

The spiritual exercises of those ten days would be further diversified by religious conversation. The reading of Scripture would naturally give rise to comments and queries. The brethren who had been privileged to hear Jesus expound the things which were written in the law, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning Himself, on the night of His resurrection-day, would not fail to give their fellow-believers the benefit of instructions through which their own understandings had been opened. Peter, who was so prompt to propose the election of a new witness to the resurrection of Jesus, would be not less prompt to tell the company in the upper room what the risen Jesus had said about these Old Testament texts. He would freely speak to *them* of the meaning Jesus taught him to find in the sixteenth Psalm, just as he took the liberty of doing afterwards in addressing the multitude in the streets of Jerusalem. When that psalm had been read, he would say: "Men and brethren, thus and thus did the Lord Jesus interpret these words;" just as, when the 109th Psalm had been read, he stood up and said: "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas: for it is written, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and his bishopric let another take. Wherefore"—let us choose another to fill his place.

Thus did the brethren occupy themselves during these ten days. They prayed, they read the Scriptures, they conferred together on what they read and on what they expected to see. So they continued waiting with one accord in one place till the day of Pentecost was fully come, when suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, filling all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Then the promise was ful-

filled: the power had come down from on high, in a manner illustrating the words of the prophet: "Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him."

The events of Pentecost were the answer to the prayers offered up during those ten days, which we may call the incubation period of the Christian church. And that the lesson of encouragement to be learned from this fact may not be lost, be it remarked that the prayers of those assembled in the upper room were not essentially different from the prayers of saints at any other period in the church's history. They had reference to much the same objects. The eleven and the others prayed for the promised power, for additional light on the meaning of Scripture, for the coming of the divine kingdom on earth. And while they prayed for these things, we believe, with peculiar fervour, they did not pray for them with extraordinary intelligence. Of them, perhaps more emphatically than of most, it might be said, that they knew not what to pray for as they ought. They had very indistinct ideas, we believe, of the "power," of its nature, and of the effects it was to produce. That they had crude, and even erroneous ideas of the "kingdom," we know; for it is recorded, that on the very day of His ascension they asked Jesus the question, "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" In this brief question three gross misconceptions are contained. It is assumed that Christ was to reign personally on the earth, a great king, like David. The disciples had no idea whatever of an ascension into heaven. Then the kingdom they expect is merely a national Jewish one. "Wilt Thou," they ask, "restore the kingdom *to Israel?*" Finally, the kingdom looked for by them is political, not spiritual: it is not a new creation, but a kingdom of earth *restored* from a present prostrate condition to former power and splendour.

The notions of the eleven concerning the kingdom continued to be much the same to the day of Pentecost as they had been on the day of the ascension. It is true that Jesus had, in His reply to their question, made a statement which, if rightly understood, was fitted to correct their misconceptions.

Formally a declinature to give information on the subject about which the disciples were curious, that reply afforded a sufficiently clear and full explanation of the real state of the case. When He spoke of the power which *they* should receive, Jesus not obscurely hinted that the work of inaugurating the kingdom was to be done by the apostles as His commissioners, not by Himself in person. And the same thing is implied in the words, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me," for witnesses would be needed only for one who was himself unseen. By connecting the "power" with the descent of the Holy Ghost, Jesus in effect corrected the third mistake of the eleven concerning the kingdom,—the notion, viz., that it was to be of a political nature. Power arising out of a baptism of the Spirit is moral, not political, in its character; and a kingdom founded through such power is not a kingdom of this world, but one whose subjects and citizens consist of men believing the truth: "of the truth," as Jesus Himself put it in speaking of His kingdom before Pilate. And, in the last place, the words, "Witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth," were certainly fitted to banish from the minds of the eleven the dream of a merely national Jewish kingdom. If it was but the kingdom of Israel that was to be restored, to what purpose bear witness to Jesus to the world's end? Such witness-bearing speaks to a kingdom of a universal nature, embracing people of every tongue and kindred under heaven.

From the reply of their Lord, the disciples might thus have gathered the true idea of the kingdom, as one founded on faith in Christ; presided over by a king, no longer present bodily, but omnipresent spiritually; not limited to one country, but embracing all who were of the truth in all parts of the world. This great idea, however, they did not take out of the words on which we have been commenting. They were to learn the nature of the kingdom, not from the teaching of Jesus, but from the events of providence. The panorama of the kingdom of God was to be hid from their eyes till the curtain was lifted in three distinct historical movements,—the *ascension*, the *descent of the Spirit* at Pentecost on

the multitude who had come to keep the feast, and the *conversion of the Samaritans and the Gentiles.* The first of these movements had already taken place when the disciples assembled themselves together in the upper room to wait for the promise of the Father. Jesus had ascended, so that they now knew that the seat of empire, the capital of the kingdom, was to be in heaven, not in Jerusalem. This was a valuable piece of knowledge, but it was not all that was needed. Only a small part of the panorama was yet visible to the spectators, and they were still in the dark as to the nature and extent of the coming kingdom. They expected to see a panorama of a new Palestine, not of a new heaven and a new earth wherein should dwell righteousness; and they doubtless continued to cherish this expectation till the curtain was uplifted, and facts showed what they had unwittingly been praying for, when they at length learned that the Hearer of prayer not only does for His people what they ask, but far above what they even think.

And now, in taking leave of these men with whom we have long held goodly fellowship, let us make two further observations concerning this waiting scene, in which they occupy the prominent place.

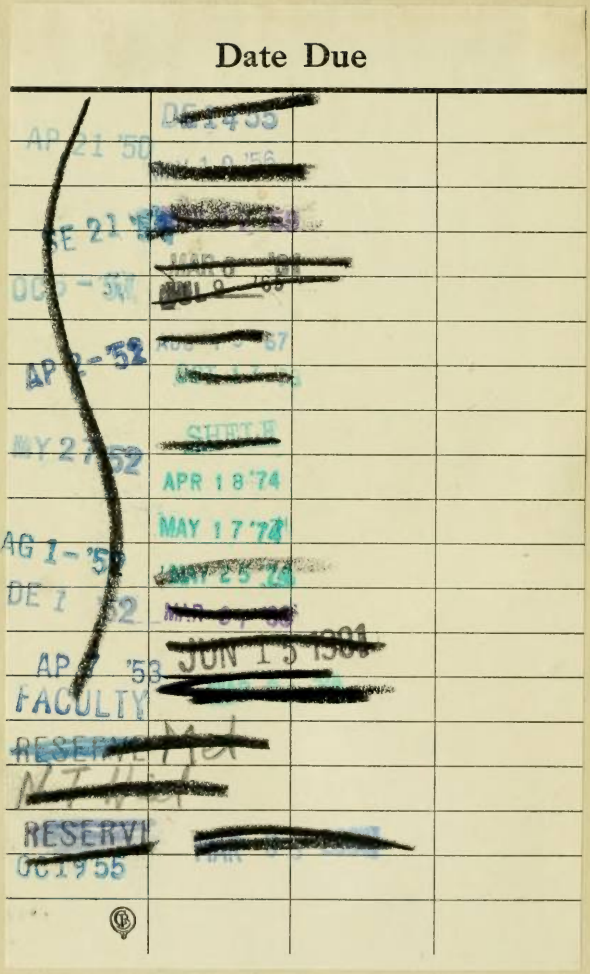
First look at that scene in relation to the subsequent events recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, not to say the whole history of the church, and learn what significance may lie in things apparently very insignificant. We had occasion to make this remark in connection with the first meeting of Jesus with five of those who afterwards became members of the chosen band of twelve, and we think it seasonable to repeat it here now. To the contemporary Jewish world, that meeting in the upper room, if they knew of its existence, would appear a very contemptible matter; yet it was the only thing of perennial interest in Judæa at the time. The hope of Israel, yea, of the world, lay in that small congregation. For, small as it was, God was with those who formed it. Infidels who believe not in supernatural influence smile at such words; but even they must acknowledge that some source of power was centred in that little community, for they multiplied with a rapidity surpassing that of the Israelites in Egypt. Those who reject divine influence, impose on themselves the burden of a very

laborious explanation of the fact. For those who believe in that influence, it is enough to say, the little flock grew great, not by might, nor by power of this world, but by God's Spirit. It was their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom.

Look again at that scene in the upper room, in relation to the past history of the disciples, and learn how utterly incompetent for the task assigned them they are, without some such light and power from on high as Jesus encouraged them to hope for. These men have been some three years in Christ's company, passing through a theological curriculum in the best of all colleges. From Christ's own lips they have heard the words of divine wisdom concerning all things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Yet here are they still, after their Lord's ascension, almost as ignorant of the nature of the kingdom as they were the day they became disciples. And they are as devoid of spiritual power as of spiritual light. They are still well-meaning, but rustic, undignified, morally ineffectual Galileans, needing some influence to descend upon them and transform them into apostles indeed.

Look forward a few days, and behold all is changed! The eleven have got other hearts, other minds, other tongues, and have become enlightened, eloquent, powerful men. The change is obvious to all, but whence did it come? Some may reply, from natural causes. Philosophers may tell us that men of honest purpose must grow wise and strong sometime, and that persons who have been ciphers while overshadowed by a great character, do often suddenly develope into distinguished men, when called to act on their own responsibility as leaders in a great movement. To our mind, the experience of the apostles is a demonstration that the Light and the Power from on high, whereof Jesus spoke so often, were realities, not fancies. If what we have written should create or confirm this conviction in other minds, our labour shall not have been in vain.

THE END.


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